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## New Media and Religion: Observations on Research

Kyong Cho

New College

University of Edinburgh

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Editor emeritus: William E. Biernatzki, S.J.  
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Paul A. Soukup, S.J.  
Communication Department  
Santa Clara University  
500 El Camino Real  
Santa Clara, CA 95053 USA

Transfer by wire: Contact the managing editor. Add \$10 for handling.

Address all correspondence to the managing editor at the address shown above.

Tel: +1-408-554-5498  
Fax: +1-408-554-4913  
email: [psoukup@scu.edu](mailto:psoukup@scu.edu)

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# New Media and Religion

## Editor's Introduction

Kyong Cho's featured review essay on new media and religion comes five years after COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS last examined religion and the Internet (Campbell, 2006)—a lifetime in the new media. If anyone should doubt that things have changed, a number of books on new media reviewed in our Book Review section makes that point. Niall Cook's *Enterprise 2.0*, Paul Levinson's *New New Media*, and Andrea Press and Bruce William's *The New Media Environment* all argue that something significant has changed in the way people communicate. Each also makes the point that this change continues rapidly, almost too rapidly for scholars to assess the impact of these media. Each tries to measure—or at least comment upon—how this change of media will influence the different contexts of people's lives. The new media affect everything from interpersonal communication to entertainment to information to education to political activity to business and beyond.

Religion is no different. Religious groups of every kind have made regular use of communication throughout their histories; indeed, many fall into the “early adopter” category. The Judeo-Christian Bible was the first book to come from Johannes Gutenberg's printing press in the 15th century. Film makers as early as 1895 recorded biblical stories. The first on-location radio broadcasts in the United States originated from churches. Television evangelists, again in the U.S., helped spur the growth of cable television. COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS has committed itself over the 30 years of its publication to examine religious uses of communication. Our first issues carried a “religious communication” supplement; more recently, we have tried to publish one issue each year dedicated to communication and religion. And so, we do not nor should we find it surprising that religious groups have turned to the new media as well as to every other form of communication.

These new media offer very different opportunities for religion, certainly allowing interactivity where many of the old media aligned with religious groups provided just one-way communication. Cho's review offers a look at research into some of these uses but also notes studies that show a certain lack of imagina-

tion among the religious groups. Where churches have embraced the new media, Cho reports some interesting changes, particularly in terms of the relationship of online and offline practices. He also notes the rise of research into the use of new media by non-Christian groups—much of the work reported even five years ago addressed Christianity only. And, perhaps not surprisingly, these five years have also seen the development of different research approaches and methods. Cho has also identified an important trend in the research into new media and religion, one that will most likely appear more and more in all communication research addressing the new media: its interdisciplinary nature. Not only have new media changed how people communicate, they have changed our understanding of how to understand this process. And that calls for the collaboration of many disciplines and methodologies.

By providing easy and instantaneous communication across the world, the new media have also expanded well beyond the West and have led non-western researchers to provide important perspectives, not only on these forms of communication but on all communication (a point reinforced by Aguirre and Bisbal in their book, *Prácticas y travesías de comunicación en América Latina*, also reviewed in the Book Review section). The new media suggest a new world, both of communication and of research, one that benefits not only from multidisciplinary research but from multicultural perspectives.

Finally, Cho's survey suggests that the religious use of new media manifests a certain change in religion as well. While religious institutions (denominations, parishes, schools) enter into the new media world, these media promote more individual uses. Levinson notes in his book that “every consumer is a producer.” And this appears among religious users. People do not wait for an institutional church but create a religious practice “from the bottom up.” Such practice will raise interesting questions for organized religion, for the understanding of dogma, and for teaching authority. The new media have changed everything and as more and more media become more and more available, we should expect even more changes, all needing study.

# New Media and Religion: Observations on Research

Kyong Cho

*kyong.h.cho@gmail.com*

## 1. Introduction

What proper metaphor might we draw of an academic area of inquiry that has developed at an enormous speed, yet in a disorganized and somewhat messy manner? The study of new media and religion constitutes such an area. Scholars apply a variety of theories to construct different paradigms, many of which do help in orienting further studies. Culturally speaking, the study of new media and religion is taken up in the West, the East, the Middle East, and Africa. Because of the pluralistic nature of the origins of new media and religion, it is difficult to point to a specific discipline, a set of methodologies, or theoretical rationales as the prime influence.

A fitting metaphor to describe the emergence of new media and religion comes from the story of the Internet itself. From its beginnings as the government-sanctioned ARPANET [the United States Department of Defense's Advanced Research Project Administration network] in the 1960s and its grassroots utility for university students in North Carolina, the Internet has grown exponentially since the 1990s. It is not technically owned by anyone, yet it is utilized by one-sixth of the population of the world. We have only recently begun to bring ourselves up to speed on how to understand the Internet and apply offline regulatory policies to it. Boyle's (2008) work, for instance, explores the realm of intellectual property and the public domain. The Internet is employed for a variety of uses, from entertainment to research, from information dissemination to socialization. When one takes a step back to survey the impact of the Internet, one cannot help but marvel at it, despite its disjointed and often messy development.

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In a similar way, the study of new media and religion has developed from a range of disciplines. The resulting body of knowledge is not necessarily cohesive, but when one takes a step back to admire the large picture, it is both exciting and promising, nonetheless.

Another helpful way to understand the current landscape of new media and religion comes from a media researcher, Lynn Schofield Clark. Clark used the term *protestantization* to describe the state of research in media, religion, and culture (Clark, 2002). By this, she does not imply the propagation of Protestant Christianity, but rather refers to

the values emergent with the Reformation. Those values specific to my argument include the rise of intellectual inquiry as an endeavor separated from religious aims and the cultural norm of religious tolerance and relativism in the content of a U.S. society that is increasingly pluralistic. (Clark, 2002, p. 8)

Protestantization refers to the state of scholarly research specifically. Clark identifies the interdisciplinary approach, as well as the willingness of both sectarian (religious) researchers and scholarly researchers to engage in dialogue. The hard distinction made here between religious and secular interests makes the point that researchers have different agendas for studying new media and religion, and that while some fit along this dichotomy, other scholars may have both interests at heart. The protestantization of new media and religion refers to the interdisciplinary approach, as well as the pluralistic attitude towards it. While Clark refers to the broader study of media, religion, and culture, for our purposes it is helpful to apply her term to the more narrow study of new media and religion.

The landscape of new media and religion as described may not seem reassuring if our goal is to find a harmonious middle ground. The point, however, is not to find a compromised position that provides a vintage snapshot of new media and religion. Rather, in

keeping with the “protestantization” of the study, we want to expand and incorporate interdisciplinary methods. This review identifies several key trends for the purposes of orienting ourselves in the direction of fruitful research. In preparation for this, I have familiarized myself with scholars contributing to new media and religion from a variety of different fields, including sociology, communication, religious studies, English, theology, and anthropology, and have identified key researchers at the forefront of the study, whose work I will point out.

This review chronicles the emergence of the study of new media and religion as a field of inquiry

in its own right. First, it gives an overview of the history of research paradigms from a scholarly perspective using Hojsgaard and Warburg’s observations (2005). A brief overview of sectarian views on new media and religion from Christian perspectives follows. Second, this review offers an in-depth treatment of the author’s observations regarding new media and religion. Several heuristic perspectives are identified that will constructively orient the landscape. The next section summarizes the methodologies employed by scholars from various disciplines. Finally, I propose several research prospects based on observations made in the field of new media and religion.

## 2. History of Research Paradigms

The use of the Internet for religious purposes can be traced back to the early 1980s (Campbell, 2006). According to Hojsgaard and Warburg (2005), the first studies of religion and the Internet were enthusiastic, and were either clearly Utopian or Dystopian in their views of the potential of religion on the Internet. Hojsgaard and Warburg’s characterization had to do with the theoretical potential of the religious uses of the Internet. The fascination with Internet-mediated religion had not yet yielded a considerable amount of scholarship to inform researchers of the nuances of new media and religion. Because of this lack of data, speculation on the potential of the Internet as a place for religious rituals in the future did not seem so naive then (O’Leary 1996; 2005; Zaleski, 1997). Ess, Kawabata, and Kurosaki (2007) attribute the enthusiasm for computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the 1990s to the legacy of medium theorists like Innis, Eisenstein, McLuhan, and Ong, who saw technology as the defining factor in culture.

Hojsgaard and Warburg (2005) identify the second wave of research on religion and the Internet as being “more reflexive and less unrealistic, as it seeks to come to terms with the technological differences, the communication contexts, and the overall transformations of the late modern society” (p. 5). This evolution of research is in part a function of time. Hojsgaard and Warburg identify first wave studies in the late 1990s. Since the speculations in the first wave, we have accumulated more general knowledge as well as research into new media and religion. To

dispel simple Utopian or Dystopian views, researchers have identified nuances in the actual practice of religion on the Internet. For example, in Hojsgaard and Warburg’s volume, Barker surveys the potential for new religious movements (NRMs) to utilize the Internet for the purposes of *vertical control*, as well as the Internet’s tendency to undermine that control with opportunities for horizontal interaction. What results is a tension between dichotomy of religious members/non-members and a more organic outgrowth of users sharing religious knowledge with one another (Barker, 2005). Another example of the nuanced use of the Internet is Introvigne’s (2000, 2005) studies on information terrorism against religious movements in cyberspace. In addition to the positive uses of the Internet, Introvigne brings to our attention the negative use of the Internet for information dissemination. What is apparent in the second wave of research, then, are the real outcomes of the practice of religion on the Internet.

At the time of their writing in 2005, Hojsgaard and Warburg had hinted at the possibility of a third wave of research.

[We] believe that because of its chaotic and complex development, religion and the Internet will continuously be a topic that needs to be addressed by scholars with very different approaches. In the light of that, a *bricolage* of scholarship coming from different backgrounds and with diverse methodological preferences may very well indicate that the topic is maturing

academically, and that it is maturing well. The third wave of research on religion and cyberspace may be just around the corner. (Hojsgaard & Warburg, 2005, p. 9)

Since 2005 research has certainly not slowed down. We have indeed seen continuous contributions from scholars in a variety of disciplines employing various methodologies. What is more, we have begun to stratify the study of religion and new media according to (1) different religions, and (2) different uses of new media.

We have found that religion on the Internet does not make up a singular stratum. Different religions use the Internet in a variety of ways and encounter different issues. For instance, Islam, one of the larger and more prominent religions in the world, deals with issues of terrorism in a post-9/11 world and of the navigation of Internet use for purposes of dialogue and self presentation (Abdulla, 2007; Hashim, Murphy, & Hashim, 2007). In another example, different branches of Buddhism struggle with issues of authority and individual self actualization through Internet dissemination of religious artifacts (MacWilliams, 2006).

In addition to stratifying new media and religion according to its use by different religious groups, studies have begun to address different uses of new media. The *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* published an issue dedicated to rituals on the Internet. Analyses of religious websites find out how religious organizations use the Internet; they revolve around uses such as information dissemination, identity, and evangelization (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2007; Baab, 2008; Frobish, 2006; Hutchings, 2007; Kim, 2007; Smith, 2007; Sturgill, 2004). Virtual community has also attracted the attention of scholars (Campbell, 2005a; Kim, 2005).

The stratification of research as outlined above does not necessarily indicate that new media and religion has completely fragmented as an area of inquiry. Rather, it shows that scholars have created a landscape that appreciates the complexity of the field given that religion itself is a term that represents, sometimes inaccurately, highly diverse groups of people and their activities. The current state of research is indeed promising given the different directions that scholars are taking the study.

It will be helpful at this point to briefly outline the attitude towards new media and religion from a religious scholarship viewpoint. The diversity of

scholarship includes those of a more sectarian persuasion who have religious interests in studying new media and religion. The sectarian attitudes as treated in this section will be specifically from a Christian perspective for two reasons. First, Christianity constitutes one of the largest religions in the world, and thereby offers a fair representative of a large portion of the population. Second, sectarian scholarship, to the author's knowledge, consists mostly of Christian scholars. It is safe to assume that sectarian scholars from other religions may have different attitudes according to their religious traditions. This will be a promising area of study in the future.

From the outset we should mentioned that, within Christianity, scholarly views regarding new media and religion are not uniform. Consider, for example, the series of lectures in the 1970s by famed British television journalist, Malcolm Muggeridge. A convert to Protestant Christianity and later to Roman Catholicism, Muggeridge's lectures focused on his judgment that media create a fantasy world that deprives British society of moral values. The cure for this obsession with fantasy is reality grounded in Jesus Christ (Muggeridge, 1977). Muggeridge had operated under the assumption of a dichotomy between media and real life: real life inherently represented what was real, and media lent themselves to fantasy. Muggeridge's pronouncements did not anticipate the golden age of televangelism led by the Fundamentalist Christians a decade later. Fundamentalist Christians also operated with an assumed dichotomy, but between the things of the world and things of God. A theological characteristic of the Fundamentalists was premillennial dispensationalism: the idea that God will take up his followers in the rapture from the earth before the millennial period of tribulation. Because of this belief, Fundamentalist Christians heavily emphasize the salvation of the soul, and remain at liberty to use a variety of means in the necessary process to spread God's message, including television.

Mark Noll, an Evangelical Christian historian, labeled the rise of Fundamentalism in the 20th century as an intellectual disaster (Noll, 1994). Fundamentalism's lack of ability or unwillingness to critically survey worldly phenomena, including the very technology it was employing, had led to a simplistic view regarding media and religion. Suffice to say that the dichotomy between worldly and spiritual things made investigation into technology and media unnecessary. Noll's

indictment of Fundamentalism was part of his larger indictment of Evangelical Christianity, which has its roots in Fundamentalism.

Evangelical Christianity can be characterized by four traits, as observed by British historian David Bebbington: conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism (as cited in Noll, 1994, p. 8). Evangelical Christianity's activism allows it to think more critically about worldly phenomena than its Fundamentalist cousins. This challenge is taken up by Douglas Groothuis, an Evangelical Christian philosopher, in his book, *The Soul in Cyberspace* (1997). Groothuis's approach to the soul in cyberspace accounts for a more nuanced look at the tendencies of cyberspace, including its postmodern character, its lack of physical embodiment, and its fragmentary nature. Each of these characteristics poses a potential threat to Christianity, which is incompatible with postmodernism, gnosticism (a body/spirit dichotomy), and an assault on contextual truth. Groothuis concludes his work, however, by vindicating his approach and defending himself from a cyber-dystopian worldview:

Given the present tendency to worship technology, some negativity is necessary in order to bring some balance. In this sense, being negative is positive. The raving digitopians are easily blinded by the power of their machines; they tend to equate power and speed with moral and social improvements . . . The simple realization that what is newer may be neither truer nor better should drive us to a deeper level of analysis with respect to our culture and worldview. (Groothuis, 1997, pp. 155-156)

Groothuis operates in a thoughtful and critical manner while maintaining his position on Evangelical Christianity. Cyberspace is not merely a neutral tool for evangelization; rather, Groothuis identifies what he sees as the characteristics of cyberspace of which the Evangelical community needs to be wary.

Pierre Babin and Angela Ann Zukowski treat the issue of new media and religion from a distinctly Catholic perspective. In *The Gospel in Cyberspace* (2002), they take less of a negativity vs. positivity approach and instead address cyberspace in a direct and engaging manner. Applying the primacy of *ground* over *figure*, Babin and Zukowski stress that

for the media generation the place from which one speaks, the tone of voice, the conviction, and

the emotion springing up from the heart are more important than words. . . . All these surroundings of the message are the message itself. (Babin & Zukowski, 2002, pp. 56-57)

The ground is also referred to in a later chapter as the body or the media or technology itself. The primacy of the medium is a McLuhanesque idea, and this statement of Pope John Paul II falls in line with McLuhan: "One no longer thinks or speaks of social communications as mere instruments or technologies. Rather they are now seen as part of a still unfolding culture whose potentialities remain for the moment only partially exploited" (as cited in Babin & Zukowski, 2002, p. 168). That the medium transforms the demands of culture is not lost on Babin and Zukowski. They write that the hope of their book is to "help readers understand that it is not simply a matter of amplifying a doctrinal speech with the media; the challenge is to deeply transform the communication system" (p. 181). Implied in this statement is that the religious community must transform itself in order to take advantage of, as well as understand, the frontier of cyberspace.

