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Preschool Children and the Media

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1. Introduction

When the Kaiser Foundation released its report on electronic media use among infants, toddlers, and older preschoolers (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartella, 2003), commentators, older adults, and parents of older children were shocked and amazed. Only the parents of very young children and those who work daily among them were unfazed. The study of 1,000 parents of children from 6 months to 6 years of age revealed a young generation surrounded by media devices and immersed from birth in electronic media content.

The report's summary of media immersion:

> Nearly all children (99%) live in a home with a TV set, half (50%) have three or more TVs, and one-third (36%) have a TV set in their bedroom. Nearly three out of four (73%) have a computer at home, and about half (49%) have a video game player. In some ways, new media is trumping old: nearly twice as many children in this age group live in a home with Internet access (63%) as with a newspaper subscription (34%). Nearly all of them (97%) have products—clothes, toys, and the like—based on characters from TV shows or movies. (p. 4)

More astonishing than immersion is the usage: "nearly half (48%) of all children 6 and under have used a computer, and more than one in four (30%) have played video games" (p. 4). Even more distressing to some is the constant presence of TV content:

> Two-thirds of 0- to 6-year-olds (65%) live in a home where the TV is on at least half the time or more, even if no one is watching, and one-third (36%) live in "heavy" TV households, where the television is left on "always" or "most of the time." Just under half (45%) of all parents say that if they have something important to do, it is very or somewhat likely that they will use TV to occupy their child while they finish their task. (p. 4)

The study elaborates the usage of each form of electronic media and breaks the data down into smaller age groups. Not surprisingly, usage rises sharply with age, but media is part of the lives of even 6-month-olds. "In a typical day, 68% of all children under 2 use screen media (59% watch TV, 42% watch a video or DVD, 5% use a computer, and 3% play video games), and these youngsters will spend an average of two hours and five minutes in front of the screen" (p. 5).

According to parent responses to the survey, "two out of three (65%) children ages 0 to 6 read or are read to every day (another 29% are read to a few times a week). In a typical day, 79% of all children in this age group spend time with books . . ." (p. 6). Other findings:

- Listening to music is one of the most popular activities
- Videos and DVDs are a staple in the lives of preschoolers
- Few differences emerged between media patterns of boys and girls
- Most very young children use media with someone else, generally a parent.

Among parents surveyed, 7 in 10 (72%) believe computer use and television viewing are educational.

Of particular interest in this report on research is the relationship between media and preschool children, that is, children 4 years of age and younger, but especially those between birth and 3 years of age. Professor Daniel Anderson, a psychologist at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, has generated cutting edge research for nearly 25 years on how very young children view media, use media, and are affected by media. He is among a small coterie who began in the 1980s to bridge the chasm between developmental neurologists and psychologists who studied fetal life, neonates, and infants on the one side, and media scholars who studied the impact of media on school age children and those who watched *Sesame Street* on the other. Anderson's former doctoral students have built research agendas of their own, which over the last decade began intertwining, particularly at the

University of Texas, with mass communication oriented scholars like Ellen Wartella, Aletha Huston, and the late John C. Wright.

One of the most amazing areas of growth in research methods and findings lies in the earliest part of human growth and development, *in utero* and newborn stages. As Karmiloff and Karmiloff-Smith (2001) observed:

> Over the last two decades, novel infancy research techniques have been developed that shed light on these much earlier stages of language learning. Along with a new understanding of fetal and neonatal speech processing, the importance of early mother-infant nonlinguistic dialogue has been recognized." (p. 3)

One of those novel techniques, the authors reported, was insertion of tiny microphones "outside the wall of the uterus" to measure the noises that enter the womb and ultrasound recordings of fetal activity. The results: from 20 weeks of gestation, when the hearing system is developed, "The fetus' world is filled with a cacophony of gurgles and grumbles. . . . But most stimulating of all are the filtered sounds of language" (p. 1). That a fetus recognizes its mother's voice *in utero* and upon delivery is but one new line of research in this rapidly expanding field. Of interest to media scholars is the degree to which media sounds—and their impact on a mother's nervous system—occur *in utero* and from that moment forward through preschool years.

Central to these issues are profound theoretical questions from the classic nurture vs. nature to the process by which the youngest humans adapt to a media world or, conversely, the impact the media world has on the adaptation of infants, toddlers, and very young children. This first generation of research into this area is providing patterns of relationship, but the directionality of causation, if there is such, is coming more slowly. For example, studies cited later point to a relationship between viewed violent content among 3-year-olds and more aggressive behavior in subsequent play in comparison to the play style of those who watched *Mr. Rogers*.

Children, especially very young children, provide an ideal group for assessing the accuracy of Marshall McLuhan's (1964) characterization of media as the "extensions of man," both as newcomers to the media society from widely divergent media environments and as individuals whose growth and development in one way or another incorporate and adapt to modern media. Nor is concern about children and their media unique to the modern era. The arrival of dime novels, cinema, and comic books spawned public discussion about the possible negative effects on youth, especially boys. And, children's magazines originated in the early 1800s as a vehicle for communicating religious values through Sunday schools. Soon after television became a form of home entertainment for the majority of households in England, Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958) searched out a village not yet reached by this new medium in order to monitor the effects on children which accompanied its introduction. In the United States Schramm (1961) and his colleagues studied its impact on learning and development among school children.

Preschool children, however, were largely an afterthought for both television programmers and researchers, at least until Joan Ganz Cooney founded Children's Television Workshop (CTW) in 1967 as a producer of TV programs with specific educational goals and objectives for 3–5 year olds. As Cooney (2001) points out, research was the first step and the last step in CTW's production cycle. "The notion of combining research with television production was absolutely heretical in 1967 when we began making plans for Children's Television Workshop" (p. xi).

CTW's goals were clear and simple: "to use television to help children learn, particularly children in low-income families." As the lone pioneer in researching preschool children and television, CTW opened the door in design, methodology, and theory for very young children. Moreover, CTW developed two distinct research streams. Formative research tested every aspect of every program segment with groups of children to identify the most effective television strategy. Summative research employed various settings, groups, and methods for measuring learning gain against the goals of specific segments (Fisch & Truglio, 2001, pp. 7-9).

The international success of *Sesame Street* demonstrated to supporters and naysayers alike that substantive research on pre-school children was not only possible, but yielded results rich enough to shape television production and to analyze the learning gains from each segment across a wide variety of children and settings. The vast majority of research, however, continued to focus on older children, apart from some advertising research (Ward, Wackman, & Wartella, 1975; Wartella, 1979; Levin, Petro, & Petrella, 1982). As the body of research developed through the 1980s, pioneer researchers in several fields, but especially neuropsychology and cognitive development, began

studying younger and younger children, eventually moving to those *in utero* (Eliot 1999).

According to the calendar of media technology, however, the 1970s are an era not so distant as the 19th century, but far removed from the children's media environment of the early 21st century. CTW research began in an era dominated by three major TV networks, an age before home computers and widespread cable systems, a time when music was sold on records or tapes, a time before VHS recorders, and one where children's books and toys were but remotely related, if at all, to what they heard on radio or saw on television. The research reviewed in this essay covers various forms of media which employ a range of content designed for various purposes with children whose age ranges from a few months *in utero* to age 5, the normal start of kindergarten. The research also incorporates viewing conditions which range from isolated use in the child's bedroom through family settings to day care and other group situations.

With so many variables at play, the historical overview of Wartella and Reeves (1985) provides several key categories: "issues of physical and emotional harm, and changes in children's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors." Within each age group and medium category, the research will be organized under five topics: physical impact, emotional impact, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. With the older groups, findings on the perennial concerns of advertising and violence will be added. Because a number of more recent studies manipulate variables such as the setting, parent vs. video presentation, and computer interaction, these will be treated as subcategories.

Chaffee, McLeod, and Atkin (1971) looked to a child's family environment for keys into learned media behavior. Their research addressed older children with an eye toward political information processing, but their underlying schema carries value in reflecting on very young children, as the Early Window project demonstrated (Huston, Wright, Marquis, & Green, 1999; Wright, Huston, Murphy, St. Peters, Piñon, Scantlin, & Kotler, 2001; Wright, Huston, Scantlin, & Kotler, 2001). How parents view and use media, coupled with their conversational style with children, shape not only lifelong language ability, but other characteristics as well. And, in households where children learned a disciplined use of television, similar long term consequences were identified

What follows in the several sections devoted to specific media forms—print, audio, television, and video/computer games—is far from an exhaustive review of the literature in each area and for each medium, although it does cover the major trends and principal researchers, especially for very young children.

2. Print Media

Print materials, which include books, magazines, pictures, and photos, are on one level simple contents to which infants and young children can be exposed. On another, more complex level, they are the content which parents, grandparents, older siblings, and others read or explain. This latter phenomenon, reading or explaining print material, comprises a set of interactions which have social, psychological, cognitive, and entertainment dimensions. Research on newborns, infants, and toddlers expanded dramatically in the 1980s as neuropsychologists, linguists, developmental psychologists, and pediatric specialists began to create new methods for testing infant subjects and to take advantage of new medical technologies in exploring the mental processes of their tiny subjects. Underneath this exploration of the frontier was a recognition that newborns arrive not with a *tabula rasa*, but with a working memory, developed hearing, and the ability to recognize familiar sounds.

One of the more fascinating discoveries came from DeCasper and Fifer's (1980) study of 16 pregnant women who read a Dr. Seuss story to their *in utero* infants every day beginning 6½ weeks before the due date. Once born, the infants were given a nipple which, through their sucking, controlled the sounds played to them. Newborns quickly adjusted their sucking speed to get their mother's voice reading *The Cat In The Hat* or *To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street*, whichever the mother had read to them. They also adjusted their sucking speed to hear music which played while they were *in utero*.

In a follow-up experiment, DeCasper and Fifer followed the same maternal reading exposure *in utero*, but gave newborns a choice of the voice of their moth-

er or that of another woman reading the story. Newborns overwhelmingly preferred their mother's voice. Kisilevsky, Silvia, and Hains (2003), who had proved that fetuses hear by the third trimester of pregnancy (Kisilevsky, Muil, & Low, 2000), found that *in utero* infant heart rates accelerated when an audiotape of their mother's voice reading a poem was played. When a stranger's voice read the same poem, the heart rate declined. *New York Times* writer Gina Kolata (1984) summarized a wide range of research in the U.S. and in France as pointing to neonates as having exceptional abilities. Lipsitt (1998) observed that while the research is exciting, with "certain kinds of learning, it is not absurd to suggest that the very young child may never again in its life be as fast at learning as during the newborn period and the succeeding few months." But he also cautioned that the learning curve flattens out as social and environmental factors become part of the learning process.

Whatever the precise rate of learning among newborns and infants, DeCasper and Fifer's basic finding held up in subsequent replications: newborns who are read to *in utero* will actively seek their mother's voice reading the same story. The extent to which the mother's voice and the unique sound of a familiar reading interact remains to be sorted out. Research has consistently shown that a newborn will instinctively turn in the direction of its mother's voice, an effect that is more pronounced when the mother read books and poems regularly during the final prenatal weeks (Lipsitt, 1998).

The role of print media as a social process begins with *in utero* reading and extends through the newborn, toddler, and young childhood stages. Print media alone, i.e., separated from social interaction, can operate much like audio media, which will be discussed in the next section. Child use of either medium in isolation has far less impact than one or the other used as part of interaction with parents, siblings, or others, as will be seen. Print media include books, magazines, photos and pictures that can be viewed, though probably not fully understood, independently. But, when a parent or other adult holds a child and reads aloud, several powerful and separate sensory components in the developmental world of infants, toddlers, and young children become part of the context:
  • The warm touch of being held
  • The scent of mom or dad or another familiar person
  • The sound of a familiar voice
  • The sight of images, letters, colors.

Being held is a crucial component in early bonding between infants and other members of the family, particularly the adults (Greenspan & Lewis, 2000). Sitting on a lap or nestled in someone's arms furthers the bonding process as an additive value to being read to. Scent is often underrated or ignored as a factor in bonding, but infants know their mothers by scent from the moment of birth (Varendi et al., 1994; Makin & Porter, 1989) and if held, learn the scent of other family members (Porter & Moore, 1981). The familiar sound of the mother's voice or of a voice that becomes familiar in early childhood contribute to the overall pleasure, comfort, and security that accompanies being read to (Eliot, 1999, p. 389).

When Jim Trelease (1979, pp. 14–15), a pioneering activist in the reading movement, encouraged a father to begin reading aloud to a 6-month old, the father demurred, "she won't understand the words I'm reading to her." Trelease reminded him that if the child is old enough to talk to, it is old enough to read to. The act of reading a book or poem aloud or of explaining a picture or photo constitutes a more complex model of learning. Trelease based his approach on Deutsch's (1963) study of the learning deficits suffered by children who are neither read to nor engaged in conversation by parents and other adults in the preschool years.

Subsequent research on language acquisition and development underlines the value of Trelease's reading campaign: "Books are without doubt the most effective tool for teaching language" (Eliot, 2000, p. 390). Beginning to hear reading aloud in infancy yields greater language skills in two-year olds than among comparison groups who were not read to (Dunn et al., 1977; Whitehurst, Falco, & Lonigan, 1988; and DeBayrshe, 1993). While straightforward reading aloud has multiple benefits, a dialogic form of reading further encourages the development of a child's communication skills. Prompting a young child to interact with the story by adding details, raising questions, and commenting on characters or setting or action, may increase language skills among 2-year olds by as much as nine months above the standard level. Durkin (1966) found four factors constant among 79 children identified by teachers as "early readers":
  • The child is read to regularly.
  • A wide variety of printed material is available in the home.
  • Paper and pencils are readily available in the home for scribbling and drawing.

- Parents and others in the child's home praised reading, answered questions, and generally supported reading through their actions.

The darker side of this situation is that 88% of children who have reading problems in first grade will still have them in fourth grade, and those who have them in fourth grade will, without major intervention, steadily fall behind as they progress through higher level schooling which depends increasingly on reading ability (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001).

Trelease distinguished between the pleasures of reading, which include learning stories, and the language skills required for self reading. The former, he argued, are appropriate for reading aloud to very young children; the latter are the subject of formal education. Being read to lays the foundation for a significant communication process: the structure and trajectory of a story. Reading aloud provides preschool children with both enriched vocabulary and the ability to tell a story (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2003, pp. 102–03) Two other components, the ability to link sounds with letters and a grasp of how letters combine to make words begin with the level of cognitive development typical of 4- and 5-year olds, and these remain a central task of 4-year-old and 5-year-old kindergarten youngsters.

One of the interesting phenomena observed among toddlers who cannot read is that they will pretend to read a favorite story but with a high degree of accuracy, while holding the book upside down. Development scholars speculate that this pattern generates the pleasure of being read to and replays memorized enjoyment. Some mothers report toddlers want to return the favor of being read to by "reading" the book to an adult . . . perhaps adding elements from other stories.

While a rich vocabulary is an obvious benefit from being read to, the ability to tell a story is an equally crucial foundation stone for language development (Engel, 1999). In hearing the narrative structure of many different stories, children also learn models for assembling their own experiences and ideas into a narrative. Moreover, as they hear many different kinds of stories—long and short, adventures and descriptions, fanciful and factual—children build up a repository from which they can draw the structure which seems best suited to showing off birthday presents or recounting a trip to the zoo.

Paucity of both vocabulary and storytelling models handicaps children who are read to seldom or not at all, so that when they enter kindergarten and begin to study letter sounds and spelling, they enter the unfamiliar world of books and stories. Among the sharpest criticisms of television viewing by children under two years of age were raised first by Trelease and repeated by almost every researcher who has examined language development. When television viewing displaces reading aloud to children, particularly in the first four years of childhood, language development deteriorates proportionately. When television viewing replaces being read to among preschool children, particularly in low socio-economic status households, overall learning declines, and the consequences can reach into academic performance in high school (Neuman, 2003; Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2003).

Ascribing lower language abilities and less frequent reading among older children and teens to television viewing remains, nonetheless, a highly controversial conclusion. Leading media scholars, as will be discussed in the television and video section, point to controlled and careful studies which find television viewing time may have some initial impact, but in the longer run is not related to academic achievement or learning or language development.

