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The Media, Culture, and Religion Perspective

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The Media, Culture, and Religion Perspective

Discovering a theory and methodology for studying media and religion

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1. Introduction

The cultural studies analysis of the media has now become a dominant paradigm of communication research, and the "Media, Religion, and Culture" focus is a central paradigm in research on religious media. For example, the biannual international conference on "Media, Religion, and Culture" usually draws from 300 to 600 people from around the world, virtually all carrying on research on media and religion from a cultural studies perspective. The cultural studies approach recognizes the importance of so-called "administrative research" used by broadcasters to measure the reach and effectiveness of programming, but argues that quantitative effects research really does not answer the central questions of religious media.

Religion is a personal response, seeking meaning in life and in one's universe. Religious expression is generally found within institutional religion, but the formal creed, rituals, devotions, and moral codes do not exhaust the personal experience of religion. The central question of the cultural studies approach is concerned with how individuals in groups use media to construct religious meaning in life and how this religious meaning relates to many other aspects of human life. This approach typically draws its theories and methodologies, not from psychology, functionalist sociology, or quantitative analysis, but from cultural anthropology, philosophy, literary studies, drama, and history. The methods of research are no less rigorous, but these are much closer to a tradition of humanities than to behavioral sciences

Until the 1970s virtually all research on media and religion was attempting to answer the questions of religious broadcasters as to what effects they were having. Most religious programs claimed to be having large audiences—impressed with what one can do with the media compared to the Sunday sermon—and they generally claimed to be "converting " many people. Others were skeptical, and the research was brought in to settle this kind of dispute. Gradually, however, researchers moved away from these "effects" questions to how people are creating meaning from media . . . and many other sources. How and why did this move to a new set of questions in research on religious media come about? The present essay will explore this question.

A. Effects studies—background

From the time the 1920s-era Payne Studies concluded that the "impact" of film depended very much on family background, the subjective cultural background, and other factors influencing the subjective interpretation of the *meaning* of the film (in Rowland, 1983, pp. 92-99), media researchers felt that they had to use quantitative, objective methods to show the positive or negative effects of media in order to get action by governments or other public institutions. One of the typical examples was the attempt to devise an "objective" measuring scale of violent content which rated violence from the low point on the scale of a heated discussion to the high point of a bloody murder. The researchers then attempted to show a direct correlation between the level of violent content and aggressive behavior of audiences. Coders were instructed to mark exactly what they heard or saw whether it was a Bugs Bunny cartoon for children or a portrayal of the life of Christ. Not surprisingly, humorous children's cartoons, where rabbits, pigs, and ducks were continually getting smashed about came out as horribly violent. If the quantitative interpretation of violence that some social scientists proposed were applied to the media, there obviously would be no further presentation of great works of art such as Shakespeare and even the presentation of the Bible would be questionable.

What soon became evident is that the *meaning construction* placed on a scene or particular action can vary a great deal (Newcomb, 1978). The portrayal of the crucifixion of Jesus can be seen as sickeningly offensive or as a beautiful sign of enormous love

depending on the meaning that the beholder places on this. There might be wide agreement that the portrayal of explicit sexual relations is repugnant and morally offensive for many different reasons based on many different meanings. But in every case it is important to know the *meaning* not just for different audiences but for the writer, the producer, the actors, and a host of others who are involved in some way with producing something that does have meaning (Newcomb, 1978, pp. 279-280).

It also became apparent that although the official practices of a religious tradition might define a devotion or action as religious, adherents of the religious tradition might have their own unique interpretations of the official practices and might have experiences which are generally consonant with the theological norms of the tradition but are completely unique for a given person.

B. Trying to find the "definitive" proof of effects of religious broadcasts

With the advent of television in the 1950s, religious television stars in the U.S., such as the evangelist Billy Graham and Bishop Fulton Sheen, began to gain top audience ratings. The mainline Protestant churches felt that they were losing out and wondered if they could not find a Bishop Sheen in the Anglican or Methodist Church. There began to be considerable discussion of whether religious television personalities were really having a significant lasting impact, whether this was drawing people away from worship in the local churches, whether it appealed to young people, and other similar questions. In 1951 the National Council of Churches in the United States funded a major study of the "effectiveness of television" as a tool of evangelization. The director of the study was one of the great personalities of U.S. religious broadcasting, Everett Parker, and the team included Dallas Smythe, who later became one of the leaders in the critical cultural studies school.

Guided by August Hollingshead, one of the top sociologists in the U.S., the study employed the best current sociological tools and behaviorist social psychological models. It remains one of the classics of research on religious media, but, unfortunately, the authors themselves suggest that their methodology raised more questions than provided answers. The study confirmed what many other surveys had indicated and others would indicate: that the main users of religious broadcasting tended to be lower status, with less education, more likely to be women and more likely to be elderly. The major conclusion was couched in terms of the behaviorist psychology model, namely, that following religious broadcasts "reduced anxiety" (Parker, Barry, & Smythe, 1955, p. 405). The researchers admitted that they discovered that their methodology (behavioral psychology and effects models) was too limited to answer the real questions of the study, even in the simplest terms (Parker, Barry, & Smythe, 1955, p. 395). The study did not reveal whether users of these programs become more religious, more moral, closer to their local churches, or more inspired to be involved in work with needy people. The results could say little about the relation of the broadcasts to general belief systems. These are questions which deal with *meaning*.

One must recognize that the researchers were using the available tools at hand in 1950. This was before the development of the sociology and anthropology of religion, before the major empirical work of Stark and Glock (1968) in the U.S., before the great theoretical advances of sociologists of religion such as Peter Berger (1969) and Thomas Luckmann (1967) or of David Martin (1969; 1980) and Bryan Wilson (1982) in Britain and a host of other major theorists in Europe. It even predated the development of "parish sociology" (Fichter, 1954). The 1960s, however, brought a major shift in the focus of the human sciences and in the emerging field of mass communication research in particular.

C. The shift from a media effects paradigm to recognition of the importance of the cultural context of media use

In the late 1940s Joseph Klapper, for many years head of the research department at CBS and close associate of Paul Lazarsfeld, did a definitive analysis (his doctoral thesis) of just what kind of effects one could expect from broadcasting. The surprising result of this analysis of hundreds of studies of media effects was that not a single study proved that the media had the powerful direct effects that broadcasters expected. The landmark book revealed that the influence of media is always limited by the subjective social context, knowledge, attitudes, motivation, and *interpretation* of the receiver (Klapper, 1965). This suggested that broadcasters had to take into consideration the motivations, interests, enjoyments, cultural values, and the subculture of the particular audience that they sought.

Klapper and others suggested that a better approach to audience analysis was not effects research but what came to be known as uses and gratification studies (Dennis & Wartella, 1996, p. 24). The central question was not what media did to people but what people did with the media. Peter Horsfield, in his comprehensive survey of the research on audiences of religious media in the early 1980s, found many doctoral theses and other research on religious broadcasting in the 1960s and 1970s using the uses and gratifications approach to document the now well-known patterns of religious media use (Horsfield, 1984, pp. 118-124).

Another major influence was Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (1964) which argued that the most significant impact of media was not on individual psychology but on whole cultures and societies. McLuhan came to media studies from literary analysis which stressed the activity of the person in reading and interpreting a text. Different media touched different senses—the ear, the eyes, the whole consciousness—and the person responded by constructing the meaning of the text according to the major sense influence, thereby producing an "oral culture" or a "visual culture." The perspective of McLuhan and his student, Walter Ong, S.J., (1982), also helped to shift interest of religious communicators from broadcast effects to the *interaction* of a medium and religious cultural movements.

Berger and Luckmann, in their work on *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967) shifted the focus away from the systemic functionalism of Parsons which made the person the result of systemic forces at the intersection of the social system, the personality system, and the economic system. The new focus made the starting point *culture*, defined now more cognitively as a system of meanings produced by persons in interaction. All this was part of the great personalist movement in the late 1960s, inspired by thinkers such as Marcuse (1968) who emphasized the importance of responding to one's own identity and creativity, thereby rejecting conformity to powerful social controls. The counter-cultural movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s rejected the subjection of one's life to the mobilization of industrialization and mass consumption. All this called into question the use of media for religious persuasion and manipulation. There was awakened interest in the use of media as a context for discovering personal religious values, religious cultural identity, and an active faith expression.

D. The movements of "education for critical use of the media"

In the 1950s the dominant idea of the Church's use of the media was still a powerful, dramatic speaker using a persuasive rhetoric to convert audiences to a deeper religious practice. The logic of religious broadcasts was not much different from political campaigns, advertising, or radio talks. In the 1960s, however, there was a growing critique, especially in the churches, of the harmful effects on faith and morals of the manipulation of sex, violence, advertising, and other forms of increasingly commercial "hard sell" media. This set in motion a series of efforts to introduce "media education" which assumed that the audience was not simply a passive receiver of message effects. Audiences can be critical and have their own ideas about the media. Media education encouraged people to carefully select media use according to their personal values and to use these media to deepen one's value commitments. Media education has varied in its focus from a defensive view of media as highly manipulative to an appreciation of our benignly banal popular culture, but most approaches seek to strengthen the use of media from the perspective of one's own active interpretation and one's own cultural identity.

A more important contribution, in many ways, was the movement of education for freedom which emerged in the countries of the South, especially in Latin America.

The churches in Latin America, India, Asia, and Africa began a process of education of the rural and urban poor with a general educational philosophy of helping the poor and marginal form grassroots, participatory organizations to solve their own problems. These efforts incorporated the educational methods of Paulo Freire (1990a; 1990b), Badal Sircar's concepts of popular theater in India (1978) and many other popular movements. In many ways this changed the perspective on religious broadcasting and research on religious broadcasting, in large part because this emphasis was adopted by international associations of religious broadcasting such as UNDA (now SIGNIS) and The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).

First, these educational methods stressed not just new production techniques but the affirmation and promotion of the popular cultures. The media, especially small media such as group communication, popular theater, and people's radio, were the sites where the poor and marginal could develop their cultural identity.

Second, these methods saw as the reasons for poverty and oppression the passive dependence on the hegemonic culture which imposes a self-concept of "natural inferiority" and need to depend on the governing elites. Third, in the face of globalization of cultures, it is necessary for the poor and marginal to have their own media and to actively produce their own cultures. Thus, the concept of culture became central in religious broadcasting and in research on religious broadcasting

Another very important emphasis coming from education for liberation was to develop the sense of dignity, creativity and freedom of the person through dialogue in community. These movements were far more aware of the dehumanization that comes from the concentration of power in societies and the use of media to impose that power. The ideal form of communication was a communitarian, participatory, dialogical communication, and this ideal became a central ethical and theological principle in the media, religion, and culture perspective. This value position led many doing research on religious broadcasting toward theories and research methods of "cultural studies," with its different variants in the United States and in Latin America.

2. The cultural studies approach

Media studies began in the 1930s and 1940s in the U.S. There was virtually no communication research in Europe, at the time enveloped in total war. After World War II Europe began its own approaches to social studies and media. Public service broadcasting systems in Europe were much more concerned with national cultural integration and with the cultural quality of broadcasting. These systems did not need to establish the effectiveness of advertising as did the U.S. commercial broadcasters. Media researchers in Europe were concerned about the profound cultural transformations as the "welfare state" increased the incomes of the working classes and brought the working classes into a kind of broad middle status.

A decisive influence was the cultural studies approach that originated in France and which was picked up by the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham in Britain. The center began a program of research on the factors influencing the profound cultural changes in Britain, especially among the working classes (Hall, Hobson, Lowe, & Willis, 1980). Not surprisingly, in contrast to the behaviorist, functionalist dependence on psychological conceptions of the individual which led to an emphasis on the blind behavioral effects of the media, the cultural studies approach borrows from the humanistic sciences of textual analysis, literary studies, semiotics, history, cultural anthropology, and cognitive structuralism. The focus was not on behavioral response but on the creation of meaning, or, more specifically, "signifying practices" which bring about "shared social meanings" in various "languages," especially mass media languages (Barker, 2000, p. 7). Contrary to views of institutions such as the BBC, the popular classes were not considered "cultureless" and passive consumers of media to be reshaped in the middle-class image, but active in the creation of a rich and strong culture (Hoggart, 1957; Thompson, 1963). Popular novels, films, and television were sources of ideas and symbols that people used to create their own personal and cultural identities. The leaders in cultural studies were scholars formed in literary and dramatic criticism, and they saw the media as a text that both revealed and reflected the nature of the culture but that was also a source of symbols for the construction of the great variety of subcultures. What was striking about the youth subcultures in particular was the use of popular music as a symbol of resistance to the dominant, hegemonic cultures (Hall & Jefferson, 1983; Frith, 1983). Rather than turn their backs on their poverty and working-class status, youth took from the media images that glorified their own popular class values.

Underlying the cultural studies approach was a strong commitment to the dignity, freedom, and creativity of all persons. The individual was seen, not as an object of culture and social systems, but as the author of culture. Although cultural studies has found Marxist analysis helpful for a critical understanding of the concentration of political-economic power in the formation of cultures, cultural studies rejected the economic determinism of classical Marxism. Instead they saw the person as a protagonist in the struggle with power to define the meaning of all economic products not as hegemonic ideology but as the affirmation of the cultural identity of the subaltern classes. Stuart Hall introduced the distinction of the concept of the encod-

ing of the preferred, hegemonic meaning of media to support hegemonic power and the decoding of the message in terms of the identity of the media user. The studies of media fan groups have revealed how media users refashion the meaning of symbols of the media around their own person and cultural identities (Jenkins, 1992). Martin-Barbero's studies of the reception of telenovelas in Latin America suggested that the reading of media is a complex combination of seduction, rejection, resistance, and transformation of meaning (1993).

The American version of the cultural studies approach emphasized that media reception is a social, communitarian activity. The new religious, racial, ethnic, and gender movements in the U.S. and elsewhere, on the basis of their internal communication networks, *collectively* challenged the negative images in the media. Carey (1989), borrowing from cognitive anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (1975), introduced the ritual, communion notion of media, and Horace Newcomb and Robert Alley (1983) used the anthropologist Victor Turner's theory of ritual (1969) as the audience experi-

ence of the state between the world as it is and the world as the community would like it to become.

A turning point was the development of media reception theory in the late 1970s and 1980s, analyzing how audiences take media narratives, role models, and symbols as materials for constructing their own life histories (Morley, 1992; Fiske, 1987). From this came a series of new methodologies of audience analysis roughly described as audience ethnography and including life histories (Grodin & Lindlof, 1996), personal accounts through letters (Ang, 1985), observation of groups viewing television (Lull, 1988), observation of households using media (Silverstone & Hirsch, 1992), or participation in fan groups discussing programs (Brown, 1994). What has characterized reception study is the analysis of the use of media as one source of constructing meaning in a "natural life context" and a whole meaning construction process: a whole life-time, an ongoing-friend group, a whole household, a whole community or church congregation. The purpose is to understand the role of media in a complex pattern of meaning relationships.

3. The beginnings of the Media, Religion, and Culture approach

A. Early history

By the early 1980s, the study of media and religion had at its disposal a new set of tools that the authors of the 1950s' study of the effects of religious television said were needed. Also emerging were new theologies of communication which defined the media as a process of bringing publics together to form dialogical communities. Evangelization was beginning to be seen, not as imposing a foreign religious culture, but as helping peoples discover and activate their best religious values. The reaching up to God is not something brought from outside, but is embedded in the nature of human existence and in human cultures. There was cross-fertilization of narrative theology (Shea, 1981), the life-history approach to moral development (Kohlberg, 1981, 1984), concepts of faith as evolving through stages (Fowler, 1981), the analysis of media reception as an interaction between media myth and narrative (Silverstone, 1981), and personal life histories (Fiske, 1987). Another very important influence was the new sociology of religion emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, which showed that religiosity could

not be defined simply by the imposition of institutional religious affiliation (Beckford & Luckman, 1989; Beckford, 1989). It was evident that new generations of seekers were building their own belief system from symbols from a variety of religious traditions (Roof & McKinney, 1987; Roof, 1999).

By the 1970s and early 1980s the prominence of the televangelists began to stimulate many studies of religious broadcasting, especially regarding the socio-cultural and political impact of new religious movements and the Pentecostals (Armstrong, 1979; Hadden & Swann, 1981; Frankl, 1987; Abelman & Hoover, 1990). Especially important were Peter Horsfield's *Religious Television* (1984), providing a summary analysis of research on religious broadcasting up to that point, and the Gallup survey of audiences of radio and television (Hoover, 1988, pp. 63-70). All of these studies confirmed that audiences were largely the devout church members, the elderly, less well educated, more rural, and tending to be heavier television users. Contrary to the claims of many religious broadcasters,

television broadcasts made few converts among the unchurched, but television was most important in providing public symbols of identification for the new religious movements in the 1970s and 1980s.