This section has provided a brief history of research paradigms as outlined in Hojsgaard and Warburg's work. The first wave of research in new media and religion was polarized regarding the beneficial or harmful potentials of new media. The second wave of research is characterized by a nuanced understanding of new media's potential for benefit or harm as evidenced by several case studies; the presence of new media is not wholly a helpful development, nor is it wholly a harmful one. At the time of writing, Hojsgaard and Warburg predicted a third wave of research in new media and religion in which a variety of scholars would begin to contribute to the field of inquiry with different methodologies and approaches and from different disciplines. This they took as a sign of a maturing field. In addition to chronicling the waves of research, this section has also highlighted thoughts on new media and religion within Christianity. The modes of thought briefly surveyed here make apparent the diversity of viewpoints regarding new media and religion arising within the various Christian perspectives. Such diversity within one religious perspectives argues for the value of studying the paradigms of other religious communities regarding new media and religion.

### 3. Heuristics

The following section presents a number of observations regarding certain trends in the study of new media and religion. Less a review of common themes in new media and religion, it seeks to identify some guiding heuristic perspectives. In a past issue of COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS, Campbell (2006) identified some of the common themes and provided a helpful bibliography. She divided the research into nine themes: Theology/Spirituality, Religion, Morality/Ethics, Practical Ministry Applications; Religious Traditions, Community, Identity, Authority/Power, and Ritual.

Rather than repeat her work here, this section outlines approaches to studying new media and religion. Heuristic perspectives as understood here describe viewpoints that scholars both employ in approaching their studies and develop from their findings. They offer insight into the interpretive lenses that are used to understand the intersection of religion and new media. The value of such heuristic observations lies in the tentative picture they paint of the landscape of the study, as well as in the precedent they offer for how scholars should further pursue studying the field.

#### *A. The Internet as an information transmission medium*

A number of scholars in new media and religion have identified the tendency of religious communities, churches, and individuals to use the Internet as a means of information dissemination or transmission. Their studies focus on the phenomenon of religious communities utilizing the Internet mainly for the purpose of exchanging information. This appears in distinction to using the Internet to mediate religious experiences, practices, and rituals (see below Section 3D, “Online-religion and religion-online: The prime heuristic,” for a treatment of this distinction). Smith’s (2007) study measured nonprofit organizations’ use of Internet websites. Using Kent and Taylor’s (1998) criteria for effective web communication, she found that many religious nonprofit websites were underutilizing their potential for two-way communication and surmised that this was the case because nonprofits depended on more traditional one-way communication mediums (Smith, 2007). Her study highlights for us the fact that

the nonprofits surveyed had yet to adapt to the two-way communication opportunities of the Internet, and thereby do not have a strong interactive presence with Internet users. The organizations themselves approach the Internet as if it were a broadcast medium, such as a newsletter, television, or radio, thus reinforcing their tendency to use the Internet as a means for information dissemination.

Most researchers typically characterize church websites as information oriented. Sturgill’s (2004) study of organizational and ideological purposes of websites outlines the way that churches communicate. In her content analysis of Southern Baptist churches, she looked for signs indicating the purpose of websites. She concluded that “promoting the church as an organization (or attracting visitors) was of major importance in the sites examined. There was little attention spent in developing relational aspects of the site that might in some way extend the church experience in the online realm” (p. 175). The church as an organization is contrasted to the church’s ideology: that of evangelization. Sturgill’s conclusion was that the scope and purpose of the Church websites she analyzed centered more around the church as an organization and less on evangelization. Hence, the most prevalent content on the Southern Baptist websites were worship service times, church addresses and phone numbers, photos of the main church building, weekly schedules, and listings of church staff, among other things (p. 172).

Bedell (2000) studied the use of the Internet by Mainline Protestant congregation members. In his survey, he found that the top priority items for congregants’ use of the web included information about services and programs, announcements to members, and prayer requests and other support for those in need, while the items that were least selected as top priority included conducting educational classes, conducting business meetings, and conducting worship or spiritual meetings (Bedell, 2000). While we can consider requesting prayer and other support as more than merely exchanging information, Bedell’s study overall finds that members of Mainline Protestant congregations seek information on websites more often than they would seek out meetings, classes, and worship services.

Horsfall's (2000) qualitative analysis of five different faith traditions' church websites yielded general characteristics of religious groups. The general characteristics included external (outside of the religious group) and internal (within the religious group) communication. External communication included evangelistic outreach, about which Horsfall observed that "no one indicated that the Internet information is sufficient in itself for a religious experience" (p. 174). Other external communication consisted of publicity, directories, addresses and contact information, and legitimization. None of the contents listed above lent themselves particularly to mediated religious experience. Internal communication, while it also consisted of information dissemination such as member directories, published testimonies, and shared resources, consisted of online discussions between members in newsgroups, listservs, and e-mail. This is an indication that the web had facilitated two-way conversations, which opened up the possibility for members to share religious experiences mediated by the web.

The studies cited above are instances in which religious communities, organizations, and individuals utilized the Internet mainly for the purposes of information dissemination. While it may seem rudimentary, the study of such phenomena is helpful because many religious websites today use the web for informational purposes (as will be discussed later on); however, information transmission is not the only purpose to which religious communities put their websites. Internet users, religious organizations, and webmasters all have a variety of different opinions regarding the extent to which religious experience can and should be mediated online. What all of them seem to agree upon, however, is that the Internet, at the very least, is conducive to and useful for information transmission.

### *B. Online religion's relationship to offline religion*

The following section addresses online religion's relationship to offline religion in two distinct aspects. First, how is online religion incorporated into offline religion? Does it act as a supplement, a substitute, or a usurper of offline religion completely? Second, what is the nature of online religion? This second question deals with issues of whether the nature of religious rituals changes with the transition from the offline to the online.

The first aspect of online religion's relationship with offline religion deals with how people or groups

incorporate online religion into offline religion, if at all. An early worry about computer-mediated communication (CMC) in general arose from the fear that users would engage in less face-to-face (FtF) communication. Studies have indicated that, however, those who connect to the Internet can both maintain contact through CMC, as well as increase their levels of FtF communication (Wellman & Haythornthwaite, 2002). The issue is not lost in religion. Campbell's (2005a) ethnographic participation in three e-mailed based communities addresses the issue of online community and offline community. She found that those who engaged in online community maintained their friendships over a period of years; indeed they had done so not only through e-mail, but through face-to-face encounters. Campbell herself had participated in one of these meetings, The Great Anglican Online Listmeet, a weekend gathering of participants in Anglican Communion Online in Toronto. In participating in such an event, Campbell reminds us that relationships can be maintained through a combination of both online and offline interaction.

Online social networks are not seen as isolated, simply located online, but are considered embedded in the "real," or offline, world. This means people are active participants in both realms and move seamlessly between the two. They do not consider their Internet friendships to be only online, but see them as part of their general social network. Online communication often creates a desire for individuals to go beyond the screen and transcend the limitations of online textual interaction. This can occur simply by adding emoticons in texts or orchestrating face-to-face meetings with online friends. (Campbell, 2005a, p. 148)

Campbell's findings were, first, that the online Christian community acted as a supplement to a user's involvement in local church, and second, that individuals supplemented these relationships online in addition to using the Internet for information. In this instance, the online involvement in religious community has not usurped the offline religious institution's place or role. The blend of online and offline community also appears in new religious movements (NRMs) such as the House of Netjer, a revival of ancient Egyptian religion (Krogh & Pillifant, 2004).

In addition to the supplementary nature of online communities, researchers have found instances in which churches primarily engage online. Simon

Jenkins, one of the founders of the virtual Church of Fools, chronicles his experiences in beginning one of the first virtual churches online. The Church of Fools started as an outgrowth of an online community board on Jenkins's online magazine website, Ship of Fools. The church ran as an experiment from May 2004 to September 2004, and as of this writing exists as St. Pixels church on the web. Jenkins stated his aims in creating Church of Fools:

1. We wanted to try translating church into the medium of the net. It was to be a genuine experiment, seeking visitor feedback, to find out if online church is a viable way to "do church."

2. We wanted to create moments of genuine depth and spirituality, helping people feel they were connecting with God, themselves and others.

3. We wanted to educate and inform people who would never darken the doors of a church about Christian worship and fellowship. We hoped to break down the barriers people have about going to church. (Jenkins, 2008, p. 100)

Kluver and Chen (2008) evaluate the possibility of spiritual experiences online by conducting a virtual ethnography and interviews with participants in Church of Fools and St. Pixels. From their data, they imply that such an experience may indeed be possible. Hutchings comes to the same conclusion in his own observations and interviews in three online churches (Hutchings, 2007). Other instances in which online community operates without an offline counterpart appear in Berger and Ezzy's (2004) study of American and Australian teenage witches. Because becoming a witch is less organized around adherence to an institution or a set of doctrines, there is less of an opportunity to get involved in physical covens. Berger and Ezzy's interviews with teenage witches found that "active participation in Witchcraft-related online communities provides young Witches with an important sense of contact with and belonging to a group of people who share similar beliefs and practices but who were perhaps 'just out of reach' geographically" (p. 186). Online religion in this instance acts as a substitute for the lack of offline community. Indeed, it presents itself as an entirely new and different phenomenon. Kim (2005) echoes this sentiment regarding Buddhist community online. He writes, "more than an additional *locale* for religious practice, online religious community seems to develop into an alternative religious organization that sat-

isfies the multi-pattern needs of contemporary individuals" (p. 147).

From these studies we identify three patterns regarding online religion's incorporation into offline religion. The first is a complementary role; online religion acts as a supplement to offline religion, as demonstrated by Campbell and by Krogh and Pillifant. The second pattern is that online religion acts as a substitute for offline religion, as was the case with Church of Fools. However, because Church of Fools was an experiment that ran for a short period of time, the sustainability of such religious communities cannot at present be substantiated. To do that, some longitudinal studies of such online religious communities are required. And third, online religion takes a form that is qualitatively different from offline gatherings, or lack thereof, as was demonstrated by Kim and by Berger and Ezzy.

The second aspect of online religion's relationship to offline religion deals with the nature of online religion. Researchers have demonstrated this by surveying rituals online. Specifically, they look at modifications to rituals when communities transfer them online. Some rituals have yet to be adapted successfully online because of their nature. For instance, in an interesting contrast, Protestant Christian communion has been mediated through the Internet (Helland, 2005) while the Catholic Eucharist has yet to be officially sanctioned online because of the "transubstantiated" nature of the bread and wine; that is, the elements take the actual physical property of Jesus's body. Where is the body if people partake of the Eucharist online? Do the virtual bread and wine become Jesus's body?

Some studies chronicle the experience of participating in some type of online ritual, such as pilgrimages (Kalinock, 2006; MacWilliams, 2004). Those developing them form the nature of online rituals around the notion that while some potential exists for rituals to mirror or mimic offline rituals, the rituals themselves are also transformed in some ontological way, or, in some instances, an entirely new ritual is formed online. While practitioners model some rituals after offline traditions and modes of communication and thereby allow participants to see the rituals as virtual extensions of physical religious communities (Jacobs, 2007), more often than not they act in such as way as to make some changes in the rituals apparent in the transfer. Radde-Antweiler (2006) focuses on the contextual changes in rituals online using the concept

of *transfer of ritual* developed by Langer, Lüddeckens, Radde, and Snoek, which states that “when a ritual is transferred, i.e., when one or more of its context aspects changes, changes in one or more of its internal dimensions can be expected” (as cited in Radde-Antweiler, 2006, p. 58). Miczek states that one of three processes can occur with online rituals: transformation, invention, or exclusion (Miczek, 2008).

A particularly interesting case study regarding the change in rituals is MacWilliams’s (2006) case study on the Gohonzon controversy. Independent Nichiren Buddhists made the Dai Gohonzon and other Gohonzon available to download via the Internet. The Dai Gohonzon is a calligraphic scroll which acts symbolically for Buddhists and is an object of veneration. Prior to its free dissemination, the Gohonzon was distributed either by priests (as is the case with the Nichiren Shôshû branch of Buddhism) or the community of Buddhists (as is the case for Sôka Gakkai International, also known as the SGI). The availability of the Gohonzon online coincides with an increase in the number of independent Nichiren Buddhists, who practice their religion more individually. This sparked a controversy among the Nichiren and SGI because some felt that the free availability of the scroll outside of the context of Buddhist communities compromised the sacred nature of the Gohonzon. This marks an instance in which independent Nichiren Buddhists, who have a fundamentally different understanding of the ritual and the Internet, had recreated the ritual for a more individual use. MacWilliams writes that for the independent Nichiren, the Internet Gohonzon “are as real and authentic as the originals since, as mirrors they reflect the true Buddhahood that emerges from the heart of the chanter” (MacWilliams, 2006, p. 116).

The nature of online religion, as manifest by the rituals that it employs, is seen as being a mirror or branch of offline religion, as well as being qualitatively different in its practices. Thus it both reflects offline religion—the case when it is modeled after offline religion—and it manifests something new, as in the case when new rituals arise out of the old. Kluver and Chen’s study of the Church of Fools finds that it is “a curious mélange of levity and gravitas, of sacred within the profane” (Kluver & Chen, 2008, p. 137). The idea of the sacred within the profane suggests that online religion’s relationship to offline religion is dynamic and can potentially recreate the nature of religion in contemporary society.

### C. Online influence on the offline

As mentioned above, researchers view online rituals either as maintaining their original form or, as Miczek pointed out, as taking a different form when transferred online. An interesting area of study that as yet awaits a full exploration lies in the implications of online religious influence on the offline. Teusner’s 2007 study on the emerging Christian bloggers in Australia demonstrates this. The emerging Christian bloggers embrace the postmodern notions of identity construction and religion. They do not belong to traditional churches nor adhere to all their beliefs and look for a better way to live meaningfully. As an auxiliary point, Teusner observes that these bloggers aim not simply to contribute to the online world, but also to the offline world. The following quote comes from an interviewee in his study:

[Emerging church] is a conversation that I think is only useful if it’s grounded at some point. I think there’s way too much abstract theology in a whole lot of these blogs. That’s nice, but it needs to be grounded at some point. My site is focused on my particular reality. I want to recruit [readers] to their own context. I don’t have goals for the blog to grow or be huge. Having a counter on my blog is of use to me as I like to know not how many but where from. My blog is a conversation to try and help people reflect on the Gospel in their own world. (quoted in Teusner, 2007, p. 12).

Similarly, Mia Lovheim’s (2004) interviews of young Swedish participants in online discussions on religion points to the Internet’s role in the transformation of religion in contemporary society. She questions whether there is a synergistic link between the character of the Internet and such change and argues that “the impact of the Internet on religion, at least in terms of its use as a resource for the construction of identity, must involve an examination of the intersection of ‘embodied’ religious experiences offline and ‘disembodied’ experiences online. We need to learn much more about the interplay of these worlds and context in the lives of ordinary Internet users (Lovheim, 2004, p. 72).

The postmodern nature of online religion clearly appears in both of these studies. The construction of religious identity online does not follow Durkheimian distinctions between sacred and profane space. Whether this is symptomatic of the broader religious culture in contemporary society lies out of the scope of the research reported in this review. What is pertinent

to our discussion, however, is the Internet's potential as a space where people negotiate identities and define themselves, and whether this indicates such broader change, as well as instigates it.

Kim's (2007) study of Korean megachurch websites yields several observations about what she terms "ethereal Christianity" (Kim, 2007). In this instance, the Internet serves as part of the instigation. She writes that the "'ethereal' world of the Internet therefore poses critical questions for Christian theology of matter and physicality. One obvious aspect of Korean pneumatology . . . is a strong correlation between success in the spiritual world and in the material, which encourages involvement with the world rather than withdrawal" (Kim, 2007, p. 222). Her study indicates that the ethereal Christianity portrayed by Korean megachurch websites contributes to theological discussion in the offline realm. She points to the recent development in the study of cyber-theology and expects further studies to gain fresh insight into world Christianity.