When children reach kindergarten age, they continue to have difficulty separating letter sounds in words. Indeed, teaching letter sounds and the spelling of three- and four-letter words remains one of the major tasks of K4 and Kindergarten classes because it is only in that age range that children's cognitive development allows them to move forward.

Eyesight is the weakest of the newborn's senses, and it has been compared to looking through a fog or a piece of frosted glass (Eliot, 1999). In addition to a very short focal range, newborns can discern only bold contrasts, bright colors, and strong patterns. Recognition of its mother's face comes within hours after birth, however (Walton, Bower, & Bower, 1992). Using the wired pacifier method, they found newborns sucked at a rate which projected their mother's face on the screen for a sustained period. Perception of color and depth develop over the first six to nine months, and a wide variety of toys from mobiles and colored rings to soft books with bright colored images are marketed to guarantee maximum development. Placing photos of faces cut from a magazine provides significant visual stimulation, as do geometric black and white images.

Once the infant gains full control of neck muscles, a simple picture book—especially one treated as a read aloud book—moves stimulation to the next step. In the toddler stage, children begin to self select

images which please them. But competition from other media has already intensified. Despite the American Academy of Pediatrics' warning that any television is inappropriate for children under two, Rideout, Vandewater, and Wartella (2003) found that 74% of children under two watch television, 43% watch every day, and 26% have a television in their room. Television's combination of images, colors, and motion combine with sound to offer a more complete and stimulating media experience. From the 1970s, *Sesame Street* research demonstrated that print media could be designed for specific educational goals and integrated with an educational television program with significant learning gains over television viewing alone (Lesser & Cooney, 1974). The gains from print materials—storybooks and coloring books—was even more significant when parents read aloud and interacted with children.

The success of this integrated media package for learning gain set the pattern for children's television content which followed, as will be discussed in the television and video section. From a marketing standpoint, they are following a trail blazed by Walt Disney in the 1930s for entertainment purposes.

3. Audio

Audio media include music and speech delivered through both traditional electronic devices such as radio, television, and music systems as well as computers and the newer generation of toys with microchips and vocal modification capability. The growth of commercial products designed to entertain, enrich, and educate the very youngest children bear special attention.

Eliot's review of the literature shows that "children's early experience with speech and music are tremendously important in shaping many higher aspects of brain function" (2000, p. 229).

Newborns arrive with hearing ability more highly developed than any other sense, in part, because it began to function four months *in utero* as noted above. While the ability to hear is well under development at birth, it continues to develop through early childhood (Peck, 1995). Through this developmental stage, particularly in the first three years, hearing remains quite plastic, shaped in response to the surrounding environment, including media (Northern & Downs, 2002, p. v).

Hearing directly affects the development of language and communication, and through music it provides a source of pleasure and entertainment. Indeed, children born deaf, like those born to mute parents, require early intervention to prevent serious, lifelong, irremediable limitations in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Northern & Downs, 2002, pp. 80-81), perhaps because some auditory brain cells are reallocated to other purposes during the great pruning at about age 3 due to inadequate stimulation. Joan Ganz Cooney was working with precisely this group of pre-school children in rural Georgia in the 1960s when she discovered a 3-year old who had learned rudimentary spelling from watching television commercials and was inspired to create pre-school educational television which became *Sesame Street* (Lesser & Cooney, 1974).

The role of audio media among preschool children varies by age group in availability and usage in two major domains: home life and day care. But of particular concern are the audio media which promise to enrich a child's development or teach a new language.

A. Newborn to 18 months

Newborns arrive with a preference for their mother's language as Mehler and colleagues (1988) discovered among 2-day olds in an experiment monitoring sucking patterns on a pacifier. At the same time, newborns seem sensitive to every phoneme in human speech, but by 6 months of age they focus increasingly on sounds of the language(s) spoken around them and become less sensitive to phonemes from other languages (Kuhl 1993, 1994, 1996; Werker & Tees 1983, 1984a, 1984b). This early selectivity explains the persistence of local dialect and pronunciation despite the presence of alternatives in mass media. Throughout childhood sensitivity to phonemes of new languages seems recoverable along with the ability to reproduce the sounds of a new language without accent, but this ability begins to decline as adolescence approaches (Mehler & Christophe, 1995).

Extensive research into language acquisition among infants raises the issue of whether infants can acquire foreign languages by listening to audio material. Some commercial products promise to teach a for-

eign language to newborns. However, daily conversation most powerfully shapes language acquisition rather than simply listening to recorded foreign language (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 1988, 2003). The key difference in conversation seems to lie in the social interaction that is part of the drive to communicate. Thus, social interaction between an infant and older person who speaks another language will also shape language acquisition. By 10 months of age, an infant uses adult responses to babbling and general language to sharpen the ability to hear and reproduce the sounds of adult language. Kuhl and Meltzoff (1996) demonstrated that infants will reshape their vowel sounds when an adult repeated the sound as a form of training. Again, the interaction with an adult seemed an important, perhaps crucial element.

Music, on the other hand, seems to evoke immediate positive responses in several forms: quieting, entertaining, and pleasure seeking, but it can also cause discomfort and upset. Volume seems to be an upsetting element for newborns who prefer a softer, lower volume than their older siblings or parents, i.e., sound levels closer to those heard *in utero* (Aslin et al., 1983). Music played regularly while a child is *in utero* can instantly quiet a newborn. As infants mature, specific songs become favorite elements in the child's environment.

Whether specific forms of music could increase a child's intelligence by stimulating the brain became a major controversy in both neuroscience and the market of children's educational materials. Called the "Mozart Effect" because the initial experiment involved that composer's music, this approach argued that the inherent order and logic of Mozart's music increased the intellectual ability of those who listened to it. Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky (1993, 1995) reported increased improvement on a spatial reasoning task after 10–15 minutes of listening to Mozart's music. Campbell (1997, 1998, 2000), inspired by Rauscher, launched a series of music CDs and eventually a book that asserted that regularly listening to classical music stimulates brain development, coordination, and visual tracking among newborns, infants, and young children. Other commercial products followed with similar promises. The problem is that the research is hardly conclusive. Steele, Bass, and Crook (1999) wondered publicly at the inability of other researchers to replicate Rauscher's findings. Hetland (1999, 2000) found the presence of some short-term effect on spatial reasoning, but no evidence that exposure to classical music raises the intellectual ability of children.

As with print media, audio media in this age group can be an important component of child-parent interactions which are so crucial to development, as cited in the introduction. Without interaction, manipulating audio equipment creates a significant barrier in the newborn and early toddler stages. An older sibling, of course, can be a source of audio content.

B. 18 months to 4 years

At a somewhat unpredictable point between 18 months and 2 years of age brain growth leaps forward (Eliot, 2000, p. 373) and language development shifts into high gear as toddlers begin to build vocabulary at an average of eight words per day (Marchman, 1990; Pinker, 1994). It is at this point that pictures, story books, and simple video content can provide new words and associate them with images. This milestone in cognitive development opens the way for all forms of media to play an increasingly significant role in a child's learning, with or without adult interaction, although some adult assistance is required to assist in the operation of equipment in the early stage of this period.

Once this milestone is passed, parental engagement seems to be the single most important factor in a child's vocabulary development—more than media, including language CDs. Hart and Risley (1995), in examining the socioeconomic factors that created significant differences in child development, identified three factors that accounted for most of the difference in language growth: the amount of parental talking to the child, the number of times parents answered children's questions, and the ratio of positive vs. negative feedback. The volume and variety in patterns of parental speech provided models for children in this age group to imitate. The richer the variety, the more examples children heard to draw from and incorporate as their language developed. The positive or negative feedback was of a different order, one supporting the Chaffee, McLeod, and Atkin (1971) findings on differences in family communication patterns. The higher the ratio of positive feedback, the better the language performance of 3-year olds. Children discouraged from asking questions or generally communicating seem to learn that such behaviors are unacceptable. Socialization of children to the patterns and roles of language shapes the child's view.

As digital coordination improves, toddlers can manipulate interactive toys with embedded microchips, and audio devices provide stimulation and play value. Dolls of an earlier generation that cried "Mama,

mama" have been replaced with interactive stuffed toys with embedded microchips and an audio speaker that play a series of short phrases. The more advanced ones have a vocabulary acquisition program that "learns" from what the child says. Nor are these toys designed for girls alone, although dolls aimed at girls remain part of the market.

The BRATZ dolls, Nora and Nita, are an example, as their advertising copy on Amazon.com explains:

> Once they start talking, these twins might not stop. These BRATZ Nita and Nora dolls recognize each other, and then they gab and squabble about it, just like they do in the BRATZ BABYZ DVD movie.
> Nita and Nora really talk, and their heads turn as they speak.

> Nita and Nora interact with each other by using over 75 phrases.

Aimed at 3-year olds, these dolls generate language and can provide another source for children's vocabulary and grammar style. Note also the modern interdependence or joint marketing of multiple media forms to children at this age. However, as Hart and Risley (1995) have shown, the more powerful effect comes from parental interaction.

It is at this stage that television and computers become more prominent, although music remains an audio form of enjoyment. Media research on this age group shifts heavily to television, as children's coordination allows control of the television set and programs aimed at young children become available.

4. Television

No aspect of media research can match the variety and sheer volume of published studies on children and television, reflecting longstanding concern about the impact of the media society on children. From television's earliest years as a source of children's entertainment, parents, scholars, and public officials have worried publicly about its deleterious effects and imagined dire consequences for a generation narcotized by the medium, or, worse, turned into savage killers. As television out-muscled other forms of popular entertainment for the attention of children, public worry turned into serious scholarship which has grown steadily and spread across a wide variety of academic areas from anthropology to theology. Each discipline has brought its own concepts, methodologies, and primary questions as television began to shape popular culture and provided programs which became touchstones for various subgroups of the population.

Similarly, few research areas have pushed so steadily into the frontiers of understanding of children as the scholars examining the growth and development of children from prenatal stages to 3 years of age. New technologies allow us to peer into uterine development, the responses of a fetus, and the brain patterns of infants. Creative new research methods allow researchers to gain glimpses of the patterns of development among infants and toddlers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) weighed in on the issue with its assertion that children under 2 years of age should not be exposed to television because of its negative effects (2001). In making its assertion, the AAP relied on a body of research from the scientific community including developmental psychologists, neuropsychologists, linguists, and educational psychologists. Its caution matches that of researchers on infant development. The AAP's recommendation was less warmly greeted by scholars who study school age children and adolescents; their work had made them skeptical of claims about direct effects. The two groups of scholars thus come from significantly different traditions, and they focus on significantly different developmental stages of children, one on neonates and infants through 24 months or so, the other on children from 2–3 years of age through middle childhood to adolescence. Only a handful of researchers have begun to integrate the two with explorations into the relationship between television and children under 3 years of age.

A. Neonates, infants, and toddlers (0–18 months)

Birth initiates a period of dramatic and rapid development of brain cells whose steady response to the infant's environment begin a process of neurological shaping that continues for years. As Eliot wrote:

genes are important, but anyone who has studied nerve cells can tell you how remarkably plastic they are. The brain itself is literally molded by experience: every sight, sound, and thought leaves an imprint on specific neural circuits, modifying the way future sights, sounds, and thoughts will be registered. Brain hardware is not fixed, but living, dynamic tissue that is constantly updating itself to meet the sensory, motor, emotional, and intellectual demands on hand. (1999, p. 4)

Infancy is the most crucial stage in this molding process: "Although we know from studies of adult learning that the brain remains malleable throughout life, it is massively more so in infancy" (Eliot, 1999, p. 6).

Although infants are born with a somewhat primitive brain, they are not at all Locke's *tabula rasa* (1689); rather, newborns "come into the world with all kinds of mental skills and predispositions, abilities uniquely suited to the critical needs of early life" (Eliot, 1999, p. 6), the ability to recognize their mother's voice, and preference for their native language. Once outside the womb, the skull and brain within it grow very rapidly because of genetic endowment and in response to the demands placed upon it. "While genes program the *sequence* of neural development, at every turn the *quality* of that development is shaped by environmental factors" (p. 9). Television is among the environmental factors, more noticeably present for its sound than its images, which places it with other audio media as a factor shaping the brain development of infants.

The period of rapid proliferation of brain cells in the first eight months is followed by a period of significant cell pruning for efficient operation through age 2, a process which continues as the brain shapes itself through childhood (Eliot, 1999, p. 205). In the first phase of pruning, the brain molds its functions to the specifics of the environment, in some instances with irreversible consequences. In a child born with strabismus, for example, the brain will not develop binocular vision, and if uncorrected will disconnect itself from one eye (Birch, 1993). In a child born blind, the brain will reallocate the 100 million or so neurons from sight to hearing. Such powerful response to environmental stimuli holds true for every aspect of an infant's body. Lacking stimulus from a particular sense or area, the brain will prune away or reallocate the brain cells originally devoted to it. Conversely, the brain will allocate greater resources to areas of high stimulation. From this perspective, the influence of television is part of the overall pattern of stimuli which prompt an infant's brain to shape itself to fit the specifics of the environment.

From the first cry after birth, an infant will begin communicating and learning how to communicate with important people in the immediate environment, especially the mother, who quickly learns to distinguish the meaning of the distinct cries (Haith & Campos, 1983). The communication process and skill with it turns on the relationship between the infant and the parents, older siblings, and other care givers in the immediate environment. Jerome Bruner (1977) understood even the earliest interactions as crucial to developing language and grasping the idea of taking turns in a conversation.

Manning-Morton and Thorp (2001) summarized their observational conclusions about how babies communicate with the following schema:

- Babies communicate their needs and feelings by crying when they are bored, hungry, in pain, frightened, and lonely.
- Babies express their interest and pleasure in communicating with you by gazing, searching with their eyes, smiling, babbling, reaching, craning their necks, pointing, laughing, and shouting.
- Babies show that they want to stop an interaction and their displeasure by looking away, tilting their heads away, grimacing, whining, whimpering, and pushing away with their arms and legs.
- Babies pay more attention to human voices than to other sounds.
- The more others respond to babies' attempts to communicate, the more the babies will continue, and they seem to pause for a response.
- Babies often show that they know what you are about to do by reaching out or looking towards their bib or bottle, for example.

Karmiloff-Smith (1994) integrated these observations about distinct cries, other studies on infant speech efforts, and research about infant response to facial expressions: "It has been demonstrated that young infants can detect the correspondence between auditory speech signals and the visible articulatory movements that accompany them. . . . In other words, they can 'lip read' " (p. 1304). As her research and that of her daughter and other psycholinguists developed, Karmiloff-Smith (Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith, 2001) moved somewhat away from the "group of theorists [who] place social interaction at the center of their claims about the processes of language acquisition" (1994, p. 1304). Rather, she argues that recent research

shows that language development not only proceeds on multiple levels at once from early infancy, but that:

> different brain mechanisms will be more attuned to processing one type of input over another. Thus a mechanism that is sensitive to sequential, fast-fading input might pay particular attention to oral or signed language but not to faces, and as it becomes increasingly specialized at processing language, it will become more devoted to that specific domain. (2001, p. 7)

Even more powerfully than Bruner's view that language develops from the earliest interactions, Karmiloff and Karmiloff-Smith's summary of recent psycholinguistic research explains the adamant opposition to exposing infants and very young children to television among those who study the development of very young children. Like other parts of the environment, television provides stimuli which necessarily skew brain development not just in language acquisition but towards understanding television itself. Opposition centers around five major concerns: distortion of brain development, displacement of parental interaction, interference with language development, lack of processing ability, and false promises of enhancement.

The risk television poses for distorting brain development springs from the extraordinary plasticity of brain cells during this period including dramatic growth and subsequent pruning. Within this cycle the brain develops rapidly in direct response to stimuli, and television provides higher levels of visual and aural stimulation than non-TV activities. Healey (2004) points to limited cortical cell growth among television viewers in comparison to non-television viewers owing to the relative passivity of TV viewing in contrast to normal play. But Healey extends findings from studies comparing the cortical development of rats running through challenging maze versus those who live unchallenging lives.

To the extent that television diminishes infant-care giver interactions, it thwarts the normal drive for communicative interaction, and it replaces development of dialogic abilities with one-way communication of uncertain value and direction. In the pre-2 year old age, the communication activities summarized above by Manning-Morton and Thorp require a communication partner. For want of a partner, the opportunity for growth in skill is lost.

