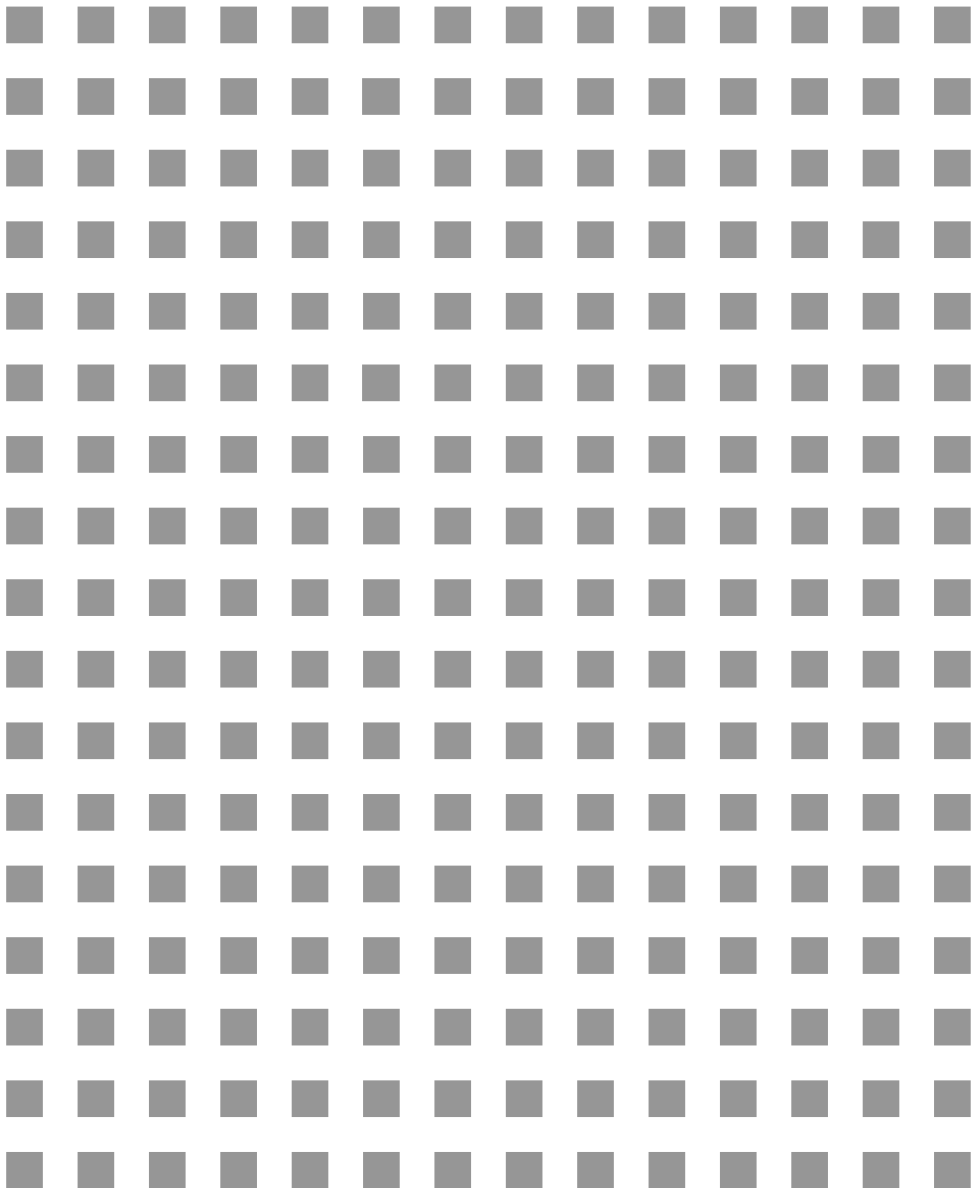




Book reviews



Małgorzata Adamik-Szysiak (2012), *Telewizyjna reklama polityczna w Polsce w latach 2005–2010 (Televised Political Advertising in Poland 2005–2010)*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, pp. 276, ISBN: 978-83-7784-163-1.

The book of Małgorzata Adamik-Szysiak refers to the role of television in Polish political advertising. Although the position of new media, and especially the Internet is constantly growing, television is still the most important medium in Poland. Televised advertising absorbs the major senses of the viewer, and political consultants soon noticed the possibilities of its use as a tool of electoral communication. How does it work in Poland? How professional is it? What is the future of televised advertising? These are the questions which the author has faced in her presented book.