These studies indicate that online religion's offline influence will necessitate a multi-disciplinary approach to new media and religion, with help from such fields as religious studies, the sociology of religion, and philosophy.

#### *D. Online-religion and religion-online: The prime heuristic*

One of the most often cited works in the young field of new media and religion is Helland's article on the distinction between religion-online and online-religion. Helland (2000) proposes the heuristic distinction to describe religious participation on the Internet. Religion-online describes the situation when a religious organization "has adapted the medium to a traditional form of one-to-many communication. They have retained complete control over the belief system and presented it to their practitioners without allowing for any reciprocal input from those receiving the message" (Helland, 2000, p. 220). An outgrowth of this is that much of the way that religion manifests itself online takes on a broadcast model and therefore acts in mostly informational ways. Helland likens such religion-online to television worship. The previous section on the Internet as an information transmission medium grows out of this approach.

Online-religion, on the other hand, takes advantage of the "unregulated, open-ended, non-hierarchical communications network" (Helland, 2000, p. 214). In online-religion, Internet users become involved in a

dialectic process of give and take. Rather than the one-to-many communication model of broadcasters, this approach embraces a model in which "the beliefs are developing and altering, adapting and fluctuating in the direction the participants wish to take them" (Helland, 2000, p. 214).

While the religion-online vs. online-religion distinction proved helpful a decade ago and may still have its uses today, the fluidity of the use of the Internet and its frequent changes, argues that we may well need to amend this heuristic tool. Glenn Young took up the task of doing this in his study, but he applies the heuristic specifically to Christianity. Young (2004) sought to demonstrate, by way of analyzing the content of Christian websites, that religion-online and online-religion form continuous rather than discrete categories. The websites Young studied indeed contained elements of information and participation, and elements of preexisting Christian traditions and newer, online traditions. Continuity between the two characteristics of Internet-mediated Christianity proved helpful in light of websites evolving into more dynamic spaces.

Helland himself addresses the issue of online-religion in a later study. Using his distinctions between religion-online and online-religion, he attempts to clarify how researchers may see online-religion. In doing so, Helland adds clarification to what constitutes online-religion. Regarding whether an act can be considered online-religion, Helland stated that the authenticity of the act must be observable (Helland, 2005). He writes this because the interactive elements of the Internet do not necessarily lend themselves to religious experiences. The religious act must be observable as having taken place online and must have attributed to it some sort of religious meaning. Furthermore, Helland writes:

In the case of online religion, people are living their religion on and through the Internet medium. For those individuals who participate in online religious activity, there is no separation between their offline life and experiences and their online life and experiences, and their religious activities and worldviews permeate both environments. . . . [T]he Internet is not some place "other" but recognized as a part of their everyday life and they are merely extending their religious meaning and activity into this environment. (Helland, 2005, p. 12)

Following these lines, the continued investigation of new media and religion will find it helpful to study the

continuity of these two elements in other religions on the Internet. As websites continue to evolve in use, especially in the realm of virtual representation of religion in avatars and online churches, mosques, synagogues, and other centers, the ability to observe online-religion will hopefully increase.

#### *E. Basic observations on the Internet as a medium: The beginning and end of medium theory*

Howard (2000) studied the rhetoric of dispensationalist Christians in online discussion boards. He draws the distinction between revelatory truth and negotiated truth, and posits their tension in the discussion boards. Because dispensationalist Christians understand God's revelation in particular ways and the rapture to be impending, rhetoric surrounding such topics usually takes the revelatory form—that is, dispensationalist Christians hold that truth is revealed directly from God or the Bible. However, when such dispensationalist discussions moved online, Howard identified the presence of negotiated truth, which does not come directly from a source verbatim; rather, members find truth through negotiations with fellow dispensationalist Christians and perhaps even with non-Christians. Howard writes that "if the Internet has had any effect on American Dispensationalism, it is the infusion of otherwise foreign or competing belief elements from radically distinct discourses and among individuals vastly removed in space and experience" (Howard, 2000, p. 243). This statement implies that the Internet as a medium has contributed to a more dialogical model of truth. Howard uses this model to demonstrate the lack of sustainable discourse in the 1996 "Heaven's Gate" campaign and its subsequent failure to recruit new members (Howard, 2005).

Scholarship that addresses the characteristics of the Internet as a medium does so indirectly, as is the case with Howard's study. Barker addresses new challenges to religious authority by highlighting that the Internet may undermine the vertical, hierarchical structure of traditional religions (Barker, 2005). Campbell highlights the opposite conclusion: She coins the phrase "spiritualising the Internet" using the social shaping of technology (SST) approach, which views technological change as a social process (Campbell, 2005b). She implies in this study that religious users may themselves become able to frame discourses and narrative in Internet mediated religion, rather than the Internet medium playing a role in

determining the shape of religion online. Other studies mention the influence of McLuhan and Ong as an ancillary point (Dawson & Cowan, 2004; Dawson & Hennebry, 2004).

Scholarship that directly applies medium theory, as posited by Meyrowitz (1985) and influenced by Ong and McLuhan, is scarce. O'Leary used Ong's theoretical framework in understanding religious communication (O'Leary, 1996). Horsfield and Teusner (2007) reference McLuhan and Ong in framing the study of mediated religion. Their approach discards the simplistic view of media as instrumental; they state that "significant hegemony has been at work in submerging this influence of media in the construction of different faith positions" (p. 281). They highlight the influence of print at its advent in the 15th century and draw parallels regarding Internet-mediated religion. Casey's case study of an online Church demonstrates the potential of rituals to undergo significant changes in light of new technologies (Casey, 2006).

The term medium theory is not readily applied to new media and religion studies, albeit the clear influence that scholars such as McLuhan and Ong have had on certain aspects of those studies. Perhaps this results from the fact that the technological determinism debate has lost its place at the forefront of new media studies in general. Addressing medium theory and its usefulness, regardless of whether one adheres to technological determinism or not, would help at least in giving us a picture of the characteristics of new mediums as they relate to religion. For example, someone might expand Barker's study on authority longitudinally, as well as in depth. Campbell, in view of her study on social shaping of technology, acknowledges in her study of three religions' views of authority over the Internet how "the Internet may differently influence certain religious community perceptions of officially recognized religious roles" (Campbell, 2007, p. 11). What remains necessary, then, would be an application of medium theory in conjunction with a more robust understanding of the power of the religious community to define how it will shape its use of the Internet.

This section of the review has made several heuristic observations on the trends in the study of new media and religion. First, it identified studies on religious use of the Internet as an information transmission medium. The value of these studies lies in the fact that churches and organizations use the Internet for the purposes of disseminating information for congregants

and outsiders. The study of these aspects reflects the interest and use of the Internet by certain religious communities. The second heuristic development sees three ways in which online religion relates to offline religion: online religion can act in a complementary way to offline religion; it can act as a substitute for offline religion, as was demonstrated with the case study on the Church of Fools; and finally, online religion can take a form that is qualitatively different from offline gatherings. For example, religious rituals online can mirror rituals offline, or they can create entirely new rituals. The third heuristic explores the possibility that online religion can have an impact on offline religion. The fourth heuristic comes directly from

Holland's (2000) distinction between religion-online and online-religion. Religion-online is the phenomenon of religious organizations utilizing the Internet as a broadcast medium and mainly for information dissemination; online-religion adopts the heterarchical nature of the Internet in which participants determine the direction of religious practices. Finally, the fifth heuristic observes that studies in new media and religion fall under the influence of medium theorists such as McLuhan and Ong, yet do not explicitly employ medium theory. This discussion concluded by noting the benefit of employing the theory in order to gain better insight into the Internet as a medium and whether or not it is compatible with any particular religion.

## 4. Methodologies

Scholars in new media and religion employ a variety of different methodologies. The following section offers a brief appraisal of methodologies and their contribution to the study. Because new media and religion defines a developing field of investigation, each methodology provides advantages in some respect in yielding new insights. Radde-Antweiler (2008) uses the term *clusters* when referring to religion. This is an advantageous distinction because the term religion, in addition to being difficult to define, represents a vast array of different populations. To attempt to study religion in general without making a distinction as to which religion is being studied lends itself to an over-generalization that most likely fails to represent all religious groups. Clustering is advantageous because it allows researchers to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods based upon the demographic within the religion represented. The following outlines the strengths of different methodologies employed as they relate to new media and religion.

### A. Qualitative approaches

A majority of study in new media and religion utilizes qualitative approaches; these include case studies, content and rhetorical analyses of specific websites and religious communities, virtual ethnographies, and interviews with participants in Internet-mediated religion. Content and rhetorical analyses generally focus on religious websites (Abdulla, 2007; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2007; Baab, 2008; Hashim, Murphy, &

Hashim, 2007; Kim, 2007; Sturgill, 2004; Van Summeren, 2007). These methods prove helpful in studying religious websites that are generally more informational and less interactive. They are able to give us insight into the purposes of websites as well as to critically evaluate their effectiveness, as was the case in Howard's study of the rhetoric of the Heaven's Gate campaign (Howard, 2005).

A considerable number of scholars also chose to focus on case studies of different religious communities (Campbell & Calderon, 2007; Campbell & LaPastina, 2010; Casey, 2006; Frobish, 2006; Hutchings, 2007; MacWilliams, 2006; Rudolph, 2006; Schippert, 2007; Scott, 2002). The case studies offer great value, particularly in the realm of new media and religion, because they offer a detailed look at the diversity of religions represented on the web. Their in-depth analysis of particular events or groups of people gives a generally accepted comprehensive examination, even if they cannot easily be generalized due to their small and non-representative sampling. However, given the newness of the field and the diversity of religions on the Internet, there is a dearth of long established trends and populations on the Internet. Many different religions appear on the Internet, each with its own aims, context, and online presence—and they find some representation in these studies. It may be helpful to think of new media and religion, then, in terms of clusters, a term adopted from Radde-Antweiler (2008). The value of longitudinal studies in the future appears self-evident.

dent; however, the value of such qualitative studies lies in the fact that each scholar has unearthed significant findings for online religion as it pertains to specific religious demographics or clusters. The Church of Fools, one of the first online church experiments, was studied by Hutchings (2007) and Kluver & Chen (2008), and their findings imply the ability of Internet users to have significant religious experiences over the web, and moreover, have hinted at the possibility of incorporating the sacred in the profane (Kluver & Chen, 2008). MacWilliams's (2006) study of independent Nichiren Buddhist groups highlights the transfer of a religious artifact and its dissemination online, and the assumptions of the Internet and religious experience that undergird such practice. Shippert's (2007) study of the 9/11 hero Mychal Judge and his popular sanctification (that is, his acclamation as a saint purely through online means) give us insight into the ability of the Internet community to construct religious meaning. As new media and religion continue to intersect in the future, the clusters of religious groups may grow larger in number, and so may call for more longitudinal and quantitative studies. However, future studies will build upon these studies and their findings as indicators of what to look for.

Regarding the use of interviews and online ethnographies, the same advantages and shortcomings appear. Interviews employ a more strategic method that gives insight into specific areas as related by the participants. Ethnographies function in a similar way, with the added advantage of immersion into communities and extended periods of observation and participation (Bainbridge, 2000).

The Internet poses some issues with regards to such methods, however. In the case of interviews, the Internet can potentially be a barrier for online interviews because of its anonymity and the concomitant inability for researchers to check their sources. This is a problem, however, that seldom appears for researchers because online identity and religious community is in many cases directly tied to offline identity and community (Kluver & Chen, 2008; Campbell, 2007). Regarding religious community, Helland's study addressed the theoretical problem of what constitutes online religion (Helland, 2005). Building upon his own defining distinction between religion-online and online-religion, Helland proposes that online-religion should be something that is observable and lived out through the Internet. This theoretical framework provides the first step to affirming the validity of qualitative research methods such as ethno-

graphies and interviews in the context of online-religion. As part of this issue, Helland also identifies the discrepancies in individual users' religious experiences. While some may readily adopt online discussion boards and utilize e-mails to share prayer requests and pray for one another, others may not see these same experiences as being genuinely religious.

Radde-Antweiler proposes a possible solution to this particular issue. Radde-Antweiler applies the concept of an "Actor-Related Religious Historiography" to deal with issues of religious self understanding. To deal with the different religious experiences and perspectives within a cluster, the Actor-Related Religious Historiography seeks to understand religious experience on a subjective, individual level in an emic fashion. These individual experiences are integrated into a group dynamic (Radde-Antweiler, 2008). The advantage of such methods lies in the ability to see online religious clusters in a negotiated fashion.

### *B. Quantitative approaches*

Surveying provides the main quantitative methodology employed by scholars. Indeed, they conducted surveys for a variety of purposes. Smith (2007) assesses the efficiency with which nonprofit organizations use their websites. Robinson-Neal's (2008) study finds that participants in online worship use that worship less as a supplement for real life worship and more out of curiosity. Fukamizu (2007) found that the Internet allows Japanese Buddhist followers to critically assess their religion and give voice to doubt.

The surveys in new media and religion seek both clustered religious groups and the larger population in general. Cantoni and Zyga (2007) studied of the use of the Internet by Catholic congregations; this significant study sought participation from all the Catholic congregations and autonomous institutions worldwide (a number totaling 5,812 congregations and institutions at the time of study, with a total of 858,988 members). While that may seem like a large number, Cantoni and Zyga's study sought to survey a specific religious group. As was mentioned before, the clusters of religious groups represented in the area of new media and religion perhaps make it more feasible at this time to conduct surveys that seek to accurately represent a population in a sample. In a similar way, the Pew Internet and American Life project attempted to measure faith online for the entire population of Internet users in the United States (Hoover, Clark, & Rainie, 2004). This survey found that 64% of Internet users

have done things related to religious or spiritual matters. This provides an instance in which a study seeks to measure the religious use of the Internet indiscriminately, and helps to paint the larger picture of online religious participation in the United States. A continual study of new media and religion which employs such quantitative analyses will consist of longitudinal studies, as well as studies on specific clusters of religious communities online.

The present section outlined briefly the methodologies employed in the study of new media and religion. The strength of employing quantitative analyses lies in the ability to see specific clusters in online religion. We can refer to these demographics as clusters, a

helpful term adopted from Radde-Antweiler. Because religion as represented online is extremely diverse, qualitative analysis may provide a more detailed and thus more representative view of target populations. Longitudinal studies will help to establish trends, as the field of inquiry is relatively new. Because of clustering, quantitative analyses also have the same advantage and can measure demographics according to varying degrees of specificity. As religion further interacts with new media, quantitative analyses may prove more useful, as the sheer growth in number of individuals, churches, and organizations online would necessitate study from quantitative perspectives and more representative sampling.

## 5. Conclusion

We have surveyed the history of the study of new media and religion, identified heuristic perspectives helpful in organizing current scholarship, and appraised methodologies employed in the study. The study of new media and religion has evolved from extreme utopian/dystopian discourses to a better understanding of the observable effects of new media, to incorporating into its scholarship diverse disciplines—hence the “protestantization” of the field. Perspectives on religion and the Internet vary within religious traditions, as the diversity of thought within Christian uses demonstrates. Current heuristic perspectives in the study include the Internet as an information dissemination medium, the relationship between online and offline religion, the potential influence of online religion on offline religion, the distinction between online-religion and religion-online, and observations of the Internet medium itself. Researchers employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the study of new media and religion, with each methods having its advantages.

The study of new media and religion does, as Hojsgaard and Warburg (2005) maintain, show signs of maturing. Scholars from a variety of disciplines with a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches have become involved in the field of inquiry. Based on the observations made in the literature review, I propose a few suggestions for further fruitful research.