Television can interfere with normal language development among infants in several different ways during a crucial period when the ability is developed or lost permanently. Most prominent and damaging is a household where television is constantly on and the volume set high. In addition to overwhelming the infant's auditory sensitivity, this environment makes it extremely difficult, even impossible, for the child to learn the subtle spacing between syllables and words. Because the ability to distinguish phonemes comes in a relatively narrow window from 6 to 18 months (Eimas, 1971) while the infant simultaneously learns the boundaries between words (Christophe, Dupoux, Bertoncini, & Mehler, 1994) and the more subtle sounds of its native language, loud television interferes with language acquisition with permanent results (Kuhl, 1994). Learning to make the sounds of the language develops in companionship with hearing the sounds, because infants can hear their own voices and the phonemes they produce. As this ability develops, an infant begins to associate word sounds with concrete objects and actions in the immediate environment. Learning to name things in the environment follows the ability to hear the original word from a care giver and one's own pronunciation in the context of interaction with someone. A child whose ability to hear is compromised by loud television through most or all of the waking hours in this stage of development will suffer an irrecoverable shortfall in language development. Only if the sound or volume is low enough can the infant distinguish the language of care giver interactions from the background sounds.

Doerkin (1983) found the language of television quite dissimilar from normal parental expression, so full of hyperbole, exaggeration, puns, and words with double meanings as to be unintelligible to an infant learning the language. He was particularly concerned about the odd usages in advertising, including the language of jingles, and argued that such cuteness would replace coherent thought based language.

Television requires a more complex intellectual process than audio or print media, and even 3- and 4-year olds have not yet mastered its intricacies. Developing pictorial competence is a major task of children (DeLoach 1979, 2005; DeLoach, Pierroutsakos, Uttal, Rosengren, & Gottlieb, 1998), who through 24 months seem able to understand pictures right side up or upside down. Yet, distinguishing between pictorial representations and real objects develops slowly to about 19 months of age. Prior to that age, young children will try to grasp or pat objects in photos and on a screen, progressively less aggressively from 15 months on. The inability to process fully

a television image includes failure to understand that television, unlike a window, does not show actual objects and life on the other side.

The original concerns about children and television included the impact of households where television was always on and the way television seemed to fixate children, even very young children, leading to concern about a "narcotizing effect" (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1948).

The initial explanation for very young children's attention to TV was fascination with the shifting patterns of color, even if they could not process the content. Anderson (1977) characterized fixed attention as attentional inertia which could be affected by distractions in the environment, the program content, and the viewer's pattern. Subsequent research led Anderson (Anderson & Collins, 1988) to elaborate distractability. He discovered that attention to TV begins with color and motion, but even among infants, it continues because of interest in the content, for children look away from the TV set as often as 150 times per hour, disproving the fixed attention construct. Among children 2 years of age and older, content coherence becomes critical, demonstrating a direct link between a child's understanding of content and attention to it (Anderson, 2004).

The difference between foreground television and background television emerged as a dimension of TV attention from Anderson's work and that of others, particularly in the exploration of the effect of households where a television set is always on. Foreground television refers to active viewing by the child, or at least the presence of TV content near the child. Background television refers to the presence of TV's sound and image somewhat removed from the child's physical location. Foreground television is, if not a dominating presence, a forceful one; background television is both more remote and less attended. Older siblings as well as other adults in the household can be the source for both foreground and background TV and retain the infant in proximity to the TV. Constant TV households have long been a major concern, but Vandewater and her colleagues (2005) found that normal socio-economic status variables do not predict which households will have TV on for 12–18 hours per day. Rather, parental belief that TV is good for children or at least poses no deleterious impact predicts most accurately. Conversely, parents who believe TV can negatively affect young children tend to sharply restrict viewing.

Anderson and Levin (1976) had shown that attention to TV content rises measurably from age 1 to age 4. Younger children spent more time with toys and only 10% of the time looking at TV. Older children watched TV at least half the time and for several minutes straight. Vandewater, Bickham, Lee, Cummings, Wartella and Rideout (2005) found that about four in 10 households with children aged 1–4 had television on all or most of the time. Most children in these "constant television households" develop in the presence of foreground television which creates the developmental problems noted earlier. But others live with background television, a little studied situation. The concern turns on whether very young children tune out background television or are somehow influenced by its presence as well.

Anderson and Pempek (2005) found in an experiment among young children that they significantly reduced both the number and length of play episodes when the TV program *Jeopardy* was introduced in the background. Play episodes among 1-year olds dropped 25% in length, from an average of 80 seconds to less than 60 seconds. The results were not solely attributable to glances at the TV set, rather occurred in a setting where children seemed generally distracted. Schmidt and colleagues (2008) and Kirkorian and colleagues (2005, 2008) found in an experiment that mother-child interactions change significantly when taped TV shows are replayed. With TV on, mother-child interactions decreased an average of 21%, from 74% of the hour to 59%.

In 1997 PBS began airing *Teletubbies*, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) children's program designed for toddlers. The four strongly colored characters are shaped something like snowmen with TV screens on their bellies. During the show film clips related to the show appear on the screens. Purely fanciful, the program nonetheless employs strategic repetition of words to encourage language acquisition, along with a kind of childish babble like that of toddlers. The babble or "childese" has been the source of considerable controversy in educational circles. Linebarger and Walker (2005) found that children who watched the program learned fewer new words than others. Krcmar, Grela, and Lin (2007) found that younger toddlers cannot learn from *Teletubbies* unless viewing with an adult. New words were lost amidst the multiple elements of the program, and the sequence seemed not to match normal language (Krcmar & Grela, 2004). Children over 2 years of age, seemed able to separate

new words from the other elements and to add them to their vocabularies.

How well very young children understand or process a program like *Teletubbies* was examined in an experiment by Anderson and Pempek (2005). Using regular and scrambled versions of a 10-minute segment of *Teletubbies* with children aged 6 months to 2 years of age, they found sharp age differences in attention. Up to 12 months of age, children showed no attentional differences between the two versions. At 18 months of age children showed moderate differences in attention. But, beginning at age 2, children showed clear and significant differences in attention, spending more time with the normal sequence but turning away from the scrambled version. Similar results emerged when Anderson and Pempek played two versions, one with the normal soundtrack and the other with the soundtrack played backwards, except that 18-month olds appeared to notice the difference. Thus, the period between 18 months and 2 years of age constitutes a developmental stage when children begin to recognize both the visual and sound aspects of television, or at least begin to develop expectations about the organization of images and words.

Researchers reserve some of their most pointed criticisms for video products which refer to studies of cortical development as proof that watching a particular set of tapes or CDs will trigger superior mental development through stimulating the brain. No controlled study supports the assertions of commercial claims (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2003). Indeed, use of such materials may induce neurological crowding and become counterproductive (Huttenlocher, 2002). In reality, very young children are much slower to imitate what they see on the screen than what they see in their environment (Barr, 2008).

B. Age 2 to 4

Two years of age marks a shift in a child's development and the beginning of new possibilities in the relationship between children and television. At approximately 24 months of age the dynamic brain cell process of infancy begins to slow and the child's exploration of the environment rises. In this stage television content can provide substantial educational enrichment but also negatively affect behavior. Not coincidentally, this age marks the beginning of television content aimed specifically at young children and of research by media scholars on the relationship between children and television.

The world of both children's television and research on children and television changed dramatically with the first broadcast of *Sesame Street* in 1969. Prior to *Sesame Street* television content for children, apart from Saturday cartoons, comprised mostly entertainment programs in either the *Howdy Doody Show* (1947–1960) or half hour adventure formats. In the distinctive array of children's programming developed in Chicago, *Ding Dong School* (1952–1956) set the pattern for children's educational programs by simulating a classroom (Okuda & Mulqueen, 2004). Only *Captain Kangaroo* (1955–1984) involved a conversational tone with child viewers and mixed book reading and drawing with character interaction. None of these programs involved research beyond basic Nielson audience data.

Joan Ganz Cooney's inspiration for *Sesame Street* began with an overriding educational goal: bring the children of poor urban and rural families up to the school preparedness level of their middle-class peers (Lesser & Cooney, 1974). As an educational psychologist working among special needs children in rural Georgia, Cooney discovered the potential of television as the mechanism for reaching this goal on a national scale. Thus, rather than looking for a new form of children's television, Cooney saw in television, particularly the format of TV advertising, tools by which she could shape the educational future of disadvantaged preschool children. Moreover, unlike previous children's shows, *Sesame Street* was broadcast on PBS, funded by grants from Carnegie Foundation and others rather than by commercial sponsors.

In 1968 Children's Television Workshop (CTW) embarked on television programming for children founded on research and evaluated by research, a model so radical that program producers rooted in the traditional model could not grasp the merits. Edward Palmer, the first director of research, proposed two research approaches: "formative" and "summative" from the outset (Polsky, 1974, p. 48). Formative research, in Palmer's usage, has a developmental function: it tests every aspect of a program both before and during its production. Summative research studies the effects, particularly learning gain, among children following exposure.

Palmer's approach permanently reshaped the larger research worlds in education and media with an unprecedented integration of quantitative research, television production, educational content, and child development. Both the model and the research output revolutionized the relationship between children and

television (Palmer & Fisch, 2001). Literally tens of thousands of individual research studies—large and small—have been conducted by CTW over the past 39 years. In addition, research journals abound with re-analysis and studies from scholars external to the *Sesame Street* process.

No aspect or dimension of *Sesame Street* was built on assumption; everything was scrutinized through research. The very first research studies probed the unknown aspects of young children and television. How could they be reached? Did they control TV sets? Could they change TV channels—VHF and UHF (prior to cable and remotes)? When were children watching television? Could children tell when *Sesame Street* was broadcast? And so on. The results, by the way: Children at 3 controlled stations and could change channels. They watch throughout the day, and over 1 million were watching at midnight any day of the week. Children at 3 tell time by the TV program that is on, so they learned which program preceded *Sesame Street* (Lesser & Cooney, 1974).

Developmental research comprised analysis of proposed story lines, characters, and pacing for effectiveness, followed by testing and focus groups which helped refine the final product. With so little understanding of how children between 2 and 4 years of age react to TV and grasp its content, CTW staff used developmental research to open windows into this world and to achieve educational success and to remedy boring or ineffective segments. Some studies focus on production aspects: segment length, pacing, and sequencing. Others test learning strategies and effectiveness. Every new character is studied and refined to produce the desired goal.

As the program moved into social learning, developmental research studied ways to address children's emotional states and problems. For example, one story dealt with Ernie's fear of the dark. Fear kept him awake worrying about monsters who were shown dancing around. Pilot testing showed that the portrayal frightened children, too, so that only a few were attentive to the reassuring ending (Guernsey, 2007, pp. 106–07). Similarly, a pilot test of *Elmo in Grouchland*, which began with an evil person stealing Elmo's blankie, so distressed children that many wept openly in the theater.

Perhaps the most famous example of developmental research studied how to deal with the death of actor Will Lee, who played Mr. Hooper, the proprietor of the local store. Episode #1839, "Farewell, Mr. Hooper," ran on Thanksgiving Day 1983 with a direct discussion of death as part of life and a cause of grief, and it encouraged children and parents to talk about the death of a loved one. It earned a Daytime Emmy and remains one of the most poignant and influential segments in TV history (Truglio, Lovelace, Seguí, & Scheiner, 2001, pp. 73-74).

The summative or evaluative research assessed the degree of learning gain across the widest possible array of variables, and those findings constitute a large proportion of contemporary knowledge about the educational aspect of children and television. CTW mounted hundreds of separate evaluative surveys of *Sesame Street* in day care centers, nursery schools, and samples of homes across socio-economic status variables. Testing included follow up variables such as co-viewing, especially with a parent, viewing combined with post-viewing use of specially designed story books, coloring books, and work sheets. The evaluative research continued as new follow-up materials proliferated along with stuffed characters, toys, puzzles, and games.

C. Learning gain

CTW research and that of others unequivocally demonstrates that children who watch *Sesame Street* gain in their learning of language (Fisch & Truglio, 2001; Rice, 1983, 1984; Rice & Woodstall, 1988; Rice, Huston, Truglio, & Wright, 1990), particularly for the intended audience of 3- to 5-year olds. One aspect of this dramatic result is the developmental stage known as the "vocabulary explosion." Between 2 and 6 years of age children acquire an average of eight to 10 new words per day (Marchman, 1990; Pinker, 1994). Because of specialization within the brain cells, children from about 2 years of age on can acquire and use 200 new words per month. Almost simultaneously children experience a "grammar explosion" in which sentence order and word sequence begin to fall into place. Suddenly, two-word expressions blossom into more complex speech.

As *Sesame Street*'s formative research demonstrated, television helps acquisition of vocabulary most effectively when the image on the screen displays a picture for the word or the word itself, and when it is accompanied by frequent repetition. A television image that is not associated with the word causes confusion, at least in the early stages of language development (Eliot, 1999).

Another crucial aspect of *Sesame Street*'s effect on vocabulary and grammar is the presence of a source

of enrichment. Hart and Risley (1995) found that the strongest predictor of a child's language skill is the amount of time and the style of parental conversation with the children. Parents who speak more often and with a richer vocabulary had a positive effect, but more importantly, parents who asked questions and affirmed children's speech tended to raise children with greater verbal skills. In adopting this kind of communication style, *Sesame Street* spurs language development. One characteristic of impoverished families is limited vocabulary, and in this context *Sesame Street* offers vocabulary that is otherwise unavailable. *Sesame Street* also offers the same enrichment to children in middle and upper class households as well. With program design aided by formative research, *Sesame Street* built an effective language learning model.

Analysis of data from the 1993 National Household Education Survey demonstrated that children who viewed *Sesame Street* come from all demographic groups and geographic areas, except that the proportion of children watching is significantly higher in more impoverished areas (Zill, 2001, p. 125). Moreover, *Sesame Street* viewers were more likely to exhibit the following characteristics with controls for all possible intervening variables:

- Signs of emergent literacy in preschool years (strongest among the most impoverished)
- Self reading of story books in first and second grade
- Less likelihood of needing remedial reading instruction.

Disappointingly, despite much stronger learning gains from watching *Sesame Street*, children from disadvantaged and impoverished households did not reach the achievement levels of their middle and upper class peers.

Wright, Huston, Scantlin, and Kotler (2001) found in a longitudinal study that educational viewing, particularly *Sesame Street*, correlated with school readiness measures for children from low to moderate socio-economic status families. These results and review of other findings led Schmidt and Anderson (2007) to conclude:

> It is clear that *Sesame Street*, the longest running TV program with an explicitly academic curriculum, has short-term positive effects on vocabulary and school-readiness and that these have long-term positive consequences. No other curriculum-based program has been as intensively studied, but numerous evaluations and other kinds of studies have found positive effects for many other curriculum-based programs consistent with those found for *Sesame Street*. Television that is designed to teach does so, with long-term positive consequences. (p. 67)

D. Long term effect

CTW initiated a series of recontact studies in which researchers examined the long term effects of *Sesame Street* among high school students. The recontact study found that "students who frequently watched *Sesame Street* as preschoolers . . . had higher grades in English, mathematics, and science; spent more time reading books outside school; perceived themselves more competent in school; placed higher value on achievement in mathematics and science; elected more advanced mathematics courses; and expressed lower levels of aggressive attitudes (Huston, Anderson, Wright, Linebarger, & Schmitt, 2001, p. 140).

The Early Window Project (Wright et al., 2001) followed 230 subjects aged 2–5 over a 3-year period with interviews, phone surveys, and viewing diaries. The study, cited in the overview, provided a significant portrait of television viewing among young children. The standardized test administered annually provided insight into development of language, pre-reading and pre-math abilities. Children who watched *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* or *Sesame Street* and other educational shows performed significantly better than those who watched other kinds of programs.

E. Other programs

In 1970 *Sesame Street* was joined on PBS by *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, which actually had been airing since 1968 on the National Educational Network (NET) and moved to PBS when NET went off the air. The show began in 1962 on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) as *Misterrogers*, but in 1966 Fred Rogers (1928–2003) bought the rights to the show and moved it to Pittsburgh and worked on a new approach. Rogers set a distinctively intimate, dialogic, and leisurely pace, asking viewers about aspects of their lives, entertaining a visitor, and exploring community life with film clips from factories, zoos, offices, fishing boats, and the like. He then moved to another part of the set, the "Neighborhood of Make Believe" with its castle and puppets (Collins & Kimmel, 1997, Rogers, 2003). Ever gentle and sympathetic, engaged with his young viewers, Fred Rogers offered young children a program which contrasted sharply with *Sesame Street* and its curriculum based content delivered with the energy of a TV ad. The show ended in 2001.