The new studies of the sociology of religion in the 1970s and 1980s were confirming that a new religious configuration was coming into existence—more fundamentalist, intensely committed, more personalistic and spontaneous, more militant against liberal religious hegemony. No sociological study suggested that the religious broadcasters were an important cause of this, but broadcasting was part of the creation of a new culture.

In the mid-1980s Stewart Hoover, drawing on the many currents of thought about religious media described above, designed a new approach to the study of religion and media which focused on the role of media in the creation of personal religious meaning and religious cultures. Also important were discussions with the Jesuit-sponsored Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture in London (the original publisher of *Communication Research Trends*), which was encouraging a cultural studies approach and which published his book in its Communication and Human Values series. The central question in the study was, "What kind of religious culture are we creating in this era of great social and institutional change?" (Hoover, 1988, p. 12). Television was considered a cultural medium, a signifying practice. The study adapted the following aspects of the cultural studies approach:

- The focus was on the culture of a particular religious movement and the life context of people in this movement: their jobs, their families, the problems they faced, and their politics.
- The study focused on people involved with a televangelist movement, namely that of Pat Robertson, but looked at all the sources of religious meaning in their lives—their church, their political involvements, their general reading, their social affiliations, their many religious activities—and how they used these sources of meaning.
- The data were whole life histories and how these life experiences led up to the present searches for meaning in life, especially the precipitating factor that led to a kind of conversion to a deeper, more intense search for meaning.
- A particular focus was on the sources of meaning for their involvement in politics and other aspects of public life.

The study revealed that following a particular televangelist was part of belonging to a particular religious subculture, in this case, a somewhat more fundamentalist and conservative religious, political, and social culture. There were many sources of information that helped those associated with the movement to define the meaning of their life situation: interpersonal contacts, discussion groups, books and newspapers, and—since television was so important a part of these somewhat elderly and more sedentary people—various television programs. All those interviewed felt that this movement had provided crucial help in defining how to make sense out of a central meaning problem in their lives: a death of a family member, a serious illness, loss of a job, family crisis, or any of the many problems that could affect a person in modernity. Even though many did not regularly watch his TV programs, Pat Robertson was so much a public symbol of all that they believed in that they were ready to contribute relatively large amounts of money to make his voice heard. The networks of those associated with this movement included virtually all religious denominations—Protestants of all backgrounds and all social classes, Catholics, and even some Jewish people—but the "meaning problems" were sufficiently similar that a*ll identified with what this media figure promoted and symbolized.* In the highly differentiated modern societies divided into single-value concerns and single-issue politics, people of different subcultures tend to identify with different public media figures. Moreover, those who identified with a particular media figure tend to be in contact with each other and to live in a particular value world.

Hoover's study showed that the way certain people come to be identified with certain media figures depends very much on the history of their social backgrounds and social networks. It also depends on life circumstances that present crises of meaning that make people move out of a particular routine and search for new meaning. Sometimes seemingly chance experiences lead people toward identification with a media figure, but almost always the social history of a person leads them toward certain types of media use. The social history also provides different resources of interpretative capacity, different "filters," and different interests. What became most apparent, however, is that religious media are important providers of symbols that people can use to build their own systems of meaning.

B. Formulating a Media, Religion and Culture research agenda

In the 1980s and 1990s religion, which many had considered a phenomenon disappearing in the face of modernity, suddenly was recognized as becoming a much more central actor in the political, economic, and socio-cultural affairs of the world. The world-wide Pentecostal, evangelical movement was one dimension of this; Pope John Paul II was another dimension; and still other dimensions were the Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu socio-political-cultural revitalizations, and the evident religiosity of the people of the new nations. The literally hundreds of new religious movements and "quasi-religions" came to be considered part of the "post-modern" culture. Many scholars began to speak of the "re-enchantment" of the world (Murdock, 1997).

The study of media also moved away from its administrative concerns to the recording of immensely varied ways of signifying to oneself and to others "who I think I am" (identity) or "what I would like to be," "with whom I and we want to be identified," and "what we think is important in life and in the world." Everything from billboards to T-shirts, to horror films, to home decorations, to the Internet—all are fitting identity signifying practices to be studied. They are religious because they were associated with what is called religious or because they deal with what the subjects involved consider to be matters of ultimate concern and what is considered to be "sacred." The preoccupation with signifying identity is due in part, on the one hand, with globalization and the confrontation of cultures and, on the other, the post-modern collapse of overarching cultural belief systems. The major institutions involved with providing signification materials are less and less the institutional churches and ever more the commercial marketing systems selling commodities that can be readily used to define and dramatize identities. The focus of study thus becomes the systems of persuasive selling that transforms everything potentially religious into commodities, from statues of Padre Pio to "I love Jesus" bracelets. The media—everything from the telephone to home video— have been a unifying focus in this because the media are what link us together.

The study of media, religion, and culture also began to move out of the institutional religious base into a more secular scholarly context as it became evident that religion is a central *cultural* institution that is dealing with the signifying practices that link together areas of meaning. The institutional churches have ceded ground to popular culture signifying practices as the places of unifying the meaning of life. Indeed, religion is now studied more in departments and centers of the study of popular culture, although many of the centers that are part of the media, religion, and culture network still have close links with institutional religion. This delinking of the study of religion from explicit connection with institutional religion makes it easier for the study of popular identity signifying practices to analyze critically the use of popular culture to establish cultural hegemony precisely through the commodification of objects of popular culture. In the view of some, the delinking of the study of religion from more explicit institutional definitions also helps to distance the study from more "essentialistic" conceptions of religion. Thus, the study of media, religion, and culture retains the central humanistic focus of the critical cultural studies tradition and the defense of the freedom, creativity, and sanctity of the person. The central question remains the same: what kind of culture are we creating in the context of mediated signifying practices and how do we evaluate this culture in terms of the meaning of human existence today?

The emphasis on studying religious media as part of a subculture, a life context, and a life history leads toward research on how different subcultures use media to build religious meaning: youth, women, the elderly, rural people, and a host of other groups. This introduces another important premise, namely, that every person and group has its own concept of what is religious, often quite different from the variety of institutional religious creeds, and may project a religious meaning on to media. The focus moves beyond the institutional representations of religion to more poetic representations of personal spirituality, a sense of unity with personal identity and inspirations of others. This attempts to understand the experience of transcendent community in film, music, and visual or plastic arts.

The study of media and religion as culture is also much more open to the processes of globalization and the "hybridized" reception of religious cultures as they travel around the globe (Asamoa-Gyadu, 2004). The ethnographic study of live rituals is able to catch the process of "hybridization" in the act of creation and to see the various roles and interaction of leading actors in the process of creating local cultures.

The study of religious conversion from a cultural perspective has moved away from a psychological reductionism and focuses more on the transformation of personal meaning systems and the integration of personal identities around central symbols. This has led away

from understanding of religious and moral development or religious conversion as simply the result of "external" factors such as life crisis, new material opportunities, or powerful persuasion and, instead, sees this as a personal search for the ever more profound integration of meaning in personal lives and in cultures (Ihejirika, 2004).

Also central to the study of media, religion, and culture is the tendency in religious broadcasting to transform religion into an ideology which sacralizes and naturalizes the relations of exploitative power. The televangelists and many other religious broadcasters present themselves as the true national culture, sometimes under the guise of a "persecuted minority," thus drawing audiences into accepting and submitting to cultural hegemonies (Bruce, 1990).

C. The formation of the Media, Religion, and Culture network

By the early 1990s there was gradually forming a network of individual researchers, research centers, and research programs that identified roughly with a cultural studies approach to the study of media and religion. There are now some five or six centers in various parts of the world which generally follow the cultural studies approach to the study of media and religion. Some of the major ones are The Center for Media, Religion, and Culture, University of Colorado; Centre for Communication, Theology, and Ethics, New College University of Edinburgh; Centre for Interdisciplinary Study of Communication, The Gregorian University; the program of media and religion at Annenberg Center at the University of Southern California; and the Centre for the Study of African Culture and Communication in Nigeria. The conceptualization of the contemporary relationship of media and religion of people in this network tends to follow the lines described above. The consensus that this focus represents an important area of research led to setting up a more formal structure of international conferences, publications, and research groups.

During the 1970s and 1980s there had been a series of studies of the televangelists, but most of these were quite descriptive. It was evident that there was no coherent theoretical interpretation of the general significance of media and religion, much less a theory of media, religion, and culture. The book, *Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture* edited by Stewart Hoover and Knut Lunby (1997) attempted to pull together the various strands of thought and outlined the major concepts, arguments and issues in this area of study. My own chapter, "Religion and Media in the Construction of Cultures" was an attempt to provide a systematic theoretical explanation of the interaction of media, religious institutions, and religious movements in the development of contemporary cultures (White, 1997, pp. 37-64). Two of the contributions of this book, that of the Latin American Martin-Barbero (1997) and that of Graham Murdock (1997), both frequently cited, argue that the religion in the media is a major aspect of the "re-enchantment" of the world that is widely observed. The book remains, in my estimation, the best collective representation of major scholars in this field and provides some of the strongest theoretical formulation regarding the interrelation of media, religion, and culture. Sadly, few refer to the book.

There is, in general, an unfortunate aversion among many of those doing research in this area to work within the framework of a general theory of media and religion. There is much more interest in focusing on specific areas of interaction of media, religion, and culture, with only limited or case-specific explanations offered.

The international conferences of the media, religion, and culture network have proven much more influential. The first International Conference on Media, Religion, and Culture was held in Uppsala in 1993, with subsequent international conferences in Boulder, Colorado in 1996; Edinburgh in 1999; Jyvaskyla, Finland in 2003; Louisville, Kentucky in 2004; and Stockholm in 2006. Several collections of papers have appeared: from the Boulder conference (Hoover & Clark, 2002) and from the Edinburgh conference (Mitchell & Marriage, 2003). The conferences stimulated the foundation of the *Journal of Media and Religion* in 2002, and a book series with Routledge Publishers, initiated in 2003.

4. Themes and theses of the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective

A. The interaction of producers and religious culture

Much media research tends to take media messages and even the producers behind the messages as abstractions from the culture, as if a message appears from nowhere. The Media, Religion, and Culture tradition has emphasized the importance of examining how the content of religious media or religious themes

emerge out of a socio-cultural context. For example, when Hoover (1988) studied the influence of the televangelist Pat Robertson, he analyzed how Robertson emerged from the resurgence of the evangelical movement along with other fundamentalist movements in the American cultural crisis of the 1960s and 1970s. Robertson and others responded to a new culture of religious seekers and the desire for religious experience. Their popularity, especially in the 1980s, owed much to the capacity of televangelists to understand what people of the 1980s culture sought. With their invitation of letters from the public and the careful analysis of the voluminous correspondence, the televangelists were much more in contact with the cultural pulse of the audience they catered to and knew how to build on the cultural preferences of this audience. The sensitivity to the cultural "feelings" of audiences and the ability to articulate the religious language of the audience explains why televangelists were able to get audiences to contribute relatively large amounts of money.

This awareness of the embeddedness of producers in the culture helped to explain why the media of the mainline churches, especially the Catholic Church, which were message-oriented (especially dogmatic, propositional messages) and insensitive to the culture, virtually collapsed in the 1970s (Medrano, 2004). Most of these productions were mandated by the hierarchy of the Church with relatively little audience support. Catholic productions placed little emphasis on letters from the audience, live presentations to audiences, or other forms of audience interaction that would generate audience support. An exception is Mother Angelica's Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), which built its relatively narrow but intensely devoted audience around its appeal to elements of Catholic popular culture such as religious habits, traditional ritual, Catholic iconography, and traditional hymns.

In a more recent study, Jolyon Mitchell's analysis of the emphasis in popular West Africa home video films on witchcraft, spirits (good and bad!), and exorcisms went beyond the content to include the intentions of producers (Mitchell, 2004). All producers are aware of the intense interest of their audiences in the war between the spiritual powers. Pentecostal groups produce many of the films, which feature the power of Pentecostal evangelists to control these evil spirits—in contrast to the weakness of the mainline Protestant Christian churches. One of the most popular and successful producers of these films in Ghana explained that he himself did not believe much in witchcraft or the battle of the spirits, but he knew that he had to include this emphasis because this element is so central to popular religiosity in West Africa.

B. Bringing theology back in

Much research on media and religion has tended to exclude theology as a valid object of study and has followed the positivist tendency toward behaviorist reduction. The Media, Religion, and Culture tradition sees the study of media and religion as an interdisciplinary exchange and insists on the inclusion of theological perspectives in its analysis. The perspectives both of popular theology—the way ordinary people *explain* their religious experiences and the *meaning* they place on these experiences—and of formal theology—the explanations in a more systematic fashion—are important. Both are signifying practices and one must be ready to accept the theological reasoning process in order to understand them. That is, in order to enter into the meaning of a particular religious production, one must know the theology of the producers, the theology implied in the content, and the theology of the audiences interpreting and producing their own meaning.

The theologian Roberto Goizueta (2004), argues that underlying Latino popular Catholicism is a theology of "symbolic realism." Latinos understand God as really present in the rituals, icons, processions, music, and dance of Latino religiosity and believe that these reveal the power and creative dynamism of God. As one participates with all of one's senses and corporeal reactions, one has a deep experience of an incarnate God. Medrano (2004), in his productions for the American Latino community, felt that the programs had to reproduce the people, stories, rituals, icons, music, and dance that constitute the religiosity of the Latino in order to evoke the same experience of symbolic realism embodied in this religiosity. Even more, he argues that, in order to truly communicate at the religious level, the producer must be part of a praying, believing community and communicate not a message but an experience of God. It is close to the experience of creators of icons who must first meditate on the subject to enter into the deep emotional full experience of the divinity in order to reproduce in form and color the experience of the divinity. Embedded in this experience is a theology, and to understand this signifying practice one must bring in the theology whole and intact.

A central premise in this approach to theology is that the lived religious faith experience of a community, the world this community attempts to bring into existence, is the most important text of reference for theolo-

gians. In today's world of large national and global communities, the interconnectedness of community occurs largely through media. Here, the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective understands media not simply as transmitters of information, but as a selective construction of the meaning of the world we live in, a selectiveness that exists by discovering the interests and desires of the audience. The religious communities of today design their construction of the future largely in terms of the materials provided by the media.

C. Narrative fiction as a space for creating culture

Like cultural studies, the Media, Religion, and Culture tradition takes media as a text revealing the culture. For example, German Rey (2004) shows how the Latin American *telenovela* provides a good indicator of Latin American religiosity in general, and the different religiosities in Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, or Argentina, in particular. The telenovela portrays the sharp moral contrasts of good and evil, the fascination with expiatory suffering, but above all the providentialism of Latin American cultures. The telenovela shows that virtuous goodness always triumphs; separated families are always brought together; and honest, faithful effort brings results. If one compares this with Latin American reality, it is clear that a telenovela is more of a theological statement rather than a mirror of reality where brutally unjust people usually gain triumphant power.

Indeed, the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective is interested in narrative fiction or other forms of media as more than mirrors of reality, but as arenas of social discussion—what Martin-Barbero (1993) has called mediations. The meaning creating resides not in the media themselves but in the discussions about the issues that are portrayed. This may be at a more local level where housewives from the neighborhood sit together to watch a *telenovela* and comment together about how the protagonist handles her husband—and how they should be more independent in confronting their husbands. Or the discussion may involve a whole nation. In Chile the dominant entertainment is telenovelas that often have as many as 200 to 250 episodes and deal with major cultural, moral issues. For example, a recent telenovela, *Macho*, portrayed how a family with seven sons confronted the problem that one of the sons declared himself a homosexual. Never before had the issue of homosexuality been treated so openly—and a national discussion ensued.

The Media, Religion, and Culture perspective finds of particular interest how audiences use the media to draw out a narrative sequence to write the scripts of their own life stories. Often this deals with issues of ultimate, overarching meaning. In Latin America, for example, where the narrative fiction *telenovela* is a favorite with young people, many have noted that youth frequently find in the media a language to describe their "religious" experiences. Frequently, there is an ongoing dialogue between the television narrative and the personal life narrative (Yevenes, 2007). One young girl in her late teens, attempting to deal with the grief she felt at the death of her grandmother, drew strength and inspiration from how the protagonist of a telenovela dealt with a death in her life. The example of the telenovela also helped the young girl to understand better the theology of death drawn from her institutional religious affiliation.