The book is an attempt to describe the marketing activities of Polish political actors during the electoral campaign period. The main hypothesis of Adamik-Szysiak's work is the claim that we can observe the process of professionalization of televised advertisements on the Polish political market. The term "professionalization" itself is treated as adjusting the rules and techniques of political marketing by the wide spectrum of Polish political actors in their activity during electoral communication.

The book consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides a very rich and solid theoretical background. The author has not omitted the most valuable and important theories formulated by Polish scientists. The reader can find references to the works by Bogusław Nierenberg, Maciej Mrozowski, Zbigniew Bajka, Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Tomasz Goban-Klas, Marek Mazur, Robert Wiszniowski and others. The author has not forgotten about valuable works by researchers and theorists from outside Poland, including concepts by Philip Kotler, Peter Drucker and Serge Albouy. The theoretical part consists of the brief history of television as a medium and describes the basic theories of media influence, which is relevant to the following part of the thesis. However, there is a deficiency of a brief description of used methodology. The first chapter makes a great introduction to the issue of televised political advertising. The second chapter is about the rhetorical value of political messages in television. It starts with a very broad and complex description of the cultural and social background during every election in 2005–2010 in Poland. The recent history of Poland is full of issues which have had an impact on the political system, and the Smolensk plane crash is one of these examples. The chapter provides the reader with facts essential for understanding their influence on the results of elections apart from advertising. The third chapter tells us about the most commonly used strategies in televised political advertising. It is a great study of the instruments used by political actors, such as a dichotomous vision of the world and the means of expression used in political messages. The next chapter describes all of the aspects connected with political image and public relations. The author has focused on the images of the candidates during presidential elections and the image

of party leaders during parliamentary campaigns. The final chapter is dedicated to describing the future of televised advertising in Poland. Małgorzata Adamik-Szysiak has tried to answer basic questions about the form of future advertisements and their position in the era of the Internet and new technologies.

The research conducted for the dissertation was based on seven political campaigns, both presidential and parliamentary, which took place in Poland between 2005 and 2010. The author gathered 445 advertisements, which were put to transcription and analyzed. It has to be mentioned that research material consisted not only consisted of messages which were broadcast by political parties and candidates, but also with social advertisements encouraging citizens to take part in elections. After quantity analysis, the gathered material was analyzed from the quality perspective. The author has put a great effort to research the verbal, visual and audio side of advertisements. Małgorzata Adamik-Szysiak has conducted a comprehensive analysis of political actors, (candidates in presidential election races, party leaders) images, including a case study of verbal and non-verbal communication acts, essential attributes and perks revealed in the research material. Every relevant result of the research, quantity or quality, is presented within the transparent tables with data or transcripts.

In the last part of the book, which was dedicated to the perspectives of political televised advertising, its development and direction of changes, Adamik-Szysiak has agreed with the opinion of Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, who claims that political advertisements will be shorter and with “reduced content,” which would make them easier to absorb by the audience, because it affects mainly the emotional sphere of the viewer. In the same chapter, the author confirms her main hypothesis — we can definitely observe a process of professionalization of televised marketing in Poland. Hiring private marketing companies and involving them in the process of image-building of the political actors has become common practice. It entails another factor confirming the main hypothesis, which is increased funding of the electoral campaign. The book ends with the valuable point of view about the position of televised advertising in the era of new technologies. Since the structure of the audience is changing, and the Internet is becoming the main source of political information, the future of televised ads lies in interactive television.

The book is a very valuable piece of work, being a successful attempt at describing the evolution of political advertising. Solid empirical research, a wide social and cultural context and rich theoretical background makes the book by Adamik-Szysiak required reading for young political science students who are interested in political marketing, social life researchers and everyone interested in the functioning of political actors in the media sphere.

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Natalia Vasilendiuc (2011), *Cultura profesioanală a jurnaliștilor (The Professional Culture of Journalists)*. Bucharest: University of Bucharest Publishing House, pp. 211, ISBN 978-973-737-967-2.

Natalia Vasilendiuc's book is more than a scanning of the journalistic cultures in Romania and Moldova. Based on an analysis of journalistic values, roles and representations, the author creates a fruitful debate field about how to build journalistic culture by trying to answer the following questions: Is journalism a craft or a profession? What are the prerequisites for creating and strengthening journalistic culture? What are the professional values and roles of journalists? How are the professional representations of journalists constructed? What are the defining elements of the professional cultures of journalists in Romania and Moldova? The entire study is based on a set of considerable bibliographical resources, which give value and consistency to this book.