Developing pro-social behavior in children was a major goal of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Stein and Friedrich (1972; Friedrich & Huston-Stein, 1973) used the program in a field experiment on the relationship between TV content and aggression. Children from lower class families who viewed 12 half-hour episodes over a 4-week period exhibited more pro-social and helping behavior in sharp contrast to their counterparts who showed more aggressive behavior after viewing an identical amount of Batman and Superman programming.

Sesame Street, designed for preschool children in the 3- to 4-year-old range, seemed increasingly out of place as the media saturation of children's households rose with the explosive growth of cable in the 1990s and a parallel growth of parental use of VHS and DVD for both babysitting and educational reasons. A CTW audience analysis in the late 1990s revealed that *Sesame Street*'s core viewers were between 2 and 3, and that children's interest in the program began dropping after 3 years of age (Guernsey, 2007, p. 121). The problem was that the media world of children and families had changed dramatically by *Sesame Street*'s 30th anniversary.

As the Zero to Six study (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartella, 2003) demonstrated, the bedrooms of even 6-month olds held TV sets and related electronic equipment, and nearly 60% of children under 2 watch screen media in a typical day. The amount of children's programming increased, much of it cartoons and other simple entertainment or reruns, but other educational programs were developed like *Barney, Blue's Clues*, and *Dora the Explorer*.

Following up on Anderson and Lorch's (1983) research, which showed that young children pay attention to TV when they are cognitively engaged, a group of producers developed *Blue's Clues* (1996–2006) using a narrative structure with interactive content rather than the episodic structure of *Sesame Street* (Anderson 2004; Tracy, 2002). Introduced on Nickelodeon, the show became the highest rated show for preschoolers and changed the paradigm for program structure for young children. Like CTW, Nickelodeon developed a line of books and related materials for reinforcement, with great financial success.

The same year PBS, the BBC, and the CBC introduced *Arthur*, a series of 30-minute programs comprising two 11-minute stories starring an aardvark and a live segment featuring elementary school children in a class room working or learning. Books and libraries are particularly important to the episodes as part of Arthur's adventures with his family and friends. Distinctly pro-social, *Arthur* also includes material on nutrition and other health issues. A unique characteristic of *Arthur* are the parodies of other TV shows and references only adults are likely to catch.

In 2000 Nickelodeon added the animated show *Dora the Explorer* to its preschool lineup with the same story driven structure. In each episode Dora, a bi-lingual Latina, sets out on an adventure to help somebody find something. Highly pro-social and imaginative, the program equips Dora with a magic backpack and map, amiable and mischievous companions, and anthropomorphic plants and animals. In every episode Dora asks viewers to help her.

Linebarger and Walker (2005) found that children who repeatedly watched *Dora the Explorer*, *Blue's Clues*, *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, and *Arthur* were able to identify more words at 30 months than children who did not view. The other significant finding: as long as children watch, they continue to learn. Children who watched *Sesame Street* showed far less vocabulary gain.

Competition from good quality educational programs was one thing, but as CTW researchers well knew, reaching 2-3 year olds required different production elements and educational approaches than that employed to reach their original audience of 4-year olds. In 1998 PBS began broadcasting a revamped *Sesame Street*, redesigned for 2- to 4-year olds, which concludes with a 15-minute segment, *Elmo's World*. The new version is story driven and structured in response to research which showed that children want to see a story from beginning to end, rather than the episodic and segmented structure of the original *Sesame Street* (Bedford, 2001). The show remains curriculum-driven, and subsequent studies show that children who view the new format show vocabulary gain. Native English speaking children who watch *Dora the Explorer* add a modest number of Spanish words to their vocabularies, particularly at 4 years of age (Linebarger & Walker, 2005).

F. Special considerations: Violent content

In studies of college students whose irrational fears originated in childhood, Cantor (2001, 1998) developed Piaget's (1952, 2000) model of cognitive growth. Children who see violent content before they can adequately process it can suffer long-term trauma which leads to irrational fears. Below the developmental stage in which children can distinguish fantasy from reality, graphic violence has long term implications. Moreover, Cantor (1998) found that the image seems

very powerful for very young children, even with children as old as 5 years of age. At that age of development, she argued, the image on a TV screen is every bit as real as the parent in the living room. They fear, for example, the Incredible Hulk because young children are intellectually unable to grasp positive motivation in characters who appear frightening until they move to the next stage of cognitive development.

Apart from graphic violence and a frightening appearance, however, lesser violent content can also have short-term and long-term impact in three ways: increased aggressive behavior, desensitization and increased tolerance, and generalized fear about personal safety (Murray, 2007, p. 194). While this applies to older children and adults, the question is how preschool children might be affected. Preschool viewing of violent content correlates with negative results among high school girls (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Deborah, & Wright, 2001). Early viewing of violent TV and video content seems to lead to increased aggressive behavior and subsequent negative relation-ships with teachers (Huesman & Eron, 1986; Singer & Singer, 1981). Anderson and colleagues (2001) also found viewing violent content to be associated with lower academic achievement in girls. Schmidt and Anderson (2007), after reviewing the literature, argued that the positive impact of educational programming relates to impulse control and reduced aggression. Violent content, on the other hand, offers an opposite model of dealing with impulses and social interactions.

In conclusion, they summarized the extant research from the past 50 years:

> There is little question but that educational television programs teach, and that this teaching has beneficial short- and long-term consequences for schooling. These consequences are due not only to academic content and skills learned from the programs, but also from the social teaching of impulse and aggression control. Most of the negative effects of television stem from entertainment programs, particularly those with violent content. (p. 77)

5. Video and Computer Games

Although psychologist David Grossman (1995) draws a direct line from violent video games to adolescent aggression and violence, his primary concern lies with middle school age children rather than preschoolers. Still, video and computer game use by preschool children raises an array of concerns and questions whether the games have educational or pure entertainment goals because they have become a significant part of the media environment. Commercial software and video game manufacturers offer parents an array of products which promise to enhance intelligence, teach a foreign language, or prepare a child for preschool and kindergarten. Others, like the web site One More Story (www.onemorestory.com) sell subscriptions to a set of "the highest quality children's books" from 10 publishers. With a mouse, member children can see and hear a story by clicking on the image of the cover and then turn each page. This fusion of audio, video, and print media opens up a whole new media pattern for today's very young children. Whether in the background of a very young child's media life because of an older sibling or in the fore-ground through direct play, video and computer games are part of the world of many toddlers.

The Zero to Six study (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartella, 2003, p. 15) found 14% of children from 0–3 years of age have played a video game, a figure which rises to 50% among 4- to 6-year olds. In addition, 7% of children 3 and younger play video games several times each week. The attitudes of these children's parents regarding the educational value of such games varies widely: 40% say they mostly hurt; 27% believe they have no effect; and 22% believe they help children learn. As sites like One More Story increase, these figures will soon seem unrealistically small. Educational claims along with fears of negative effects bear close and careful analysis. In a review of the research, Van Evra (1998) noted a significant lacuna in the area of video and computer use among younger children.

Much of the basic research addressing this area of media with preschool children has already been discussed in the sections on audio and television. A child's fundamental developmental process dictates the timing for attention to such media and the growth curve for

recognizing visual images as distinct from real objects. An extension of that line of research addresses young children's imitation of what they see on the screen. Meltzoff (1988, 1999; Meltzoff & Prinz, 2002), who developed experimental methods for testing infants' imitation of behavior seen on videos, found that even 14-month olds can replicate what they have seen 24 hours later. Barr (2008) found that children learn much more quickly from direct observation than from video versions. As with learning language, infants learn more swiftly from human interaction than from media.

Engaging very young children in video or computer games differs little on visual and audio dimensions from standard television attention and, as described above, depends on the child's developmental level and on whether the game is in the foreground or background. The degree of participation and control sets the game experience apart from simple television viewing (Calvert, Strong & Gallagher, 2005; Calvert, Strong, Jacobs, & Conger, 2007). But, the presence of interactivity does not necessarily improve children's engagement. Revelle, Medoff, and Strommen (2001, pp. 222–23) detail the ways Children's Television Workshop researchers studied the development of games through several formative research methods, including taping children playing segments under development. The need for absolute clarity and ease of response by young children and those in kindergarten and first grade formed a central concern for the CTW research.

Cognitive development offers another perspective on the relationship between children and video or computer games. Buckleitner, editor-in-chief of *Children's Software & New Media Revue*, found in his doctoral dissertation research (2004) that when preschool children could advance in a game by trial and error they were much more engaged than when they were given constant feedback in the form of directions or praise. Being in control, that is, being able to explore on their own, seemed to motivate young children to a higher level of interaction with the game. This points to a serious issue when parents play a game with their child and provide directions and commands.

Allison Caplovitz, manager of research and development for *Blue's Clues* and a consultant on children's websites, found in her research on electronic children's books that while there is no significant difference in language development in comparison with paper books, the role of parent and child is reversed (2005). Parents control the pacing and style of reading paper books; children can read electronic story books on their own, and they prefer to control the reading as they do with their toys.

One of the more radical scholars in this area, linguistics expert James Gee (2003) argues that video games can act as learning experiences that include literacy, even for 3- and 4-year olds. Among the learning areas in addition to language, Gee includes identity, situational thinking, retelling a story, grappling with a different culture, and social structure. Not all video games qualify in his view, nor does he include video games designed with an explicit curriculum goal.

> I am mainly concerned with the sorts of video games in which the player takes on the role of a fantasy character moving through an elaborate world, solving various problems (violently or not), or in which the player builds and maintains some complex entity like an army, a city, or even a whole civilization. (p. 1)

Preschoolers on the verge of kindergarten age form the youngest range of gamers who fit into Gee's type of video game, but they are far from the only players. Younger children simply have simpler games at their fingertips, but Gee's point about cognitive development and language may apply to younger children in a more limited way. PBSKids.org has developed an electronic playground in which children can explore a variety of activities and entertainments which seem more suitable to 2- to 4-year olds. Games are designed to give children complete control. The 2006 revision of the website was designed to give preliterate children the ability to play without parental assistance. "We decided we wouldn't design any more Web sites for parents," according to Sara DeWitt, director of the interactive project (Guernsey, 2007, p. 210).

With graphic violence the issue takes a different turn. For the very young child there is no such thing as fantasy violence (Cantor, 1998). Because of their stage of cognitive development (Piaget, 1952), very young children see everything as real and cannot separate what they see on a TV screen from what happens in their own house or yard. As Cantor discovered, even college students carry irrational fears created by exposure to film or TV violence at too young an age. There is no research evidence that suggests young children's exposure to video game violence differs in any significant way from other media exposure on subsequent aggression, fears, or any other dimension. The larger problem, however, is the enormous void in research in this area.

6. Conclusion

Like everyone else in contemporary industrialized cultures, preschool children cannot escape from the pervasive presence of communication media. Because most cannot read, their unassisted exposure to audio sources, television, and video games exceeds their exposure to printed materials. But the evaluation of those experiences hinges on a key factor. Those who do experience books and other print resources usually do so with parents or care givers. As this review has pointed out, academic and corporate researchers often disagree about the consequences and effects of media exposure for preschool children and this context forms one of the key variables.

The benefits of reading or experiencing print-based materials seem to arise from the increased contact with the person reading: an interpersonal benefit from the communication process, nonverbally as much as verbally or visually. As they grow older young children do associate the printed page (and its images) with the encoded information that they heard read to them and can use the visual cues on the page to remember the stories or other content. The initial benefit from the interpersonal connection becomes, in some ways, amplified in their later positive experience of texts. This hints at a second key variable in understanding preschool children's interaction with media: age.

Here, the situation of the various media differs: while children use media unaided, they may not benefit as much. But, here too we find exceptions. Audio stimulation, for example and typically, works best in interpersonal settings. Infants learn language better through interaction than through media sources. Music, which does not require human mediation, has immediate effect, without interpersonal presence. The key variable, volume, makes a difference in both music and language for young children. These observations, of course, change with age. Older preschool children do not seem as sensitive to volume; in addition, they do benefit from simple audio and video content. But parental (or other adult) engagement still matters and remains an important component in a child's learning.

And, again as this review has shown, researchers do not agree, particularly in the cases of television and video games. Some find these a helpful resource for young children and others absolutely oppose them. The variables of age and interpersonal interaction seem relevant here as well. One final difference in evaluating young people's interaction with television has little to do with the medium itself and more with the larger cultural context. We understand much more about children's experiences with television because the research community and the commercial community have devoted huge resources to understanding them. The CTW model of formative and summative research has identified many valuable lessons and variables. But these research communities disagree, not only because of their initial starting points or desires to aid or protect children. Many times they study very different children: the very young or the school-age child. The focus leads to quite different results.

Video games introduce even more uncertainty and potential for disagreement. They highlight the new world of children and media. Though designed for older children, they present themselves easily to younger ones; though envisioned as shared opportunities for younger children, they foster solitary use, as children prefer to manage their own interactions. In short, video games confound the two key variables of interpersonal interaction and age. And, as relative newcomers to the communication world of children and media, video games have a much thinner collection of research. We know something about them and we can infer more, based on knowledge of children's television for example, but we may not even know the extent to which our knowledge tranfers to this related format.

As always, much still remains for communication researchers to learn. This review has pointed out the beginnings of the study of very young children and the media. Neonates to 18-month olds differ dramatically from 2- to 4-year olds and again from older children. But all encounter communication media, more so today than even 10 years ago. With more and more communication opportunities in print, audio, television, and video games, we find more and more to understand about how children (and adults) interact with the media and with each other. It's an exciting world for communication researchers, but one that may well prove baffling for parents and teachers—at least in the near future.

Afterword

In our highly commercialized, media-saturated modern culture, Dr. Thorn's review of the literature on preschool children and the media reminds us that the primary "job" of young children is developing cognitive and social capabilities, and *not* becoming socialized as consumers in a capitalist marketplace. Looked at in the context of a media culture that defines even the youngest children as a "market," the research literature brings us back to a more humanistic and child-centric focus. Indeed, at a time when the media environment for children is rapidly changing, examining the role of these technologies and messages in the growth and development of children should lead the discussions of how, when, and *why* to expose young children to media.

The literature on how and what young children learn from media suggests important directions for future content developers, policy makers, parents and caregivers, but the research needs to be contextualized in the broader media environment to be useful as we move into the future. In particular, I want to highlight four trends in children's media culture that should guide future research and help us to rethink the applications of prior research:

First, *digital convergence* essentially removes the distinction between different media as content created for television can be viewed on a TV, a computer, an iPod, or a cell phone. Audio and even print media are available online. This changing media ecology has implications for research that looks at the unique characteristics of individual media. While many adults make the distinction between channels of distribution, most children and adolescents do not. They're growing up in a world of media convergence and engaging with media differently from previous generations. Most young parents are *multi-taskers*, comfortably using multiple media simultaneously and fully integrating electronic media into their lives. And their children learn by example. Multi-tasking increases the number of simultaneous media inputs and should be examined in the context of young children's developing language acquisition and attentional abilities. As well, convergence leads to new questions about how content designed for exhibition on a 30- inch screen is received on a two-inch screen or a 60-inch screen (with surround-sound).

New media are *personal and portable*, allowing users to be exposed anywhere at any time under any circumstances. Laptop computers, portable DVD players, ipods, cell phones, and handheld video game players all rival books as the portable medium of choice for children. And the content is customized: children have their selected songs downloaded on their ipod; their DVD library for long car trips; their video games to play on their Nintendo DS; and their favorite Internet sites bookmarked on their laptops. This has implications for research addressing the role of social context in children's media use. While the evidence is clear that interpersonal interaction enhances learning among infants and toddlers, the new media discourage interaction by making media use a personal experience. Even though computers and TV/video/DVDs can be "interactive," the type of interaction provided by these technologies does not include key tactile or olfactory experiences. And key social skills acquired through negotiating for media use are not tapped when children (and parents) each have their own personal media. Car trips, long waits in doctor's offices, etc. are much quieter when everyone is plugged into his/her own portable media, but we have to ask what is being lost in babies' development?