D. Religion and material culture

The movement away from religion as institution and as dogmatic and moral propositions to religion as culture has brought much more attention to aspects of religion which are important in the everyday lives of the people. One of these is material culture—objects of everyday use that are used in religious signifying practices, from T-shirts with religious emblems to bracelets to crosses. Simple religious icons have always been important in religion, but today personal identity is established largely by mass-produced consumer items. We take on identity from what we consume; we buy and consume in order to communicate our social identity and aspirations to ourselves. Today, both social status in the power–stratification system and social identity are communicated largely through consumer items. Marketing specialists constantly search out new uses for items people have begun to use to communicate to others who they want to become and to be recognized as. Mass advertising has played a very important role in this and the mass media also have emphasized consumer roles.

The study of the subjective interpretation of popular culture has led to a deeper understanding of how popular religious art, so often relegated to a marginal role by theologically dominated institutional religion, can become the focus of stability for the emotional life throughout the life course (Morgan, 1999). The visual symbol often functions as a point of integration of meaning in life, and a popular devotional icon becomes the organizing principle of personal identity. In this, the study of religions, previously limited to the analysis of

print media and print-based messages, becomes more open to the role of the visual.

E. The role of popular culture in religious education

The Media, Religion, and Culture focus has privileged popular culture, a culture very largely constructed in the media experience, as a source of religious meaning for a series of reasons. Fundamentally, it sees religion as the construction of limit experience or ultimate, overarching meaning; this is a construction of meaning that is continually shifting. The greatest problem for any religion is that its interpretation of the meaning of reality does not relate to the contemporary problem of the meaning of life. For this reason, all religions display a series of continuous new religious revitalization movements, new saints, new prophets, and the continuous generation of sacred founder texts. Popular culture is created largely by contemporary "entertainers," those who, in the words of Horace Newcomb and Robert Alley, can take us out of the present world and hold us between a world of the past and a world that could come into existence (1983, pp. 23-25). These entertainers live by being able to articulate the way the world makes sense right at this moment. As John Shea once argued, the popular artists are the first to sense the new, emerging religious meaning, even if it is too new to be given sanction by religious institutions as truly "religious" (1981, p. 45). Entertainers also appeal to the authenticity of audiences with texts that lie closer to the way people feel at a particular time, and they also strongly invite the audience to listen to their own construction of meaning for that text. This experience of being entertained includes the discovery of more of one's own personal existence.

Religious educators, then, take responsibility for what might seem an impossible task, helping a new generation to assume the responsibility for the tradition of values of a religious community. Mary Hess, in her reflections on the task of religious education (2004, 2005), feels that religious education should be a process of dialogue in which the educator representing perhaps more centrally the tradition of the community listens to the way a young generation is constructing a contemporary meaning of the sacred text and lived tradition of the community by their authenticity. From this dialogue, which is both confrontational and discerning, emerge broader symbols with which all involved in the deliberation can identify. The discernment sets up a mutual critique of the tradition and the emerging culture. The partners in this dialogue feel that these symbols evoke what is most authentic about their honest desire to give witness in the culture to the values of the tradition in the language of contemporary popular culture.

F. The role of culture in the formation of religious institutions

Many analyses of the formation of contemporary religious institutions such as the Pentecostal movements have tended to explain the theologies, language, and practices of these movements in terms of "strange theologies," ideologies, or simply personal greed. Although personal beliefs and personal motivations certainly operate in the actions of the founders of Pentecostal or other religious movements, local cultures, and especially local religious cultures, are important factors.

For example, the Pentecostal movements sweeping Africa and parts of Latin America owe much of their power to attract adherents to the cultural institutions already strong among young Africans. Many of the founders and leaders are well educated and some are former university professors with doctorates in business, management, or engineering (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2004, p. 65). African religion has a strong orientation toward getting practical outcomes. Pentecostal leaders see their well-organized churches as bringing some rationality and principles of good management into the chaos and corruption of African societies. Pentecostal churches in Africa offer services of employment, special education, and contact with the most influential people in the industrial world. They appeal to the desire for modernity of many young Africans by borrowing many of the techniques of mass media hype from the American Pentecostals and ultimately from the American advertising and public relations experts. At the same time, they call on the Pentecostal theology of powerful evil spirits to respond to the belief in witchcraft and pervasiveness of evil spirits common in African cultures. Pentecostal pastors present their superior power over evil spirits as an example of their general superiority. The literal appeal to the biblical text convinces young Africans that this religion has clearly indicated foundations in tangible evidence. They appeal to upwardly mobile young Africans, especially young men, with their messages of capacity building, empowerment, and realization of potential (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2004).

To many, all this provides evidence of insincerity, greed, and an offer of false prosperity, but this conclusion provides no real explanation of the powerful attraction of these new religions. The young Africans drawn to these churches and movements experience a liberation and strengthening of their desires for modernity. Increasingly, many of the leaders in business and the professions find in these churches the integration of their personalities around their religious values.

G. Religious seeking and the new Internet media

Many in the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective subscribe to the thesis of major sociologists of religion such as Wade Clark Roof (1999) that many people now tend to pull loose from institutional religious systems and respond more to their own personal project of identity and self construction. There is less a conscious process of identity building and more one of simply responding to what an individual enjoys, doing what makes him/her feel good, or what makes sense in one's own personal life. Religious seeking is rooted in a person's internal emotional structure. Religious seeking may always have emerged from internal motivational dynamic, but today people around the world experience more socio-economic and political freedom in their own life context and less institutional constraint. There is a much wider range of educational and occupational opportunity. If marriage does not bring internal emotional satisfaction, people tend to move into other relationships.

The research of Roof (1999), Wuthnow (1992) and many other sociologists of religion confirms the broader theory of sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991) that late-modern consciousness now finds itself in a more or less constant quest to construct an ideal "self." Religion and much seeking of meaning that is quasi-religious is a project of self construction. The Media, Religion, and Culture research methodology has sought to trace this self-building, seeking accounts of stages of life-course development, focusing on the moments of much more intense seeking of meaning and the factors that are involved in this.

Internet use is a particularly interesting case because it leaves the subject a great deal of freedom to respond to one's own internal motivations. The now voluminous research on religious use of the Internet has now categorized many different types of persons and uses. (See, for example, Hoover & Park, 2004, who refer to three of these studies: Brasher, 2001; Zaleski, 1997; and Hadden & Cowan, 2000. To this may be

added Bazin & Cottin, 2004; Bunt, 2000; Babin & Zukowski, 2002. For a fuller review, see Campbell, writing in *Communication Research Trends*, Vol. 25, no. 1, 2006.)

Hoover and Park (2004) refer to Christopher Helland's (2000) discussion of two major types of religious presence in the Internet: "religion online" where institutional churches provide information services of publicity, education, and outreach to their committed members and "online religion," which is open to the subjective construction of religion of seekers. Whereas religion online is self-consciously controlled by the church authorities, online religion responds to the nature of the medium, unstructured, open, and non-hierarchical. Online religion is open to whatever definition of religion that the users wish to give it. Usually, online religion is much closer to what is now referred to as "quasi-religion." As Hoover and Park note,:

> Many of the web sites representative of *religion online* assume that seeking takes place. They provide resources, handles, information, links, and so on designed to attract the seeker and bring him/her in. More interesting, though, is the relationship between seeking and *online religion.* The elasticity and subjectivity of the "selves" that presumably "seek" online enable them to integrate their quests into the kinds of settings and locations on the web. . . . As autonomous seekers move into the online environment, their practices need not bear any necessary relationship to established or ascribed categories of religion. (2004, pp. 124-125)

What Hoover and Park found is that those who have a religious seeker personality or were in a phase of life when religious meaning systems were shaken tended to use the Internet for a religious quest much more. Individuals who were satisfied with their present experience in an institutional religious community were much less likely to use the Internet to construct a religious self. This confirms earlier research on religious life histories that the use of religious media is much greater in times of less religious certainty.

H. Family processes of constructing meaning in a media-saturated family context

Most studies of construction of meaning in the media experience are based on an individual telling the story of how he or she individually constructs life meaning. Other studies report that indi-

vidual young people construct meaning through interaction with their peers. The Centre for the Study of Media and Religion at the University of Colorado, working with the team of the "Symbolism, Media, and Lifecourse" project, took on a far more complex research task: how families—parents interacting with each other and with their children of various ages—construct meaning of media (Hoover, Clark, & Alters, 2004).

The statement of the objectives of the project is worth quoting in full because it sums up well much of the general methodology of the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective:

> In our research, we were interested not only in describing the stories of families as they negotiated media practices in their homes, but also in analyzing these stories in relation to what we have come to believe are the larger structures of late capitalist social organization. Thus, we sought to generate a "map" of sorts; a map of how parents and children negotiate media rules, to be sure, but also one that took account of the reflexive parenting that we came to see as emblematic of parental identity and practice at this point of U.S. history. Our aim was similar to that outlined by media researcher Timothy Gibson (1999): to develop "an adequate notion of the totality of a particular society and a detailed understanding of how that totality patterns, constrains, and becomes reproduced within the realms of everyday life." (Hoover, Clark, & Alters, 2004, p. 21)

In other words, to understand meaning making practices, research must "simultaneously" take into consideration both "micro" and "macro" aspects of cultural construction.

What emerged in this research involving some five or six associates and graduate students at the University of Colorado was the realization that a very complex set of factors influenced media practices among families of the United States in the last 10 years. The research attempted to take into consideration the extremely diverse understanding of what is a family or household in the U.S. at present: not just traditional nuclear families, but various forms of single parent and companionship families and many types of dysfunctional families with, for example, an alcoholic husband-father. Most of the families approached, in some form, the classical modern nuclear family and virtually all were attempting to assume some set of norms of good parenting. Thus, family values and some ideal of the kind of values adults desired for their children entered into the picture. Good parenting included guiding the media use of the family. Regarding media use, one of the central findings is that most families apply what Carey (1989) called "public scripts" about media and values in America or what Ellen Seiter (1995, 1999) has termed "lay theories of the media." The common public script or lay theory is that the "sex and violence" of the media are harmful to all in the family, especially to children. This may prompt the question: Why does a nation tolerate a media system that virtually all agree is harmful to its people? Here enters another set of factors: the sacredness of freedom of expression, the assumption that "the buyer must beware," and the view that the entrepreneurial drive for profits in the capitalist system is necessary for the political-economic well-being of the nation.

Another set of factors are the parents' religious world views, which often dictate a more or less strict view of parental guidance. The script which parents used was often their memory of how their family of origin had experienced the media and the view that the media had become less favorable to parenting. In the background, too, lies the assumption that every person is entitled to his or her sense of self- realization. Children were often aware that they were entering a very different technological and political-economic world than their parents had known and that they had to chart their own script for use of media. Most parents experience the tension of trying to protect their children and, at the same time, allow the children to respond to their own sense of self and personal identity. Finally, it was apparent that the media practices varied considerably according to the socio-economic status and disposable income of the families (Alters & Clark, 2004, p. 178).

Given the complexity of the factors influencing family media practices, it is not surprising that no unifying theoretical perspective emerged in the research (Clark & Alters, 2004). It is evident that neither sociological theory—in its general theory and variants of family theory—nor media theory seem capable at the present date of providing the materials for formulating this general theory. Much intellectual work remains to be done.

5. The International Study Commission

In 1996 the Porticus Foundation initiated the International Study Commission on Media, Religion, and Culture made up of 15 scholars and media producers to carry out a more focused study of the emerging shape of religion in the media-dominated age and how the institutions of religion should respond to these challenges. The commission has met with local religious leaders and scholars in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Australia to interchange perspectives on media and religion in those parts of the world.

In 1999, to encourage more research and scholarship on media and religion in countries of the South, the commission began a program of scholarships for Catholic doctoral candidates from Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. The scholarships are granted by the Porticus Foundation under the title "International Catholic Fellowships for Research in Media, Religion, and Culture." The program does not simply pay tuition but attempts to bring together the approximately 30 fellows in roughly yearly meetings to discuss their research among themselves and with senior scholars in the field.

The commission has also been interested in reaching church leadership and leadership in seminary formation. For this audience Peter Horsfield has prepared *The Mediated Spirit*, a CD that traces the role of media in the development of Christianity (see http://www.mediatedspirit.com). The CD-ROM has proven to be a very useful resource for researchers, teachers, and youth leaders, or those simply interested in understanding the nature and reasons for the changes in religious faith and practices taking place today. Horsfield has also assembled a comprehensive bibliography of publications of the members of the commission which, when complete, will appear on the commission website (http://www.iscmrc.org).

Over the 10 years of its existence the study commission has attempted to explore the following questions:
- In what ways can we say that the media have come to occupy the spaces traditionally occupied by religion?
- What is the relationship of religious authority to modes of symbolic practice?
- How must we re-think the relationship between religion and media?

- What does this new situation imply about epistemology?

In the background of these questions lies the emergence of global cultural and religious contact, the disappearing vestiges of collective nationalistic-ethnic definition of religious identity (the tradition of *cujus regio, ejus religio),* the personalization of religious choice, and the recasting of social relationships and information-seeking in the moulds of communication technologies.

The book, *Belief in Media* (2004) summarizes, in some ways, the thinking of the commission about these questions, and my own chapter in the book, "Major Issues in the Study of Media, Religion, and Culture" (White, 2004), attempted to summarize the thinking of the nearly 10 years of discussions and research of the commission. Perhaps a good way to close this review and to bring together more briefly the current thinking of the Media, Religion, and Culture approach is to sum up the evidence about the interaction of media and religion emerging from the numerous studies of people using the more open-ended ethnographic interviews of the cultural studies methods. The situation in which people are increasingly cut loose from the institutional religious framework that structured the parameters of their cultural beliefs and values provides the backdrop. At one time an institutional religious framework structured the way people perceived their world, their standard questions about this world, and the standard answers to these questions. These religious institutions were often closely associated with national and ethnic geographical territories. As people have moved out of these structured social contexts through globalization and physical and intellectual migration, they have had to piece together their own coherent world views, their own definitions of the key questions, and their own answers.

Virtually all of the hundreds of interviews that one might consult in this research tradition over the last 20 years reveal people searching for answers to questions and solutions to the everyday problems of family unity, health, financial security, realizing lifelong dreams of personal aspirations, crises of personal friendship and affection, and a host of other problems.

Virtually all the respondents have carried some degree of answers and coping mechanisms *in their own personalities* and either knew how or did not know how to relate their personal identities to the immensely varied situations that the extremely differentiated role situations of late modernity present. How well people responded to situations or found answers depended very much on how well their personalities were organized around central symbols that carried answers or coping mechanisms with them. For example, a young man whose personal identity came to be organized around the ideal of the successful businessman with the belief systems and values—including religious values—that this implies might move through life coping well with all the problems that life might present, including severe difficulties and reversals. Virtually all people had (or were constructing) some form of coherent world view or framework of ultimate explanation (Wuthnow, 1992).

Culture is understood most commonly in terms of Ann Swidler's (1986) concept of culture as a "tool kit," a pool of explanatory resource symbols that one might draw upon to make sense out of puzzling situations. The religious in these studies is defined in terms of what a given subculture considers religious, but this is most often experienced as what lies at the very edge of structures of rational explanation; what underlies and is present in all explanations is the transcendent (Ammerman, 2004). For example, for people whose lives mostly center on the experience of nature away from the congestion of cities, the transcendent sacred is the dynamic force of nature which is beyond explanation because it simply exists and at the same time underlies all of the power and beauty of nature. One of the best explanations of this basic theory of the Media, Religion, and Culture approach is found in the introduction to Lynn Schofield Clark's (2003) book reporting her research on the role of media in the religiosity of teenagers in the U.S.

When people meet situations of uncertainty, lacking in some degree a coping mechanism in their personality organization, and begin to search for information, the most important sources are interpersonal contacts, and these contacts often lead into movements of cultural revitalization that provide a patterned explanation of life problems and patterned coping mechanisms. These movements of cultural revitalization carry with them a series of media sources that provide a continual flow of information on how to cope with life's problems. Followers of the movement generally and consistently use the media associated with the movement because they know that they will provide solutions to questions and lead ever more deeply into the wisdom of the movement. Often, at the center of these movements of cultural revitalization stand prophetic founding figures whose messages seem to contain the answer to all the problems. In the recorded interview data, one finds members of the movements continually remarking that the prophetic figure seems to have all the answers, always makes sense to people, is a clear communicator, and is always accessible. (This summary draws on the interviews of Hoover in his study of the followers of televangelist Pat Robertson, 1988; the interviews of Clark with young people in the Denver area of the U.S., 2003; and the more recent and valuable unpublished field notes of Walter Ihejirika, studying converts to Pentecostalism in Nigeria; Columbanus Udofia studying youth and contemporary Christian music in Nigeria; and Ray Debono-Roberts studying the life histories of members of the charismatic movement, the "Thy Kingdom Come Community" in Malta.)