In the first part of the manuscript, the author defines the theoretical and conceptual tools by presenting the works of influential authors that have helped her to design the upcoming researches and define the key concepts (profession, professionalism, journalistic profession, professional roles, values and representations) with which she operated in her studies. One of the many aspects that caught my attention in this chapter was the manner in which the author masterfully explores the latest theories on journalistic culture, critically analyzed from the perspective of East European realities. It would not be a mistake to say that in this chapter the author has taken a first step towards building a theory of journalistic culture in East European countries.

In her chapter on *The Professional Culture of the Romanian Journalists*, N. Vasilendiuc provides the findings of two distinct qualitative and quantitative research projects she conducted in the period 2008–2010 in Romania: *The Socio-Professional Portrait of the Romanian Journalists* and *Words of Journalisms — Romania*. These studies are pioneering ones, due to both the large amount of data with which the author is engaged and the unanticipated conclusions that identify an unknown world of Romanian journalists. The author speaks of various generations of journalists faced with professional and organizational identity issues. One might even say that journalists have dual professional identities, one ideal/desired and another real/imposed. As the author suggests, the lack of a homogeneous identity makes it impossible to strengthen the journalistic profession in Romania.

In addition, in the last chapter the author makes an excellent analysis of the political situation and cultural elements that help build a complete picture of the media phenomenon/landscape in Moldova. The results of the study, which the author carried out in Moldova in 2006 (*Moldovan Journalists in a Post-Communist Society: Professional Roles, Values, and Representation*), reveal new aspects and bring important scientific relevance to the subfield of sociology of journalism. Some difficult issues like self-regulation or professional ethics are dealt with objectively and

without falling into moralizing stereotypes. As stated at the beginning of this study, the research on Moldova is one of the first journalistic portrayals that allow an in-depth understanding of the transformations in post-Soviet Moldova.

Although nowadays the theoretical and methodological research issues on journalistic culture are discussed intensively, in Romania and Moldova this research topic is still peripheral. With this volume, the author tries to increase the interest in this subfield of sociology of journalism proposing methodological and analytical tools for future complex, well-structured, clearly organized research projects on journalistic culture.

Mădălina Moraru

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Mădălina Moraru (2009), *Mit și publicitate (Myth and Advertising)*. Bucharest: Nemira Publishing House, pp. 224, ISBN 978-606-8073-89-7.

Drawing a connection between myth and advertising, as the book title implies, means rediscovering new successful techniques to create compelling advertisements that go beyond marketing debates. Moraru approaches this broad field of advertising from a different perspective, relying on cultural and anthropological concepts, which point out how complex an advertisement can be.

The book is structured in five very well-connected chapters that explain the relationship between archetypes, myths, storytelling and advertising. The book's main hypothesis is that myths find a way to be rediscovered and treasured through advertising storytelling, because every advertisement is faced with the simple goal of solving the consumer's problems. Consequently, the first chapter analyzes the most well-known myths that nourish advertising stories both in Romanian and worldwide campaigns, according to the author's examples. The myth of returning to one's origins, the hero myth, and the erotic myth are the most important anthropological aspects this study focuses on.

The author identifies main features of myths, which establish a clearer relationship between anthropology, narratives and advertising. Moraru's approach to myth relies on the following aspects: narrative character, exemplarity, etiological function, temporal dimension and collective consumer appeal. Mircea Eliade's theory on myth is the starting point of the theoretical framework, because it leads to archetypes and interesting stories. The author repeatedly emphasizes that most advertisements respect a simple pattern: 1. Something unpleasant happens to the future consumer; 2. A hero appears and fights evil (disease, work problems, other conflicts); 3. The problem is solved and the consumer is again satisfied with his or her life. Interestingly, the hero can be the product, the brand or another consumer,

which proves that all these factors are highly flexible. In terms of archetypes, the author identifies the Conqueror (Marlboro), the Caregiver (usually suits the mother — e.g. Milli campaign), the Magician (Tide — *My mom is a magician*), the Angel (the wine Rai de Murfatlar, translated as Murfatlar Heaven), the Artist (Red Bull), the Innovator (Jack Daniels).