First, since a wide variety of disciplines contributes to the field of new media and religion, contin-

ued application of different theories and methods would help it to develop. For instance, Armfield and Holbert (2003) and Armfield, Dixon, and Dougherty (2006) employ both secularization theory and uses and gratifications theory to measure the religiosity of Internet users. Swanson (2004) employs frame analysis in his study of Christian apostasy on the web and concludes that apostate organizations employ websites primarily for the purposes of information dissemination. Herring (2005) applies contextual theology in her study of the virtual realm, positing that the study of God must begin in the context in which a religious group or individuals find themselves, rather than in propositional truths established via tradition or sacred scripture. In studying theology, this view is helpful because it affirms the context in which theology is done presently, which includes the virtual realm. This starting point can yield different theological results than one done propositionally. Another potentially promising theory to expand upon comes from James Carey (1988), who proposed a ritualistic view of communication; we have seen this applied by Fernback (2002). Carey posits that the two main views of communication prevalent in scholarship had their beginnings in religion. A ritualistic view of communication, in contrast to the transmission view, provides more help in exploring online religion because of its connection to a more communal and meaning-making view of communication. Researchers can expand the theory as a frame through which to understand how

religious individuals communicate with one another through a shared medium; they can consider the possibility of shared communal space on the Internet, specifically in discussion forums, e-mail listservs, and perhaps even virtual worlds.

An application of social networking to online religion forms a second area of future research. Campbell (2005a) and Dawson (2004) each propose a number of characteristics that define a community online. The nature of online religion tends to be less geographically oriented and more individually oriented. What is more, studies such as Lovheim (2004) and Teusner (2007) indicate a postmodern shift in religious understanding online. This means that there are no longer clear cut distinctions between sacred and profane; instead, people negotiate religious identity as well as community. Because of this, relationships tend to be less formal and structured around religious institutions, and more centered around connections between individuals or groups of individuals. A social networking perspective may prove helpful in understanding the formation of such religious communities online. It may also help in studying the construction of religious identities online.

Third, research would benefit from a formal exploration of the medium theory as it applies to new media and religion. As mentioned above, many of the references to the Internet as a medium and its potential to shape or affect religion online are secondary. Whether one adheres to a technologically deterministic stance or not, an exploration of the characteristics of the Internet as a medium as it applies to religion online would help to clarify matters, even in the quest to understand how religious communities are able to shape such technologies for their own use. So far studies have suggested that the hierarchical nature of the Internet lends to less structured and institutional forms of religion online. Therefore, religious authority comes under heavy scrutiny (Barker, 2005; Campbell, 2007). A detailed and deliberate exploration of the Internet as a medium as it relates to religion will help in addressing Dawson and Cowan's (2004) sixth concern regarding religion and the Internet: whether the Internet provides a more conducive environment to particular types or styles of religion.

Finally, much of the research cited in this review comes from studies in new media and religion rooted in a distinctly Western perspective. The expansion of the study of new media and religion to different regions of the world, both in its content and its contributors,

would prove most valuable. Part of the reason for the present imbalanced study may result initially from the proliferation of the Internet in Western countries, and subsequently, the adoption of such technology by Western religious communities. I am fully aware of the possibility that I am missing some key studies from non-Western perspectives; as such, I offer the current review of literature with the realization that other studies may exist that can be extremely helpful in painting a more accurate picture. Religious communities from other countries may have distinctly different perspectives and uses. For instance, Japanese religious communities, while different from modern Western religion, may also experience the postmodern phenomenon of critical dialogue regarding religion (Fukamizu, 2007; Kawabata & Tamura, 2007). Korean use of the Internet presents a diverse religious representation, as studies of its use in both Buddhist and Christian contexts demonstrates, with differences in understanding cyberspace between the two religions highlighted in some cases (Kim, 2004; Kim, 2007; Lee, 2009). As non-Western religions flourish on the Internet, potential for insights increase accordingly.

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## Book Reviews

**Aguirre, Jesús María and Marcelino Bisbal (Eds.)**  
*Prácticas y travesías de comunicación en América Latina [Practices and crossings of Latin American communication]*. Pp. 280. Caracas, Venezuela: Fundación Centro Gumilla, 2010. [Available from Apdo. 4830, 1010-A. Caracas, Venezuela; www.gumilla.org].

According to the editors the experience of the past 10 years has shown that the mythical Internet universality is less than dreamed. The web reproduces and still powers the existing asymmetries on the market of production and knowledge diffusion. Domain control, English supremacy, and infrastructure avail-

ability are some of the many pitfalls that still makes the exchange of studies about communication in Latin America difficult.

As a matter of fact, in communication and culture studies, compartmentalized territorial and disciplinary optics still prevail, despite the globalizing process and transdisciplinary slang. Each country and, especially, the biggest ones of the hemisphere—the USA, Mexico, and Brazil—apply a diffusive endogamy, in other words, they produce studies referred to their reality that later expand according to an upscale market. Not even textbooks and university manuals have been released from this conditioning when looking to leverage an editorial industry that covers the hemisphere.

A study of the most widespread texts in Latin America on the sociological and theoretical approaches to communication shows that the manuals from U.S. sources already translated into Spanish—DeFleur (1996, 1982), Fernández and Gordon (1993), Dobkin and Pace (2007)—don't mention any Latin American author. This also happens with European studies from the Netherlands (McQuail 1983, 1991), Italy (Wolf 1985, 1994) and even France, although Maigret (2003, 2005) at least takes into account Martín Barbero, the writer of the translated prologue. Among Spanish publications should be noted the pioneer work of Miquel Moragas (1981, 1985) who in his studies about theories incorporates the first Latin American publications, despite his failure to highlight the initial contribution of García Canclini and Martín Barbero. Later, Alsina (2001) and especially Daniel Jones will be diffusers of the Latin American work.

Starting from this Latin American perspective, the book is a synthesis that seeks to pull together in a coherent way the results of communication studies, preferably Latin American and Venezuelan. Without denying the dispersion of the studies about communication and the innumerable mediations that come across the field, the book privileges the sociological approach about mediatization—communication media transformed by ITCs—that mark our societies to set down the four large dimensions of production, diffusion, cultural consumption, and future trends.

The various interdisciplinary perspectives are covered by professors of Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and Universidad Central de Venezuela through the following sections:

- “Communication studies in Latin America: Starting points.” Jesús Ma Aguirre and M. Bisbal.
- “The economy of communication in Latin America.” Francisco A. Pellegrino.
- “The social communication professionals.” Jesús Ma Aguirre.
- “From the analysis of media to mediatic representations.” Humberto Valdivieso.
- “Latin American studies on reception and media audiences.” Gustavo Hernández.
- “Sensibility, media, and culture: Reflections from the cultural consumer.” M. Bisbal and P. Nicodemo.
- “Organizational communication in Latin America: Retrospective, voices, and horizons.” A. Canelón y N. Silva.
- “Communication for democracy: A Latin American journey.” Andrés Cañizalez.
- “The way towards societies of knowledge: 30 years of new technologies.” Carlos Delgado F. and Luis Carlos Díaz.

Even though the various chapters are uneven in their development (because authors of two generations of scholars contribute with dissimilar expertise), there's no doubt that this is a publication that covers a gap in the state of art about Latin American investigations in communication. The book is more especially important because it includes a list of URLs and websites of specialized regional magazines with an index of authors and analytic content.

—José Ignacio Sudupe  
Universidad de Deusto  
Translated by María Alejandra Fajardo

**Cimoli, Mario, Andre Hofman, and Nanno Mulder** (Eds.). *Innovation and Economic Development: The Impact of Information Technologies in Latin America*. Cheltenham UK and Northhampton MA: Edward Elgar. 2010. Pp. xi, 271. ISBN 978-1-84980-241-3 (hbk.) \$115.00; 978-1-84980-655-8 (e-book).

Given its technical nature, this book may seem more appropriate for review in an economic journal. Much of the field of communication, however, is based on the ever expanding and always changing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) that are transforming our lives, economies, and politics (as, for example, Egypt in early 2011—recent weeks at the time of this review). These technologies are helping

to transform the lives of people everywhere, including even the world's poor where the field of communication for development and social change has had a history of more than five decades.

The premise of this edited volume is that ICT increases the economic output of countries and makes workers more productive. The problem with this seemingly straightforward assertion is that it is difficult to demonstrate with empirical data what seems obvious to most people. One quote that is repeated in many of the chapters comes from the well known economist, Robert Solow, who in 1987 said that "You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics" (p.184). The paradox that he pointed out was that even when computing and communication technology was already widespread in the U.S., the indication that this was improving the economy was not yet apparent in studies by economists. The evidence for contribution of ICTs in GDP and productivity for Latin America is the concern of this book. Contributors include analysts from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as scholars in the field of ICT.

The first chapter by D. W. Jorgenson and K. M. Vu summarizes what economists have done since Solow's famous quote to demonstrate that ICT has made a significant difference in economic output and worker productivity for the entire world. What the chapter demonstrates is that after 1989 there has been a global trend toward investment in ICT but that the relative impact on economic growth and worker productivity varies across the seven world regions. In short, the world has been convinced that spending money on ICT will pay off in greater growth and prosperity for individual countries.

Chapter 2 by C. Castaldi and G. Dosi introduces another approach to answering the basic question about the value of ICT for national economies. In what is called an "evolutionary approach" to the question, the authors argue that the simple input/output model used by traditional economists does not take into account some of the complexity of ICT relationship to the economy. Here learning and human capital is introduced into the model. This argues for how people's education, research, and R&D also contribute significantly to economic growth. The issue of policy enters the picture at this point: Can a nation improve its economy by improving its education system and increasing its investment in research? The other contribution of the chapter is lay-

ing out the five main technological revolutions over the past two centuries or more: Industrial Revolution, 1771-1828; the Age of Steam and Railways, 1829-1874; the Age of Steel, Electricity, and Engineering, 1875-1907; the Age of Oil and Mass Production, 1908-1971; and the Telecommunication and Information Age, 1971-present. The other contribution of this model and this chapter is the suggestion that the world is divided into those countries that were able to take advantage of these changes and those who were not. They suggest that real high-level growth can only happen on the ground when "local firms are able to recognize, exploit, and internalize *the knowledge underlying the new technologies*" (p. 66, emphasis added), reinforcing their claim that learning and education are crucial factors in improving the impact of ICT on growth.

Other chapters make many of the same points but add to the list of concerns about the role of institutional reform in improving the investment and payoff of ICT for Latin American countries. To this is added the specific national regulatory reforms and, finally, the role of diffusion theory in helping to explain how and why ICT is adopted successfully in different Latin American countries. Here we can hark back to the contribution of Everett Rogers whose classic work on diffusion (1962, and through three other editions) was part of the communication field for five decades. The questions if not the methodology remain constant: Who adopts? When? And at what rate is the technology diffused throughout the population?

The importance of this book for the field of communication lies not only in the technologies that are information and communication based but in the questions that economists raise about the consequences of these technologies for peoples' lives, both good and bad. Several authors argue that much of the "digital divide" has begun to shrink as technologies like the cell phone and Internet access diffuse to ever larger segments of populations throughout the world. But the data from these studies also suggest that the simple access to technologies do not necessarily improve all peoples' lives. Certain nations and certain segments of populations within nations benefit more from the presence of ICT than others. The suggestions in this book for policies to narrow these gaps may seem abstract but they need to be translated into concrete actions on the parts of governments to promote better education and research as well as firms to invest in ICT to provide work for people.

The book contains notes and extensive bibliographies after each chapter as well as a detailed index.

—Emile McAnany  
Santa Clara University

## Reference

Rogers, E. M. (1962). *Diffusion of innovations*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

**Cook, Niall.** *Enterprise 2.0: How Social Software Will Change the Future of Work*. Aldershot UK and Burlington VT: Gower Publishing, 2008. Pp. 165. ISBN: 978-0-566-08800-1 £45.00.

It's very strange to be reading a book about the impact of social software when Facebook is mentioned briefly only twice within its pages. This is what happens when authors try to capture the deeper meaning of new technologies emerging and changing so quickly. The book's 2008 publication date means that many important developments have occurred since Cook analyzed the social software scene.

Nonetheless, this book contains many principles and case studies of great value. One of its most helpful sections is its Appendix—a review of the literature by Robert A. Campbell of the University of Toronto. This 18-page document, with a six-page References list attached, is an extraordinary overview of the social software literature (with 2007 publications the latest to be cited). In reviewing this literature Campbell discusses his sources and method, definitions and approaches, opportunities and barriers, along with conclusions emerging from research in this field. This Appendix document is so rich one is tempted to spend more time on it. Let me at least suggest that for many TRENDS subscribers you may profitably begin reading this book by starting at the end of it.

Another good place to begin is to clarify definitions and categories. Cook is Worldwide Director of Marketing Technology at Hill & Knowlton, a communications consultancy. So we begin with the concept that markets are conversations. *The Cluetrain Manifesto* quotation opening this volume states (in 1999): "A powerful global conversation has begun."

Cook says: "In this more mature post-Cluetrain age, these conversations are now collectively referred to as *social media* . . . all kinds of information created online by those who were previously consumers of that media." We are dealing here with consumer- or user-

generated content. The list includes blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, tagging, RSS, mashups, instant messaging, virtual worlds, tweets, Facebook pages—you get the idea—and some of these have exploded since this book was published.

A major reason for organizations to become aware and expert in social software is that internal hierarchies are subverted by this reality. (Although Cook's main focus is how ceding control happens in the business organization or workplace, I kept thinking as I studied this volume about the implications of all this participatory communication on those who currently control the learning process).

One of Cook's major contributions here is the introduction of his own analytical framework. He notes there are four primary functions of social software: communication, cooperation, collaboration, and connection. He calls them throughout the book "the 4Cs." Many readers who have worked with negotiation literature will find helpful Cook's distinction between cooperation and collaboration.

Another reason for riding the social software tiger is that these tools all have "the ability to facilitate interactions and conversations between people" and they are also transforming group interaction.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I examines the social media explosion and its role in "the Enterprise." The role of *platforms*, rather than *channels*, is discussed. Thus, Enterprise 2.0 is more than Web 2.0—with the former's emphasis on process and output rather than simply capturing.

Part II elaborates upon the 4Cs approach. Among some of the case studies examined are the BBC, Microsoft's Academy Mobile, the Oracle IdeaFactory, and the mashups of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency.

Part III treats the implementation of social software in the Enterprise and Part IV deals with social software outside the Enterprise. The latter section addresses challenges of Internet communication, two-way dialogue, and suggested policies and procedures.

In addition to the above structural overview of the book, let me list some of the very interesting conceptual issues studied throughout the volume:

- The democratization of collaboration;
- The value of what we create vs. what we buy (Dewey's learning by doing?);
- Social media expertise perhaps replacing the Internet on one's resume;
- The passion people feel about sharing;

- The importance of *brands* in a more chaotic information environment;
- The role of bookmarking as an information-management tool

Don Tapscott, author of *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, has contributed a helpful Foreword to this book. The volume contains many valuable Tables and Figures and an Index.

I suggest two additional books to accompany this volume: those by David Kirkpatrick (2010) and Jennifer Aaker, Andy Smith, and Carlye Adler (2010).

—Frances Forde Plude

Notre Dame College, Cleveland, Ohio

## References

- Aaker, J., Smith, A., & Adler, C. (2010). *The dragonfly effect: Quick, effective, and powerful ways to use social media to drive social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kirkpatrick, D. (2010). *The Facebook effect: The inside story of the company that is connecting the world*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

**Dutta, Mohan J.** (2008). *Communicating Health: A Culture-Centered Approach*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Pp. 282. ISBN 9780745634913 (hbk.) \$79.95; ISBN 978-0-74563-492-0 (pb.) \$26.95.

If you are looking for a fresh approach to teaching health communication, *Communicating health: A culture-centered approach* provides a unique perspective that will leave readers with a feeling of sensitivity, a call to justice, and a knowledge bank of practical strategies for culture-centered healthcare.

Dutta argues that much of our health models in the past have had a focus on the biomedical approach to health communication. The focus of this text is on the culture-centered approach, which is an alternative to traditional ways of looking at health issues in that it is value-centered and built on the notion that the ways of understanding and negotiation the meanings of health are embedded within cultural contexts and the values deeply connected with them. Thus, the culture-centered approach creates more opportunities for genuine dialogue of voices from multiple communities in health decisions. Regardless of one's background in health communication, this text outlines some basic theories of health communication as well as provides detailed examples for a more sophisticated look at health issues; thus a quality mix for various levels of students and practitioners.