Do the media occupy the spaces traditionally occupied by institutional religion? The closest answer is that the institutional churches were once based on a population much more homogeneous in terms of cultural background while today's societies are a mosaic of movements, leisure networks, associations, and communities of interests. Each has its own world of media use and information sources. Each movement may have its own version of the broad umbrella institutional belief system of religion and politics. But the broader belief system of a church, a nation, or a continental society such as Europe is mediated through an immense variety of subcultures, each with its particularly strong religious symbols. For people attracted by the values of the ecological movement, for example, the relation with nature can become the major religious experience and their major form of responding to life's problems. Their media use will also center very much around ecology issues. People vary in their closeness to the centers of the subcultural networks; they may be moving in and out of various cultural networks, but their religious symbols will be found in what these subcultural networks consider to be religious. If the symbols somehow relate to the institutional church umbrella and if the major symbolic figures of the umbrella church are sympathetic to the values of their subculture, then they may draw on these symbolic resources.

Regarding the relationship of religious authority to modes of symbolic practice, it is unlikely that the relationship is one of strict legal or doctrinal imposition. Everybody seems to pick and choose from available ethical models what their experience tells them is a good way to act. Most tend to model their lives after persons known in interpersonal networks, but they would probably not identify them as "religious authorities." Some may take as their religious authority the leader of their institutional identification, but most would select a person they know through the media whose life, writing, and teaching models for what they think is a good way to act. The media tend to give prominence to institutional leadership such as a pope (Gans, 2004), and people tend to identify with the institutional leadership presented by the media to the extent that the media figure symbolizes what they feel is the good life. Cultural revitalization movements engage followers at the point of "meaning gaps" in their lives and help to solve these meaning gaps by bringing followers to identify with central leadership symbols who "make sense," that is, they present a coherent pattern of meaning, making everything in their life "fit together." Virtually all central leaders in revitalization movements become mediated symbols, starting their own TV or radio programs, writing their own books, or putting out their magazines. Sometimes the followers push the leaders into the media. Often media organizations seek out the leaders and offer them contracts. At times the leaders sense that they must become mediated for the sake of what they are trying to do. The media projection of leadership symbols gives them authority in "making sense" and the fact that many in the movement follow them gives them authority (Hoover, 1988; Ihejirika, 2004). Berger pointed out in his sociology of religion (1969) that the public evidence of large numbers of followers, what he calls "massification," is an important source of the authority of the belief system. It is well known that the media give prominence in their reporting on the public appearances of leaders of institutions and movements such as a papal visit as a gauge of the authority of that leader as moral leader. Margaret Melady (1999), in her study of the papal visits to the United States in 1987, reports that those planning the papal visit made sure that the Pope would make public appearances in those cities where there was assurance that a large public turnout of a particular kind of crowd, in this case Hispanics, could be mobilized. The supporters of canonizations of individuals whose symbolic power is being carefully created will make every effort to have a "record" crowd present overflowing out of St. Peter's square, and these supporters will make sure that the size and fervor of the crowd is vividly portrayed in the mass media. The media prefer gigantic crowds because this also reinforces the importance of the media themselves; that is, the size of the crowd justifies both the media presence at the event and the fact that the media are where the great majority of the people are—where history is being made. This implies the belief that the media themselves make history and that history cannot be made without the presence of the media. Moreover, the fact that the media are present strengthens people's identification with a symbol that the people feel sums up their belief system. The visual presentation of the media event draws out many iconic identifications that reinforce the strength of identification (Morgan, 1999).

Most great religious leaders who have made their way to the top intuitively understand all this; their communicative charisma is often one of the criteria of their selection by followers who want to promote the institution. Great public religious figures, such as John Paul II, often have acting experience, that is, the experience of directly moving crowd response, and they—and their carefully chosen public relations managers—know how to mobilize public identification. In the election of the present Pope, Cardinal Ratzinger quickly outdistanced all other candidates because, in his celebration of the funeral of John Paul II, he showed that he had carefully learned the power of Vatican pageantry in developing symbolism in the public sphere.

Of course, all those who do not identify (in their personal experience) with the hegemonic public symbols, are part of what Kathleen Jamieson calls the "spiral of cynicism" (Jamieson & Cappella, 1997). They wait for their opportunity to mount a counter public symbolism and the clash of public symbolisms becomes the culture wars of today. The media almost certainly have intensified cultural conflict in the world today because the media work so much with stereotypes and play on emotional prejudice. The media take the processes of social interaction out of the direct interpersonal context—where most conflicts can be resolved, or at least negotiated—and live off the drama of cultural conflict. The beginning of the resolution of culture wars lies in favorable interpersonal contact that generates symbols, but these unifying symbols must

then be carried to the level of the public sphere which usually means the media sphere (Browning, 2000).

The third question which the International Commission for the Study of Media, Religion, and Culture has posed is the need to rethink the dichotomies enveloping media and religion, the dichotomies of sacred and profane, good and bad media, media as either instrumental manipulation or idyllic communalistic participation. A list of these common and trite "culture wars"appears in my already cited chapter (White, 2004, p. 209). One of the most obvious ways that the Media, Religion, and Culture research breaks down the dichotomies occurs in the study of the reception of the religious programs, which shows a valid construction of religious meaning at times quite different from the official, institutional meaning of images. Implied in this is a distrust in classical "essentialistic" conceptions of religion and openness to ideas of what is religious emerging out of popular religious experience (White, 2004, pp. 202-204). Another departure from the dichotomies is the Media, Religion, and Culture interest in popular culture expressed in the continually and rapidly changing tastes in popular media. Mitchell's study of horror films in Ghana shows that what seem garish and bizarre portrayals (to Western canons of film) are in fact serious religious reflections on the moral dilemmas of everyday life in Ghana, what one Ghanaian producer calls "moral parables" (2004, p. 116). The Media, Religion, and Culture program of international, comparative research in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has helped to free the conceptions of media and religion from the fixed Western categories.

The fourth question raised by the commission deals with the epistemological practices implied in studies of media and religion. Has the Media, Religion, and Culture research helped to bring the way we think about media and religion closer to the experienced realities? Perhaps the most significant thing about Media, Religion, and Culture research is that it uses an ethnographic methodology that takes us into the everyday life of various subcultures and allows us to see the world through the eyes of the inhabitants of those worlds and how those inhabitants use the media to see that world. One of the best examples is Clark's five year study of youth and the media in the U.S. (2003). Another example is Ihejirika's study of the conversion experiences of Nigerian Pentecostals: their perception of a world inhabited by good and evil spirits and how they see Pentecostalism giving them greater control over this world (Ihejirika, 2004). Clark's essay (2002) on the move from an epistemology of institutional power over media and culture to an epistemology of increasing autonomy and reflexive awareness questioning our creating of culture in the media while we create it provides one example of an attempt to theorize this new epistemology. Another example is Jan Fernback's exploration of the epistemology of the ritualization of the experience of computer-mediated community (2002).

6. Is the research of the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective addressing the real issues?

I would argue that the expansion of the research on media and religion that has occurred in the last 25 years has brought us closer to answering the kind of questions that were posed by religious leaders in the study carried out by Parker, Barry, and Smythe nearly 60 years ago. True, the way we ask the questions has changed considerably. We now have not only a very clear idea of what groups listen to religious broadcasts and how the use of religious broadcasts contributes to patterns of religious development and spiritual growth, but also a precise sense of how religious broadcasts are likely to fit in a complex mix of many other communication sources. We can explain these much more complex processes because of more ethnographic studies of media use within the life context and life histories of people in very different social and cultural contexts.

The typical religious broadcaster or local parish priest may want to know how to help people grow spiritually. If spiritual growth is a transformation of a person's consciousness, then we can know such consciousness only as a particular kind of personal or group (family) signifying practice—a cultural meaning-creating process. This approach characterizes the Media, Religion, and Culture research.

But one can still question whether the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective or any approach to research on media and religion is really dealing with the major problems with religious media.

To what extent are religious media dealing with the enormous social injustices that exist in the United States and in most other advanced industrial countries? It is widely recognized that these disparities in opportunity for education or adequate health services are increasing. Religious media often pretend to be the conscience of the nations, but rarely do these media take up the real issues of poverty, the growing underclass, and the suffering of children in these contexts of social injustice. The Media, Religion, and Culture perspective argues that it has adopted a cultural studies approach, but the tradition of critical theory, which is supposed to be part of the cultural studies tradition, is rarely found in the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective.

One might ask whether the Media, Religion, and Culture approach has taken up issues of social exclusion in religious media: the exclusion of women or of racial and ethnic groups in most developed countries. Has the Media, Religion, and Culture research taken up the exploitative relations of the countries of the North or the injustices supported by the social elites in devel-oping countries? Has research dealt with the issues of conflict, war, and migration? All too often religious media ignore war.

In the face of widespread belief that public participation in governance has declined and that the media are part of a decline in the demands of accountability for governing elites, research has failed to examine the role of religious media.

All this remains a research agenda that the Media, Religion, and Culture perspective might well take up.

An earlier version of this essay appeared under the title "The 'Media, religion and culture' perspective: Discovering a theory and methodology for studying media and religion" in J. Srampickal, G. Mazza, & L. Baugh (Eds.), *Cross Connections: Interdisciplinary Communications Studies at the Gregorian University (Saggi celebrativi per il XXV anniversario del CICS)* (pp. 313-342). Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana. —Ed.

Editor's Afterword

Religion and the means by which we communicate are cultural institutions and they interact closely with other cultural phenomena. They can be studied like other institutions, but religious believers often are reluctant to subject their own religious beliefs to the same objective treatment as they do other cultural phenomena. The beliefs held sacred by others might easily be treated the same as non-religious beliefs or myths, but our own beliefs flash warning signals if we approach them as objectively as we might the beliefs of others. The signals become more strident in proportion to the degree of sacredness with which the beliefs are held. This can result in reticence on the part of a social scientist with strong religious beliefs who tries to study his or her own beliefs as objectively as those of others, or as objectively as an "outsider" might do.

The early encounter between religion and the social sciences was affected by the positivistic assumptions of some social scientists. Religious people who wished to use social science approaches to study their religions often found secular social scientists to be unwelcoming because of their own positivistic and materialistic prejudices. The unwritten assumption seemed to be, "If you can't count it, it's not worth studying." As was noted above, religion sometimes was written off as "just a form of mild neurosis," thereby weakening any claim it might have for serious study. "Cultural studies," relying on a wider range of evidence, proved to offer a more favorable environment for the study of religion than some other research approaches, in spite of seeming to lean somewhat towards Marxist-style analysis.

Fortunately social scientists in more recent years have broadened their outlooks and have become more receptive to both qualitative research methodologies and to the study of religion. Unfortunately, though, much of the growing interest in religion has coincided with a growth of social and political problems around the world which have roots in religious differences. The war in Iraq is a case in point. Failure to take account of the complexity of religious factors in that country has been a major contributor to the escalating chaos there during the last few years. The political role religion can assume even in the modern world has become painfully evident there and in many other trouble spots. Conflicts, even those that appear purely political, often cannot be resolved without a deep

understanding of the religious factors that influence the various parties involved.

The most influential contemporary religious movements owe less to modern communication media as such than they do to combinations of more traditional forms of communication with mass media and/or the Internet. Outstandingly successful in this respect is the Islamic fundamentalist movement. Ideologically averse to cinema and other forms of pictorial imagery, Islamic fundamentalism has spread its message largely by word of mouth and print media. However, its promoters have been alert to newly-appearing possibilities. For example, satellite broadcasting facilities set up in the Middle East seem to have been used to reinforce the influence the fundamentalists had long been fostering through more mundane means, such as direct interpersonal contacts, during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and in religious schools throughout the Muslim world.

Another example of the use of combinations of media is the Protestant fundamentalist movement in the United States that has promoted support for Israel through a series of novels on the "end times" allegedly as predicted by the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Tens of thousands of copies of the several novels in this series, supplemented by films and television programs, have stimulated support for Israel and spread anti-Islamic sentiment among many millions of readers in the United States. This "Christian Zionism" appears to have subtly influenced individuals at the highest levels of the American government for some years up to the invasion of Iraq in early 2003. As recently as 2006 the White House convened off-the-record meetings with leaders of Christians United for Israel (CUFI), a group that supports "Israel's expansionist policies" as "a biblical imperative" (according to *The Nation*, August 8, 2006, (web only).

This complex political case provides a good example of a situation that commingles religious influences with mass media and many other cultural influences. Study of cases of this kind require attention to a large number of factors that demand a holistic research methodology that can ensure that as many of those factors as possible are given an opportunity to be recognized and their influences given their due weight.

—W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.
General Editor

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Additional Online Sources

Center for Religion and Media www.nyu.edu/fas/center/religionandmedia

Journal of Religion and Popular Culture: http://www.usask.ca/relst/jrpc/

UK Research Network for Theology, Religion, and Popular Culture http://www.trpc.org.uk/

UK Conference on Media, Religion, and Culture (April 2007). Information: http://www.theology.bham.ac.uk/gordonlynch/

University of Amsterdam, Modern mass media, religion, and imagination of communities http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/media-religion/

University of Colorado Center of Media, Religion, and Culture http://www.colorado.edu/journalism/mcm/mrc/

Book Reviews

Berg, Bruce L. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, Sixth Edition*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2007. Pp. 384. ISBN-10: 0-20548-263-5 (pb.) $69.20.

Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, Sixth Edition takes a symbolic interactionist perspective on methodology, providing an overview of the field and instructions on how to carry out basic qualitative design, data collection, analysis, and reporting of findings. Berg's text successfully balances coverage of important issues with accessible explanations and instructions.

In the first three chapters, Berg introduces the field of qualitative research and covers basic research design issues, including ethical considerations and standards. Chapters 4 and 5 cover the process of conducting interviews and focus groups. Chapter 6 introduces ethnography and fieldwork, and Chapter 7 provides an introduction to action research. Chapters 8 and 9 discuss archival and historical research processes. The case study approach is explored in Chapter 10. Chapter 11 explains content analysis procedures, and the final chapter discusses how to structure and write research papers. Each of the chapters is well organized and systematic in its explanation of concepts and practices.

Strengths of the book include good coverage of technological aids to research and use of the Internet in research, which are increasingly important components of qualitative research processes. I also applaud his inclusion of a chapter devoted to action research strategies, including coverage of the fascinating and empowering "photovoice" technique—in which researchers ask participants to take photos of aspects of their life experiences—and the depth of discussion of focus groups, an increasingly popular research strategy. Moreover, I appreciated Berg's presentation of researcher ethics as a vital topic requiring serious consideration, rather than presenting it as mere formality, hindrance to obtaining good data, or afterthought. I commend Berg's careful attention to influences of feminism on how qualitative methods are currently understood and practiced. Pedagogy is also practical and helpful: Each chapter has a "Trying It Out" section with exercises for students to practice their skills, and references are provided at the end of each chapter for further reading. The book clearly defines terminology and provides practical instructions and suggestions on how to collect and analyze data.

The current edition expands the coverage of the previous one on topics relating to more interpretive and less positivist approaches to qualitative research. However, if one thinks of qualitative methodology as existing along a continuum with post-positivist, systematic research on the right end and interpretive, artistic, openly ideological research on the other, Berg would be located somewhat right of center. Berg considers himself "something of a traditionalist" and his choices seem to be designed to appeal to others who approach methods in a similar vein. For example, Berg explains that the use of first person voice in writing is a fairly recent and significant choice for him in terms of reflexivity, an issue that many qualitative researchers would consider obvious or passé, and he refers to "subjects" in his discussion of writing research reports, rather than using terms such as "informants" or "participants" that imply a more egalitarian relationship between researcher and those researched. Although he briefly mentions interactive interviewing and feminist goals of interview-

ing, there is little coverage of newer forms of narrative and creative writing strategies (e.g., poetry, performance art) that are increasingly prevalent in qualitative research. Of course, the significance of these omissions depends upon the instructor's goals for the course; while I consider these topics vital, more traditional qualitative researchers may not. The book provides an excellent foundation that could easily be supplemented with an essay on and exemplars of creative writing forms.

I recommend Berg's book as a textbook for advanced undergraduate or graduate courses in qualitative methods or to be used in conjunction with a statistical methods book in a course designed to cover the spectrum of methodological approaches. The book would be useful in a range of social scientific disciplines including communication studies, sociology, and anthropology, as well as education and allied health fields such as nursing.

The book includes both a subject and name index.

—Laura L. Ellingson
Santa Clara University

Browne, Donald R. *Ethnic Minorities, Electronic Media, and the Public Sphere: A Comparative Approach*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2005. Pp. vii, 255. ISBN 1-57273-604-6 (hbk.) $59.50; 1-57273-605-4 (pb.) $23.95.