Children's products are created to be *multi-platform* "supersystems" (to borrow a descriptor from Kinder, 1991). Gone are the days of stand-alone toys and television programs. Media conglomerates target children with the same content across television, video/DVD, audio, software and online content, print media, and toys. This has implications for the research addressing the variety of content choices available to children. If babies' brains develop according to the environmental stimuli present, then more varied and complex environments should encourage a different kind of brain development than an environment saturated with relatively similar inputs. Although *Sesame Street* and *Blue's Clues* programs and ancillary products have substantial research to show their educational power, saturating babies' environments with these images and stories is still limiting. The impact of toy-TV/DVD tie-ins on young children's developing capacities for imaginative play is an area in need of further research.

Finally, the highly *commercialized* nature of children's culture must be acknowledged, as even the

youngest children are targeted as a "market" for media products. Lapware (software for babies designed to be used on a parent's lap), baby DVDs, and even 24/7 baby-targeted cable channels like BabyFirst TV play on parents' concerns about the educational achievement of their offspring. While this content does not contain advertisements, it does normalize the practice of babies' consuming media. Once babies are defined as an acceptable market for media products, then how can we question the targeting of preschool- aged children? And young children are not only targeted for program consumption, but they are the targets for advertising and marketing campaigns featuring favorite program characters selling a variety of consumer goods. The current epidemic of childhood obesity in the United States has led many in the public health field to question the role of food marketing to children and its impact on children's food choices. Commercial breaks during children's programs are filled with attractive messages featuring popular, recognizable characters selling high-fat, high sugar, low nutrient foods (Gantz, Schwartz, Angelini, & Rideout, 2007). There is no shortage of evidence in the research literature indicating that children under age 8 are more susceptible to persuasion than older children, yet the practice of advertising to this age group is prevalent. Given the evidence that environmental inputs influence cognitive processes, more research is needed to see whether increased exposure to persuasive messages accelerates children's abilities to comprehend these messages or whether we are creating a culture of consuming kids.

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Book Reviews

Cooper, Stephen D. *Watching the Watchdog: Bloggers and the Fifth Estate*. Spokane, WA: Marquette Books, LLC, 2006. Pp. 355. ISBN 0-922993-46-7 (hbk.) $59.95; ISBN 0-922993-47-5 (pb.) $39.95.

While it's not exactly news in 2008 that there's a new sheriff in Media Town, Stephen D. Cooper's *Watching the Watchdog* provides a sturdy, well-researched account of some early forays by an emergent posse of digital deputies.

Cooper takes a deep and serious look at what critics have occasionally dismissed, sometimes to their peril, as a lightweight, populist phenomenon that has come to be known as the "blogosphere."

In fact, Cooper, an associate professor of communication at Marshall University with a doctorate from Rutgers, goes so far as to argue that blogs and bloggers constitute "a legitimate social institution," a spontaneously arising, self-organizing, self-regulating Fifth Estate—in effect a watchdog for our traditional watchdog, the press, or Fourth Estate.

Cooper sections the activities of this new media form into a quadripartite typology that he uses to interpret and analyze how its practitioners patrol the airwaves, pages and Web sites of mainstream journalism:

• accuracy (checking the veracity of news reports)
• framing (how facts and events are interpreted or presented by journalists)
• agenda setting/gatekeeping (how issues and events become newsworthy, or not)
• journalistic practices (the methods journalists and news outlets use).

In 355 pages written in the stiff prose of the academy and laden with extended excerpts from a number of online postings and other source materials, Cooper examines how a diverse, informal, digital vox populi is increasingly monitoring—and holding to account—the press, an institution that once held itself the last word in safeguarding the public interest and ensuring accountability.

Perhaps the most celebrated case Cooper cites was the 2004 online uprising sparked by Dan Rather's use of documents of questionable provenance to cast a pall over President George W. Bush's service in the National Guard three decades earlier—a report that aired on CBS at the height of Bush's wartime re-election campaign.

Rather's "60 Minutes II" report was quickly challenged by bloggers who had downloaded the documents that CBS so helpfully posted on its own Web site. The resulting blogger analyses of typefaces, timelines, and military argot of the period prodded mainstream outlets into examining the controversy and ultimately led CBS to repudiate the report and ease Rather out of his CBS anchor chair ahead of schedule.

More importantly, the episode put journalists everywhere on notice that the so-called "voice of God" era of 20th century journalism was over. No longer could the audience be regarded as just a passive, pliant maw for received wisdom dispensed by a media culture operating according to its own inscrutable conventions and intentions.

Rather, the audience was now empowered with a global platform to challenge journalists directly (via e-mail or comment sections on news outlets' own Web sites) or indirectly (but no less effectively) by communicating with each other publicly via blogs in the digital echo chamber that constitutes the "blogosphere."

Watching the Watchdog can be useful to communications educators looking for examples of how newsrooms are being changed from the outside. In the cases he chose to profile, Cooper provides extensive verbatim transcriptions of both blogger postings and the original journalism they critiqued.

But that strength is also the book's greatest weakness—its commendable emphasis on depth lamentably comes at the expense of breadth.

For one, Cooper's central proposition about the rise and power of media watchdog blogging, introduced in the first pages, often seemed to this reader overwhelmed by the sheer volume of replicated postings and transcriptions he used to buttress and illustrate his case throughout the book. Yet absent this abundance of original material, a critic might have argued that Cooper was short on evidence. Still and all, I would have preferred a bit more narrative and analysis.

Cooper also seems to favor bloggers and online critics operating from the right side of the political spectrum. Some might argue that this is almost inevitable since much of the nation's mainstream newsroom population arguably tends to view the world from a more leftward perspective (see, for example, the 2004 Pew Research Center report that found a self-identified liberal-conservative split among national journalists of 34% to 7%).

The emerging digital world that Cooper has chronicled here has, among other things, been forging more transparency in the journalistic process, and that's a good thing. But the view through that new window on the newsroom can occasionally be distorted and misleading.

As a former editor on major desks at *The New York Times*, I am personally familiar with a number of the articles Cooper cited in *Watching the Watchdog*. One in particular (sorry, no names or specifics) deserves mention, as a cautionary tale for our new vanguard of digital constabulary.

A number of bloggers cited by Cooper were exercised by a passage in a *Times* article that had also troubled me when I read it in the paper at the time of publication. I soon approached the reporter about it, who, still fuming, explained that it had been inserted by an editor over the reporter's strenuous objections. But of course it was the reporter who took the heat in the blogosphere because it was the reporter's name—not the editor's—atop the article.

It's a useful reminder to our new watchdogs that, as anyone who has ever practiced the journalistic craft knows, things aren't always what they seem to be.

—Mark J. Prendergast
St. John's University

Edy, Jill A. *Troubled Pasts: News and the Collective Memory of Social Unrest*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006. Pp. viii, 230. ISBN 1-59213-496-3 (hbk.) $69.50; 1-59213-497-1 (pb.) $22.95.

How do people come to remember the past, particularly the troubled past? We might individually recall events or people, but we also know the unreliability of our recall, the contradictory evidence of eye witnesses. Where do the stories that make their way into our local, national, or global consciousness come from? In this extended case study of social unrest in the United States, Jill Edy explores these and similar questions, particularly those that connect memory to the role of the press. Her questions include the basics of collective memory, but also how we collectively resolve controversies, how those resolutions occur, and how collective memory influences the recall of more recent events (pp. 5–6).

Edy chooses two events—the 1965 Watts riots in Los Angeles and the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago—chosen as far enough in the past that scholars do not have first-hand memories, well, most of us at least. Both events marked part of my own teenaged years and resist, for me, the dynamic of collective memory. But both also work quite well for an analysis of collective memory, since the process of Edy sketches takes on a very real life.

Edy uses the cases to show how collective memory grows; at each stage she situates her analysis in terms of the relevant scholarly understanding of journalism and reporting, integrating those theories into a larger picture, and just as often bringing in work from other disciplines, particularly history and psychology.

After introducing the problem—how societies remember and the uses of memory—and the methodology (content analysis), Edy presents her theory and findings in five steps. Chapter 1 reviews how journalists covered the stories, looking at what she calls real-time news. The records here are confused but fairly straight-forward. The Watts riots have more journalistic coherence, since the national and local papers tended to have reporters who worked with editors who in turn combined reports with official statements. This led

to a somewhat coherent narrative. The Chicago convention protest stories have less coherence, since reporters ended up as participant observers who never quite got enough distance to make sense of what happened—in fact, Edy points out that at least three different events get rolled into the one story.

If this forms the first draft of history, then what comes next? For Edy, in Chapter 3, it's the competition to frame the story, often by public officials who have strong motives to use the past, either to redress a wrong or to advance some agenda, whether that be protecting their reputation or legacy or moving public policy. Here again, the news reports show how the real-time news gradually shifts, moved by players with enough clout or strength to re-make the story. In the Chicago case, that consisted of courtroom trials that attempted to assign blame; in the Los Angels story, a state commission re-read the events in terms of local poverty. In both cases, memory overlooked police actions.

Over time the stories lose their controversy and the process of collective memory takes over (Chapter 4). An analysis of news stories from 1980 to 1996 referring to those events of the 1960s shows a process of fragmentation and reduction, of the search for salience and a loss of context, of the impact of a changed social environment. The past, of course, is a product of the present. Edy concludes, "There is no evidence here of reporters (or anyone else) actively working to create collective memory. Yet collective memory is indeed a byproduct of these social processes . . ." (p. 122).

Chapter 5 moves closer to the heart of the process, explaining how we build collective memory. It's a process of integration, telling a good story, and broadly accepting that narrative, even if it should lack accuracy. For example, despite its occurrence during the height of the Civil Rights movement, the Watts riot had little to do with that movement; in fact, many of the local black community did not welcome a visit of Martin Luther King. However, many years later, after King's assassination and the naming of a Los Angeles street and a new hospital in Watts for Dr. King, people accepted as fact that King had influenced the subsequent history of the area (p. 128). Chicago actually had an easier time of it, since in 1996 the Democratic Party Convention returned to Chicago, prompting a city- and nation-wide reframing of the events of 1968.

Finally, in Chapter 6, Edy concludes by examining how we use collective memory, how the past influences the present. These past events do provide tools for thinking about the present and the personal and policy choices before us. However, though she acknowledges it, one could argue more strongly that the present often has powerful motivation to use the past.

The overall argument of the book is a strong one and even people who have no particular interest in the events of 40 years ago will find *Troubled Pasts* a good guide to how the news industry shapes our memories. Edy provides a good theoretical model and a good guide to how we might best use the literature about reporting, remembering, framing, and motivation. Whether these models will hold up with the shift from news industries to citizen journalism remains to be seen. Sadly, as economic and technical forces transform daily journalism, journalism itself may become the contested terrain of its own troubled past.

The book has an index as well as 12 pages on references.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.
Santa Clara University

Ekstrom, Mats, Åsa Kroon, and **Mats Nylund** (Eds.). *News from the Interview Society*. Göteborg, Sweden: Nordicom, 2006. Pp. v, 267. ISBN 91-89471-37-7 (pb.) SEK 280, €30 (www.nordicom.gu.se)

In 1859, Horace Greeley, the *New York Tribune*'s legendary editor, ran a story consisting of the answers to a series of questions he had put to Brigham Young one month earlier in Salt Lake City. Thus was born the first "news" interview with a public figure. A decade later journalists still scorned this innovation: "the most perfect contrivance yet devised to make journalism an offence, a thing of ill savor in all decent nostrils," railed a magazine editor.

Grizzled newsmen of the Gilded Age saw the interview as a tacit give-and-get bargain that muzzled their ferocity as the public's watchdog. Docility purchased cooperation. The reporter obtained a story, the politician publicity: "the joint product of some humbug of a hack politician and another humbug of a reporter," stated *The Nation*.

News from the Interview Society comprises 12 articles that examine the practice of interviewing in Scandinavia (save for a piece on Eisenhower and Reagan). Primarily sociological in bent, the essays probe the roles and rules—and even the treachery—used to fashion interviews in a backroom process largely invisible to the public. The better essays are compelling as conceptually sophisticated examples of media criticism.

For example, in " 'Doing' Interviewer Roles in TV Interviews," Mie Femo Nielsen adopts Irving Goffman's observation that social roles are bolstered and maintained through acting skills: a person who acts like a leader is recognized as such. Interviewers operate from within a wide category of roles; these include "midwife, buffoon, skeptic, microphone holder, chairperson, and tease" (p. 95). Nielsen's study catalogues the mannerisms that attend the professional personae assumed by three prominent interviewers on Danish TV.

She identifies the "swordsman," who enjoys battle with worthy opponents. Similarly, another interviewer plays the "neutral opposition" role, whose thrusts and parries proceed through "a complex question design with advanced footing shifts that are also mimicked and accompanied by shifts in body posture" (p. 102). Nielsen also scrutinizes a soft-voiced interviewer who plays the sympathetic "midwife" and forges an alliance with an incest victim by sitting "in a relaxed position leaning her head slightly to one side, with eyes opened wide, [moving] her left hand from supporting her chin to playing with her left ear or the hair on her neck" (p. 103).

Nielsen has meticulously transcribed each set of questions and answers, replete with inflections and gestures, to reveal the verbal and non-verbal constituents of each interviewer's role. Her study is grounded in Harvey Sacks' cumbersomely titled formulation, "doing being or something or somebody." This means "being able to recognize a certain behavior and being able to redo it when it is called for in a specific situation" (p. 95). For example, "doing being ordinary" requires

> tacit knowledge about what constitutes being considered ordinary and how we behave in order to be considered as such. For instance, one does not call people in the middle of the night just to say "Hi!", but instead must have a very good reason, a kind of emergency. And the reason for the call should be enacted via sequential positioning of the reason for the call, voice, and speech rate if the caller is to be considered ordinary. (p. 95)

Thus, Nielson's premise is, "Doing being a certain interviewer role is indeed a matter of enactment, of correspondence between turn construction, the use of formulations, continuers, and responses, as well as the handling of pauses and posture, gesture and facial expression" (p. 96). In essence, the mastery of stock mannerisms and inflections imbues social roles with credibility.

Nielsen's translations of her examples into "rough" English, she warns, fail to capture certain nuances. However, she remedies this by referencing web links to the complete videos of her transcriptions. These clips, the raw data of conversational analysis, are not circumscribed by language and culture. They demonstrate that gestures and facial expressions weigh as much as speech in constituting interviewer roles. Most significantly, however, this footage presages how the use of digital technologies signals a new era in communication scholarship.

News from the Interview Society contains another study anchored in Goffman's work, "Hidden Camera Speaks Louder than Words" by Economou & Limsjo. This piece probes the ethics of ambush journalism, an accepted practice in Swedish investigative TV reporting. Ambush reporters justify deception as a means to expose the chasm between their subjects' private, or "true" beliefs, and their manipulative, crafted public statements. Using Goffman's notions of "frame" and "frontstage/backstage," the authors transcribe two hidden camera interviews: the first concerns a petty affair about travel funds; the second interview, however, contrasts a politician's "backstage" reflections on immigration with his public platform—and may have decided the outcome of the 2002 Swedish general election.

This secretly-filmed clip captures a journalist pretending to be a "xenophobic" voter baiting the politician into uttering what Economou and Limsjo term a "racist" statement. Reflecting upon Sweden's recent immigrants (Kurds and Kosovar Albanians), the politician states:

> we have had Vietnamese since the '80s, but they behave well, they have adjusted nicely and they work, you can't say that the Muslims behave the best; if I were to put it somewhat nasty, they are good at giving birth to many children and exploiting our system. (p. 133)

Filming this utterance constituted an "investigative" scoop, which won Sweden's most prestigious journalism prize. Economou and Limsjo, however, find the footage ethically tainted; yet throughout their commentary, they repeatedly and uncritically treat these words as prima facie evidence of racism.