The introduction lays out briefly the components of the culture-centered model—structure, culture, and agency—in order to provide a general conceptualization of the health communication approach used throughout the text. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 provide the historical overview and theoretical grounding from which the culture-centered approach derives. Explanations of current structures and theoretical models of health communication are examined and critiqued in Chapter 1. The biomedical approaches, while effective in some respects, can actually marginalize and contribute to silencing voices of certain cultures and communities. Dutta explains (in Chapters 2 and 3) that the dominant approaches attempt to incorporate culture; and however noble the attempt, dominant paradigms are still situated within a “meaning community—the community of scholars and practitioners who have come to define what it means to theorize and practice within the discipline” (p. 46). This dominant structure has typically been the Eurocentric systematic approach that has shaped the health communication field. The culture-centered approach, however, is concerned with the dialogue between researcher/practitioner and the community in order to articulate health problems and generate solutions. This approach generates negotiation and shared meaning in order to include the subaltern participant (versus silencing of certain groups within society) in regard to health decisions. Chapter 3 continues with outlining the components of the culture-centered approach with detailed models and examples of cultural practices in order to understand the culture-centered approach setting the grounding for social change.

The middle chapters of the text examine specific constructs related to the culture-centered approach while on occasion juxtaposing them with the dominant biomedical approaches. Chapter 4 begins with looking at how individuals create their identity via narratives to understand health issues. Individuals use narratives to generate culturally-understood meanings that may reflect how they experience health and illness, as well as how they portray these experiences with health-care providers. Sharing this identity via narratives with others may produce either an equally satisfying relationship (i.e., dialogic, culture-centered) where there is understanding and shared decision-making, or a silencing with an ideological hierarchy whereby the patient's identity/narrative is not recognized and only a dominant biomedical approach is employed. Dutta argues that narratives are enacted

within structural processes and that we can use such narratives as ideological devices to serve but also challenge the status quo.

Chapter 5 outlines how the notions of healing and curing are conceptualized, both by the biomedical and culture-centered approaches. Due to capitalism and tradition, individuals have accepted the biomedical model for understanding the body, illness, and treatment of illness. This model then, reflects the politics and decision-making that accompanies it: economics, social structures, health products, etc. However, as Dutta explains, alternatives to the biomedical model have existed long before the biomedical model and co-exist as ways of healing and curing of illnesses. Alternative systems of healing (i.e., Indian, Chinese, Native American), spirituality (i.e., Christianity, Judaism), socio-structural contexts and polymorphism are all various alternative “ways of knowing” that co-exist with the biomedical model notion for curing and healing. Such alternatives are explored to enhance our thinking of health and healing within this chapter.

Chapters 6 and 7 investigate more closely the notion of marginalization. Chapter 6 looks at the general explanation of marginalization and how it intersects with culture and structure; while Chapter 7 pinpoints specific contexts of marginalization and examines how it affects those who experience it. More specifically, Chapter 6 demonstrates how communication is a key element in the identification and enactment of marginalization. Marginalization “reflects a state of existence in which an individual or a group does not have communicative presence within the mainstream discursive space and within those platforms that regulate the distribution of health resources” (p. 151). Such resources relate to food and policy decisions, among others; which lead to health disparities to the point of structural violence within communities. More health outcomes, social inequalities, and communicative enactment of marginalization are discussed within Chapter 6. Chapter 7 takes marginalization one step further to identify specific contexts (such as gender, race, age, and socio-economic status) in which marginalization occurs. Dutta gives real life experiences of what marginalization looks like across the globe and provides a rationale as to why our past and current political structures of imperialism, Western knowledge, and postcolonial practices have not resolved issues of health disparities, but rather have tried to impose

practices upon others across the globe that in essence have created more subalternity. The chapter concludes with ways we can challenge taken-for-granted assumptions of mainstream solutions and explore ways to listen to alternative narratives from marginalized groups.

The last chapters of this text take a closer look at the political structures of healthcare and communication, each taking a different perspective with regard to marginalization. Chapter 8 draws attention to the intersection between the components of the model to include structure, culture, and agency with relevance to the community in which one lives. In addition, the community is the constitutive space where these components are played out and the resources available to communities can determine the health of the community. Dutta claims that community health is also connected to social capital in that participation and social support affect one’s health. “Social capital serves as a mediator between the disparities within communities and the health outcomes experienced by these communities” (p. 212). Health outcomes of social capital are such that a community with higher levels of social support may perceive increased positive health and thus generate participation of lifestyle changes. This however does not happen automatically, thus the intersection of looking at structure, culture, and agency. The chapter ends with suggestions for engaging in a more community culture-centered approach by becoming a “co-participant” external agent or researcher in order to share in dialogue with the community in order to start this process.

In chapter 9 Dutta examines the powerful role that communication plays in creating a voice for the marginalized. It is through communication that resistance of dominant structures can take place and this act of communication allows marginalized communities to participate in health processes. Dutta argues that resistance in the culture-centered approach toward healthcare can take place at a micro- or macro-level. Micro-level practices include day-to-day acts of resistance (i.e., methods of treating an illness counter to the biomedical approach as it may be against one’s cultural practice). Macro practices overtly challenge dominant structures and seek transformation, such as with policy implications that “challenge the communicative processes already in place within the dominant structures and encourage individuals, groups, and communities to think beyond these structures and the constraints imposed by them” (p. 227). In closing, Dutta

claims that culture is the blueprint for communication as well as the site for change. In essence, communication as resistance is the fulcrum for change.

Chapter 10 takes a different political view of health by looking at the globalization and corporatization of health care. Lives and experiences of local communities are influenced by ways in which global policies are implemented; health policies unfortunately are determined and implemented by those of the dominant culture that serve the global interests, thus ignoring the underserved segments of the world. Dutta argues that absence of voice, power, and access deny communities ability to play a role in global or transnational corporation decisions of healthcare. “Politics at the local, state, and national levels today are intertwined with global practices, and that is the reality within which health communication strategies and solutions ought to be delivered” (p. 247). Dutta ends the chapter by challenging scholars (among others) to engage in various forms of resistance and activism, both via the Internet to connect local and global communities, as well as locally communicated practices in order to promote the voices of others.

Dutta’s final chapter (Chapter 11) provides a summary, as well as practical applications and research methodologies of the culture-centered approach to health communication. In addition, Dutta provides a case study to link together elements of this approach. The close of the text, and this chapter, outlines excellent strategies for structural changes at the individual, organizational, social, and global levels.

Throughout the book, Dutta opens each chapter with brief chapter objectives, demonstrates concepts with brief stories/cases about people, and follows with discussion questions for students to link back to the chapter. The stories show individuals from across the globe to genuinely highlight the culture-centered approach. In addition, there are discussion points scattered throughout the chapters for student reflection and critical thinking. At the beginning of the text there is also a brief glossary for enhancing the knowledge base for those unfamiliar with some health-related concepts as well as a list of figures and narrative stories for convenience. In essence, an instructor’s manual/student guide is built into the text and within chapters making it applicable for classroom or practicum use.

Overall, this is an excellent text and is important for scholars, students, and health practitioners alike. Dutta’s text is written in such a way that is reader-friendly for various audiences, yet scholarly and

packed with research, theory, and application. The reader leaves the text with optimism that despite the marginalization of voices, dialogue, resistance to the dominant position, and change is possible with a culture-centered approach to health communication.

—Donna R. Pawlowski  
Creighton University

**Falk, Erika.** *Women for President: Media Bias in Nine Campaigns*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010. Pp. 206. ISBN 978-0-252-07691-6 (pb.) \$25.00.

Regardless of whether former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin runs for president in 2012, it is certain that she will be (and currently is) a major figure in media coverage of the campaigns. The media will deride her; support her; comment on her television shows, her clothing and makeup, her family, her intellect, and perhaps even her policies. What is less certain is the extent to which the media coverage of her or other women presidential candidates in 2012 is different than those of men candidates. Erika Falk’s study provides the historical foundation for both how we can understand media coverage of women as presidential candidates, and what we might expect in future elections. Indeed, the author concludes, the media provide more coverage of men in presidential campaigns. This book makes a major contribution to efforts to inform the electorate as it provides a comprehensive treatment of the constellation of gender, media, and political variables regarding women presidential candidates. Falk addresses nine presidential campaigns originating with Victoria Woodhull in 1872 and Belva Lockwood in 1884 through Carol Mosley Braun in 1984. This recent edition includes a detailed account of Hillary Clinton’s bid in 2008.

The book is arranged thematically as opposed to candidate by candidate, and examples from the campaigns are addressed in each chapter. A major strength of the book is its methodology. Falk examined newspaper articles in the *New York Times* and those newspapers with the largest circulation in the home states of the candidates from the time they were considered a candidate to the time of the primary election or they withdrew from the race, whichever came first. Her methodology is described in detail in an appendix to this edition. While the methodology for most campaigns was limited to newspapers, that medium is the most consistent media channel to examine over the

course of about 120 years. The key to her studies was who warranted media coverage because many women who considered the presidency or vice-presidency were not addressed in this book. In this second edition, which includes a final chapter on Hillary Clinton, Falk also examines television news broadcasts of evening news and selected blogs.

The first chapter, "Why Worry about the Press," lays the theoretical foundation for how language shapes perception. Falk draws from the work of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, George Gerbner, George Lakoff, and other scholars whose work emphasizes that the primary means by which populations become familiar with candidates is through the media. The language, imagery, metaphors, and mythologies created and perpetuated by the media construct skewed and often enduring personae of political candidates. One implication, as Falk puts it, is that the "failure of the press to cover equitably the women who run may actually dissuade women from being engaged in the political process" (p. 22). The second chapter is her first case study of the problems with the social construction of women candidates. Her data here suggest that the media consistently cast women's involvement in politics as unnatural in the sense that for women, the private sphere is more natural. They are described, explicitly and implicitly, as incapable for high office, particularly in times of war or national crises, and unviable as candidates in the sense that the media identify the campaigns of women as merely symbolic.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine traditional stereotypes of men and women to determine the extent to which the media reinforced or challenged these in their coverage of campaigns and to examine how appearance of candidates was covered by the media. The research bears out that fear and sadness and irrationality were consistently associated with women candidates and are usually part of the larger picture of unfitness while emotions such as anger and rationality associated with assertiveness as a favorable leadership quality were attributed to men. Falk also identifies the media's habit of suggesting that women who seek the presidency may actually be aspiring to the vice-presidency where they would be a better fit. In the "High-Heeled Boots and Violet Suits" chapter, the author briefly reviews anecdotal evidence of reporting on the appearance of candidates before summarizing her own more comprehensive approach. Through content analysis, she concluded that women's physical appearance was

described in articles at a ratio of about 4 to 1 versus men's appearance.

Chapter 5 asks the question whether newspapers give equal coverage to men and women presidential candidates. The chapter seems to be an essay that deviates somewhat from the organizational pattern of the book, but nonetheless is a comprehensive review. Falk's results show that the major newspapers she studied "wrote fewer stories and fewer words per story about women" through nearly every campaign she studied (with the exception of Victoria Woodhull in 1872 whose uniqueness as both a woman candidate and prominent businesswoman may have boosted the number of stories written about her). In short, though, the answer for eight out of nine campaigns studies was no, newspapers do not provide equal coverage.

Chapter 6 addresses campaign issues, biography, and chaff. Here, Falk examines media coverage of presidential candidates in three areas: substantive issues, biographical characteristics, and quotations. In addition, she examines what she calls chaff (material that is essentially useless as a way for a voter to make a decision about a candidate), coverage of campaigns as a horse-race (wherein women candidates rarely compete well), money raised, and supporters' gender. Chapter 7 "Is America Ready?," is a short chapter on the "readiness" of Americans for a woman president and still reads like a summary chapter from the first edition. Falk posits that there are several reasons why America is ready for a woman president: polls indicate a decreasing bias against generic woman candidates and younger voters indicate more acceptance of woman candidates.

Chapter 8 "Eighteen Million Cracks but Still Intact," presents a detailed account of Hilary Clinton's campaign for the democratic nomination in 2008. This chapter includes more data from news broadcasts and introduces blog content from *Crooks and Liars*, the *Daily Kos: State of the Nation*, and *Think Progress*. Falk reports that the data from this most recent campaign involving Clinton and Obama (or as the media would more likely put it, *Mrs. Clinton* and *Senator Obama*) indicate that the bias was still present but the gap had closed considerably when compared to previous campaigns. Particularly striking in this chapter is not only the continued focus on the physical appearance of Clinton far above that of Obama, but the vitriolic nature and bluntness of the comments. Additionally, the chapter includes a revealing a section on how the media seemed to create an instance of

Senator Clinton using the “gender card” in a speech at Wellesley College and a related television ad when in reality her references to gender, implied or otherwise, were nonexistent.

In addition to the complete research that comprises this study with great breadth, several other strengths distinguish it. At the conclusion of the book, Falk includes 10 suggestions for how to use the material from the studies. Such a list is valuable to campaign managers, voters, and teachers in various disciplines. Second, while her study certainly covers bias, the study is non-partisan. The study may benefit from examination of the effect of political party or ideology as a variable in media coverage of women candidates, but that is not Falk’s question here and her objectivity is consistent, (evidenced by her identification of the biases of clearly liberal commentators such as Chris Matthews, p. 165). Third, her treatment of media bias, though appropriately critical, does not become media-bashing. Instead, the research seems to reflect culturally-based gender biases that journalists are also likely to possess. To be sure, the role of men in the publishing of the newspapers may have been part of the reason for the coverage. Falk writes that even some reporters were surprised with her results. Future research, like research into all media issues, will become more complex. New considerations will have to include the breadth of the sources providing the accounts, what constitutes coverage, multiple perspectives coming from one source, and other complexities.

—Pete Bicak  
Rockhurst University

**Johnson, Dale D. and Bonnie Johnson.** *Words: The Foundation of Literacy*. Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2010. Pp. xix, 235. ISBN 978-0-8133-4415-7 (pb.) \$25.00.

English provides a wealth of words, words drawn from multiple languages and cultures, words with long histories, words with equally long pedigrees of academic attention. Consider just one extended example:

“The zipper on the freelancer’s hoodie was broken. ‘I wish they made these things with Velcro,’ he groused as he leaned into the bitter wind.”

The dates of origin of the 22 different words above range from 950 to 1993. (p. 27)

And each word, from “thing” and “wind” (950, Old English) to “they” (1250, Scandinavia) to “zipper”

(1925, trademark B.F. Goodrich Company) to “hoodie” (1993, U.S.) carries its own story. And this example just offers a hint of the fun students can have with studying words.

Dale Johnson and Bonnie Johnson offer this book to teachers of primary and secondary students as a resource for them to encourage their students to go beyond “studying for the test” and for themselves to go beyond “teaching the test.” They argue that schools must teach words in a much broader context and they offer this book as a way into that context. They provide great enjoyment of words, striving to make learning both vocabulary and a bit of linguistics fun. Their chapter on word formation includes reduplicatives (“fender-bender,” “dilly-dally”), compound words (“handout,” dating to 1882, and “jaywalker,” from 1917), blended words (“telecast” from “television” and “broadcast”), conversions (“changing a word from one part of speech to another without changing the form” as in “bicycle” used either as a noun or a verb), and derivatives (adding prefixes or suffixes to change a word’s meaning). You knew that an acronym is an abbreviation that can be pronounced (your PIN), but did you know that the abbreviation you cannot pronounce is called an initialism (the ATM at which you use your PIN)?

The Johnsons begin the book with a chapter on changes in American English (the focus of the book is on teaching in U.S. schools). Here they look at old words, obsolete words, words whose meanings have changed over the years, slang words that have gained respectability, new words, and examples of words moving in and out of English from the 1700s. The next chapter explores word origins, with a note on the difference between etymology and word origin. Then we see more on word formation. Chapter 4 looks briefly at semantics and how people and language groups tend to organize words in meaning clusters for easier recall. Chapter 5 glories in the ambiguity of the English language, noting, for example, that 72% “of common words used in children’s trade books and schoolbooks have multiple meanings” (p. 87), including something as seemingly straightforward as “dog” for which they list 20 meanings in its various combinations—from the animal to the Greyhound bus to the military identification.