Further, the author presents several storytelling models applying Claude Bremond and A.J. Greimas' theories to prove the structure of advertising which echoes that of ancestral fairytales. In addition, a sub-chapter separately explains the characteristics of advertising fairytales stating that "narrative speed is greater, because it offers only facts, not explanations." Many examples highlight special storytelling techniques such as retrospection, introspection and narrative alternation, which lead the viewer to film and literature. In our opinion, Mădălina Moraru tries to prove that advertising has a huge power to find in any field by reviving ancestral myths according to consumer insight. Analyzing different kind of brand and product categories, Moraru notices that "the female image of fairy and princess beauty" dominates advertising stories. Local examples cited in the book strongly rely on tradition, history, and popular culture, and are very successful in the Romanian market.

The third chapter connects symbolic thinking and stereotypes, whose role seems very important to properly position the brand in consumer's minds. Even if stereotypes are thought to kill creativity and the best scriptwriting, the author argues for their significance in maintaining consumer loyalty, because many customers do not like to have new experiences all the time. Additionally, there is a social pressure consumers always pay attention to, which is related to one's integration into specific groups. Using Lee Roy Beach's image theory (value image trajectory image and strategic image), Moraru classifies advertising stereotypes based on several examples. The new elements in this well-known debate seem related to gender and social stereotypes, which are differently titled and described. For example, the author lists several elements that go beyond the old and boring stereotypes, to become "meta-stereotypes." Thus, for instance, for women these stereotypes include notions of eternal youth, pleasure-seeking, natural beauty, and classical and elegant beauty; and for men, Don Juan, the Herculean man and the businessman. In terms of social framework this book draws very close to post-communist Romanian reality, emphasizing characters such as: the specialist, the economist or the bank employee, the hard-working man and the peasant. Cultural stereotypes also deserve attention, especially because they match the overall Romanian background in terms of tradition, history, politics and the arts. Therefore, the author associates them with "building a cultural identity" that was one of the main goals of all young democratic countries.

The next chapter has a non-conformist structure, resembling a writing debate or a dialogue caused by the many questions the author is trying to answer. It is here also that Mădălina Moraru explains the reasons for writing her book and adopting this strategy of myth revival. This part may be also interpreted as a synthesis of the previous chapters, which demonstrates the author's concern for coherence and

homogeneity in her paper. For example, the first subchapter title resembles talking to oneself: “Why did I choose the advertising narration?” Obviously, this is a strategy for better appealing to readers, making them curious in the end.

To conclude, this book opens new research directions in advertising, by coming up with arguments to support mythical influences on storytelling and proving how meaningful an advertisement can be. In short, it proposes a different way to understand advertising that both professionals and academics will find useful and interesting.

Natalia Milewski

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Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Bartłomiej Łódzki and Wayne Wanta (eds.) (2012), *Agenda Setting: Old and New Problems in the Old and New Media*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 168, ISBN: 978-83-229-3322-0.

The book provides up-to-date scientific knowledge and thorough information on new theoretical ideas and concepts associated with “old” agenda setting theory. It gives an excellent overview of contemporary agenda setting research and describes new challenges it faces in the new media era.

It consists of 10 very different chapters written by 12 authors coming from various scientific backgrounds. Readers will find here papers and discussions not only about old and new problems in the old and new media (as mentioned in the title). Some papers focus on the theoretical framework or the evolution of agenda setting theory and the need to rethink its assumptions; others focus on research methodology and formulate proposals of specific methodological approaches and research areas. Finally, there are papers dealing with very particular issues that present results of succinct research and a further discussion on its aspects.

All the papers refer to agenda setting theory. It is the main and, in fact, the only unifying theme of the chapters. Readers will not find here one consistent approach to the subject, but rather many different angles and scientific positions, various points of view and areas of interest co-existing within the same theoretical framework. Is this a weakness of the book? No. These different angles and scopes create something like a view from inside a kaleidoscope — different fragments form together an entirely new whole that is worth seeing. There is added value in it.

Variety is one of the main advantages of this book. It is visible not only in a diversity of angles and scientific scopes, but also in the differences between researchers and academics — the authors of the book; they are from different scientific backgrounds, they come from several continents and many different countries (e.g. Malaysia, Lithuania, Poland, USA, Turkey, Slovakia). Some authors look at agenda

setting issues from a national perspective, which makes this book even more interesting. Moreover the authors belong to different generations. Some of them are young scientists at the beginning of their scientific and research career (graduate students, PhD students), others are experienced and respected researchers who have dealt with the subject of agenda setting for many years, published dozens of papers and conducted a number of studies in this area (e.g. Wayne Wanta or Dana E. Mastro). Thanks to this the book resembles a very interesting and inspiring mosaic.