Browne has examined documentary evidence, made on-site observations, and conducted expert interviews with people involved in the production, regulation, and reception of electronic ethnic media. For the aim of comparative research on his subject he visited nearly 20 different countries on five continents.

With his research he tries to find out how ethnic electronic media contribute to the public sphere, what kind of policy is made for or against such media development in different nations, and what sort of audience they reach, especially with respect to regional and local ethnic communities. In addition to that he is interested in the people who participate in the production of ethnic media content in terms of being part of the public sphere.

The book consists of six chapters. The first chapter deals with the organization of the research report, the scholarly traditions in ethnic media research, and theoretical and historical considerations of the subject. Chapter 2 focuses on ethnic minority media, their form of distribution, and their geographical scope. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are the main and most important parts of the

report. An overview of international media policies (Chapter 3); comparative considerations of audience research surveys including case studies (Chapter 4); and information about programming structures, genres, and issue-specific content (chapter 5) are given in this section. Chapter 6 contains conclusions and projections on future developments of ethnic minority media.

All in all, Browne's study is not an empirical survey in the conventional sociological sense. It is rather the result of a collection from different information sources. Many personal discussions and interviews, documents, studies, and scientific sources are brought together, in order to analyze the role of ethnic minority media for the constitution of the public sphere. This applies not only to the public sphere as a functional model in the sense of Habermas but also to the participants to this sphere, the producers, the recipients, and the politicians, who are responsible for the legal and economical framework of the ethnic minority media. Scientists, who are concerned with this issue, should not miss consulting this book. In particular the research program set up by the author in the section "Need for Research" is likely to become very important for forthcoming studies on the role of ethnic minority media in the public sphere.

The book includes bibliography, subject, and author indices.

—Joachim Trebbe
University of Freiburg, Switzerland

Carilli, Theresa, and **Campbell, Jane** (Eds.). *Women and the Media: Diverse Perspectives.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005. Pp xvi, 283. ISBN 0-7618-3040-5 (pb) $41.95.

There exist many issues of debate when considering the role and representation of women in the media, such as gender images in advertising, or media coverage of gender activism, or representations of homosexuality in film. Carilli and Campbell's anthology increases the complexity of this debate by adding international and cross-cultural perspectives for our consideration.

Carilli and Campbell explain the rationale for their book at the end of their introduction, stating

> We offer this anthology as an exploration of the status of women in the media. Despite the constraints women have faced in achieving equality, they continue to forge ahead undaunted. With this book, we hope to initiate a global dialogue

about this subject and build partnerships with women around the world. (p. xv)

Both editors are professors at Purdue University Calumet, Carilli as a Professor of Communication and Campbell as Professor of English. Contributors to this text and discussion are scholars in a variety of disciplines, including Communication, Political Science, Women's Studies, Sociology, and English, to name a few. *Women and the Media* features 19 chapters from this diverse collection of authors.

Four segments of the book organize a variety of chapters on issues of American media as well as foreign media from countries including India, Israel, Japan, China, and Argentina. In the first segment, "Commodifying and Exoticizing the Female Body," readers learn how the notion of the male gaze from Western mass media is also found in the fragmentation of women in television advertising in India, and how Israeli press has portrayed Jewish women as "biological reproducers and nurturers of their people" (p. 20). Two American based studies explore the representation of gender in television and magazine advertising, among a number of other chapters on the female body. The breadth of the contributions in this segment is extensive in the variety of gender issues raised and original research discussed.

The second segment, "Stereotypical Depictions" features three chapters that explore depictions of sexuality of African American women in *Essence* magazine, press coverage of gender equality in Japan, and images of oppression of women in post-liberation China through propaganda posters.

The third segment, "Portrayals of Political Activism" presents four studies of women and media in politically based situations in the United States. This is an interesting collection of essays, including an analysis of media coverage of female political players of the late 20th century, the notion of an "environmental pin-up girl" as embodied by Julia "Butterfly" Hill and Erin Brockovich, media coverage of women activists involved in MADD, NOW, and the Million Mom March, as well as the background of an early 20th century immigrant newspaper and its female publisher, Maria Kowalska.

The fourth and final segment of the book, "Media Pioneers," offers profiles of Joan Ganz Cooney, founder of the Children's Television Workshop and creator of *Sesame Street*, and Francis Benjamin Johnston, a photographer from 1864 to 1952 who took President McKinley's photograph the day he was assassinated, as well as portraits of the Roosevelts, Booker T. Washington, and Alexander Graham Bell, yet was ignored form historical accounts of that era. This section also features a chapter on the late 1990s television program *Cybill* (starring Cybill Shepherd), a "pioneer" as a television program addressing the issue of menopause. This final segment of the text is a unique contribution to the discussion of women and media rarely found in such anthologies.

In addition to references provided at the end of each chapter, a selected bibliography concludes the book that identifies titles of key books in the field, in addition to a well-developed index. This comprehensive collection addresses important issues in gender and media studies, and offers a diversity of perspectives on an international scale.

—Joan Conners
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Cushman, Donald P. and **Kovacic, Branislav** (Eds.). *Watershed Research Traditions in Human Communication Theory*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995. Pp. viii, 312. ISBN 0-7914-2597-5 (hbk.) $30.50; 0-7914-2598-3 (pb.) $29.95.

The watershed metaphor identifies issues, concepts, processes, or events that constitute defining moments in the development of some phenomenon. In the communication discipline, a watershed tradition may be regarded as those fertile areas that are created when deep and sustainable inquiry is initiated into questions and responses posed by researchers in the major domains of communication: human communication processes, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, media, etc. In *Watershed Research Traditions,* the authors identify watershed research traditions as areas of communication theory that "inspire a broad range of research that inquires into [questions] at theoretic, philosophical, and practical levels of analysis" (p. 1). The authors present each tradition as an argument that is supported by evidence, the condition that separates a hypothesis from a theory.

The three levels represent a hierarchy of sorts that helps the reader understand the significance of the watershed tradition. The philosophical perspective unpacks arguments that operate under certain overarching premises about human communication, i.e., a set of conditions that frame communication processes. The theoretic perspective examines theoretical arguments as empirical or a "precisely verifiable set of relation-

ships" that link concepts together (p. 3). A practical perspective examines theory as it prescribes a specific course of action. Indeed, each of Kovacic's five introductory essays that introduce the nine watershed theoretical traditions uses this three part organizing principle, but the individual theory chapters follow the structure to varying degrees.

The essays in the initial section, "Theories of the Human Communication Process*,"* provide overviews of foundational communication theories. Two essays provide examples of how the text as whole meets its goal. Philipsen provides an overview of Pearce and Cronen's Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM), and Nicotera explains Constructivist Theory. Philipsen describes the basic assumptions of CMM and shows how the interplay of individuals' social realities, resulting in coordination, has left a theoretical legacy. Nicotera identifies the theoretical underpinnings of Constructivism and deftly follows the philosophical/theoretic/pragmatic structure that the text initially lays out. She begins with an overview of assumptions, then traces the theoretical traditions (Kelly, 1955; Werner, 1957) behind the theory and the ways the theory has been developed. Other theories included in this section are Uncertainty Reduction Theory and Anxiety-Uncertainty Reduction Theory (together) of Berger and Gudykunst, and the Sequential Inferential Theories of Sanders and Gottman.

The next three sections are *"*Interpersonal Theories of Communication," "Organizational Communication Theories," and "Mass Communication Paradigms*."* The interpersonal communication and mass communication "sections," include just one theoretical tradition each as *watershed*. Though the authors admit from the outset that not every theory can be covered in the text, it is unusual to include only one theory in such major categories as interpersonal communication and media. "Interpersonal Theories of Communication," provides an overview of the Rules Theory of Interpretation. Moemeka and Kovacic identify the original statement of rules theory, including key concepts such as self-concept, interpersonal relationships, communication rules, and reciprocity, followed by revisions and extensions of the theory.

"Organizational Communication Theories" includes High Speed Management and Organizational Communication of Cushman and King (the section is written by the researchers themselves, as are about half of the chapters), and Kovacic's review of Deetz and Mumby's theories of democracy and control in organi-

zational communication. King and Cushman present high speed management as, though it is oversimplified here, a theory of responding rapidly and efficiently to organizational challenges. On a philosophic, theoretic, and practical level, the authors assert that speed is the most important factor when dealing with organizational change. They also present case study summaries of some of the 50 or more major organizations that were intensively probed as the theory was developed. Kovacic's review of the power dynamics of organizational communication unmasked by Deetz and Mumby is certainly complete and meets head-on the complexities of this highly intellectual theory.

The "Mass Communication Paradigms" section includes a single description of a vast theoretical tradition: the psychological approach to media studies. This tradition is an amalgam of approaches drawing, for example, from Ellen Langer, Chomsky, Paiget and others. The authors, Roger Desmond and Rod Carveth, describe the tradition as emerging—indeed, they open the chapter with the admission that one challenge to discussion of the tradition is to come up with a name for it, and they refer to the tradition as an "uncoordinated watershed tradition" (p. 242). "Cultural Communication Theories," also presents just one research tradition: the ethnographic communication theory (EC). Gerry Philipsen's EC is presented as watershed in that it draws from particular cases (Philipsen conducted studies in "Teamsterville" as part of the original statement of the theory) that provide insight into generalities about cultural rules. Carbaugh describes EC as studying people from various cultures to discover "the distinctive communicative means that particular people use, on particular occasions . . . in particular places" (p. 271).

The authors concede early on that no volume can appropriately handle all of communication theory; *Watershed* is not comprehensive. Yet, the text is unique for at least two reasons. First, the selection of traditions, and the essays themselves, combine historical placement *and* emerging potential to complete the watershed metaphor. The research traditions are supported by basic assumptions, research agendas, and methodological distinctions and criticism but are also highlighted for their contemporary relevance and potential for development. Second, the approach the authors have taken, that is to describe the philosophical, theoretic, and practical elements of theory, is novel and generally consistent throughout the chapters. The three-part structure allows advanced undergraduate or

graduate students to understand how the discipline has taken shape, and to see theory as more than notes on a page. The symmetry of philosophic, theoretic, and practical is treated somewhat differently by contributors who deal with the organizing principle in various ways. The research traditions described here as watershed are contemporary—the "oldest" theory reaches back to the 1960s. The notion of watershed, then, is confined to those theories that have been developed in the past 40 years or so or that have great potential. The volume would serve as a strong companion piece or stand-alone text. The text has a subject index.

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References

Kelly, G. A. (1955). *The psychology of personal constructs, 2nd ed.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Werner, H. (1957). The concept of development from a comparative and organismic point of view. In D. B. Harris (Ed.), *The concept of development*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

De Blasio, Emiliana, Guido Gili, Matthew Hibberd, and **Michele Sorice**. *La Ricerca sull'Audience* [*Research on the Audience*]. Pp. x, 214. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli Editore S.p.A., 2007. ISBN 978-88-203-3774-2 (pb.) €19.50.

This group of researchers has individually worked on research in a number of different fields. In this book, they have decided to put together a guide to audience research for the Italian-speaking market. Their point of departure is their view that although there are books that look at research methodologies and at research on the audience, most of these do not ask the question: How does one undertake research on the audience? In addition, there are few publications that consider research on the audiences for different media, they believe. Here they try to address the lack they perceive.

The book is divided into four parts, each of which considers research. The first quarter is written by Guido Gili, Professor of the Sociology of Communi-cation at the University of Molise. Professor Gili's section is entitled, "The receiver: a privileged viewpoint in the understanding of communicative relationships." Here, he provides an overview of the process of reception and in studying the public (that is the audience), and looks at the social processes in which the audience exists. He departs from the notion that one cannot study the audience/public without beginning from a reception theory that is actually a theory of communicative relationships. He also, as in his recent book (reviewed in an earlier edition of *Communication Research Trends*), considers credibility as a fundamental basis for these relationships.

Professor Michele Sorice, who teaches and researches at Università la Sapienza, Rome, at the Università Svizzera-Italiana in Lugano, and at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, has written the second section, which he suggests is the logical follow-up that puts the preceding chapter into practice. He considers both the theoretical background of research and how these theories can be put into practice. Sorice does not write that these are definitive means, but that consideration of them may assist the researcher to construct his or her own research methodologies and practices. The author reflects on those questions that present themselves to the researcher, for example: when, for instance, is it better to undertake an in-depth interview rather than a structured questionnaire? If the decision is taken to use questionnaires, how does one administer such research tools? If one decides to use focus groups—who should be invited to take part and how should one run it?

The third and fourth, more empirical, sections, are written respectively by Matthew Hibberd (of the University of Stirling, UK and a visiting professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome), who is an expert on broadcasting and who has written extensively on the Italian situation; and Emiliana De Blasio, who is a lecturer in Sociology of the Mass Media at the University of Molise and also teaches new technologies and communication at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome.

Hibberd's portion of the book examines original approaches to television in research in the United Kingdom. In this chapter, the results are, of course, as important as the ways in which these results were reached. As the foreword of the book tells us, "It is important to verify how the theory of practice actually follows concrete practice." The segment is informed by the methodologies and operative mechanisms described previously, but also attempts to enable efficient comprehension of the objectives of the study while methodologically remaining both coherent and correct.

De Blasio's part of the book deliberates on the cinema audience and on multi-dimensional research into this audience. She gives particular consideration to a research project that looked at the horror genre and advises us of the problems and possible mis-steps which those thinking of undertaking research of this

nature might like to bring into consideration at the outset of a project. The methodology utilized here was based on the Delphi technique (which is also discussed in Part 2 of the book) and on focus groups.

The book would be a useful addition to the library of anyone undertaking media and communication research, or who teaches research. It would also be helpful to postgraduate and undergraduate students. The chapters contain many diagrams and explanatory sections, together with possible exercises. There is an extensive glossary of terms used in the book (with suggested bibliography); pp.197–214 consist of a bibliography of those works mentioned in the text—a surprising number of which are in English, which may point to the lacunae which the authors are trying to fill by publishing this book. The publishers are to be complimented on a very striking cover.

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De Man, Ard-Pieter. *The Network Economy: Strategy, Structure, and Management.* Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004. Pp. xix, 190. ISBN 978-1-84376-494-6 (hb.) £49.95. $76.50; 978-1-84542-837-2 (pb.) £15.96, $28.00.

Professor De Man's *The Network Economy: Strategy, Structure, and Management* is a well-written treatise about alliance management, corporate strategy, and organization. Indeed, the network, rather than the individual firm, has become the most relevant and effective form of organization in the modern economy. This highlights the fact that companies now need to manage whole networks, not just individual alliances, and that the days when firms operated in isolation are over.

The book brings a helpful body of knowledge to bear on our current challenge in understanding network economy, drawing from numerous scattered sources. By studying the fundamentals of the networking and managerial process, De Man, a professor of Organization Science at Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands, has developed a coherent framework for analysis beginning with network formation and partner selection, then on to such topics as competitive moves against rivals. He has taken a comprehensive view of the increasingly important subject with a chosen mechanism that accommodates both different elements of knowledge about the network economy and the diversity of networks in practice. The approach he argues would clarify the choices and dilemmas companies face in the network economy with the combination of translating theory into practice and identifying the theoretical background of empirical facts.

The mechanism basically consists of two parts. First, the practical process of networking is divided into seven steps to yield an overview of existing network knowledge about each phase: business strategy, network strategy, network structure, partner selection, implementation, management, and change (p. xvi). Second, the diverse networks in modern business are classified into five types, namely the quasi-integration network, the vertical supplier network, the solution network, the R&D network, and the standardization network (p. 20). Different types of networks are set against the network process chart according to their specific characteristics in the network economy. The combination of network type and network process, as he proposes, "makes it possible to systematically develop and classify management knowledge about the network economy in a matrix" (p. xvi).

The book covers critical issues such as strategy, network structure, partner selection, alliance and competition, and network management; it places each element within a logical framework that forms the structure of the book. The first chapter gives a reason for the long-term structural and organizational changes in the modern economy and emphasizes the importance of alliance strategy and network management thinking. By using the network process as the backbone, De Man provides in the next three chapters the seven steps for how to cope with the dynamics of network economy based on the combination of the latest theoretical thinking and developments in practice. From matching the goal and type of network to identifying the desired "position" (p. 39), from the "five building blocks" (p. 60) of a network to obtaining the right "fit" (p. 57), he has demonstrated how to decide network strategy and design a network structure in the initial phases of effective network management.

Chapter 5 is the core of the book and is highly supported with scholarly literature and cases studies. In this part, he moves step by step with practical and operational guidelines for partnering, implementation, management, and change. Undeniably, there is a substantive demand for companies to develop various tools and processes to manage each of these phases. While illustrating the dynamics and complexity of the network development, De Man suggests that under-

standing the basics would help companies to develop in-depth knowledge of these processes and to gain a competitive advantage by "smart network positioning" (p. 116).