Thus, this study unwittingly reveals that both quarters, journalists and their academic critics, share the same set of unscientific and sanctimonious biases. Each camp is united in obviating verification of the politician's statements. It's one thing to quote conjecture about ethnic birth rates and welfare rolls, but true

journalism involves checking the facts. That a news organization would air this story without comparative statistics on Muslim birth rates is telling. Also remarkable is that Economou and Limsjo, playing the role of media experts, are equally blind to such standards. Reporting and analysis in the spirit of fair scientific inquiry has given way to name-calling.

Nonetheless, Economou's and Limsjo's penetrating description of the reporter who trapped the politician verges on literature:

> During the entire report, the journalist presents himself as a truth-seeking, honest, hard-working person. He is the one initiating this important issue and we are at the beginning of the report, invited to follow him as he drives his car through Sweden. It is a very symbolic image: the truth-seeking journalists, untiring in the chase of shortcomings and disclosures for our sake, himself at the steering wheel. No road is too long, no village too distant. If there is dirt it will be dug up. At the same time he is wearing sunglasses, which points to the fact that he is embarking on a secret inspection (cf. the name of the program [Mission Inspection]), that as an undercover agent he will sneak his way into the nest of the bad guy and (aided by the latest technology) reveal the fishy games that are going on. (p. 135)

As one would expect, the book contains a Table of Contents, Preface, and a section about the contributors; however it does not feature a general subject index, nor an index of authors.

—Tony Osborne
Gonzaga University

Feilitzen, Cecilia von and **Ulla Carlsson (Eds.)**. *Promote or Protect: Perspectives on Media Literacy and Media Regulations*. Göteborg: NORDICOM International Clearing House on Children, Youth and Media, 2003. Pp. 260. ISBN 91-89471-23-7 (pb.). $25.00.

The book looks at ways media literacy and media control have been implemented in different parts of the world. In the context of massive media influx all over the world, the authors ask how media affect the lives of children and young people. The editors invited media researchers, lawyers, media regulators, international civil servants, media professionals, and voluntary groups to present empirical findings on the role of parents, teachers, governments, and all others in helping the future generation in facing the reality of media in a more positive way.

The various case studies contribute to enrich this concept. These case studies speak in general terms of regulation by an external body, government or civil, self regulation by the media, and media education, i.e., the consumers' gradually becoming critical of media messages and being able to select what they want prudently. Media education essentially means that one understands how the media function and how media images construct images of the world for us and shape our values.

In the first paper, "Media regulation, self regulation, and education: Debunking some myths and retooling some working paradigms," Divina Frau-Meigs argues the pros and cons of these concepts and settles on the importance of media education, which is better organized starting from early school curricula. The next nine articles highlight similar concepts from different backgrounds. David Buckingham and Kate Domaille present survey findings from 38 countries on the state of media education. Their survey shows that media education has not really got into the school curriculum anywhere in the world. The authors comment that there is a general apathy among policy makers on the need for media education and so they suggest the urgent need for teacher training.

In different countries different situations have caused the development of media education. For example Joan Lioskey tells how media education has gained momentum in grassroots advocacy groups in the U.S. like the one in Washington that studied for four years the effects of violent depictions in the media, presenting the results to schools. Matteo Zacchetti writes about how e-learning has helped people to learn about the effect of media in Europe. The project argues that media literacy is a key element of active citizenship. Looking at the Japanese situation, Midori Suzuki and Kyoko Takahashi evaluate the contribution of Forum for Citizen's Television and Media (FCT) and how it managed to convince school authorities to take to media education. Thomas Tufte looks at entertainment-education (EE) possibilities in tele-novellas, theatre, musical shows, and so on, to suggest how these help people realize the positive roles media can play, especially by participating in the production of these programs. Moreover, Guillermo Orozco Gòmez and Daniel Medina Jackson argue that television programs in Latin America help the audiences to identify their own selves, and thus play a constructive role in society. In their papers Karl Larsson, Angeline Khoo, Tyng-Tyng

Cheong, Albert Liau, Ferran Casas, Monica Gonzales, and Christina Figuer argue the importance of parental guidance especially in the area of monitoring children's interactions with the Internet, in different countries.

Since media education has not yet become a successful reality, it is important to speak of self- regulation, co-regulation, and total regulation. Ulla Carsson, analysing the effects of violence in the media, suggests different kinds of information as well as measures of self regulation and co-regulation. Carmen Palzer and Alexander Scheuer clarify different concepts of self-regulation, co-regulation, and public regulation. The authors recount a few examples of regulations, classifications, and rating systems prevalent in Europe. In Piermarco Aroldi's piece we have television regulation systems, codes of ethics, laws on the protection of minors, etc., marked out in seven different countries, which help better performance by the channel owners. W. James Potter analyzes rating systems, family viewing hours, V-chips (child protection devices), and so forth and argues that these are of little help. Santiago Barilà invites us to the Argentinean system of government control and protection of media content. Based on a survey he comments that these show no positive signs. Audrey Gadzekpo looks at post-military Ghana and suggests that Ghana lacks a national broadcast policy—a lack that shows in the programming. The next three papers from Australia throw positive light on the art of media regulation as the audience too are co-regulators with the state. Des Clark speaks of the classifications system and review boards for films and computer games in Australia which help the audience select programs. Suzanne Shepherd sheds light on how radio and television are regulated by Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) and sectors of the broadcasting industry. And Mike Bernard tells how the ABA also exerts control over the Internet.

The last article in the book by Aidan White focuses on the necessity for raising the media professional's awareness of children's rights. The author argues that there must be space in the media for children to express their opinions.

Being a strong proponent of media education myself, I had suggested that media education is more greatly needed for less educated or illiterate housewives, or the non-critical in general, in developing countries who take to television and other media too much, as these people have no opportunities to see through the ways of manipulations practiced by the media controllers. However, today I feel that the earlier a person comes to realize media manipulations, the

better s/he is prepared to make better use of the media. Today I feel even really educated people do not see through the media manipulations and one needs to make efforts to teach them media education. If children fall into media manipulations and become bad, media alone are not to be blamed for this. Other factors like their lack of parental guidance, bad peer groups, valueless teachers, etc. have definite roles to play.

Laws and self-regulation may be applied to limit the dissemination of injurious media content. Self regulation is difficult in these days of peer group pressures. One can never leave aside the responsibility of adults in helping the younger generation improve the quality of their media atmosphere. Once the children are given a clear understanding of how mass media work, how the media produce meaning, how the media are organized, and know how to use these wisely, they can surely become responsible. Otherwise if children are brought up on poor media products they develop poor taste; they are hardly ever shocked by violence in reality as they are used to seeing it in the media; they even take to anti-social behavior as these are linked to "heroics" in the movies and soaps. Early media literacy helps everyone to empower themselves to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages, using images, sound, and language. So the question finally remains, "should children and vulnerable adults be protected from the media or promoted to enjoy the media?" The answer may be, once they realize the way the media function and know the media's agenda, the children and vulnerable adults can critically discern the media messages.

The many case studies in the text repeatedly ask the question whose responsibility it is to teach media education to the younger generation: parents, teachers, government authorities, media personnel themselves, voluntary organizations. Who will bell the cat is a crucial question that needs to be resolved at the local level depending on the state of affairs in each country. This book argues that protecting the youngsters from harmful effects of media and encouraging them to watch quality media must be the thrust in any case. This will give them sufficient armor against the onslaught of media on their lives.

—Jacob Srampickal S.J.
Gregorian University, Rome

Jensen, Klaus Bruhn. (Ed.). *Interface://Culture—The World Wide Web as Political Resource and Aesthetic Form*. Frederiksberg, Denmark: Samfundslitteratur

Press and Göteborg, Sweden: Nordicom, 2005. ISBN 978-87-5931-1146-0 (pb.) $46.00, €34.00.

This edited volume is part of a seven book series emerging from a national research program in Denmark, "Media and Democracy in the Network Society," conducted over a four year period with 50 researchers from media studies and social sciences. Each book has a different focus or take on the questions, but all include a balance of theoretical reflections, empirical studies, and policy deliberations, as Professor Klaus Bruhn Jensen observes in the preface (pp. 7–8). More information on the complete series can be sought at http://modinet.dk, archives at http://netarkivet.dk.

The broad themes unifying the eight chapters, concerning topics from corporate ethics to content analysis of websites, and digital autobiography, are mapped in a highly informative and interesting introductory chapter framing the studies in the volume. The grammar will be familiar to social scientists and mass media researchers, elucidated crisply, as one might expect from a senior researcher of Jensen's stature. The key theoretical concepts around which the volume is organized are: media, structure, and agency; medium theory; communicating politics; and interdisciplinary approaches. Overall, the editors arranged successfully a broad discussion of how politics and culture converge through the world wide web as interface—and political platform.

While the chapter on digital autobiography is the most dated of the lot—it analyzes John Kerry's website during the 2004 presidential campaign—those analyzing the websites of corporations for ethical discourse, and participation in civil society, as well as the grammar of the Internet, are durable with a longer shelf life.

Those interested in media ethics and politics, however, will be looking for a future volume with entries on the Danish cartoon controversy—a global dispute with viral power to disrupt civil society, resulting from the journalistic convergence that unites us all, stemming from one editorial decision of a print editor. This episode bears examination precisely because the velocity of the Web to disseminate misinformation can ultimately disrupt the information flow of corporations, news, and political discourse.

This single volume is a valuable addition to the literature in the field—leaving readers with the expectation there will be more analysis of comparable social science data in the future.

—Claire Badaracco
Marquette University

Kiernan, Vincent. *Embargoed Science*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006. Pp. 192. ISBN 978-0-252-03097-0 (hbk.) $30.00.

Reporting about medicine and science is an area critical to the public interest, the author Vincent Kiernan argues, but separating out the special interests involved in funding and supporting scientific peer reviewed research makes discerning what is in the common good a complex argument. Kiernan, a senior writer at the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, provides in his five-chapter, 130-page monograph a well researched, scholarly summary about the argument that is one of the key issues today in reporting about "breakthroughs." He concludes that journal publishers are under an illusion of controlling information, or timing of a release of major scientific news, and that the embargo should be replaced with full and open disclosure of research results as soon as they are ready for publication, as Kiernan states in his fifth and final chapter.

Kiernan's argument hinges on whether or not the Inglefinger rule should pertain today; it was created by Franz Ingelfinger, editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* between 1967 and 1977. This policy argues that a journal should not publish a scientific paper that had already been disseminated in the press. The rule intended to preserve the competitive edge of his journal also prevented media coverage of research that could not pass peer review. Kiernan's research demonstrates that among 80 major journal publishers, three quarters of them supported this rule, and that more than 500 journals today have adopted this as part of their editorial policy. Yet the rule has its critics, who claim that much scientific research is funded by taxpayer money, and so, therefore, should be available to the public whether or not it passes the muster of peer review.

The embargo means that the authors of the scientific research article cannot hold a press conference until the article appears in print. The rationale is precisely that which ought to outlaw direct to consumer pharmaceutical advertising, but does not. Physicians, so the argument goes, need to be able to inform themselves before one of their patients approaches them with the "latest" news about medicine or scientific research, asking for their opinion or the new drug. Yet one might argue that the convergence of advertising and science reporting has made this line of thinking obsolete. What good is an embargo if the pharmaceutical industry, with deep financial ties to the research establishment, is releasing the "miracle" cure through advertising and driving patients

to the web, to find information about "findings" they can take to their physician ?

This embargo has made science writers' jobs more difficult, Kiernan argues, because scientists are reluctant to talk with journalists at the scientific meetings they are covering in order to make public the latest findings of bona fide research. Online publication resources such as PubMed and PLOS have also made the embargo inefficient. Once the research is accepted for publication, Kiernan argues, the principal investigators ought to be free to discuss their finding with and through the public, in the interest of the common good. "Science and medical journalists should end their 'embargo' relationships and the government should also withdraw its support," along with universities. Scientific societies and the infrastructure that supports the creation of scientific information should "stop trying to shape the newsflow" (p. 137) that politicizes the findings. Kiernan's argument makes sense, especially if it makes more transparent the industry-science connections and special interest web that undermines the free flow of information in the public interest. Not only the web, but the dominance of direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising makes obsolete the Ingelfinger rule begun mid-20th century.

—Claire Badaracco
Marquette University

Lewis, C. K. *Romancing the Difference: Kenneth Burke, Bob Jones University, and the Rhetoric of Religious Fundamentalism*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007. Pp. xii; 161. ISBN 978-1-60258-003-9 (hbk.) $39.95.

Burkean critics often take a perspective by incongruity to put themselves in front of symbol systems heading toward their tragic culmination. Burke contends that "seeing something in terms of something else involves the 'carrying over' of a term from one realm to another" (Burke, 1945, p. 504). Such a carrying over leads to inevitable incongruity since those two things are not exactly alike. Camille K. Lewis draws from Burke's tragic and comic frames to illuminate texts of Bob Jones University (BJU) in order to explain the university's fundamentalist, separatist, world view. She argues for a third frame, the romantic, to chain out BJU as a suitor or courtier. Their ultimate goal is not to assimilate with, attack, or agitate the Other, but to root itself in God's Truth in order to appear desirable to the outside world. Lewis argues that including the rhetoric

of separatist groups is essential in democratic societies in order to be truly plural. Her analysis provides a romantic corrective for understanding that rhetoric.

Lewis begins with a distinction between Burke's tragic and comic frames. Burke, says Lewis, sees the tragic frame as turning upwards, perhaps always in pursuit of what he sees as perfection, or taking symbol systems to the end of the line. The comic frame turns inward, identifying common human elements that minimize situations by identifying those things that reduce symbol-use to commonalities (p. 3). Lewis argues that "religious sectarian discourse falls outside the tragic or comic frames of acceptance, operating instead within a third frame—romance . . . in order to woo [the] lonely Other" (p. xii).

Chapter 2 explores the history of BJU as it is presented in its museums and galleries. Lewis argues that an accuracy trope guides museum space and contents. She contrasts the cenotaph, an empty vessel that can be used for (filled with) political purpose and exhibits Burkes' tragic frame, with the photograph which displays beautiful accuracy. For BJU, accuracy is rooted in Biblical Truth, the word of God. This Truth transcends linear time to create a sort of immutable pre-modern devout time, preserving, not remembering, the sacred.

In Chapter 3 Lewis turns to BJU's art collection. The gallery houses one of the most respected collections of religious art in the world. The museum and gallery are so stunning that they simultaneously challenge and celebrate secular society by dazzling it. The art functions as romantic wooer, seeking to reach out to the secular other and promote conversion. The art is primarily baroque and is so beautiful and unusual for BJU to own, that it prevents it from retreating within itself and becoming tragic. This prevention is the work of Lewis' Romantic Pied Piper. When talking to others, the university's presentation of the art, informed by BJU's biblical interpretation, roots their interpretation in the subjects of the art, not the art itself. When talking to itself, BJU's art becomes not an ironic, begrudging collection of Catholic art, but a reminder of the "passion of biblical characters."

Chapter 4 examines BJU's rhetoric within the Greenville, SC community. BJU creates a romantic glass case around itself placing it on tempting display for the community. The university's prescriptive behaviors for students and faculty, its outreach in the form of festivals and service, and its efforts to be separate from but at the same time draw the community inward, function as a partner or friend. Lewis contends

in this "Curing the Culture" chapter that Burke sees symbol-use having a medicinal effect. Here, Lewis identifies the tragic frame as homeopathic—the introduction of small doses of a malady to treat the malady as a whole—and the comic frame as allopathic, the introduction of forces opposite of what the malady presents. The romantic separatist, however, presents a third treatment: communion, or *balm* as Lewis puts it, as the cure (p. 69).

The final major chapter addresses the U.S. Presidential Campaign of 2000 and subsequent public perception of the university. BJU faced enormous pressure in 2000 as a result of national attention that was created when it hosted a rally for George W. Bush. Opponent John McCain seized on BJU's rigidity and called the institution un-American for its separatist views. Instead of a romantic corrective, a comic frame is needed to break the tension between the suitor and tragic actor. Lewis examines media transcripts of the campaign to show how BJU and media responses illustrate a need for comedy. One key text is a letter published in *USA Today* which serves as BJU's own defense of itself during the controversy. But the letter isolates religious freedom as the key defense of the attacks against BJU. The suitor still appears attractive to the Other, but rehearsing the core American principle of religious freedom acts as a comic corrective.