Chapter 6 presents figurative language: idioms, similes, metaphors, and many more. Some of these have long histories in language and have come into English from other cultures. “Out of the woods,” for example originated around 200 BC in Latin, but “with

flying colors” began in English in 1692 among sailors. Oh yes, a person can find oneself “in the doghouse,” to add another variation on the basic meaning of “dog”—that’s an American idiom. Chapter 7 presents proverbs as an important element of vocabulary study, consistent with the Johnsons’ concern for student learning. Here they briefly mention the roots of these sayings in oral cultures, something that I, for one, would have liked to see more of in the whole treatment of words. The book unfortunately tends to privilege written language, even when much of the fun with words stems from their spoken form.

Chapter 8 examines onomastics, how names become common words, while Chapter 9 examines word play and riddles. The last chapter looks at language in life—slogans, common usages, newly coined words, and so on.

Each chapter contains any number of instructional activities, geared to various age groups. Chapters also have reference notes. The book as a whole has an extensive bibliography as well as an index. Though not directly intended for college students, communication students interested in a teaching career can certainly benefit from the book. Others, including faculty, may well find it too much fun to put down quickly.

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

**Levinson, Paul.** *New New Media*. Boston: Penguin Academics, an imprint of Allyn & Bacon, 2010. Pp. xiv, 226. ISBN 978-0-205-67330-8 (pb.) \$65.00.

One gets the sense that if one has to ask what “new new media” are, then it may be too late to learn. Paul Levinson’s book does provide a primer for those who need to know and some helpful discussion for those who do know but wonder about everything from utility to ethics. Levinson bases his discussion on learning by doing, and so he recounts his own experiences in each of the new new media, reflecting on the experience. That makes for an interesting, often first-person book, but also for one that resembles a blog-like commentary, with tempting morsels scattered throughout relatively short sections. (For example, the 41-page chapter on blogs has 25 sections.)

Levinson begins with defining descriptions. “And what, exactly, do I mean by ‘new new media’? The current roster is listed in the chapter titles of this book: blogging, YouTube, Wikipedia, Digg, MySpace,

Facebook, Twitter, Second Life, and podcasts” (p. 1). He also wants to distinguish these from new media (and, of course, from old media like print and broadcasting). So, some key distinctions: (1) “every consumer is a producer”; (2) nonprofessional producers; (3) a choice of medium: text, image, sound; (4) free of charge to the consumer; (5) competitive, at least for consumers’ attention; (6) more than search engines or email; and (7) dependent on remote servers, though the producer need not know how the underlying platform works (pp. 2-5). The new new media invite interactivity; they promote a model different from the new media, in that they neither charge viewers/readers nor depend on a gatekeeper (though some, like Wikipedia, have introduced some form of these). The new new media are inherently social media; they tend to describe general approaches rather than specific topics—one can blog about anything, though many lean to politics or news—and they favor highly portable hardware, like the iPhone, Blackberry, or laptop computers. And they evolve. Fast. Levinson admits as much: in his chapter on MySpace he notes that it is losing popularity to Facebook. He had no idea how quickly, even in the time between the writing of his book and its publication (the book bears a copyright of 2009, but the Allyn & Bacon catalogue lists its publication as 2010—a very old media eventuality).

Arranging the chapters in descending order of influence, Levinson begins with blogs. And fittingly, the longest chapter deals with this form of online writing. Short for web-log, a blog is the work of a “citizen journalist” (p. 17) or a citizen commentator. Many blogs invite comments by readers. Some make money (Levinson has a section on “monetizing your blog”). Some influence politics. And many, many blogs depend on old media for their content, as they link to current events or comment on the reporting done by journalists. Blogs vary in their readership, so Levinson offers ways to determine readership rankings. Everything the novice needs to know about blogging and some things that will interest scholars who may want to ponder this newer media world—it’s all here.

The next chapter introduces YouTube, the online video site. Levinson begins with political videos, things that played a role in the 2008 election. Along the way he notes how the role of video producer (and distributor) has changed, how YouTube has become a depository for the history of video, how YouTube refutes Lewis Mumford, and how YouTube still faces the old media issue of copyright.

Wikipedia is a different matter. As an online crowd-sourced encyclopedia, it invites people to make entries and depends on its vast readership to correct errors. Over its short existence it has risen in importance and reliability. And, not surprisingly, it has generated battles among its most active users: should Wikipedia, for example, include everything (online storage space and the HTML format place no limits) or should Wikipedia limit the entries? What about its volunteer editors and conflicts of interest? How transparent should its processes be? How up-to-date? This last question matters since a typical encyclopedia, which seeks reflection and accuracy, differs from a newspaper, which seeks immediacy. Levinson does not answer all the questions, but does give an introduction to this medium and its advantages and disadvantages.

He then turns to Digg, an index for news published on the web, which ranks stories according to an algorithm that processes votes from its users. Levinson describes the process, then gives examples. In trying to explain why Digg rankings in the 2008 primary election cycle broke down, he offers one of his rare missteps, citing the below-voting-age characteristics of many Digg users. Though this is an instance of it, he does not consider the larger sampling problems that affect all new new media as they attempt to poll public opinion.

The next two chapters address the more recent headline grabbing new new media: the social networking sites, MySpace and Facebook. Describing the “friending” process (it shows up also on Digg) and how it differs between the two social networks, Levinson gives examples of what works and what does not. He also recounts well reported stories of online bullying, including the bullying that led a teenager to take her own life.

Twitter, the micro-blogging site, provides “the epitome of immediacy” (p. 134). It allows people to send out and receive 140 character messages from almost any device. It combines, Levinson tells us, interpersonal and mass communication. It has had political uses and has supported popular uprisings in a number of countries. And, in one of his delightful connections, Levinson tells us that Marshall McLuhan really was a microblogger *avant la lettre*.

Second Life comes next. A social, virtual reality site, it allows participants using avatars to interact in real time in a variety of places. Levinson describes how he himself has a presence in Second Life and

how he has done readings from his books and conducted seminars.

Second Life . . . represents the epitome of total involvement in a new new medium. You can pause a video on YouTube, stop editing on Wikipedia, leave your profile page on the screen and grab a bit to eat without missing too much on Facebook or MySpace, but to leave the screen when you are connected to Second Life is, literally, to leave your avatar frozen or sleeping . . . (p. 152)

Each of these media demands a different level of attention and, as Levinson pointed out in the introduction, each competes with the others for that attention.

The last of the new new media changes from primarily visual media to the acoustic. Podcasts involve “the recording and dissemination of sound” (p. 153). Prepared by amateurs, they can address any topic. Levinson walks the reader through the structuring of a podcast, the making of the podcast, and the distribution of the podcast. He presents case studies, discussions of copyright, and ideas for making money.

The book’s final chapters present too brief discussions of the “dark side of new new media” (pp. 168-179): bullying, flaming, trolling, cyberstalking, terrorism, theft, and spam; a review of the political power of these media; and a quick look at the hardware needed.

If this summary seems breathless, it follows the book’s style—and that of the new new media. The reader gets a quick tour and ends up with lots of facts but also puzzled as to what to make of them. But, since you, dear reader, read this in a printed journal, you have probably already missed the new new media wave.

As an example of old media (a printed book sold by a large publishing enterprise, seeking profit from the educational market), the book contains a lengthy (23 pages) bibliography, drawn as Levinson explains in the introduction from online sources, as well as an index. The book does provide a good place to start on new new media, with an experienced guide.

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

**Lindlof, Thomas R.** *Hollywood Under Siege: Martin Scorsese, the Religious Right, and the Culture Wars*. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2008. Pp. xi, 394. ISBN 978-0-8131- 2517-6 (hbk.) \$32.50.

Though many of us probably remember Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1998), we may have forgotten the level of passionate protest it inspired among religious groups, particularly Evangelical Christians, and we may not have known much about the individuals involved on all sides of the dispute. *Hollywood Under Siege* provides a detailed look at each aspect of the film, the controversy, and the context of the rise of the Religious Right.

Built on interviews with many of the key individuals involved with the film, the studios, and the protests, this book attempts to set the film in a wider context. Scorsese had long wanted to make a religious film, a film about Jesus that would speak to the challenges and doubts of contemporary society. Introduced to Nikos Kazantzakis' novel, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, by the actress Barbara Hershey (who had noticed religious themes in his early films), Scorsese felt that he had found the story he wanted to work with. The novel, controversial itself from its first publication, creates a fictional Jesus who "tempted in all things like us, but without sin" faces the temptation of abandoning his role as Messiah and living an ordinary human and family life. Negotiating with Kazantzakis' widow for the film rights, Scorsese placed an option on the novel and recruited his long-time collaborator Paul Schrader to produce a first script. Lindlof takes us through the process of script development, initial protests (building on earlier protests against the novel), to the withdrawal of studio support and the suspension of the project.

Scorsese, boosted by several successful films and recruited by Universal Studios, bargained to make his film. The studio's new management saw an opportunity to support a leading U.S. director and to gain credibility with an art film. The story picks up with further script development, casting, production design, and filming. Then it returns to the studio. Hearing initial protests, the studio management reached out to religious groups, even going so far as to have a group of theologians review the script and appointing a liaison to the most vocal Christian protest groups. Reading almost like a page-turner suspense story, *Hollywood Under Siege* follows the filming, the studio marketing attempts, the protests, the strategies to limit protest at the film's screenings, worries about violence, and the distribution deals that persuaded cinema chains to exhibit a controversial film.

A second story, not told in as much detail, traces the interactions of the various Evangelical Christian protest groups. (Protests also came from the Catholic

Church, but without the force of the other protests; these receive less treatment in the book.) Protests developed, coordinated both by well organized groups like the Rev. Donald Wildmon's American Family Association and James Dobson's Focus on the Family, and by individual pastors and talk radio hosts. The groups tried a variety of strategies from letter-writing and telephone campaigns, to picketing theaters, to boycotts, with little success. If anything the controversy served to provide publicity for the film in its opening weeks.

Reading this book, one learns a great deal about the Hollywood film industry, how studios work, and the key people at Universal during the 1990s. One also learns a lot about how Universal tried to rebut the protests by shaping the discourse around the film into a free speech debate. One learns something about the religious groups offended by the film, but not as much as one would like about their theological motives and understandings. From this perspective, the "culture wars" of the book's title seem a bit mysterious—not that they occurred but the reasons underlying them. Unfortunately, at times, key religious leaders appear one-dimensional, particularly in comparison with studio personnel.

Lindlof is certainly correct to highlight the film and its production as a key moment in recent U.S. religious history (and he makes an attempt to draw parallels to protests against insults to religion in other countries). While filled with data, and quite moving at times, the book leaves a certain dissatisfaction: there is more to the story of the culture wars and of the churches. Social movements that touch on artistic expression, religious sensibilities, political alignments, financial survival, and individual motivations demand more detail. *Hollywood Under Siege* provides a starting point and suggests avenues of further study, particularly among the various Christian groups. Though one can question the tactics and the almost naive understanding of American culture of some of the religious leaders, one cannot dismiss the depth of feeling that this film and many others have prompted.

The book contains notes, a selected bibliography, a list of author interviews (76 people included), and an index.

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

**Press, Andrea and Bruce Williams.** *The New Media Environment: An Introduction.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. 225. ISBN 978-1-4051-2768-4 (pb.) \$39.95.

The topic of this new book presents a challenge: to explain how quickly media technologies are changing and their consequences—in the printed format of a book. The time it took for the book to be written and published undermines some of the examples of new technologies as really new, and it simply cannot keep up with the changes as they occur. Still, a reader will be impressed with the quality of the argument and the research on which the chapters are based (a good deal of research by the co-authors themselves). The premise of the book, however, is not simply that there has been vast change in the media—from the era of broadcast television to the era of cable, websites, blogs, and YouTube—but that these changes have consequences for all of us users of media. Some consequences are obvious, the fragmentation of the audience of older media, but some are not, “eroding the distinction between producers and consumers of media” or even that “new media challenges elites . . . by providing communication channels for ordinary citizens to directly produce and access information about political, social and economic life” (p. 20). But the authors are quick to add that “of course, traditional political, economic, cultural, and media elites are also using—and in many ways still dominating—the Internet” (p. 21). The authors are clear enough about their own position of not being simply enthusiastic promoters of new technologies, but at the same time, neither are they simply critics of these changes. They repeat the phrase “it’s complicated” often enough that we understand their hesitation to jump to quick conclusions.

To confirm their concern about some of the consequences of the new media environment, they raise the issue of ownership and control in Chapter 2. Their treatment of the issue looks to the increasing concentration in not only the traditional media fields such as television, music, or print but also the same trend in Internet growth where only a few giants like Google and Yahoo account for most searches. The argument concerning net neutrality is brought up as the new bone of contention, but the general arguments for and against concentrated ownership may leave readers confused, especially in light of evidence for consequences on people. And, in fact, the authors seem rather in favor of leaving the position open by concluding,

Indeed, there are many alternative models of media ownership and control that have emerged both over time and across nations. . . . If we are to maximize the potential of a changing media environment, it is vital for a debate to be informed by the full range of alternatives and their likely consequences (p. 57)

In what seems to be a defining chapter in the book, “Media and Democracy” in Chapter 3, the authors argue that there is validity in seeing the political situation in the early 21st century through a media studies approach. That means that they boldly state that the media are an important if not the crucial factor in explaining our current politics in the U.S. Many in the field of Political Science might beg to disagree. To confirm this hypothesis, they review the communication research on politics in the 20th century. Citing Lippman, Lasswell, and Dewey on whether the average American voter is about to make a wise choice at the ballot box, they then cite Lazarsfeld and colleagues on the 1940 campaign indicating that the media (radio and print) were not the important element but that personal influence was. Undaunted by the seeming contradiction about media influence, they argue that broadcast television as a media environment was critical in the latter part of the century. Finally, they argue that the new media environment of the Internet and blogs have made it possible to influence a process like voting with exposés and scandals with important political consequences. They end with a plea for better media literacy efforts to help citizens learn how to manage the flood of political information now available. The chapter is not likely to persuade academics in Political Science about the centrality of media, but the review of communication research and its relevance to politics should inform them at the very least.

Chapters 4 through 6 return to popular culture and the new media environment, an area that Andrea Press is more knowledgeable in. Chapter 4 on “Texts, Reception, and Cultural Studies” begins with an attempt to understand *ideology* through an example of a movie, *Knocked Up*. Although the approach makes for a more indirect way of defining the concept, the authors come to this conclusion: “Since its beginnings, the heart of media studies has always been a critique of the way the media represent reality, or in fact define reality, shaping our choices, identities, and beliefs” (p. 96). The authors trace the notion of media reception from the original Lazarsfeld paradigm of a two-step flow through the development of a more

active audience theory to the study of fan groups of Henry Jenkins. This leads into a chapter devoted to the study of inequalities along lines of class, gender, race, and sexuality in media studies (Chapter 5). Here the book touches on a background of media studies beginning with the Frankfurt School and including Cultural Studies and then going through the four inequalities with illustrations from film and television texts. The question of how these media texts influence audiences remains somewhat open, leaving the impression that textual studies have a record of more concrete results than do reception studies. In Chapter 6, the authors finally address these media studies questions in the light of the *new media*. It is not that media users do not include new technologies like cell phones or Internet websites; it is that it is difficult to assess the consequences of this use, the authors saying early on that “this makes any assessment of how the media influence you a complex problem at best” (p. 157). And the problem goes on. The qualitative and ethnographic approach favored by media and cultural studies makes it more difficult to generalize findings. Toward the end of the chapter, however, the authors cite some of their own new media studies and provide some interesting illustrations of how the old problems of gender and class still operate in the new media environment. They remind readers that the new media are most often combined with the old in complex ways that make conclusions less clear cut.