In the next two chapters, he provides a unique and intriguing look at "network tactics," demonstrating the tricks and ploys firms use in a network scenario. Along the way, he has used many interesting cases to illustrate examples of effective network management and strategic alliance in the telecommunication, media, and airline industries. In a broader picture, networks affect competition in more complex ways: co-optation, group based competition, and competition between networks and other organizational forms (pp. 131–132). Mean-while, the situation begs our careful consideration of the antitrust issue which shall be adapted to the network economy.

The author rightly points out that a "network is no cure for all pains" (p. 155). Networks, like any other organizational form, have their drawbacks. Indeed, networks, as a form of organization, face a challenge in balancing integration and flexibility. Starting from Jacobs' "conservative" or "constructive" networks distinction (p. 143), De Man has described in detail the major limits to networks and has summarized the problems and their possible remedies. It is in managing these trade-offs that the challenges of the network economy lie.

The final chapter clarifies the common misconceptions about networks that emerge in practice and concludes that the accumulation of managerial knowledge is a major driving force for the network economy.

This is a readable book of serious scholarship, suitable for people with an interest in the network economy. Professor De Man has not only successfully produced a comprehensive overview and analysis of the diverse literature on networks, but has also contributed a wealth of original commentary. Readers may find less precise content than needed in coping with the ever growing complexity of network management. That is perhaps what subsequent studies can contribute to fill the remaining knowledge gap in the framework, with advances in research and practice regarding various issues in this context.

The book is profusely filled with apt examples and clear illustrations. It is highly recommended for managers and academics who strive to understand the intricate workings of the network economy.

The book has a reference list and index.

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Eilers, Franz-Josef. (Ed.). *E-generation: The communication of young people in Asia*. (FABC-OSC Books Vol. 4). Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications, 2003. Pp. 208. ISBN 971-510-173-9 (pb.). No price listed. Logos@greendot.com.ph. (http://www.iscmrc.org/)

This fourth volume of papers from the Federation of Asian Catholic Bishops' Conferences presents the work of a conference focused on the adoption of new technologies among younger Asians, the challenge of these technologies, and the opportunities they present for the Catholic church.

Because the volume keeps to the conference presentations, the reader must seek out thematic material across several chapters. But the attentive reader will find overviews of youth culture in India, Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand. Two interesting chapters are Sebastian Periannan's examination of the psychological aspects of youth communication in India and Peter McGee's linguistic analysis of e-generation identity as shown in their slang. This material, and that of the entire first part, comes out of variety of methodologies: large surveys, focus groups, availability surveys, and ethnographic research. Unfortunately, the reader must attempt the synthesis, as well as the evaluation, since the data appear in multiple formats and with varied indicators of reliability.

The second part of the book draws on more narrative accounts of young people's experiences, letting their voices be heard through youth ministry and parish activities. This section leads naturally to the next, where four youth leaders and campus ministers present expectations and recommendations to the Catholic bishops. These include the establishing of web sites and alternative media for young people (p. 111), the formation of youth groups (p. 115), the use of e-mail by the bishops, increased youth retreats (p. 117), changing the image of the church in the mass media (p. 118), updating the church's radio presence (p. 121), the promotion of youth liturgies and lay movements (p. 123), and encouraging the bishops to "waste time" with young people (p. 124).

Four final presentations examine catechetics for young people, the human development dimension, youth as missionaries in Laos, and the role and possibilities of youth days.

A documentation section concludes the volume. This includes the final declaration of the meeting, relevant sections of Ecclesia in Asia (the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of November 1999), selected texts

from the bishops' conferences on youth, and relevant pontifical messages for World Communications Day.

There is no index, but individual chapters do feature bibliographies.

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Gentz, Natascha, and **Stefan Kramer** (Eds). *Globalization, Cultural Identities, and Media Representations.* New York: State University of New York Press, 2006. Pp. vii, 232. ISBN 0-7914-6683-3 (hbk.) $84.50; 0-7914-6684-1 (pb.) $27.95.

The book contains 12 articles, dealing with the phenomena of cultural identities and the role of the media in constructing it from an anthropological and/or literature focused perspective. To be exact, one should say essays (as the editors do) instead of articles—most contributions in this book are descriptions or discussions of single cases and, from a social science perspective, difficult to evaluate with respect to their methodological approaches.

Topics deal with a wide range of media genres and culture types. Here are some (selective) examples: Aleida Assmann shows and discusses the changes in communication culture caused by the digital revolution, especially the transformation of the written word in printed books from former times to modern forms of texts in the electronic age. Miriam Butt and Kyle Wohlmut report their analyses of a popular TV series ("Xena—Warrior Princess") and the creation of a role model using intermedia promotion in magazines and the Internet. Natascha Gentz presents results of a textual analysis of an autobiographical novel of the Chinese Nobel laureate Gai Xingjian. She is interested in the dilemma of "oscillating between the attempt to escape orientalism and ethnic ascription and the simultaneous establishment of occidentalist stereotypes" (p. 8), in the construction of the main character as partly authentic and partly fictional. Ratiba Hadj-Moussa examines the social and cultural transformations caused by the use of different media—conventional and new in local communities of Algeria. With an anthropological approach he analyses the impact of global media content on cultural habits and gender relations.

The examples were given here to show the wide range of approaches, issues, media, and types of identities. It reaches from television to books, from photography to film and music, and from individual role models to ethnic identities in global and local environ-ments. On the one hand this could manifest a lack of focus and structure; on the other hand, this variety can be a resource for arguments and new perspectives in special research fields.

The book includes bibliography and subject index.

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Greco, Albert N. *The Book Publishing Industry*, 2nd edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005. Pp. 400. ISBN: 0-8058-4853-3 ISBN13: 978-0-8058-4853-3 (hbk.) $42.50.

The Book Publishing Industry provides a look at all the aspects of book industry—together with thoughtful analysis, perspective, context, information, creativity, and fun in a unique and comprehensive overview. With the majority of content addressing the business side of the industry, this book presents all the information that readers—from undergraduate students to business executives—with an interest in the area would want. The book also includes plenty of facts and figures about the history of the publishing industry in U.S., editing, marketing and production.

In the second edition the author updates the statistical datasets through 2005 as well as the text. For those readers with a special interest in marketing and economics, the book provides characteristics of the U.S. consumer book industry, such as a description of markets, channels of distribution, business operations, editing and production, marketing, trends of consumer purchasing, intellectual property and censorship, and the effect of electronic development and multimedia in the 21st century. In addition to the insights about the publishing industry, the new edition includes a new appendix containing historical data on the industry from 1946 to the end of the 20th century. The selective bibliography includes the latest literature, especially major works in marketing and economics that have a direct relationship to the dynamic industry.

As a textbook, this is well designed to suit the needs of students. From it, they can not only get a look at the most dramatic changes in the industry, but also learn the practice of editing, the reading habits of consumers, as well as lists of bestsellers in fiction, non-fiction, children's literature, trade, and other mass markets. As noted before, the book also covers copyright and libel, as well as reviewing the academic literature on the publishing area. Everything that students need to

know to gain a solid working knowledge of the book publishing industry is contained in the book. It's also an excellent choice for a first reader interested in pursuing a career in this field. With the author's easy writing style and fully detailed (and dramatic!) cases about this dynamic industry in the U.S., undergraduate students and early professionals could attain a solid working knowledge of the publishing business.

In light of the digital information age, electronic publishing is the latest challenge for most publishing professionals. The author addresses this as a new opportunity in E-business in book publishing from multiple perspectives: the reader's respective demands, market segmentation, intellectual property, economic models, problem solution, and other aspects. *The Book Publishing Industry* is a valuable and timely resource.

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Hipps, Shane. *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005. Pp. 176. ISBN-10 0-310-26274-7; ISBN-13 978-0-310-26274-9 (pb.) $18.99.

It does not require a great deal of imagination or empirical observation to note that the Christian church, its worship, and its interactions (both with its members and with the culture) have changed dramatically over the past 25 years. Shane Hipps, a Mennonite pastor with an earlier career in advertising, begins here and—in good media ecology manner—suggests that the work of Marshall McLuhan may have something to say about it.

In this masterful and thought-provoking book, Hipps situates the contemporary church in its communication environment so that we can pay attention to what happens in our midst.

> This book is more concerned with identifying broader issues that impact the ways we live as the body of Christ. At the same time, it is by no means a simple exercise in abstract thinking. . . . With this in mind I will make periodic recommendations, some by asking what I believe to be the right questions, others by offering specific examples. . . .
>
> I also want to make it clear that I am not a wholly uncritical advocate of the ways in which the church is responding to cultural change. (p. 17)

With these goals in mind, Hipps sets out to explore our contemporary electronic culture.

Part I, with its four chapters, introduces the reader to a way of seeing the culture by seeing its media: not the content, but its ways of communicating. Drawing on examples and anecdotes, Hipps makes McLuhan's observations about the role of the media both clear and relevant to the situation of the church. An anchor for his method ties the analysis to McLuhan's four "Laws of the Media":

• What does the medium extend?
• What does the medium make obsolete?
• What does the medium reverse into?
• What does the medium retrieve? (p. 41)

Hipps returns to these throughout Part I, not only to demonstrate McLuhan's media ecology, but also to encourage the reader to explore each aspect more deeply—to "'navigat[e] through an ever uncharted and unchartable' culture" (p. 44).

As would be expected, Hipps examines the role of printing in Western culture and in the Christian church, noting its emphasis on abstract, linear, and rational thinking. Drawing as well on the history of theology and devotion, he also shows how the Protestant emphasis on individual conversion and a personal commitment to Jesus Christ flows from the new world of print. Contrasting this with the Roman and Orthodox stress on communal worship and ceremony, he uses the laws of the media both to show where Christianity has come from and to explain the rise of new worship forms (the mega-churches) in the Evangelical churches. This, he argues in Chapter 4, comes from the cultural impact of electronic media. These media "re-tribalize" the church and reintroduce emotion, community, and ongoing conversion. Here he draws on Walter Ong's concept of secondary orality and its impact.

Part II of the book moves towards practice—what he calls "alternative practice" (p. 85). How might the church proceed in this new media world? Limiting himself to just a few topics, Hipps examines the church itself as a medium; community; the "challenges of power, authority, and leadership" (p. 85); and new forms of worship.

By regarding the church as a medium, Hipps can examine its role as "a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's kingdom" (p. 94). He does this through attending to biblical metaphors (body of Christ, salt, light for the world) and highlighting, as the Catholic Church did in the Second Vatican Council, the metaphor of the

people of God; these metaphors allow him to develop a theology of the church that stands in contrast to much traditional (19th and 20th century) ecclesiology.

Such metaphors lead, of course, to the consideration of community, to which Hipps turns in Chapter 6. Not surprisingly, he finds his inspiration in the application of the laws of the media to things like reality TV, blogs, and the kinds of intentional communities promoted by new media. Each of these challenges us to think about how we think about the church. Each also challenges pastors to explore new ways to foster the community of the church. Hipps himself suggests storytelling as a catalyst. He concludes the chapter with a practical aside on dealing with conflict in community, drawing on his own Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition (p. 120).

Chapter 7 turns to leadership in the church. Electronic media change the role of authority through their management of information. The medium of interest in this chapter is the Internet. From his analysis, Hipps suggests that the "rhythm of praxis" (reflection-action-reflection) can best help to create collaborative authority. Again he ends the chapter with practical suggestions drawn from the Mennonite tradition, this time adapting their "guidelines for consensus decision making" (pp. 139–141).

The last chapter turns to worship in the electronic culture, a key issue for many churches without a mandated liturgical structure. He recognizes that people differ in their needs for worship, spectacle, quiet, and community. Again recalling McLuhan, Hipps cautions pastors and worship leaders to recall that "the medium is the message," in worship as much as in television. How we worship teaches even stronger lessons than the content of any sermon. There is, he argues, a "narrative arc" to our worship (pp. 159–161), of which praise and thanksgiving form a part, as do "doubt and hope, despair and healing, repentance and forgiveness" (p. 161).

The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture is a wonderful little book, as much of benefit to church members as to communication scholars. Though sourced and end-noted (but not indexed), it is not really a scholarly book (many more citations could be added; other theorists consulted; more arguments developed), but it is not meant to be. The book addresses itself to an audience concerned about the life of faith in the contemporary world. It's a start and a wonderful one. The interested reader can continue to explore, through consulting the bibliography. The communica-

tion scholar will recognize many of the themes and acknowledge that, applied to the church, they make a lot of sense.

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Iorio, Sharon. (Ed.). *Qualitative Research in Journalism*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. 2004. Pp. xv, 238. ISBN 0-8058-4398-1 (hbk.) $69.95; 0-8058-4399-X (pb) $32.50.

It was 1969 and I was the greenest of green reporters. News meant getting the daily rundown from the "cop house" and covering what the mayor and city council did. "Research" consisted of a frantic visit to the "morgue" for previous stories on sanitary and improvement district legislation before a terrifying trip to the cover a zoning board hearing. News sources were overwhelmingly white, male, government and business leaders—although the civil rights movement meant a few black names were appearing. The women's pages were still a feminine ghetto (not yet "living" or "style") but papers were changing. They had started hiring women for city news to the horror of reporters who resembled "Hildy" of "Front Page."

I tried to imagine what these classic reporters would have thought of this useful book on how to adapt qualitative scholarly research techniques to reporting and writing the news. It would have been unprintable. They would NEVER have identified any of this stuff as NEWS. But their news reality is as dead as they are—as dead as manual typewriters, linotype machines, and hot type.

Today's newspapers are struggling to combat falling circulations by what some working journalists still consider fads—public or civic journalism, letting readers help shape and even cover news, looking for the social trends underlying major developments, etc. The days when journalists knew what news was and the public had better take it or else are gone. Two-way communication rules—and that's much of what the techniques in this book seek to facilitate even though creating it requires a major readjustment of journalistic norms and assumptions.

That's why I recommend it highly to working journalists. Most chapters include an explanation of the research technique in language that a non-scholar can understand, examples and case studies of how news organizations have implemented the techniques, and a discussion of the results. There's also a glossary of

terms and an extensive bibliography. Techniques discussed include case studies, focused interviewing, ethnographic journalism, civic mapping, focus groups, oral histories, and textual analysis.

Although the book opens with a section on the development of the origins of qualitative scholarly research and the changing news paradigm "from objectivity to interpretive sufficiency" (p. 41), I suspect that working journalists will find Part II describing the various methods and how they have been adapted to journalism far more useful. Authors in this section attempt to bridge the chasm between scholarly research and the practical world of journalism. "The prior discussion suggests that qualitative case study research is not an alien approach to newsroom research and reporting but rather represents a description of journalism done well" (p. 72). The author of this essay, Tanni Haas of Brooklyn College, acknowledges that academic case study research challenges some "mainstream journalistic assumptions and practices" including sharing findings with story participants prior to publication (ibid).

What Haas says of case study research could be repeated at the conclusion of almost every methods chapter. As the authors intimate, traditional "in depth" journalism and qualitative research share enough commonalities that a dialogue on how to adapt some of the methods to newsroom reality might be productive. This is especially true of methods involving interviewing, the natural habitat of any journalist.

Iorio's own chapter on focused interviews is one of the strongest and most practical in the book. She defines focused interviewing as seeking "specific rather than general information." Reporters learn to probe for responses revealing "deep emotions and strongly held attitudes" and by encouraging general discussion "as a way to extrapolate newsworthy concerns that come from the lives people lead" (p. 113). Such interviews can help identify budding political issues, understand individuals' "interpretations of highly publicized issues," and "learn the connection between personal affairs and larger social problems" (p. 114).

Some of the other techniques discussed, including ethnographic journalism (in which a reporter is immersed in a community or culture) (p. 140) and textual analysis (used to analyze opinions about texts) (p. 163), seem less practical with civic mapping somewhere between. Given computer technology, using databases to plot social and political trends becomes ever more common and practical. Witness standard post-election issue maps showing the party vote by wards or precincts—a modest form of the technique.

Overall I liked this book because it is a useful introduction to some techniques that reporters and editors need to understand to survive in today's news environment. Although the book specifically targets journalism, I would also recommend it to other communications professionals. Every public relations professional, for example, needs to become adept at focused interviewing and no PR or advertising professional should be unfamiliar with conducting focus groups.

Like any book of essays by various authors, there's some inconsistency in both writing and content. I found some chapters tough slogging while others were much more user-friendly. However if an editor is seeking an introduction to the brave new world of doing civic journalism, this is a great starting place.