In addition to these brief chapter descriptions, some other qualities of the book should be mentioned. Lewis is a wonderful writer, creating a piece of criticism that is both insightful but also beautifully written. She seems to have demanded of herself detailed descriptions of artifacts at Bob Jones University in order to complete her argument, and she comes through, for example, with descriptions of the Jerusalem Chamber (p. 18), the Rotunda of the Bob Jones Jr. Seminary Building (pp. 25-28), and important history regarding the 2000 Presidential Campaign (p. 90). Her work would be valuable to rhetorical critics and scholars of religious studies.

Lewis' criticism is complete and compelling, but there is also something very personal about the project. While this volume is remarkable in its writing, its subject, and its nuanced discovery of Burke in BJU, it also seems to be a courageous statement by an author navigating a treacherous academic world. Lewis' perspective is especially unique given her role, at the time, as Chair of the Department of Rhetoric and Public Address at BJU. The volume includes an index, bibliography, and extensive notes. The book is one in a series of studies on rhetoric and religion published by Baylor University Press.

—Pete Bicak
Rockhurst University

Reference

Burke, K. (1945). *A grammar of motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lull, James. *Culture-On-Demand: Communication in a Crisis World*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. Pp xxiv, 222. ISBN 13: 9781405160643 (hbk.) $69.95, ISBN 13: 9781405160650 (pb.) $24.95.

In many ways this is a familiar book by James Lull that is in line with many of his contributions in the past. It is a paean to the modern technologies that allow individuals the freedom to build new identities. It is an intriguing essay on culture and modern cultural practices. It is based on the author's wide-ranging reading of sources that go well beyond the world of communication studies. And yet it is something more. Lull brings all of his faith in communication technologies to bear on a problem that has not notably entered into his previous publications: how Islam as a religion and ideology has been responsible for so many of the Arab world's problems, including but not limited to terrorism, that threaten future global peace and Arab development. Added to this, the author includes all religions as essentially ideological barriers to the promise of tolerance and understanding in the future among the world's peoples. In addition to the usual scholarship and analysis of new technologies, it is a deeply personal statement about how the author feels about Islam and, indeed, religion. Putting these two major themes together makes for some difficulties in the unity of the book.

As an overview in Chapter 1, Lull lays out the issues that globalization presents to the world and the role that the communication revolution plays in this process. The author does so without glossing over the challenges of Western/American content of much global media and the capitalist basis of the technology and content. Lull is intellectually honest in assessing the counterarguments to his positions and in balancing the good with the bad in globalization's effects. Still the balance is never really achieved—it is a difficult task at best and even impossible at worst—but the consequence for the book is that there seem to be critiques of globalization left hanging and a less integrated feeling to the overall thesis about communications and globalization. There are some persuasive chapters on Human

Expression and Personal Supercultures (Chapters 2 and 3) in which Lull makes a case for the potential of the new mobile technologies in allowing for an expansion of self-expression and building new identities by a growing number of people (though he admits that for now that means mainly middle-class and western people). But when he begins to make his case against Islam and Arab cultures more generally (Chapters 5, 6, and 8), there seem no logical connections with previous chapters. The reader senses unfamiliar ground where personal feeling undermines objective analysis.

The chapters on Islam are based, as the author asserts, on wide reading, and he uses a half dozen or more sources to make his case. But all of the authors cited are making their cases against Islam as a culture and a religion. One gets the feeling that, unlike the issues on globalization and communication technology where Lull knows both sides of the arguments and balances (though not always successfully) them against one another, in dealing with Islam and other religions like Christianity and Judaism, the author simply dismisses all of them as ideologies and provides arguments from authors like Dawkins, Lewis, and Manji with no counterarguments to even attempt to balance the discussion. The struggle for the author is rather to argue for optimism for a globalized and peaceful world in the face of what he deems is the current rise of a universally fanatic Islam. But the author has hope and states clearly at the beginning of the book and several places thereafter his belief that human communication will prevail: "Still, with the many doubts, limitations, and counter-tendencies fully in mind, I set out to demonstrate in this book how and why the potential of human communication—so greatly amplified by technological and cultural developments—offers real long-term promise for a world of diverse souls who, whether they like it or not, become more and more connected every minute of every day" (p. 23). What happens, however, is that the book tries to incorporate a critique of Islam and religious ideology into an argument about media and globalization with the consequence that the book lacks a unified conclusion.

The final chapter argues strongly for the future of human communication and what he calls in the previous chapter The Democratic Secular Imperative ("[f]reedom *from* religion is just as important as freedom *of* religion"(italics from original p. 187)). This is an ideological position as much as the religious one he critiques in the final chapter. Citing a call by religious leaders (e.g. Dali Lama, Desmond Tutu, and others) in 2005 to abide by the UN Declaration of Human Rights was helpful in promoting a worthy cause but, Lull argues:

> . . . one glaring difficulty with the interfaith solution stands out: while religious leaders have shown they can interact respectfully with each other when the occasion calls for it, at core the doctrinal differences that separate them remain deeply problematic. Allegiance to the belief systems that comprise the major religions in many ways have "immunized them against the power of conversation" (Harris, 2005). (p. 199)

The problem in this argument is that Lull strongly states his own belief system in contradiction to his plea for tolerance.

These problems, however, should not prevent people from engaging with this provocative book and thinking through the challenges of globalization, technology, and religion. Besides its nine chapters, the book has an extensive reference list and a detailed index.

—Emile McAnany
Santa Clara University

Reference

Harris, S. (2005*). The end of faith*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Mootz, Francis J. III. *Rhetorical Knowledge in Legal Practice and Critical Legal Theory*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press. 2006. Pp. ix, 256. ISBN 0-8173-1536-5 (hbk.) $49.50.

In pre-Nazi Germany the philosopher Ernesto Grassi learned of the general disdain for Renaissance humanism and rhetoric from his principal colleague at the University of Freiburg, Martin Heidegger, who deemed the Italian tradition "insignificant." The Hegelian rationalism that dominated German universities excluded rhetoric as too messy. Rhetorical categories—the emotions, linguistic ambiguity, tropes, paradox, silence, mystery—resisted neat systemization. However, to judge these concerns "irrational," and thus irrelevant, Grassi argued, would bar rhetorical discourse from philosophical investigation.

In *Rhetorical Knowledge in Legal Practice*, Francis J. Mootz III echos Grassi's argument in his case against legal formalism—a fixed, abstract conception of law that denies the essential rhetorical nature of legal practice. Unlike invariable mathematical theorems, questions of right and wrong are contextual, historical, not fixed. A theft in one context is a heroic deed in another. If the courts must "say what the law is," as

Chief Justice Marshall famously declared, then it follows that this "saying" is a rhetorical activity, a matter of argumentation (p. 130–31). In effect, Mootz subscribes to the maxim that "rhetoric is a way of knowing." Mootz puts it thus, "rhetorical knowledge" is a *constitutive* feature of legal practice. He defines rhetorical knowledge as "the outcome of efforts to learn from and to persuade another person by engaging in argumentation" (p. 127). Rhetorical knowledge is intersubjective and self-reflexive, acquired through inquiry into "how we persuade others of our resulting understandings" (p. 188).

Mootz believes American legal theory is adrift, cut loose, in part, by the postmodern suspicion of any theory rooted in reason. Mootz also rejects legal formalism (positivism), which decrees an argument must have a winner and a loser. Forsaking the extremes, Mootz opts to ground legal practice in "rhetorical knowledge." This bold move requires rehabilitating the tainted notion of rhetoric as "the glib manipulation and incapacitation of reason" (p. 12). Undergirding Mootz's project are the ideas of Hans Gadamer (Heidegger's most famous student) and Chaim Perelman (a Polish-Belgian rhetorical theorist best known for his typology of argumentation). *Rhetorical Knowledge in Legal Practice* is essentially an exegesis of their work.

Mootz quotes Gadamer's defense of rhetoric:

> Only a narrow view of rhetoric sees it as mere technique or even a mere instrument for social manipulation. It is in truth an essential aspect of all reasonable behavior. Aristotle had already called rhetoric not a *techne* but a *dunamis* [the capacity for moral power and excellence manifested in action] because it belongs so essentially to the general definition of humans as reasonable beings. (p. 12)

Gadamer concludes this passage, from *Truth and Method*, by acknowledging Perelman's influence. Both men invigorated rhetoric by clarifying its philosophical lineage—its basis in reason. As Perelman asserted, the fundamental occupation of rhetoric is the *reasonable* assessment of value—not style.

The bifurcation between philosophy and rhetoric, or reason and style, derives from misinterpretations of Plato's anti-sophist diatribes. Mootz caricatures a similar, dead-end split among legal commentators: "Crude Platonists," sure of "the conceptual integrity of legal categories and the rigorous nature of legal reasoning," oppose the "irresponsible descendants of Gorgias who

skeptically view legal practice as the arena of conflict for 'hired guns' . . . which means lawyering can be strategic but never fully rational" (p. 128). Neither camp, however, dares recognize the rhetorical essence of legal practice. Strident denials mask the fear that acknowledgement would "reveal that the core of legal practice is "irrational." One might then "say that legal practice involves the rhetorical suppression of its rhetoricity" (p. 129). Mootz counters this jaundiced stance with descriptive proof:

> Legal practice involves much more than judges and lawyers deciphering prior appellate court opinions. Counseling and negotiation comprise the bulk of lawyering, although these activities often are neglected in theoretical accounts of the law. Lawyers meet with clients, elicit their stories, and deliberate with them about appropriate courses of action, sometimes in conjunction with other professionals and advisers. These meetings involve rhetorical exchanges, inasmuch as the lawyer and client seek to understand the client's situation, define the client's goals, and develop the most prudent means of securing these goals. (p. 129)

Enlisting Gadamer's hermeneutics and Perleman's "new" rhetoric to reframe legal theory, says Mootz, may seem a calamitous strategy. Because their ideas evade rigid definition—Gadamer took pride in the "vagueness" of his lectures—their categories appear easy to twist into relativist positions. However, such reshaping would belie rhetoric's critical dimension:

> Rhetorical knowledge emerges from practical encounters that have critical dimensions, and it is only this practical experience of critique that can, in turn, inform a theoretical project of critical inquiry. Gadamer and Perelman expose the error of equating critique with a special form of theoretical insight that can be divorced from ongoing practices in a significant, stable, and definitive manner. (p. xvi)

By leaning so heavily upon Gadamer and Perelman, Mootz also hopes to "recover important insights that too often get lost in the contemporary rush to establish a new and ever-more radically critical scholarly approach" (p. xvi).

These insights stem from Heidegger's conception of the concealed nature of truth: Its revelation or "unveiling" is an interpretative act. In Gadamer's words, "interpretation is not just an activity designed to bring certain objects into sharper focus; it is our funda-

mental mode of existing" (p. 3). In other words, understanding is dialogic: One opens one's self to an interlocutor, risking both refutation and self-doubt. When openness and empathy attend (genuine) conversation, understanding occurs through a fusion of horizons.

Rhetorical Knowledge in Legal Practice is Mootz's extended dialogue with Gadamer and Perelman, and, to a lesser extent, Friedrich Nietzsche. The first two are well employed; the third, less so. Gadamer and Perelman speak in their own voices. Nietzsche does not. He is miscast as a handyman whose job is to repair the author's hermeneutical-rhetorical scaffold: "When we join the complementary projects undertaken by Gadamer and Perelman, and then subject them to interrogation by Nietzsche, a more complete and persuasive picture of rhetorical knowledge emerges" (p. 187–88). Mootz acknowledges that Nietzsche resists classification, yet proceeds to embalm him in academic wrappings: "interpretivism," "naturalism," "ontological perspectivism." In a strange, indicative passage, Mootz's cardboard Nietzsche "cannot compel the religious fundamentalist to accept his perspectivist ontology, but this is not worrisome to Nietzsche since he is arguing that things couldn't be otherwise" (p. 95). This reeks of postmodern hocus-pocus. To cage Nietzsche inside some "ism" is to translate his soaring audacity into Esperanto. Overall, however, *Rhetorical Knowledge in Legal Practice* is a stimulating book. The first chapter contains an excellent summation of ancient rhetoric, making a persuasive case for the contemporary relevance of Protagoras and Isocrates. Mootz undertook a difficult, ambitious project and acquitted himself admirably. He reminds us that divorcing theory from practice yields staleness. In this respect, the ultimate keepers of the flame may be forensic orators:

> Legal theory suffers by not taking account of philosophical insights into the activity of rhetorical knowledge, but it is no less true that these philosophical insights can be enriched dramatically by drawing much-needed context from work by legal scholars. (p. xvi)

The book contains 40+ pages of notes, a works cited section, and an index.

—Tony Osborne
Gonzaga University

Nord, David Paul. *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007. Pp. xi, 293. ISBN 978-0-252-07404-2 (pb.) $20.00. (New in paperback; original hardbound edition, 2001).

Step into a standard American media history course and you'll meet John Peter Zenger, heroic crusader against seditious libel; encounter William Lloyd Garrison, the anti-slavery zealot who put out a newspaper almost on the side; and find nearly all the newspaper examples have New York mastheads. As a Midwesterner, I sometimes wonder about what was going on in the rest of the country.

David Nord's book of 12 essays on the newspaper in American history is provocative precisely because most of them either challenge the common wisdom on figures like Zenger and Garrison or because they expose aspects of journalistic history that don't make mainline texts. Even drawing most of the case studies from Chicago instead of New York is an antidote to the New York-centric orientation of much journalism history.

Like all books of essays, this work has its higher and lower points and there are times when the attempt to tie the disparate topics together through the common theme of community seems a little forced. But all in all, this book is worth reading if only because it casts a different light on a number of major episodes and eras in journalism history.

Nord opens with a fascinating piece on the origins of American newspaper journalism in Puritan Boston. However, Nord diverges from the standard take on the Puritan clergy as the natural enemy of journalists seeking freedom to oppose the religious establishment. Instead he suggests that popular journalism actually stemmed from the formats for presenting information about current events that prominent ministers such as Increase and Cotton Mather pioneered. The ministers, Nord says, were reporters, at least on some level. For example, they would observe major events such as a comet or warfare, quote participants or those who had witnessed a spectacle, and then explain them based on what seemed to be God's plan. From the perspective of popular journalism, the important fact was that they started with observation and reporting on events, setting the pattern for their secular successors and even their leading contemporary opponent, James Franklin.

Franklin, brother of Benjamin, published the nation's first uncensored newspaper and got into trouble with the Mathers over their differing views of small pox vaccination. Ironically the clergy got this one right. But James Franklin still gets credit for opposing the

establishment, an article of faith with journalists as absolute as interpreting events as part of God's plan was with the ministers.

The book is full of such "never knew that" or "never heard it explained quite that way" pieces. For example, the second essay maintains that the famous John Peter Zenger seditious libel case "was as much a religious as a political or legal phenomenon" because "like the religious awakenings, the Zenger trial reflected the skepticism for human authority felt by ordinary people who possessed a deep faith in the existence of God and truth" (p. 75).

While I will most likely continue to teach the Zenger Case as a landmark step towards press freedom, Nord's interpretation can certainly be woven into the more standard interpretation, as it probably should be.

My personal favorite essay dealt with William Lloyd Garrison and his newspaper, the *Liberator*. It makes it clear that the famous abolitionist was indeed a journalist although of a different variety than the mainstream penny press editors of the era. Nord places Garrison in the school of "associational" journalism that advocated for organizations or causes. We might view him as parallel to modern editors with pronounced viewpoints such as William F. Buckley, still definitely journalists rather than politicians who dabbled in publishing.

Because Garrison was so fervently hostile to slavery, how many of us are aware that he allowed proponents of slavery to voice their views in his paper? He felt that the best thing for his cause was for advocates of slavery to try to defend the indefensible. From an historical viewpoint, this essay helps clarify the division of American journalism into mainstream commercial and advocacy schools that occurred in the 1830s and 1840s.

A few of the essays are highly empirical such as one that studied the expenditures of working class families for newspapers and other reading material, discovering differences by region and ethnicity late in the 19th century. Southern white mill workers for example, spent far less on newspapers and other print materials than their northern counterparts, while families that lived mostly on the salaries of husbands rather than parents and children spent more. Others compare the way various Chicago newspapers reacted to such things as labor strife and how very different papers all sought community consensus.

All the essays are worth reading but individual interests will probably result in some skimming, as I did.

