Daily News, Eternal Stories

The Mythological Role of Journalism

by JACK LULE

Archetypal myths can be found every day within national reports, international correspondence, sports columns, human interest features, editorials,

Daily News, Eternal Stories: The Mythological Role of Journalism, Jack Lule, Guilford Press, 2001, 1572306068, 9781572306066, 244 pages. This compelling, often surprising book demonstrates the ways news articles of today draw from age-old tales that have chastened, challenged, entertained, and entranced people since the beginning of time. Through an insightful exploration of hundreds of New York Times articles, award-winning professor and former journalist Jack Lule reveals mythical themes in reporting on topics from terrorist hijackings to Huey Newton, from Mother Teresa to Mike Tyson. Beneath the fresh facade of current events, Lule identifies such enduring archetypes as the innocent victim, the good mother, the hero, and the trickster. In doing so, he sheds light on how media coverage shapes our thinking about many of the confounding issues of our day, including foreign policy, terrorism, race relations, and political dissent. .

Cuba Contra el terrorismo y contra la guerra: discursos los dĐ“Â-as 11, 22 y 29 septiembre y 6 de octubre del 2001: declaraciones y documentos, Fidel Castro, 2001, History, 70 pages. .

Regulating Media The Licensing and Supervision of Broadcasting in Six Countries, Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem, 1996, Language Arts & Disciplines, 424 pages. Since the beginning of the 1990s, supervisory systems for broadcasting in most Western countries have undergone significant change. Meticulously documented and clearly written ....

The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World , S. Elizabeth Bird, Aug 21, 2013, Social Science, 256 pages. The Audience in Everyday Life argues that a media audience cannot be studied in front of the television alone--their interaction with media does not simply end when the set is ....

Doing public journalism , , 1995, Language Arts & Disciplines, 188 pages. In places as far apart as Portland, Maine and Bremerton, Washington, public interest groups, grass-roots coalitions, councils of churches, and community forums have found an ....

Media, myths, and narratives television and the press, James W. Carey, 1988, Language Arts & Disciplines, 264 pages. Mass Communication and Culture: Myth and Narrative in Television and the Press seeks to decode some of the messages transmitted by our mass media in terms of the cultural ....

New York United States, David Campbell Publishers, Limited, Everyman, Random House, 1998, New York (N.Y.), 192 pages. .

Persuasive Communication , James Brian Stiff, Paul A. Mongeau, 2003, Language Arts & Disciplines, 351 pages. This popular text provides a comprehensive introduction to the study of persuasive messages and their effects. Concepts and methods from communication and social psychology are ....

The Idea of Public Journalism , Theodore Lewis Glasser, 1999, Language Arts & Disciplines, 229 pages. This volume offers a critical and constructive examination of the claims of public journalism, the controversial movement aimed at getting the press to promote and indeed ....

Representations of Space and Time , Donna J. Peuquet, 2002, Science, 380 pages. Recent advances in information technology have enabled scientists to generate unprecedented amounts of earth-related data, with tremendous potential for dealing with pressing ....

What Good is Journalism? How Reporters and Editors are Saving America's Way of Life, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, 2007, Language Arts & Disciplines, 171 pages. "A compilation of essays that show how good journalistic practices enrich the daily lives of citizens, trace the development of free expression through American history, and ....

Rhetoric in Postmodern America Conversations with Michael Calvin McGee, Carol Corbin, 1998,

Language Arts & Disciplines, 198 pages. The first book-length presentation of the influential work of Michael Calvin McGee, this volume demonstrates the importance of rhetoric to understanding power and culture in ....

Communications Policy and the Public Interest The Telecommunications Act of 1996, Patricia Aufderheide, 1999, Law, 323 pages. The passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 inaugurated a new and highly volatile era in telecommunications. The first major overhaul of U.S. communications law since ....

Analyzing Media Communication Technologies as Symbolic and Cognitive Systems, James W. Chesebro, Dale A. Bertelsen, 1998, Language Arts & Disciplines, 228 pages. For the past 25 years, critics of communication have focused on the content and form of verbal and nonverbal communication, while for the most part neglecting what ....

News as myth a hermeneutic approach to U.S. news of the Soviet Union, Jack Lule, 1987, , 454 pages. .

Understanding News , John Hartley, Jun 17, 2013, Social Science, 224 pages. News depends for its effect on a culturally shared language, and this book concentrates on ways we can decode its messages without simply reproducing their underlying assumptions..