The authors draw three general conclusions: first, “we live in a mediated age . . . that media now permeate almost every moment of our existence” (p. 194); second, the media’s relationships with other parts of our lives (and society’s) are *complicated* and understanding them demands not only a media study but a study that takes the context of peoples’ lives into account; third, human agency is important in the sense that technological change is not totally determined but is shaped by policy, a human activity. The book contains both extensive footnotes and a complete bibliography and index.

—Emile McAnany  
Santa Clara University

**Sabry, Tarik** *Cultural Encounters in the Arab World: On Media, The Modern, and the Everyday*. London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010. Pp. 240. ISBN 978-1-84885-359-1 (hbk.) £42.50; 978-1-84885-380-7 (pb.) £15.99.

I must declare a proprietary interest in this book, since I am mentioned in the acknowledgments and have followed the academic career of its author, Tarik Sabry, since his first days as an undergraduate media student who was somewhat older than the main student body.

Sabry here attempts to consider the notion of just what it is to be considered modern in the Arab world today. Many in the West have a tendency to lump “The Arab World” into one cohesive mass, with no differentiation between the cultures of countries that are Arab. In recent years, all too often the words “Arab world” have become synonymous with the words “Muslim world,” although not all Arabs are Muslim and some countries have appreciable minorities of other faiths, and not all Muslims are Arabs. There is no denying, however, that Islam has had a considerable influence on the cultures of the Arab world, nor can we fail to see differences in the cultures of Arab countries.

Sabry notes that only with difficulty can one raise the subject of culture in Arab societies without dealing with religiosity (p. 190). Those of us who have visited countries where there is a majority Muslim population soon become used to the effect that Islam has on the fabric of society, from social mores to food, from household practices to the call to prayer. Here, Sabry interweaves threads from these cultures into what he describes as “multi-narrative categories.” He looks at the effect on countries in which he has undertaken empirical research (Morocco, Egypt, etc.) of their histories, explaining why, for instance, young Moroccans often want to be heard speaking French because it is seen as more “modern,” while they can still dislike the colonial past that brought them this language. He shows how modern media and their products have enabled the young to develop notions not only of real emigration to the West but also something that he terms “mental emigration,” where young people’s use of Western media enables them to “emigrate” mentally whilst staying in their home country. These same media have had an effect on many of the young, and that same mental emigration means that some of them try to find ways round the restrictions that a Muslim country offers them. This is most notably shown in his chapter “The Bridge and the Queue as Spaces of Cultural Encounter.”

Using empirical research and drawing on philosophical works, notably those of Heidegger, as well as published material on Arab culture at various stages in history, he attempts to show the effect of the

encounter with “the modern.” How have various philosophical notions impacted on Arab culture? What effects result from this cultural encountering as a spatio-temporal phenomenon? He also considers the ontology of encountering the “modern,” while noting that “‘Modernization’ is a *process* and must not be confused with ‘modernity’” (p. 13). All of these have a strong impact on the everyday lives of those who live in these Arab countries. Chapter 2 looks at ways in which “bridging and connection between Arab thought and articulations of the everyday are possible” (p. 21). In Chapter 3 he considers the meaning of “culture” in the Arab repertoire by trying to separate those cultures from artificial and discursive relations in order to allow space for new and broader articulations.

I consider his final chapter the most important in this book. Although previous chapters look at “modern cultures” in Arab countries, using empirical research into media use and interview material gained from interviews that Sabry conducted with young people and academics in Arab countries, as well as anthropological observation, this last chapter attempts to discover what Arab cultural studies are and the importance of the space that they allow for the transformation of Arab media, culture, and society and its scientific and systematic study, together with a possible hermeneutics to enable this study and transformation and possibilities for future work in the area. This work is greater than just the development of a de-westernized version of cultural studies, since many of the extant works on Arab cultures are based on western models. It also does not just represent a move to a more internationalized model, but towards a truly Arab cultural studies model. While Sabry notes (p.192-193) work that demonstrates efforts to reach this Arab model, work based on male/female dynamics in the Arab world from authors such as Mernissi and Sadawi, or on the liberation that the vernacular offers against the “dictatorship of classical Arabic” (p. 193), about which Safouane, (2007) writes, as an aid to democratization, or Khatibi’s (1980) notion of the *double-critique*, Sabry notes (p. 193) that these are critical projects that operate in just the areas of cultural activity and creativity that he would champion.

Sabry is to be congratulated on this readable and interesting book, written by a Moroccan émigré to the United Kingdom who has developed an interesting thesis on Arab cultural studies, which will no doubt be continued in his forthcoming edited book *Arab*

*Cultural Studies: Mapping the Field*, which will be published later this year, also by I. B. Tauris.

—Maria Way  
Journalism & Mass Communication  
University of Westminster, UK

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**Simonson, Peter.** *Refiguring Mass Communication: A History*. Urbana, Chicago, Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2010. Pp. 280. ISBN 978-0-252-03517-3 (hbk.) \$75.00; 978-0-252-07705-0 (pb.) \$25.00.

The title of this book puts an emphasis on its first word: “Refiguring.” The book, then, is not a straightforward history in the ordinary sense but a “rehabilitation project” of the term “mass communication”—a term that the author argues was both a creation of the last century and an abandonment by the end of the century. What we have in this book is a reconceptualizing of the term in a rhetorical tradition with results that are quite original if sometimes opaque for the reader. What Simonson undertakes is to redefine the phrase as to how the notion of communication with a large number of people (i.e., mass communication) can be traced back to historical figures that helped give meaning to the term that was only created in the 20th century. Thus he identifies Paul of Tarsus, Walt Whitman, Charles Cooley (a sociologist that first helped define communication theory early in the 20th century), David Sarnoff (who spearheaded the radio broadcast model of mass communication in the 1920s and 1930s), and Robert Merton (another sociologist who collaborated for a decade in the 1940s at Colombia University with Paul Lazarsfeld to help refine the term as it was introduced as an academic field at mid-century).

The first chapter begins to trace the term, “mass communication,” from the use by David Sarnoff to promote the new NBC radio network in the 1920s more as a rhetorical or PR term. It was in the 1930s that the term was adopted by different scholars to designate radio broadcasting and then retrospectively newspapers and film as well and the beginning of television. After a brief overview of the field up to World War II, Simonson argues for expanding the term in ways that he believes were “repressed” by the identification of radio, press, film, and television as the appropriate

purview of the field that was beginning to unfold. He seems to believe that term of “mass communication” is no longer relevant to what might better be termed media studies today with the old media being displaced by the new. In lieu of this mass media focus he begins to explore the term and develop a theoretical approach that expands and changes the term that goes beyond media and into what one could call communication studies that somehow involve a large number of people. Thus he seeks out historical figures who might be called mass communicators.

Paul of Tarsus is his first model—and a very successful one at that. Much of the chapter reflects Simonson’s reading of the abundant recent literature on Paul and his mission in the first century of our era. The author argues that Paul was not a particularly effective orator himself but that his view of communicating with the masses was more perhaps through his letters which were rhetorically superb. The focus of the chapter is on the First Letter to the Corinthians where Paul argues for the Body of Christ as the symbolic reality for uniting the emerging communities of believers throughout the Roman world. He makes much of the connection of the two senses of the Body of Christ, both in an ecclesial sense and in a liturgical sense of the sacred meal shared by the community in Corinth and their spiritual connection with all other believers far and near. This chapter begins to redefine mass communication in a basic way.

Chapter 2 on Whitman suggests that the book struggles with focus as it can be read as a series of separate essays about different mass communicators who carried out their work in profoundly different ways in very different contexts. As in the previous chapter, the author tends to focus on a single text for inspiration. Here it is the first four editions of *Leaves of Grass* published in the 1850s when Whitman was hitting his stride. The first half of the chapter deals with Whitman’s biographical details up to the first publication of *Leaves of Grass*, but Simonson’s interpretation of this poem is as rhetorical polytheistic praise of the masses that Whitman wishes to communicate to his readers. The thesis of mass communication in Whitman seems labored, and with little reference to the text itself, the interpretation seems to come more from the author than from the poet.

When the author comes to Charles Cooley some of the previous difficulties seem to ease because we are on the firmer ground of mass communication as the term was parsed in the first part of the 20th century by Lippman, Lasswell, Sarnoff, Lazarsfeld, and others. As

Simonson states early in the chapter, “Cooley was the one [among many early scholars in the emerging field] who led the way in the academic study of communication so named, during the earliest phase in North America, from the 1890s through the 1910s. Cooley’s was the first significant social theory of communication in the United States . . .” (p. 92). But the author admits that Cooley did not use the term mass communication as such but his interest in transportation and other technologies that were seen to connect people makes the claim for Cooley’s inclusion more understandable.

The final formal chapter (there is an Afterword) concerns itself with Robert Merton, a well known name in sociology from his long tenure at Columbia University from 1940 until his retirement. Why Merton may seem an odd choice for mass communication history was that he only worked for a decade in the field (1940-1950) and is largely ignored by most historians of the field (Rogers in his history, 1994, devotes only four pages to the collaboration with Lazarsfeld). Simonson does not clearly make the case for Merton’s inclusion, but one reason that Merton is interesting is that he has *not* been studied much in our field. In any case, the author continues his narrative of how mass communication history evolved and how his chosen models incorporated their given “faiths” into communication careers. For Merton, it was a skeptical faith in reason and scientific method, and Simonson makes a good deal of Merton’s change of names as a young man from a Jewish and Eastern European one to a very mainstream sounding one. The chapter seems oddly critical at times of Merton and his move from politics, and even Manhattan to the suburbs, and, indeed, from the newly emerging field of mass communication by 1949 as the field was being created academically.

The Afterword about a fair in rural Pennsylvania seems a complicated and less revealing way of summarizing or concluding what is an original and often intriguing attempt at defining mass communication over time. There are copious footnotes that demonstrate the serious scholarship of the author as well as a bibliography and index.

—Emile McAnany  
Santa Clara University

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**Stanton, Richard.** *Media Relations*. South Melbourne, Australia: Oxford Press, 2007. Pp. xviii, 260. ISBN 978-0-19555-734-3 (pb.) \$55.00.

The review of this textbook will be short because one fact says it all: published 2007. Despite some good basic advice about traditional media, the book is irrelevant to anyone teaching a relevant course in public relations, let alone one focusing on media relations.

I began the book hoping to learn more about the brave new world of media relations—a world increasingly dominated by tweets, messages on Facebook, text messaging, etc. that I’m still not comfortable with. However there’s nary a word in this book about any of them because they had not yet transformed the field in 2007. I’m not even sure if Twitter had been invented then.

In a few weeks, I will be teaching my PR Writing class how to pitch stories via Twitter. Instead of getting information from a text, I’ll be following the instructions of an alum under 30 who finds it one of the most effective methods to communicate with reporters. I’ll bet lots of my colleagues elsewhere are doing something similar, or not many students will take their classes.

In fairness to Stanton, this is a pretty good book full of traditional wisdom about preparing informational materials for the media and relating to reporters. Some of it still holds but some of the formats he describes have been replaced by electronic versions. Few American professors would have adopted Stanton’s book even in the old days because so many of the cases and examples are from Australia and New Zealand. But all of this is beside the point.

This book, which includes a helpful glossary, extensive bibliography, and index, illustrates the reason that textbooks are an endangered species in fields such as PR. They are outdated by the time they come off the press.

No one teaching a PR class today would even consider adopting a textbook that does not address the social media revolution. Ironically, any textbook that did would probably be dated by its failure to cover the next new thing currently under development in Silicon Valley. There’s a reason I have just acquired an iPad and will be attending a workshop on using e-books, long after most people regard both as old hat.

—Eileen Wirth  
Creighton University

**Thusu, Daya Kishan** (Ed.). *Internationalizing Media Studies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009. Pp. 320. ISBN 0-415-45529-4 (hbk.) \$115.00.

This book rests on the double premise of increasing interest in globalization within communication theory and research as well as the increasing interest in media studies within the general field of communication studies. The editor, Daya Thusu, provides a good deal of support for both of these premises in his Introduction. He argues early on:

This book aims to contribute to the continuing debate in international communication studies on the imperative to broaden the discourse on the globalization of media and communication . . . The contributors to the book suggest that there is a pressing need for innovative research methodologies that fully take account of regional and national specificities, as well as pedagogical necessities warranted by the growing internationalization of students and researchers . . . in the non-Western world, notably in such large Asian countries as China and India. (pp. 1-2)

Later in Chapter 1, Thusu continues his thesis with a brief analysis of how communication study arose first in the U.S. and later in Europe with a consequence that many scholars in these regions developed a myopic view of communication and media study elsewhere outside this U.S.- and Eurocentric approach. He then makes a case for what he calls the “Chindia” challenge, i.e., that China and India between them have not only growing economies but significant university studies in media and communication. He closes his chapter with a call for “decolonizing” media and communication study in a way that allows Western dominance to give way to greater communication among researchers and a true global study of media and communication by all researchers around the world.

The book is divided into four parts: Internationalizing Media Research (with five chapters, including Thusu’s lead one), Broadening the Field of Media Studies (with four chapters), Regional Perspectives on Internationalization (with five chapters), and Pedagogic Parameters: Internationalizing Media Syllabi (with five chapters). In Part 1 there are chapters on comparative media research methods, a critique of recent globalization theories of media, the analysis of websites as an organizational window of international institutions, and a new/old direction for global media stud-

ies. Besides the Thusu chapter, two seem worth noting, more for their critiques than for their accolades for global media studies. Chapter 3 by Tristan Mattelart provides an excellent summary of the development of a theory of “cultural globalization” promoted by Cultural Studies, Anthropology, and Sociology through such writers as Harvey, Hall, Hannerz, Giddens, Appadurai, and Tomlinson in the 1990s. At the end of the chapter, however, Mattelart argues strongly that the theory leaves out the study of the context of the global media’s rise in the earlier writers on critical political economy (by his father Armand Mattelart, among others). He does not argue for limiting the cultural approach but for broadening the study of global media to include the political-economic study of the *process* of global media expansion as well as its modernity *effects* on people in its culturalist phase. The other chapter to note is by the late Jan Ekecrantz who argues that media studies needs to broaden its scope to include issues of class and the variation of media experiences across national and class divides. He suggests a very broad approach as does Mattelart which suggests that the current theories need to include some approaches that have been bypassed by the current cultural approach.

Part 2 deals with broadening the field of media studies, but the four chapters seem hard to fit into the thesis of the book. Two chapters (by Braman and by Verhulst and Price) are about law and international communication. Interesting in themselves, their suggestions are only tangential to the direction of most media studies departments and more relevant to Law and Policy Studies programs. The chapter by Boyd-Barrett is less upbeat than many of the others in the book and leaves readers wondering perhaps what media studies should do to internationalize. The chapter by Mosco and Lavin indicates a serious and long-term effort by two Canadian researchers into a topic almost wholly missing from communication studies, much less media studies, that is, labor relations within communication industries. Still, their contribution might suggest an aspect of international communication that is often overlooked: communication is carried out by people as well as technologies and those people work for the industries that create and distribute the products that audiences receive worldwide everyday.

The five chapters of Part 3 contain different points of view by region. They are about Asian media

studies in general, China, Arabic countries, Russia, and Colombia in Latin America. The approaches are all quite distinct, but a theme that arises from these efforts to discuss media studies from a regional or national point of view is that each region or nation has something unique to contribute in internationalizing media studies. And it is in this collective instinct that the book’s theme may be best expressed. This sentiment says that as the national and regional media studies programs grow, it becomes clearer that a de-Westernization is not only growing but is needed if different media experiences are to be portrayed. Banerjee in Chapter 10 makes the point that first Media Studies in Asia had to be legitimized and then had to begin to explore its own indigenous theories and methodologies. Zhao in a chapter on China makes a more refined theoretical analysis of different stages of growth of Chinese national media research with an emphasis on rootedness in the cultural experience of Chinese audiences today. Similarly, Sabry makes the case for a careful rethinking of Western intellectual currents in the light of similar debates within the Arab constituency of media scholarship. Finally Vartanova makes a quick summary of the study of communication and media since the Fall of the Berlin Wall and provides a nuanced landscape of the different media theories that have been dominant during the last two decades.