Each essay includes its own lengthy set of footnotes, often running to several pages per essay, but there is no overall bibliography. The book includes an index and a forward discussing the main message of each essay and in some cases its prior publication as an article.

Throughout the book, Nord tries to demonstrate how interwoven newspapers have been with their communities and their readers, even ending with a brief essay on today's community and interactive journalism. The book might make an excellent supplemental reader in a journalism history course although it would never replace a standard comprehensive text.

—Eileen Wirth
Creighton University

Packer, Jeremy and **Craig Robertson** (Eds.). *Thinking with James Carey: Essays on Communications, Transportation, History*. New York: Peter Lang, 2006. Pp. viii, 234. ISBN-13 978-0-8204-7405-2; ISBN-10 0-8204-7405-3 (pb.) $26.95.

For those of us fortunate enough to have known James Carey, who died in 2006, this book provides a wonderful ongoing conversation about topics close to the center of his thinking. For those who did not know him, the book proves a wonderful complement to his own essays and gives a hint to the reasons so many treated him with enthusiasm as well as a bit of frustration. Carey rooted his thought in journalism—or, better, in the functions of a journalism that gave reason to civic engagement. Part of that lay in his history: working class, Catholic, dialogic, conversational. How can we make our social world different? How could we (in the 1970s) break free of an instrumentalism that dominated communication research? How can we better see ourselves and our communication world?

Carey quickly took to Harold Innis' contextual view of communication; in one of Carey's breakthrough essays, he argued that communication serves more as a ritual than as a transporter of ideas, something that he loosely adapted from Innis' distinction between a bias of communication toward place and one toward time. And so he applied what today we call a "media ecology" approach to the telegraph and to history, to journalism (as he highlighted a debate between John Dewey and Walter Lippmann for the soul of journalism in the United States), and to cultural studies, the British approach to which he formed a living bridge.

The essays collected here enter into conversations with Carey, who participated in the original project,

begun in late 2001. The editors wisely choose to let Carey himself provide the bookends to the collection, in lengthy conversations with Lawrence Grossberg. The first walks us through Carey's biography and the origins of his interests, while the last has him reflect on the eight chapters in between. The reader should not expect a hagiography, as individual writers (most of them one-time students of Carey) take up themes in his work and debate them, rethink them, wrestle with them, tug at them in order to teach us those things overlooked in the typical communication study paradigm. Each of them, as the title proclaims, remains in the ambit of communications and its technologies, transportation, and history.

James Hay revisits Carey's essay distinguishing a cultural model of communication from a spatial one, updating the distinction and offering a critique of what he calls "spatial materialism" in communication study. Carey lived as a person of his time, so we should not be surprised that his "historicization of the ritual and transmission models of communication also placed communication research within the modern problematic" of political economy and community (p. 33). Tracing this history, Hay looks to the move from spatial materialism to cultural materialism, connecting Carey's work to the larger movements in cultural studies.

Chris Russill introduces yet another voice to the conversations with Carey: that of Michel Foucault. Calling attention to Foucault's examination of John Dewey's idea of the public allows him to bring Foucault into a dialogue with Carey through their common dependence on Dewey.

Jeremy Packer directs our attention to transportation—not the transportation model of communication, but Carey's bias towards the connection of technologies. Where Carey examined the telegraphy and the railroads, Packer cites automobiles, airplanes, and radio. The model still works in helping us understand material underpinnings of communication.

Gretchen Soderlund picks up the other half of the original equation: ritual. She examines Carey's approaches by turning them towards communication scholarship, which itself forms a kind of ritual. Her dialogue partners become structuralism and symbolism and her case study one of traffic in women, a set of cultural texts spanning 150 years, from the penny press to the Internet.

Jonathan Sterne takes us back to communication and transportation, asking how they became conceptually separated in the first place. It's a history both of

studies and of theories of communication and society. What we do with communication (and how we think about it) tells us a lot about what kind of society we want (and may well get).

In a wonderful essay, John Durham Peters offers "amends" for shortchanging Carey's stance on technology and ideology, first articulated in Carey's essay on the telegraphy; Peters had briefly touched on it in his earlier writings. Here he revisits the essay in depth, leading the reader to understand Carey better and to understand method and metaphor, language and writing, space and time—pretty much the whole universe of communication concepts. It is a fine, an exhilarating, essay and one that demonstrates where Carey could take one.

John Nerone takes us back to Carey's concern for the public life. It appears in considerations of the 19th century popular press and political parties, and the public sphere they create. How can we think these things now, particularly in light of a newer understandings of the public sphere offered by Jürgen Habermas? Nerone walks us through an historical approach, to get the facts straight before jumping into the modern period. The 19th-century public sphere seems quite different from where we find ourselves.

Finally, Craig Robertson offers another look at communication technology through the lens of an often overlooked and ignored one: the passport. This connection with the state, documentation, and individual identity suggests that seemingly mundane communication decisions have profound consequences for what we take for granted and for how we live our public lives.

As noted before, the editors place the second half of the Carey-Grossberg conversation at the end, giving Grossberg the chance to call Carey's attention to the various essays and to continue to think aloud about the topics. Carey's chosen forms of expression remained the essay and the conversation, maybe the latter more than the former. To understand Carey, one needed to hear him talk. This final chapter offers an echo of that.

While each chapter proposes its own argument, more or less well developed, the collection of them drops the reader into a very exciting seminar on communication study and its possibilities. They also remind us of just what Carey could do to our thinking and of the fortunate legacy we have in so many of his students.

The book has a brief index; each chapter has its own endnotes, but no bibliography or reference list.

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Ross, Susan Dente. *Deciding Communication Law: Key Cases in Context*. Mahwah, NJ, Alabama: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. 2004. Pp. xiv, 619. ISBN: 0-8058-4698-0 (hbk.) $80.00.

Modern libel law rests upon a wobbly 1964 precedent: in *New York Times v. Sullivan* the Supreme Court, in effect, decreed it's permissible to get the facts wrong as long as your heart is pure. To succor the civil rights movement, the Court shredded the centuries old "to the marrow" proof for truth, thus transcending the particulars of an Alabama city official's grievance against a Yankee newspaper.

"Heed Their Rising Voices," a fund-raising ad for Martin Luther King, Jr., carried a handful of inaccuracies. For example, Montgomery police had, in fact, arrested King "only" four times, rather than seven, as the ad had claimed. But such innocent mistakes inevitably attend debate on public issues, which "should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open," wrote Justice William J. Brennan in the decision that reversed a lower court's contention that falsity presumed libelous malice.

Brennan's monumental opinion is included in Susan Dente Ross's *Deciding Communication Law*. Short on "talk about cases" and long on the cases themselves, her text contains 39 opinions—mostly complete—spanning 70 years, from *Near v. Minnesota* (1931) to *North Jersey Media Group v. Ashcroft* (2002). While teaching media law, Ross discovered that even undergraduates could understand and enjoy reading the actual decisions:

> Once they overcome their initial timidity and learn a bit of legal jargon, they are fascinated by the drama of the law and by the profound disagreements and biting rhetoric exchanged by the judges who hand down these rulings. This is the stuff of real life, real disputes, real rulings: the real thing. It's not at all like reading books that talk about cases. (p. xi)

And, as Mathew D. Bunker's introduction adds:

> When it comes to communication law—or almost any field of law, for that matter—there is simply no substitute for reading the cases. Cases tell the story in a way that hornbooks, treatises and other narrative secondary sources simply can't replicate. As helpful as serious communication law treatises often are to students and teachers alike, to know the law only through these sources is to know the lyrics but not the music. (p. xiii)

Above all, however, the opinions exemplify dialectical argument in the service of democratic ideals. On occasion, dissenting justices attack the logical flaws in the majority opinions with a courage and wit that recalls Plato's *Dialogues*. For example, in *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul* (1992), which examines a cross-burning incident, the Supreme Court struck down a hate-speech ordinance as unconstitutional. Delivering the Court's opinion, Justice Scalia deemed the St. Paul ordinance overly restrictive, stepping beyond the proscription of content into that of viewpoint. "Fighting words" that would be acceptable on the placards of speakers favoring racial tolerance and equality could not be used by their opponents: "St. Paul has no such authority to license one side of a debate to fight freestyle, while requiring the other to follow Marquis of Queensberry rules" (p. 7.8). And, concluded Scalia, "Let there be no mistake about our belief that burning a cross in someone's front yard is reprehensible. But St. Paul has sufficient means at its disposal to prevent such behavior without adding the First Amendment to the fire" (p. 7.9).

Justice Byron White concurred, but took exception to the majority's motives and handiwork:

> Today, the Court has disregarded two established principles of First Amendment law without providing a coherent replacement theory. Its decision is an arid, doctrinaire interpretation, driven by the frequently irresistible impulse of judges to tinker with the First Amendment. The decision is mischievous at best and will surely confuse the lower courts. I join the judgment, but not the folly of the opinion. (p. 7.16)

Justice John Paul Stevens piled on: "in ruling that proscribable speech cannot be regulated based on subject matter, the Court does just that. Perversely, this gives fighting words greater protection than is afforded commercial speech" (p. 7.19). And, "To extend the Court's pugilistic metaphor, the St. Paul ordinance simply bans punches 'below the belt'—by either party. It does not, therefore, favor one side of any debate" (p. 7.24).

Democracy is forever in a state of becoming, malleable, unpredictable, shaped anew over and over by discursive clanging. Like a social seismograph, *Deciding Communication Law* charts these ideological twists and turns over most of the 20th century. In the mid-1970s, for example, new semantic eruption fractured the plane separating (historically privileged) political speech from mere commercial speech, resulting—arguably—in the conflation of free speech and free

enterprise. In 1978, for instance, "the Court held that a complete ban on newspaper advertising for routine legal services violated the First Amendment" (p. 10.4).

Soon after, a landmark Supreme Court decision battered the right of states to regulate "truthful commercial speech" (surely an oxymoron). During the 1973 Arab oil embargo, the state of New York had banned all advertising that promoted electricity consumption. A state court upheld the ban, reasoning that "commercial speech" from a power company conveyed little useful information. In *Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corp. v. Public Service Commission of New York* (1980), the Court found such overly broad speech restrictions unconstitutional.

In dissent, Justice William Rehnquist warned that requiring parity between commercial and noncommercial speech invited "dilution" of the First Amendment's scale of values. The Court's majority, he noted, had built their opinion from specious metaphoric stuff. Rehnquist attacked the Court's frequent reference to a "marketplace of ideas," as though some laissez-faire policy would optimize economic decision making under the guidance of Adam Smith's "invisible hand." However, he continued, the identification of speech that falls within First Amendment protection,

> is not aided by the metaphorical reference to a 'marketplace of ideas.' There is no reason for believing that the marketplace of ideas is free from market imperfections . . . . The notion that more speech is the remedy to expose falsehood and fallacies is wholly out of place in the commercial bazaar, where if applied logically the remedy of one who was defrauded would be merely a statement, available upon request, reciting the Latin maxim 'caveat emptor.' . . . [I]n a democracy, the economic is subordinate to the political, a lesson that our ancestors learned long ago, and that our descendants will undoubtedly have to relearn many years hence. (pp. 10.18–10.21)

The frequency with which such impeccable logic—the *sine qua non* of eloquence—flows throughout American case history suggests that legal writing merits more space in the liberal arts curriculum than today's marginal exposure through a single media law or ethics course. Case writing is both a literary and a philosophical/rhetorical enterprise. Inextricably linked through precedent, the cases form an architectonic canon steeped in American history. The *New York Times v. Sullivan* case, for example, is part treatise on

the Founders: in commenting on the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, Justice Brennan cites a Thomas Jefferson letter to Abigail Adams:

> I discharged every person under punishment or prosecution under the sedition law, because I considered, and now consider, that law to be a nullity, as absolute and as palpable as if Congress had ordered us to fall down and worship a golden image. (p. 14.20)

Such erudition characterizes *Deciding Communication Law* and demonstrates the compilation's applicability to a wide range of pedagogic and personal goals.

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Giovanni Tridente is an assistant at the Roman Pontifical University of the Holy Cross's *Etica informativa e legislazione di stampa* [Information Ethics and Press Law] Center. He also works in their communication office. Since 2002, he has been involved in political journalism and is the editor of *Synthesis*. He has written for a number of Italian national newspapers. Here, his intention is to consider how the journalist, or anyone involved in the communication industries, may involuntarily be aiding those who attempt to foster hate, or who are involved in what he calls "sinister activities." When, he asks, does the media person realize that he or she is being used? When should they cease to spread what amounts to propaganda for those who use hidden and illicit methods for messages to such ends?

Tridente first considers what the definition of "terrorism" should be and reconsiders how the media, which have always been tied to terrorist actions in some way, have today developed added power in the global village and an era of globalization. Through new technologies, the means of mass communication can reach the entire world. In fact, his book begins with the words of Schmid and De Graff (1982, p. 15, quoted in Picard, 1993, p. 4, quoted by Tridente, p. 9) who state that terrorism is nothing other than a violent communication strategy. There are few other forms of communicative actions that have, in my opinion, such an immediate and strong, if tragic, effect.

The book was engendered by the events of 11 September, 2001, and its initial objectives were to research and classify all of the news articles that in their problematics or history reported on mass media and terrorism. Tridente thus looked at the past, even if a recent past, that began to enable him to understand that it would be useful to reconstruct and re-interpret facts that emerged from the press accounts on terrorism.

Through the analysis of interviews and the opinions they showed, some of them published in specialized publications, he attempted to understand why and in which ways the journalist, as I said above, was involuntarily assisting in spreading the terrorist's message. Terrorism today, he suggests, is increasingly becoming this violent communication strategy, a strategy that may be more or less spectacular, carrying fewer or greater consequences, but with the intention of drawing the public's attention through the reaction of the media. It is in this context that the values of this professional response are measured in regard to the ethical basis of that response. In this regard, he states, we are faced with requests for occult publicity from the terrorist, requests that need us to both transmit and to obscure. He argues with McLuhan's (1978, but no further reference is given) suggestion of a total blackout on coverage of terrorist events, and suggests another means that will take the journalist's responsibility into consideration. The journalist is, after all, called to take the terrorist's actions into account along with his/her own. He/she must discern what his/her own action should be. He/she must therefore find a balance between the right to information, political exigencies, and contextual facts.

Tridente hopes that at the center of the journalistic profession there is man, a human being, belonging to a community who can use communication means in a measured way. To this end, his final chapter is called "Towards a correct and responsible information." He highlights the notions that the journalist has two types of responsibility: to the liberty of the press and to a sense of social responsibility. The responsibilities of the first type mean that journalists must be able to report on their discoveries because the public has a right to know everything about everything, even if such journalism may result the demise of reputations and even human lives. This leads, as he suggests, to a form of cynicism and the notion that the "Scoop" is the be all and end all of journalism.

The notion of social responsibility, however, requires that the journalist is capable of bringing together the independence of the press and his/her duties to society. They seek to influence the behavior of a society, but according to aims that relate to the common good. He/she must remain independent, but at the same time must understand the results of his/her actions. In this chapter, he also draws information from the statements and documents of the reign of John Paul II—Tridente, after all, is employed by a Pontifical University.

He points out that terrorism is a threat, and puts forward his ideas for the ethical action of the journalist in times of terroristic threat. He also offers the suggestions of Article 8 of the European Convention on the Rights of Man, which presumes that a man (or woman) is innocent until proven guilty and suggests the need to differentiate between somebody's national, ethnic, religious, or ideological background, to which they are tied and through which they interpret the world, and the condemned terrorist. He adds that SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, suggested a need for "a fundamental change in the ways in which we communicate through the media in order to contribute to a world of peace, respect and solidarity." SIGNIS adds that the fundamental objective of the means of communication is "that of contributing to understanding and reciprocal solidarity," which, as Tridente says (p. 134) is more than ever necessary in today's pluralist and multicultural society.

His bibliography draws on publications from a number of languages and might be useful as a first step for anyone who is beginning to work in this area. I have, however, noticed at least one omission from this bibliography.

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Announcement

The Media Ecology Association (www.mediaecology.org) will hold its 9th annual conference, at Santa Clara University, June 19-22, 2008, with the theme, "Communication, Technology, and the Sacred." Please see the website for program and details.