What enables so many different academics and researchers to find their place within the frames of agenda setting theory? They not only find their place in this scientific area, but apparently they feel good here, willing to continue agenda setting research. Trying to apply the theory in new communication contexts, they discover new perspectives and possibilities brought by it. Most of them still appreciate this 40 year-old theory.

Since 1972, when the first agenda setting study was published by McCombs and Shaw, everything has changed. The changes in the media environment were rapid and unforeseen. The new medium emerged. Developments in media technology brought changes in the media environment (decentralization and “demassification”), in means of communication, importance of time and space constraints, media use patterns, journalism, etc. Nevertheless, this “old” theory continues to inspire media researchers in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Apparently, agenda setting theory is still valid in the Internet and social media era. Moreover, it has the advantages of a good theory. Amira Firdaus indicates some of the advantages of agenda setting theory in the second chapter of the book. She enumerates heuristic flexibility, generalizability (utility of its constructs and the wide application of its ideas), broad theoretical scope (the theory can be applied to studies in different areas), etc. Finally, agenda setting theory is parsimonious (straightforward and succinct). The researchers recognize and appreciate its advantages and that is why they apply it in their studies.

Nevertheless, the book would be interesting not only for experienced media researchers, but for communication students as well. Thanks to the easy to understand, thorough explanations of the theory’s assumptions and nuances, the recent literature review and many references to other communication concepts and theories (the spiral of silence, Gerbner’s cultivation theory, gate keeping, etc.) students will find this book very helpful and useful for understanding one of the most important communication theories and for identifying possibilities of its application in contemporary media research.

The book consists of ten chapters. Six of them (chapters 5 to 10) focus on specific issues and recent studies conducted by their authors (e.g. the media role on the public engagement into foreign policy in Lithuania or the methods of media coverage of famous people’s deaths). The first four chapters focus on the more general aspects — the authors discuss the theoretical framework and research methodology (e.g. they propose the expansion of the theoretical and methodological scope of agenda

setting research, they construct a framework for applying the theory in research dealing with international news or they prove that the individual becomes the active expounder of the media subject).

Only three chapters focus mainly on new media. I would have preferred more of them on this subject. Nevertheless, those included in the book present the results of extremely interesting research and some proposals for future studies that hopefully will inspire many media researchers.

The most important value of this book lies in pointing out on the need to rethink and refine agenda setting theory “to reflect the new environment of new media.” At the same time, contemporary media researchers have to be aware that “simply applying old models upon new media” will not work, but still they should accept the challenge.

Anna Paluch

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Andrzej Baczyński, Michał Drożdż et al. (2012). *Convergence: Media in the Future*. Kraków: Fall publishing house, pp. 344, ISBN 978 83 62275 50 2.

This notable volume, though in view of its structure not a handbook in the ordinary sense, is a must for scholars' bookshelves and academic libraries covering Journalism and Communication Studies. The value of the work is guaranteed by its academic origin. The essential part of the publication is composed of media-related research done in the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków. The rate of the work is magnified by the fact that the publication appears after the 4th Central European Communication Forum (CECF) which was hosted in Kraków between May 5 and 7, 2011. The CECF was entitled *Convergence: media in future — future in media*. The Central European Communication Forum is the most important scholarly forum in Central Europe, integrating scholarly and professional circles in the field of media and social communication from Poland, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and other countries. Such a creative international platform for the exchange of ideas, experiences and scholarly work was a priceless background for this publication.

Although the notions of convergence, interactivity or inter-mediality have begun to appear more frequently in recent scholarly publications on empirical research regarding communication and communicating, nevertheless the publication is unique in theoretical and practical discourse, insofar as it pertains to problems and phenomena of contemporary media culture and information civilization symptoms, as they appear in numerous countries such as: Belarus, Romania, Slovakia, Poland, etc. Its various articles are the fruits of the research of particular authors,

as well as of national centers, which are keen on monitoring how the media change their role, particularly within its national context.