In the final Part 4, the authors turn to the more practical questions of how to make media studies more international. There were a number of suggestions by some recognized international scholars. Cees Hamelink makes a brief plea to include issues of ethics in the process of internationalizing media studies. Kaarle Nordenstreng makes a case for media studies as a discipline in universities, focusing primarily on Scandinavian institutions. He gives a nice summary of the history of the debate beginning in the 1959 standoff between Berleson and Schramm over the viability of the Communication field (Schramm seems to have won that one) and arguing that Communication and Media Studies may always remain a field rather than a strict discipline. His conclusion is that by its very nature Communication study is international. John Downing gives perhaps the best concrete contribution in reporting a recent survey of 10 top private and 10 top public universities in the U.S. and what they teach in international media courses. Although only a few of the Ivy League universities have formal departments, there are a number of global media courses taught in a variety of

scattered departments and programs. There are more media courses in the public universities but they tend to focus little on the global with the exception of places like the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Illinois, and Southern Illinois University and, to a lesser extent, at the graduate journalism programs at Berkeley and Missouri.

In the final analysis, this book has the merit for the Anglo-American world of exposing the many problems of their long-standing regional hegemony in media studies and the need to expand the horizons to other cultural and national realities of research and teaching in Communication. The book contains footnotes and bibliography after each chapter and an extensive index.

—Emile McAnany  
Santa Clara University

**Toplin, Robert Brent.** *History by Hollywood*. 2nd Edition. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010. Pp. ix, 269. ISBN 978-0-252-07689-3 (pb). \$25.00.

What should we make of Hollywood's version of history? Can audience members trust what they view? Is there more than one kind of historiography? Robert Brent Toplin, professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, attempts to lead the reader through these and similar questions in his discussion of Hollywood films based on events in (mostly) recent U.S. history. In addition to the viewers' concerns, these questions about filmed history have arisen, he explains, at academic conferences of historians (p. 225) and often come down to a debate pitting scholarly integrity understood from the perspective of written histories against imaginative interpretations of the past that follow a different hermeneutical principle. However, even this simplifies a fairly complex situation, since the film industry's attempts to portray history cross any number of frameworks.

These questions take on increased salience along with the increase in Hollywood's interest in various forms of history—documentary films, films based on historical events or persons, docudramas, television network programming (as shown, for example, on The History Channel), and so on. What counts as history? Toplin begins by acknowledging the difference between scholarly history writing and Hollywood's purpose. Film studios seek to entertain audiences, not

educate them, though they do see historical events and people as interesting to audiences and therefore potentially financially profitable. Because of this, studios will continue to make historical films; Toplin suggests that audiences would do well to put such films in their proper context.

In his view, historical films fall into four broad contexts or categories, around which he structures *History by Hollywood*. The first, "exercising artistic license," describes those films whose writers and directors base their work on historical facts but "simplify and fictionalize their stories. They envision scenes from the past for which they lack detailed information. They put words into the mouths of characters and imagine moments of conflict that never actually occurred" (p. 3). In other words, they rewrite history to make a better two-hour narrative. The writers and directors want to tell a good story. To show how such practices work in the concrete, Toplin provides a detailed analysis of two films: *Mississippi Burning* (dir., Alan Parker, 1988) and *JFK* (dir., Oliver Stone, 1991). The former tells the story of the FBI involvement in finding the killers of three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964. Toplin comments, "The movie does an impressive job of communicating a feeling for the conditions in Mississippi in 1964 and the attitudes of the segregationists, but its presentation of the events raised serious questions from critics in three important respects" (p. 34): the view of blacks as victims uninvolved in securing their rights; the actual role of the FBI and its tactics; and the role of violence in bringing social change. Establishing a pattern he follows in subsequent chapters, Toplin summarizes the historical events, the film version of the events, the criticism, and the aims and methods of the writers, producers, and director. In the second example, Oliver Stone crafts his film on the assassination of President Kennedy around the story of Jim Garrison, a New Orleans prosecutor who unsuccessfully brought conspiracy charges of his own again a man suspected of involvement in Kennedy's death. This allows Stone to present his own reading of the evidence surrounding the assassination. Here again, critics leveled charges of simplification and biased presentation against the film; on the other hand, the film did lead to public debate about the official findings that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing the president—a worthwhile exercise in public history, according to Toplin. The value of films in this first category lies precisely here: not in the specific

accuracy but in the larger sense of history. In other words, the film makers may change the details but not the larger historical event.

The second broad category of Hollywood history presents films “drawing lessons: making the past relevant to the present” (p. 5). Films of this type seek to teach or influence present events through a consideration of the past. To show these in action, Toplin considers *Sergeant York* (dir., Howard Hawks, 1941) and *Missing* (dir., Constantin Costa-Gavras, 1982). *Sergeant York* tells the story of a World War I soldier, with religious objections to war, who accepted the moral arguments for war and later became a highly decorated hero and then quietly returned to his farm. The film, released on the eve of the U.S. declaration of war in the Second World War, became a strong recruiting tool, even though the film makers tried to steer a middle course between the rising political debate about the U.S. participation in another European war. Unfortunately, the 70 years since the film’s production (and its setting 25 years earlier) have reduced the impact of this film even on the historical debate. Such caution does not apply to *Missing*, the story of the search for a young American caught up in the 1973 coup that overthrew Chilean President Salvador Allende. The young man’s family receive mixed messages from both the Chileans and the U.S. State Department, both before and after they find his body and discover that Chilean forces had executed him. For Costa-Gavras and the writer (the young man’s father whose book provides the basis for the film), the film helps to cast light on government cover-ups and on U.S. government involvement in both the coup and the cover-up. Each of these films merited both critical praise for artistic and thematic merit and strong criticism for historical inaccuracies. For Toplin, though, the films’ purposes had less to do with the specifics or even the interpretation of what happened as to do with the attempt to influence contemporary policy.

Toplin’s third category builds on the second, featuring films that open a debate: “revealing current controversy in portrayals of the past” (p. 6). This kind of film “does history” by offering a more open text, one that audiences could react to in forming their opinions about contemporary issues. As such, audience members on both sides of current debates could claim the films as supporting their reading of history: for the studios, a good marketing ploy, and for historians, a good teaching tool. The two films that illus-

trate this category are *Bonnie and Clyde* (dir., Arthur Penn, 1967) and *Patton* (dir., Franklin Schaffner, 1970). *Bonnie and Clyde*, which marked an important turning point in Hollywood’s portrayal of violence, tells the story of Depression-era bank robbers. Its romanticized view of violence and crime ignited a debate among film critics, politicians, and audiences about American values and fed into the ongoing (and seemingly endless) academic research about whether film and television violence leads people to act violently. As he does with each of the films under consideration, Toplin gives the historical background of the 1930s, the historical background of the film making, and the historical account of the debates initiated by the film. *Patton*, coming only a few years later, presents the war-time exploits of U.S. General George Patton; in doing so at the height of the Vietnam War, it offered the opportunity for both those in favor of the war and those opposed to it to see the U.S. military according to their lights. Toplin includes in his reception history of the film the anecdote that U.S. President Richard Nixon found this film a favorite and watched it repeatedly before he made the decision to send troops into Cambodia in an attempt to cut off North Vietnamese supply lines. The value of such films lies in their ability to spur debate. The historical re-creation allows audiences to face the present, an implicit motive in most historical writing.

Finally, the last of Toplin’s category of Hollywood’s ventures into history, “accenting heroism,” describes the “great person” approach to history (p. 7). Here, film makers focus on the exploits of one or two individuals, following Thomas Carlyle’s 19th century suggestion that “the history of the world is essentially the biography of great men” (p. 7). The two films chosen for this section are *All the President’s Men* (dir., Alan Pakula, 1976) and *Norma Rae* (dir., Martin Ritt, 1979). The former examines the events that led to the resignation of President Nixon in 1974 through the lens of the investigative reporting team of Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein; the latter, the unionization of textile workers in the southern U.S. through a focus on one factory worker. In each case, the writers and directors built the films around individuals, both for simplicity and for dramatic tension; in each case, they displeased many of the other individuals and institutions that participated in the events. Both films appeared within a few years of the events they narrated, so both encountered living memories among audience members. Because of the

relative recency of events, film makers went to great lengths to get every detail correct, down to the paper in the wastebaskets of the newsroom in *All the President's Men* (p. 189). "By drawing viewers into a richly textured look at society's troubles, these films hint that their portrayals are authentic—that the historic problems under examination are real" (p. 8). For Toplin the value of this kind of history lies in the ease of engagement it presents: viewers identify with the historical actors and feel that they, too, can make a difference.

In introducing the eight case studies in the book, Toplin offers a brief overview (much too brief in my view) of "the criticism and defense of cinematic history" (p. 8). Putting this in the book's introduction does situate things for the reader; however, the lessons Toplin offers to the reader tend to get lost after all the detail of the chapters. He and the films he chooses raise important questions about the nature of history and the purpose of researching and interpreting historical events. The non-historian wants to know more but does not find it. We get a sense that how films present history matters, but no sense of how to evaluate what we watch. What do the professional historians think? What tools do they bring to evaluate this "popular history" approach?

Toplin does warn the reader that both history and film encompass multiple approaches and methods; he does a better job in identifying four key approaches in cinematic history than in teaching about historiography and historical research. Why, for example, did those academic conference participants react so strongly to Hollywood's appropriation of historical narrative? Surely not because of professional envy. Hollywood's venture into history does, as Toplin only suggests, question the nature of history. This book would serve the reader well by focusing a bit more on that. Is history what happened or how we remember it?

The book, as one would expect from an historian, has notes, a selected bibliography, and an index.

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

**Underwood, Doug.** *From Yahweh to Yahoo!: The Religious Roots of the Secular Press*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008. Pp. xv, 349. ISBN 978-0-252-07571-1 (pbk.) \$25.00.

*From Yahweh to Yahoo!: The Religious Roots of the Secular Press* is a thorough study of religion's influence on mass media. Specifically, the hypothesis tested throughout the study is "the moral and ethical roots of American journalism and the foundations of the modern journalist's professional value system can be found in the religious history of the past" (p. 11-12).

Part I, "The Religious Roots of the Mass Media," provides an extensive layout of historical and theoretical foundations for the established hypothesis. In Chapter 1, "Prophetic Journalism: Moral Outrage and the News," Underwood places an emphasis on the 17th century in England. Specifically, he argues "prophetic impulse still guides journalism" (p. 12). Chapter 2, "The Profits of Reform: Printers, Capitalists, and the Priesthood of Believers," captures (a) the transformation of writing from a spiritual endeavor into the money-making form of today and (b) the modern marketing concepts that thrust coverage of religion into the economy and commercialism of journalism. Chapter 3, "Skeptics of Faith or Faith in Skepticism? Enlightening the Journalistic Mind," clearly reveals the facts to support the connection of journalism "to the religious past via the bridge of Enlightenment thought that has so strongly left its mark on the profession" (p. 60). In Chapter 4, "Mystics, Idealists, and Utopians: Journalism and the Romantic Tradition," Underwood examines the impact of the 19th-century Romantic Movement on journalism. Plus, he is careful to acknowledge the ways "in which romanticism of American journalists differs from the literary and philosophical variety studied in the university" (p. 74). In Chapter 5, "Muckraking the Nation's Conscience: Journalists and the Social Gospel," Underwood straightforwardly argues "the spirit of the Social Gospel movement still animates American journalism" (p. 13). Underwood clearly sheds light on "how directly the muckrakers were influenced by the social ethics of Christianity and how—explicitly and implicitly—they incorporated Judeo-Christian principles into their journalistic crusades" (p. 76). In Chapter 6, "Mencken, Monkeys, and Modernity: A New Metaphysic for the Newsroom," Underwood brings to the forefront several forces in modern journalism that interfered with journalists of today identifying themselves with religion. Specifically, he focuses on "the

heterodox American journalistic figures of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, particularly the notable journalists who went on to distinguished careers in literature and fiction” (p. 13). Finally, Chapter 7, “Pragmatism and the ‘Facts’ of Religious Experience: The Model for Synthesis,” focuses primarily on William James’s philosophy of pragmatism.

Part II—“Research, Religious Beliefs, and the Ethics of the Press”—includes three chapters focused primarily on the 1998-99 survey results from the tested hypothesis. Chapter 8, “Trusting Their Guts: The Moral Compass of a Doubters’ Profession,” contextualizes the hypothesis through an examination of the complex role that Judeo-Christian ethical concepts play in the professional value system of journalists. Specifically, Chapters 9 and 10 titled “I Will Show You My Faith by What I Do: A Survey of the Religious Beliefs of Journalists and Journalists’ Faith Put into Action”; and “Religion, Morality, and Professional Values: A Study of the Ethical Sources of Today’s Journalists,” respectively, provide the data summary from the mail survey. There was a 31% response rate in which 432 American and Canadian newspaper journalists responded to a questionnaire about their religious beliefs and the source of their ethical values. The empirical study “showed that journalists are strongly motivated by religious values, particularly in the way they put their values into action” (p. 13). Underwood concludes from the survey results that his hypothesis was largely supported.

Part III, “Secularism and the Newsroom Search for Substitute Faiths,” focuses on five substitutes for traditional religion which Underwood argues journalists have come to attach their religious longing. “The Cult of Science and the Scientifically Challenged Press” (Chapter 11) focuses on the substitute of “their awestruck attitude toward science” (p. 14). Chapter 12, “The Mind of the Inquiring Reporter: Psychology and the Science of the Soul,” focuses on the substitute of “their near religious faith in the principles of modern psychology” (p. 14). “The Press, Politics, and Religion in the Public Square” (Chapter 13) outlines a focus on the substitute of “their tendency to reduce religious questions to political questions while at the same time paying little attention to the deeper dimensions of religion in their political reporting” (p. 14). Chapter 14, “Foundations of Sand: Technology Worship and the Internet,” focuses on the substitute of “their near mystical celebration of the Internet and new media developments” (p. 14). Finally, Chapter

15, “The Gospel of Public Journalism: The Newsroom Communitarians and the Search for Civic Virtue,” focuses on public journalism as a substitute. Specifically, Underwood argues that public journalism “has been embraced by journalists without a full recognition of its connection to the nation’s religious heritage” (p. 14).

Part IV, “Journalism after Jesus,” focuses what Underwood effectively summarizes as an examination of “why the modern news media have such difficulties covering spiritual experience and how a profession that prides itself on its skepticism and empirical approach can produce coverage that is so uncritical, formulaic, and unhelpful in better understanding religious phenomena and the diversity of the world’s religions” (p. 14). “Jesus without Journalists: Miracles and Mysteries, Minus Media Reports” (Chapter 16) examines communication technology’s role in “shaping our image of Jesus and the early Christian message” (p. 14). Chapter 17, “Visions of Mary and the Less Than Visionary Press: Religious Apparitions in the Framing of the Modern Media,” analyzes how today’s media covers people’s claims that they have “communicated” with the Virgin Mary or seen a “likeness” of her projected into the world. Chapter 18, “Proselytizing and Profits: The Growth of Televangelism and the Collaboration of the Mainstream Press,” examines the growth of religious broadcasting. “Pluralism and the Press’ Blind Spots: The Coverage of Religious Diversity at Home and Abroad” (Chapter 19) brings to the forefront the “media’s coverage of Islam and the press’s tendency to cover global religions and nontraditional domestic religions in negative terms if they are perceived to threaten American business and political interests” (p. 15). Underwood argues that historically “religion has often served the economic interests of the ruling elite” (p. 270).

The key term for this book is “historical.” Underwood is not offering opinion. He has thoroughly researched the religious roots of the secular press. The hypothesis initially set out is clearly the central focus. The empirical results are presented clearly in writing and tables. In addition, the four parts of the book are clearly interwoven. The book would be successful in any American journalism course, seminar, or workshop.

The book contains 21 tables, endnotes, an extensive bibliography, and an index.

—Jennifer F. Wood  
Millersville University of Pennsylvania