—Eileen Wirth
Creighton University

Kelly, Jennifer. *Borrowed identities*. Peter Lang, New York: 2004. Pp. xiv, 232. ISBN 978-0-8204-6127-4 (pb.) $29.95.

Kelly's book explores the place of media and youth culture in the process of negotiating identities by African-Canadian youths. Drawing on concepts developed by John Thompson ("mediazation"), Stuart Hall ("identity as narrative of self"), Paul Gilroy ("stylish solidarity"), and Michel Foucault ("power") among others, she takes the view that "identity is a narrative of the self; it is the story that we tell about the self in order to know who we are" (Hall, 1991, qtd., p. x). Given that the overwhelming share of media content originates in the United States, her question becomes: "How do U.S. popular culture and the growing processes of mediazation and economic globalization mediate black youth identity formation?"

Interviews with 14 high school students from Edmonton, Alberta, provide the material for the seven main chapters of the book. In her analysis of conversations with students, the author looked at how they used images, words, and ideas from music they listened to, films and shows they watched, and fashion they followed. In chapters titled, "Urban legend" and "Borrowed identities," she argues that the prevailing representation of "blackness" that is adopted by students is derived from the U.S. media and style. While she rejects the notion that audiences are passively absorbing information and ideas from environment,

she nevertheless finds students' agency to be situated within the space of global consumerism.

Chapter 1 provides a theoretical framework for the analysis and a brief description of the study. It is followed by an examination of students' experience of living in a diaspora. The concluding chapter looks at the previously discussed material through the lens of cultural studies. Specifically, it "examines the implications of the ways in which culture and power become linked to produce relations of dominance" (p. 191). Issues are addressed such as collective identity and regulation of media, identity and media representations, and the interplay between formal curricula and informal learning in schools.

A succinct summary of her extensive ethnographic work is provided by Kelly herself:

> Throughout the study, acknowledgment is given to the process of mediation taking place between individual students and their peers as they discuss and position themselves in relation to various discourses of commodification and consumption . . . What is purportedly on sale in this process of commodification are the experiences of African-Americans. However . . . these experiences are mediated and constructed through televisual and auditory images conveyed through the films, television, and music that the students listen to. There are no authentic images that represent an essence of black experience; history, geography, and politics intervene. These images that are consumed by all racialized groups within society are then put to differing uses. (p. 207)

The book has both an reference list and an index.
—Peter Lah S.J.
Saint Louis University

Marczewska-Rytko, Maria. (Ed.). (2003) *Religion in a Changing Europe: Between Pluralism and Fundamentalism—Selected Problems.* Lublin: Maria Curie-Sklodowska University Press, 2003. Pp. 240. ISBN: 83-227-2089-0 Zl25.3. (Available from http://www.mareno.pl/prod/MIDN/83-227-2089-0)

Maria Marczewska's interesting book seems difficult to obtain in Western Europe. Recently, immigration into Europe has increased and in the global political situation (probably most noticeably in the U.S.), religion has become a major focus of academic discourse in the social sciences. In British media studies, where the Marxist critique has been a major influence, this has come as a surprise.

Some European countries have seen an influx of immigrants (from both other European and non-European countries) who are not only foreign, but who practice religions that are not the indigenous ones, causing some disquiet. Garton Ash (2006) noted a *Financial Times* poll (one might ask why the *Financial Times/*Harris undertook such a poll) demonstrated that only one in three of those polled in Britain say they are believers; in France, less than a third; in Italy, less than two thirds. Only in the U.S. are more than three quarters of the polled population believers. This polls seems to have been non-sectarian and Garton Ash asks how many of these British or French believers are Muslim. It would seem that it is not the belief itself, or its nature, that throws the academic community, but that those questioned a belief at all.

While America considers itself, and indeed is, a land of immigrants, immigration is not a new phenomenon in those countries that used to have empires, notably France and Britain (but also Holland and Belgium). In the UK, for instance, there was a Member of Parliament from the Indian sub-continent before a female Member of Parliament was elected. The UK now has a population of around two million Muslims and a million Hindus (as well as other "immigrant" religions, such as Zoroastrianism and Buddhism) and a Jewish presence that includes most branches of the Jewish faith. Britain's first Mosque is now over 100 years old. These non-Christian believers form an important and active part of our 60 million population. In some other European countries, the influx of non-Christian believers has often shocked indigenous believers and non-believers alike. Practicing religious beliefs with different foods, clothing, and practices frequently underlines the "otherness" of the incomers (or, indeed, of those who convert). Judaism and Christianity and Islam all come from the same roots—and were initially Asiatic religions, just in case we forget this. At one time, Christianity was an "incoming" religion.

Marczewska-Rytko's edited book should be given greater attention. Authors are from various countries, both European and non-European, and include writers from America, Russia, and Israel. The first and second sections of the book are formed from theoretically based and more empirically researched articles. The third and final section of the book is made up of articles with a comparative perspective.

With the influx of new religions, religion has become politicized. It must be difficult for those who thought, along with Nietzsche, that God was dead, to deal with his/her resurgence when secularization was considered to be a force. Amongst other things, the articles included here consider what may be the results of this phenomenon—will this resurgence, for instance, lead to Christian unity as Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini suggests (Marczewska-Rytko, p. 8)? Dr. Marczewska-Rytko quotes Friedman (2000) who says:

> There is nothing about globalization or the Internet that eliminates the need for ideals or codes of restraint on human behavior. The more we are dependent on this technology (the Internet), the more we need to come to it armed with our own ideals of codes of restraint. (p. 9)

Mankind has always looked for something or someone in whom to believe—whether this is a totem, a political leader, a monarch, or a God or gods—and will probably continue to do so, but if society is to continue without too much friction, then we must have ideals and also restraints on behavior.

In her foreword, Marczewska-Rytko (p. 9) suggests that several problems can be observed and are dealt with in the book:

- That the way in which a certain group of phenomena are chosen or described may predetermine the evaluation of religion in globalization processes. While religion may have faced the crises and challenges of globalization, it has simultaneously been itself in a state of crisis, which she suggests amounts to a choice between religious values and moral nihilism.
- That attitudes towards a cognition of religion range across a spectrum that runs from idolatry to extreme skepticism.
- That we should note the following problems in relation to religion: that secular organizations have taken over some of the functions of religious organizations; that some forms of religiosity have decayed; that there is a divide between the institutional Church and believers; that there has been an increase in the number of believers in "new religions"; that there is an established process of secularization.

These problems, she suggests, lead to attempts to find a way out of this crisis and also to an awareness of a need to set universal principles and combine value systems with cognitive processes.

This book and its articles came from the editor's participation at two events: the Religious Syncretism, Religious Identity conference (Budapest, 2001), and European Culture in a Changing World: Between Nationalism and Globalism conference (Aberystwyth, 2002). One of this book's points of interest is that authors often have a background that is not religion, theology, or religious studies, giving an interesting interdisciplinary slant.

In my opinion, the book's main problem is that its title shows how religious topics are usually treated—as problems or problematics. My own work's major focus is on Roman Catholicism, but more and more frequently I have concluded that this problematizing is itself a problem. We must put more emphasis on similarities between religions and societies instead of their differences, since the similarities are usually much greater than the differences. The emphasis on difference is what encourages a sense of "otherness" in believers from outside or own faith group.

There are a number of editorial mistakes, but despite these, it is well worth reading this book and it would be useful to those interested in religion or religious studies. Those whose work has a focus on international politics or sociology might also find it interesting. I hope that other similar books will be published, but would suggest an emphasis on the similarities between believers and their beliefs rather than on differences.

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Mazza, Giuseppe (Ed.). *Karol Wojtyla, Un Pontefice in Diretta: Sfida e incanto nel rapporto tra Giovanni Paolo II e la tv.* [*Karol Wojtyla, A Pontificate Broadcast Live: Challenge and Enchantment in the Relationship between John Paul II and TV*]. Roma: RAI/ERI, 2006. Pp. 468. Published as the 3rd in the Zone series of studies and research on media. (includes a DVD of video clips of events in the pontificate and of the death and funeral of John Paul II). ISBN 8-83971-401-4 €20.

In April 2006 a conference was held at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, to consider the relationships between John Paul II and the media. It

had particular emphasis on his relationship with television. My own research is in the area of the papacy's use of the moving image and little has been written about this, so this may be a step in the right direction. The preface of the book is written by Fr. Federico Lombardi, S.J., who is now Director of the Centro Televisivo Vaticano, Radio Vaticana, and the Vatican Press Office. The book is edited by Fr. Giuseppe Mazza, who teaches communication and theology at the Gregorian University.

The "business" section of the conference and the book begins with interviews undertaken with Pope Benedict XVI and with Cardinal Dziwisz, formerly the Secretary of John Paul II. These are followed by a joint contribution from Roberto Romolo and Paolo Prato about the selection of clips which are found on the DVD that accompanies the book.

Section 2 is a section on the messages that John Paul II gave us, the audience, through his media use, the reciprocal "enchantment" that existed between that pope and the mass media. This perhaps demonstrated an attempt to re-enchant a world that had lost its enchantment with the religious. Archbishop John P. Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communication, discusses the profound respect that Wojtyla had for the media and the ways in which he arrived at the notion that the work of journalists was an almost sacred task

The section that deals with the presentations given at the conference has pieces from academics (both religious and lay); from those who work at RAI in various capacities (marketing, production, presentation, and direction); from those who work in the Vatican's own broadcasting entities; from journalists, film-makers, and those who work on websites; and, of course, many from Poland, John Paul II's own country. The scope of these pieces is impressive, some being more personalized, some more academic, some with a much more industry-based focus.

When I was recently teaching a class to students on media events, they asked me to talk about my own research and so, of course, about the media appearances of John Paul II. What struck me forcibly was the fact that none of them could remember anything that John Paul II had actually said, but could remember the gestures he had made: putting a prayer in a crevice in the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, for instance. This conference's seventh section looked at this very aspect of the pontificate.

Along with the index, the appendices of the book include a selected bibliography, edited and chosen by Miriam Diez-Bosch, who teaches journalism at the Gregorian University. The guidelines given to the contributors are also appended as well as a list of those contributors with brief biographical notes about them.

(The final section has an introduction to the series of books of which this book forms a part. This was the third and began again a series "RAI VQPT" that was published between 1978 and 2005 and included more than 200 books on a variety of subjects: from tv news to fiction, from educational programs to politics, from media and society to European media systems, from sports to entertainment. It is perhaps unfortunate that this and other books in the series are not available in languages other than Italian.)

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Peters, John Durham and **Simonson, Peter** (Eds.). *Mass Communication and American Social Thought: Key Texts 1919-1968*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004. Pp. xv, 531. ISBN 0-7425-2838-3 (hbk.) $98.00; 0-7425-2839-1 (pb.) $59.95.

To tilt an isolationist America toward war, Woodrow Wilson created a vast propaganda apparatus that utilized every possible communication channel. Headed by a former muckraking editor, the Committee for Public Information (CPI) enlisted journalists, advertising executives, commercial artists, cartoonists, Hollywood script writers, the foreign language press, and even a speakers' bureau with divisions for black and white audiences and children.

The CPI demonstrated how ideas could be sold like soap. The lessons learned on the home front during World War I spawned modern advertising and public relations, corporate tools used to propagate a new dominant ideology, the culture of consumption. Walter Lippmann, who worked for the CPI, learned that public opinion is inchoate; before it can be manipulated it first must be formed. Another CPI veteran, Edward Bernays—the father of public relations and Sigmund Freud's nephew—applied his uncle's theory of dreams and subconscious censorship to shaping "the group mind's" dreams and aspirations.

Lippmann and Bernays are among the 68 writers whose work is chronologically sampled in *Mass Communication and American Social Thought*. Running throughout this splendid collection is a pitched concern with the Enlightenment's project of universal knowledge and human liberation. In the 20th century, runaway commercialization and mass culture replaced superstition and dogma as the reactionary forces besieging reason and science. In radio and television, progressives saw instruments that would fulfill the Enlightenment's goals and also extend the reach of participatory democracy, whose boundaries Plato had posited as the range of the human voice. However, business appropriated the airwaves, filling the idealized "public sphere" with low-brow programming incessantly interrupted by the din of barkers. In 1961, the new FCC chairman, Newton Minow, chided television executives for creating a "vast wasteland."

Minow's speech, "Television and the Public Interest," is a classic in American rhetoric. As guardians of "the most powerful voice in America" broadcasters have "an inescapable duty to make that voice ring with intelligence and with leadership," he said. "I urge you to put the people's airwaves to the service of the people and the cause of freedom. You must help prepare a generation for great decisions. You must help a great nation fulfill its future" (p. 471). Nothing is worse, Minow declaimed, than bad television:

> a procession of game shows, violence, audience participation shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons. And, endlessly, commercials—many screaming, cajoling, and offending. (p. 467)

Today, Minow's prescience is evident: "What will the Latin American or African child learn of America from our great communications industry? We cannot permit television in its present form to be our voice overseas" (p. 470).

The editors of *Mass Communication and American Social Thought*, Peters and Simonson, note that the "degree to which taste is a by-product of the culture industries remains one of the great debates in American life with obvious implications for democracy; it is also not accidentally one of the key debates in social thought about mass communication" (p. 174). In "The Influence of Radio upon Mental and Social Life" (1935), Hadley

Cantril and Gordon W. Allport extol radio as a "powerful agent of democracy" and social cohesion:

> Millions of people listen to the same thing at the same time—and they themselves are aware of the fact. Distinctions between rural and urban communities, men and women, age and youth, social classes, creeds, states, and nations are abolished. As if by magic the barriers of social stratification disappear and in their place comes a consciousness of equality and of a community of interest. (p. 111)

In contrast, in "A Social Critique of Radio Music" (1945), Theodore Adorno reviles radio. Irrespective of content, "trashy jazz" or "serious music," the "standardizing" nature of the medium represses and stupefies: "music under present radio auspices serves to keep listeners from criticizing social realities; in short, it has a soporific effect upon social consciousness" (p. 212).

Adorno or Allport? One of the pleasures of this collection is adjudicating the culture debate from the vantage of historical knowledge. In "The Popular Music Industry" (1942), Duncan MacDougald, Jr., an Adorno protégée, argues that Tin Pan Alley can predetermine popularity by how an announcer "builds up" or "plugs" a song or a performer and by frequent radio play. The deluded public, however, "clings to the ideology that the success of songs represents the spontaneous, free-will acceptance of the public because of the inherent merit of the number" (p. 174). The Charlie Christian case is MacDougald's most "convincing evidence." This "totally unknown musician" was toiling in Oklahoma until he joined the Benny Goodman band in the summer of 1939. "Six months later, as a heavily plugged feature member of Goodman's orchestra, he was named 'The Best Guitarist in the Country' [in *Down Beat* magazine] with a total of 2,665 to 1,877 votes for his nearest competitor" (p. 179). Casting these votes were "ignorant and undiscerning jitterbugs" (p. 178).

Plugging, not "inherent merit," accounted for Christian's ascendancy? Christian, who died in 1942 at age 25, was one of the great musical innovators of the 20th century. His harmonic and rhythmic inventions shaped the form and direction of *serious* American music. MacDougald is equally ludicrous on the composer of *White Christmas*: "Tin Pan Alley stuff is written by men without sound musical training . . . Irving Berlin, for instance, must use a specially constructed piano because he can work in only one key" (p. 175). Popularity, of course, is *prima-facie* evidence of worthlessness in the court of high-European snobbery

called the Frankfurt School, whose high priest, Adorno, was tone deaf to American culture. Consider the following passage:

> The ruined farmer is consoled by the radio-instilled belief that Toscanini is playing for him and for him alone, and that an order of things that allows him to hear Toscanini compensates for low market prices . . . even though he is ploughing cotton under, radio is giving him culture. Radio music is calling back to its broad bosom all the prodigal sons and daughters whom the harsh father has expelled from the door. (p. 212)

A ruined farmer consoled by Toscanini? Perhaps on *Green Acres*.

The Canadian sociologist Thelma McCormack's impeccable reasoning is a purgative to such pompous Continental conceit. In "Social Theory and Mass Media" (1961), she lays bare the arrogant presumptions of the Marxist's cultural superiority:

> No one is alarmed, for example, if a student finds relaxation in slapstick comedy. It is understood if a mathematician cannot fall asleep at night without a paperback mystery. . . . But it is a "social problem" when the working classes do this. For in their case it is interpreted as a symptom of despair, frustration, and monotony of economic life. And the consequences are looked upon as far more serious: a displacement of anger from the system to the self; a waste of time that could be used in social action; a damaging misconception that salvation lies in individual rather than collective effort. (p. 460)

The iconoclastic thinker Daniel Bell pinpoints the fundamental contradiction in conceptualizing the mass media as a sinister, distorting mechanism. "Perhaps terms like 'original reality' and 'real roots in the deep being' have a meaning that escapes an empiricist temper, but without the press, the radio, etc., etc.—and they are not monolithic—in what way, short of being everywhere at once, can one learn of events that take place elsewhere? Or should one go back to the happy ignorance of earlier days?" (p. 367).