The publication takes a close look at the recent unifying tendencies in the area of new technologies, referred to as the phenomenon of “media convergence.” The published results probe the dimensions of the convergence phenomenon on the basis of empirical knowledge about the processes of technological change in the world of media, and on the basis of theoretical analyses regarding contemporary media spheres. The phenomenon is a consequence of the dynamic development of information and telecommunication technologies, as well as the development of the so-called information civilization. Right at the beginning of publication the editors define the term as: “a whole set of phenomena concerned with media and communication tools becoming similar to one another and beginning to fulfill similar functions even though primarily they were not related to one another” (p. 7).

The main purpose of these analyses was “to show various dimensions of technological convergence in the field of media as well as to present some theoretical attempts at apprehending anthropological and ethical consequences thereof” (p. 8). The publication’s twofold aim is to describe the current state of convergence process, as broadly defined at an international level, and to enable individuals working in diverse parts of the field to place what they are doing within a wider context. To that end, the book comprises three chapters from eighteen editors and contributors. Most contributions provide the reader with a résumé of the history of scholarship in the subject area concerned, as well as a description of the current state of research, and a more or less extensive bibliography. All the articles start with a short conspectus and a list of key words, which the reader may find very helpful.

The useful introduction and the first chapter are written by the main editors (A. Baczyński, M. Drożdż). The first chapter is entitled *Convergence as a challenge for media ethics*. Its structure is determined by the complementary articles of the two main editors. The “sandwich structure” of the chapter suites quite well the purpose of addressing the topic of ethical aspects in media convergence. This part of the book is aimed at media system perfection, as well as practical ways of assisting society in the era of media civilization. The authors demonstrate the need for a new approach to media ethics in the context of new problems shown as effects of the convergence, e.g. “In the spirit of the thought one can hope that a critical look at the history and the present of Catholic radio broadcasting in Poland will not only refer to ‘memory.’ But one can cherish the hope that history and the present are still going to be helpful in a further study and building in the future of the ‘identity’ of radio, which will effectively fulfill its public mission and be in the service of man and community” (M. Drożdż, p. 128).

The two subsequent chapters are predominantly a collection of articles from various authors on orientation. They are arranged thematically according to the titles of the chapters: the second chapter — *Media convergence as a way from present to future*, and the third chapter — *Journalism in the new converged media*.

The second chapter is an attempt to draw attention to some tendencies in media convergent development which show the direction and character of the passage from the present to the future of the media. The third part, on the other hand, is an attempt to diagnose new challenges to journalism in the context of multifarious media convergence. This schema works quite well, although some related topics, in the same chapter, (e.g. “Advertisement and its consequences for the content of mass media, for its reception and its interpretations” written by M. Lisowska-Magdziarz and “Origins and characteristics of public trust for independent media in Belarus,” written by N. Manayeva, Y. Drakakhrust) do not appear together as a result of development of the thought from the other article.

The analyses contained therein undertake to answer the question whether the convergent media of the future will change the quality and specificity of journalism e.g. “Media in crisis and the crisis in the media, we came to the conclusion that the journalistic profession, as well as journalism itself, experiences a change that is comparable to the birth of the printing press [...]. No matter what the future brings, journalists and media workers are more than ever required to be multifunctional and their skills must be multidisciplinary. However able they are to work with multimedia, the basics of ethics must be present in their work in both spaces — online and print” (Z. Komárová, p. 338).

While every article has something positive to offer, intermittently there are some disappointing features. For instance, on occasion the discussion is so compressed that it is little more than a technical list of past and present scholarly views that non-initiates will find rather off-putting. This fault — if it is such — is counter-balanced by the inclusion of areas which some might be tempted to characterize unfairly as peripheral: ethical integration in global communication processes, info-ethics, addiction to “virtual love,” unethical PR, radio on vision, socialization on the Romanian internet, news diffusion, media consumption in Belarus, commoditization, converged brands, incommensurability, SMS copywriter and blog-media convergence. Moreover, the diverse articles by M. Drożdż, A. Baczyński, M. Lisowska-Magdziarz and Z. Komárová struck this reviewer as especially interesting and enlightening.

The above-mentioned shortcomings pale into near insignificance compared to the great service done to us by the editors and international contributors as a whole. It must be admitted that the book represents a valuable study whose strong feature is undoubtedly its focus on the principle that context is everything. Indeed, no scholar in the early twenty-first century should be surprised to find a survey such as this. Thus, the book succeeds overall in providing a service to the neophyte and a stimulus to the initiate, in a way that makes it a unique research tool. As such, it will be of help to a wide range of people, not only scholars but those people who are interested in modern convergence processes.

Piotr Drąg

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