While Bell is well-known, McCormack is less so. Hence the freshness that sets *Mass Communication and American Social Thought* apart from other anthologies: the find that is both rare and good. The reader experiences something of the editors' adventure in assembling the collection:

> While doing this project, we have more than once felt the taut pleasures of record geeks making a find at the used vinyl store. Following footnotes, reading old journals, and walking through the stacks, we have experienced the literary equivalents of a music fan's discoveries: rare early recordings by people who later made it big; albums that we were acquainted with that turned out to be different from what we remembered; and crazy, cool sides by musicians we'd barely heard of. (p. 495)

How many have heard of James Rorty, one of the earliest critics of advertising? "Our Master's Voice" (1934), by the former "adman-turned-radical," is acerbic to the point of amusement. The ad-man, for all his cleverness, is still damned:

> His daily traffic in half-truths and outright deceptions is subtly and cumulatively degrading. No man can give his days to barbarous frivolity and live. And ad-men don't live. They become dull, resigned, hopeless. Or they become daemonic fantasts and sadists. They are, in a sense, the intellectuals, the male hetaerae of our American commercial culture. Merciful nature makes some of them into hale, pink-fleshed, speech-making morons. Others become gray-faced cynics and are burned out at 40. Some "unlearn hope" and jump out of high windows. Others become extreme political and social radicals, either secretly while they are in the business, or openly, after they have left it. (p. 109)

Rorty believed advertising to be symptomatic of a pan-cultural ethical epidemic. A quarantine of the advertising profession would merely drive these "male hetaerae" underground. The crisis required mass cauterization. But how to perform this operation? This then, is the conundrum hovering over a fair portion of *Mass Communication and American Social Thought*. A viable method comes from an unlikely source, the über-adman Bernays. His "Manipulating Public Opinion: The Why and the How" (1928), is a case study on attitude formation, whose essential technique involves artfully dramatizing an idea to entice news coverage—for which the historian Daniel Boorstin would coin the term "pseudo-event" some 40 years later. The technique is value-neutral. Bernays details his successes in upholstering the millinery industry, which had been tattered by French fashion and left "hanging by a thread," and in battering lynching and Jim Crow law by propagandizing for The National Association for the Improvement of the Colored

People. Thus, the unstated query this collection gives rise to: what has prevented the advertisement of Enlightenment ideas to a mass audience?

The text includes a contents index at the front and a general topics index at the back, together with a selected bibliography.

—Tony Osborne
Gonzaga University

Retief, Johan. *Media Ethics: An Introduction to Responsible Journalism.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. x, 262. ISBN 0-1957-8137-6 (pb.) $29.95.

John Retief appropriately subtitled his textbook "an introduction to responsible journalism." The book's three parts provide journalism students and practitioners with a solid, yet concise, theoretical toolbox, case-based analysis of issues in journalism ethics, and a review of South African legal and regulatory tradition.

Chapter 1 introduces students to the basic traditions of ethical reasoning. It is impressive not in its length but clarity. Chapter 2 surveys media-related laws and regulations in South Africa.

The 10 chapters in Part II explore all significant aspects of journalism ethics, such as accuracy, truth and deception, fairness, objectivity, confidentiality, conflict of interest, privacy, trauma, stereotyping, and social responsibility. Each chapter begins with a brief history and definition of the concept, followed by the discussion of its various facets. This serves as foundation for the analysis of several pertinent case studies which conclude the chapter. For example, the chapter on accuracy starts with the Gallup poll data on the public's (lack of) confidence in the accuracy of media reports. Various facets of the concept are examined, such as the importance of gathering all relevant data, checking and verifying, weighing all relevant facts, putting facts into the proper context, and presenting the facts in a fair and balanced way. Next, it discusses the editing of quotations (e.g., faulty grammar, profanity) and offers guidance for managing situations when vital information is lacking. Finally, the issue of plagiarism is presented, with a special consideration given to Internet plagiarism. The theoretical part of the chapter concludes with bullet-point checklists for plagiarism and accuracy. The five case studies that follow serve as vivid illustrations of challenges with which working journalists and editors are confronted. They are taken from the local, South African context.

In Part III, Retief summarizes codes of ethics of several South African organizations. Among them one finds the Press Ombudsman of South Africa, South African Union of Journalists, Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa, as well as several newspapers.

Media Ethics draws upon two major traditions of journalistic ethics, British and U.S. While most non-African readers may find case studies of limited value, they will certainly profit from the clarity, comprehensiveness, and thoroughness of Retief's work. Both students and practitioners of journalism will find it a helpful tool for cracking ethical dilemmas. Bullet-point summaries at the end of each chapter will be of particular practical value to those caught in the heat of production processes.

The book concludes with bibliography and index (subject and author).

—Peter Lah S.J.
Saint Louis University

Riffe, Daniel, Stephen Lacy, and **Frederick G. Fico**. *Analyzing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*, 2nd Edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005. Pp. x, 242. ISBN 0-8058-5297-2 (hbk.) $89.95.

The authors' understanding of content analysis is "informed by a view of the centrality of content to the theoretically significant processes and effects of communication . . . and of the utility, power, and precision of quantitative measurement." As such, this research method is used to "describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context . . ." (p. 25). *Analyzing Media Messages* is a readable and useful textbook for a course on research methods that emphasizes content analysis. It explains in accessible language such basic concepts as research design, measurement, sampling, reliability, validity, and analysis. The book concludes with a chapter on the use of computers followed by references, author, and subject indices.

The reader might find the book somehow odd at a first glimpse. Unlike many other textbooks in research methods, it contains relatively few equations, graphs, and tables. This apparent lack of sophistication should not be mistaken for a lack of thoroughness, though. Quite the contrary is true, which makes the book highly useful to students wanting to expand their knowledge in this particular method outside of classroom time.

Explanations of key statistical concepts such as sampling error, intercoder reliability, significance testing, correlational statistics, and regression are clear and appropriate for the upper-level communication student. Riffe, Lacy and Fico seamlessly incorporate into their text examples of both classical research and recent studies. Often, in discussing a particular theory or method, their choice of studies was such that it demonstrated how researchers indeed build on the work of their predecessors as they search for a more perfect understanding of a phenomenon. An added benefit of this approach is that the reader is introduced to a well selected body of literature pertaining to content analysis.

Analyzing Media Messages' concluding chapter on the use of computers is brief, given the popularity of the technology among contemporary students and researchers. The authors steered away from the listing of useful reference databases and tools. Instead, they chose to present, and briefly discuss, methods and strategies of computer-supported content analysis. These range from a simple key-word search for locating materials through the use of dictionaries in categorizing content to attempts to use artificial intelligence in order to mimic the cognitive processes of humans. Their approach is refreshingly sober. Rather than dwelling on—either real or hoped for—"revolutionary changes" that this technology introduced to the field, the authors chose to highlight its inherent limitations. The chapter concludes with a list of recommendations about when and under what circumstances computer-supported approach is preferable to human coding.

—Peter Lah, S.J.
Saint Louis University

Shah, Hemant G. and **Michael C. Thornton** (Eds.) *Newspaper Coverage of Interethnic Conflict: Competing Visions of America.* Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004. Pp. xi, 276. ISBN 978-0-8039-7231-5 (hbk.) $82.95; 0-8039-7232-6 (pb.) $42.95.

The authors analyzed the coverage of three interethnic conflicts in general circulation newspapers and ethnic minority publications: the race related violence between Latinos and Blacks in two parts of Miami in 1989; the Mount Pleasant incident, a three day riot in Washington DC in 1991; and the "famous" riots in Los Angeles in 1992. Overall a number of 135 items (articles, editorial notes, columns, and letters to the editor) were analyzed in a two step content analy-

sis. Step one was a quantitative coding of themes, frames, actors, etc. Step two was a textual analysis to reveal "underlying sentiments or themes about the groups involved" (p. 24).

The theoretical groundwork is built by the theoretical approach of racial formation: "For instance, the racial formation approach helps us interpret our empirical analysis in terms of the relations between cultural representations of ethnic groups and their use in structures of racial domination" (p. 25).

The book consists of two parts. After the introduction the first part deals with the analyses of the press coverage in Miami and Washington DC (Chapters 2 and 3). In each chapter a short summary of the political and economic situation is given. After that the results of the coding and the textual analysis are presented, followed by conclusions and discussion. The structure for both cities and violence incidents is the same; the coverage of the press is studied simultaneously and is comparative.

Part 2 (Chapters 4 to 8) is organized differently. All chapters show analyses regarding only Los Angeles. The economic and political context of Los Angeles in 1992 appears in Chapter 4. Chapters 5 to 8 each deal with the coverage of a single newspaper: *The Los Angeles Times* (Chapter 5), *La Opinión* (Chapter 6), coverage in African American newspapers (Chapter 7), and the Asian American newspaper coverage (Chapter 8). Implications and conclusions are at last drawn in Chapter 9.

It is—from comparative perspective—a kind of a missing link, that in Part 2 of the book no summary or comparative tables for the Los Angeles coverage are given. The newspapers are separately described one after the other but not compared. Nevertheless, the study is theoretically and methodologically conducted and very instructive for mass communication research scholars as well as for ethnicity and integration researchers. For scholars concerned with the combination of the two subjects, this book is a must.

The book includes bibliography, subject index, and appendix with additional figures and coding material.

—Joachim Trebbe
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Silva, Tony. (Ed.). *Global News: Perspectives on the Information Age*. Ames: Iowa State Press (A Blackwell Publishing Company), 2001. Pp. xx, 199. ISBN 0-8138-0256-3 (pb.) $39.99.

News and news coverage has changed dramatically in the last 10 years, a change symbolized most powerfully perhaps by CNN. In fact, one could divide the news coverage of our contemporary information age into before and after the CNN coverage of the first Gulf War, a technologically boosted real-time look at a major battle.

Silva attempts a snapshot of this new world of news, focusing heavily on CNN, with a major section (almost 40% of the book) examining the CNN experience because CNN was the first private broadcaster to provide worldwide coverage to a worldwide audience. Chapters include an examination of "the CNN standard" by Don Fournoy; an interview with Tom Johnson, the president of the CNN Newsgroup, on "the origins of the 24-hour, international news cycle"; an analysis of producing and marketing global news (Kevin Nobler); and a look at "American News, Global Audience" (János Horvát). This heavy dependence on CNN and CNN's definitions of global news forms both the strength and weakness of the book. While it is good to look in-depth at a major player, it is not so good to ignore the increasing competition for global news.

The second part of the book broadens the focus by providing the voices of other broadcasters (and they are voices, since much of this material derives from transcripts of lectures presented by the various individuals). Corey Flintoff, a National Public Radio (U.S.) anchor, offers reflections on cultural values in news judgments. Why do some stories, he asks, drive others out? Why do some national news outlets choose to follow stories of little interest to others? Paul Norris, a BBC reporter and later New Zealand television news director, explains this from the perspective of a "small nation" that depends on larger places and organizations (the BBC, the various U.S. networks, Australian networks, etc.) for its international news. Hussein Amin, a faculty member in the department of journalism and mass communication at the American University in Cairo, attempts a similar explanation from the perspective of Egypt. In doing do, he gives a helpful overview of Egyptian television news, its function within Egypt, and its structure. In the final chapter of this section, Tony Kahn, a radio broadcaster, addresses these same issues from the perspective of someone producing and hosting an international radio news program.

Part 3 examines the reporting process. Ted Koppel, the ABC [American Broadcasting Company] news anchor, describes his company's process, while Stacy Sullivan, a print reporter, writes of the role and lives of war correspondents in this information age. Alvin Shuster, another print reporter explores the challenges of reporting in a world of shifting media priorities: his career spans the change from an American concern with global communism to a concern with the economics of globalization. Such an emphasis on business reporting is not new for Richard Lambert, an editor of the *Financial Times*. What is new, he notes, is the wider public interest in these topics.

The last section of the book looks to the future: the growing impact of computerization, new ethical challenges, new media markets. Unfortunately, the world of international news changes so fast that the future is already upon us: CNN faces serious challenge in global news reporting, the Internet has largely replaced television as a prime source for many, and governments resist the free flow of news reporting.

Global News does provide a snapshot of an important moment in the history of news reporting, though now it reads more as a history than as an introduction to contemporary affairs.

The book features a subject index and individual chapters have footnoted references, though few of these are to academic sources.

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Strelitz, Larry. (2005) *Mixed Reception: South African Youth and their Experience of Global Media*. UNISA Press: University of South Africa, Pretoria, RSA. Pp. 199. ISBN 1-86888-287-X (pb.) No price listed.

While the word "globalization" has become almost a jargon word through its continual use in our media and in academic circles, perhaps too little work has been undertaken on the audience and the effects that globalized media have on it. This book makes some steps towards addressing this lack. It is written as a book that will appeal to both undergraduate and postgraduate students of media studies. That this book comes from research undertaken in an African context, albeit in what is the richest country in Africa, makes it particularly valuable.

South Africa is a particularly interesting case study since it is a country which underwent a great deal of political change in the latter years of the 20th century and is a country with both a diverse population and a great diversity of economic levels. Strelitz is now Head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University in that country.

The book begins with a short introduction where Professor Strelitz talks about his own awakening to global media through the music of the 1970s and international short-wave radio and his the identification of himself as being in tune with the counter-culture movements of the United States. When he became a graduate student in London, he realized that this had enabled him to escape, at least symbolically, from the oppression of his local culture, yet he came to understand that despite this supposed "escape," his political understandings had been colored by South Africa's mainstream (and therefore, one supposes, government influenced) media. When he returned to South Africa and began reading debates in contemporary media theory, he came to understand that this polarity in his thinking reflected the "audience power" and "media power" with which theorists had become engaged.

In addition to the lack of research on the effects of global media on audiences, Strelitz highlights the lack of research into youth, while advising that in South Africa, 43% of the population are aged between 14 and 20, and 73% are under the age of 35. In 1998 he began to use the students on the Grahamstown Campus of Rhodes University as research subjects. He points out that 55% of these students were then white, but they came from "a range of class backgrounds. I thus had access, in one space, to a cross-section of South African youth" (p. 4). He was, however, aware that this might not provide a comprehensive picture of media consumption by South African youth.

While his first chapter gives the introduction mentioned above and outlines the structure of the book, the second chapter explores the theoretical frameworks that underpin the relationship between media texts and audiences. These are the frameworks which he uses to discuss his primary research data. Chapter 3 places the relationship of text and audience in the context of contemporary economic and cultural processes relating to globalization. Here, he does not consider only the media but draws on interaction between, for instance, culture, politics, technology and the economy with the media, and he examines "cultural globalization" and how consumption of global media has impacted on local consumers' cultural understanding. In this regard he draws particularly on the thesis of media imperialism, which he believes has played a key role in shaping initial understandings of the processes involved here.

South Africa has a particularly interesting sociopolitical context in view of the impact that the social politics of apartheid (which was the dominant system in South Africa from 1948–1994) has had on the lives of particularly the young South African. Here, in Chapter 4, he discusses also his research in the context of local and international studies on media consumption.

For anyone interested in South Africa, Chapter 5, which deals with his choice of research methods, also has an interesting introduction to the history of education and the political background of the country. It was written, he says, particularly for students as his teaching experience has shown that it is particularly helpful for them to understand the connection between theoretical research concerns and how these can be applied to the design of research projects.

The remaining chapters discuss the findings that resulted from his empirical research and Chapter 8 critiques the assumption that before American media and culture invaded the "Third World," these countries had been largely unmarked by contacts from outside. Here he points out that cultural encounters before the "American Invasion" were often connected to political and military powers that coerced the indigenous populations. He shows that those surveyed do not form a cohesive national culture, but show a deep division by way of race and class and that global media assists them by both reflecting and helping them to constitute this difference. There is an emphasis here on the respondents' perceived need for "realism" in media products. For some, this meant that locally produced media answered this need, but for others it "is, ironically, global rather than local productions that most adequately and accurately reflect their 'local' lives and that are therefore experienced as being 'realistic'" (p. 6).

The final section briefly sums up the research and prints in full the "Survey on student lifestyle and media usage: 1998" and the instructions that were given to those who were to administer the survey as well as the covering letter that was handed to each respondent. This section, and indeed this whole book, would be very useful to those studying research methodologies. In addition there are lengthy notes on the text and extensive bibliography. The book is well-indexed and, for the benefit of the non-South African reader, has a glossary of abbreviations of those acronyms that may be unfamiliar to us.

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