This compelling, often surprising book demonstrates the ways news articles of today draw from age-old tales that have chastened, challenged, entertained, and entranced people since the beginning of time. Through an insightful exploration of hundreds of New York Times articles, award-winning professor and former journalist Jack Lule reveals mythical themes in reporting on topics from terrorist hijackings to Huey Newton, from Mother Teresa to Mike Tyson. Beneath the fresh facade of current events, Lule identifies such enduring archetypes as the innocent victim, the good mother, the hero, and the trickster. In doing so, he sheds light on how media coverage shapes our thinking about many of the confounding issues of our day, including foreign policy, terrorism, race relations, and political dissent.

Every culture has shared stories that help define its values. Lule (journalism, Lehigh Univ.) suggests that in modern society news is a form of storytelling that replaces the myths of earlier times. He analyzes seven news stories covered in the New York Times to illustrate how journalists link news items to familiar myths. For example, Lule reviews the Times's coverage of Mother Theresa, from the establishment of her order in 1950 until 1980, when she won the Nobel prize. There were no articles until 1968, but when she was "discovered," journalists used mythic terms to describe the "Good Mother." She was depicted as a maternal figure, praised for her kindness, and offered as a model for us all. Controversial issues that did not fit the mythic pattern such as her failure to advocate for social change in Calcutta or her opposition to family planning were not covered. Lule also examines news reports of Mike Tyson, Hurricane Mitch, and other subjects to illustrate six other myths: the victim, the scapegoat, the hero, the trickster, the other world, and the flood. Academic libraries will want this book for journalism collections. Judy Solberg, George Washington Univ. Lib., Washington, DC

Lule, a journalism professor and former reporter, looks at the connection between modern news gathering and age-old mythology. While media critics might readily accept the notion of modern media as purveyors of untrue stories, Lule is referring here to myths as a means of conveying the great truths of life. Lule focuses on seven particular myths that surface in news reporting: myths of the victim, the scapegoat, the hero, the good mother, the trickster, the other world, and the flood. Coverage of natural disasters, obviously, represents the flood myth. Lule's more controversial parallels include the trickster myth and news coverage of Mike Tyson's rape trial, and the scapegoat myth and the violent death of Black Panther Huey Newton. Coverage of these black men reinforced social conventions and issued public condemnations of their lifestyles in ways that distorted news gathering. Lule also examines the hero myth in relation to the "godding up" of Mark McGwire, and the good mother myth in coverage of Mother Teresa, in this fascinating look at timeless and modern

storytelling. Vanessa Bush

This is an interesting approach to the news as stories, and the role of mythology in journalism Lule observes "...storytelling is an essential part of what makes us human. We understand our lives and our world through story. Perhaps stories are so much a part of us because human life itself has the structure of story. Each of us has a central character. Each of us knows, better than we know anything, that life has a beginning, middle and end. We need stories because we are stories." He takes the position that "news stories offer sacred, societal narratives with shared values and beliefs, with lessons and themes, and with exemplary models that instruct and inform." Stories told by the media are used as examples which teach readers what are good and bad ways to behave. Good guys are lauded, "bad" guys are ripped apart. For his "data" Lule compares stories in the New York Times and other major papers. It is fascinating to see the differences, and to see, with his insightful narration, how, over time, the stories changed, and even, how the stories told by the Times actually changed the news itself, and affected how others reported on the actual events. Lule lists what he calls seven myths, which he says "appear frequently, if not daily, in the news. They are primordial stories that have guided human storytelling for ages. And they guide the news and stories of today." The myths are: The Victim, The Scapegoat, The Hero, The Good Mother, The Trickster, The Other World and The Flood. I found the book a fascinating read. I bought it because I thought I could learn better how the media thinks and digests news, so I could use this to my benefit in PR efforts I occasionally engage in. I was right. It will help. This would also be a great resource to any journalist who wants to learn how to tap further and deeper into the archetypal, mythical resonances in the hearts of readers. I'm in the process of organizing a conference, StoryCon, on the art and science of story. Jack Lule has agreed to be a participant at the meeting, along with story creation giants like Jim Bonnet, Chris Vogler, Syd Field, Lew Hunter, Linda Seger and many more.

It's actually a shame that this is published under an academic imprint (Guilford, which is a fantastic publisher) because the book will interest more than just academic readers. I bought copies for two author friends-- Stephen Larsen (Fire in the Mind, authorized biography of Joseph Campbell) and Thom Hartmann, (Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight, Prophet's Way, ADD a Different Perspective) and both gobbled this book up, telling me the next day they'd spent the evening with it. Read more ›

Achille Lauro African Americans archetypal stories argued Aristide Aristide's August 23 baseball began beliefs Black Panthers Calcutta celebrity Chicago Tribune coverage critical cultural degradation depicted disaster drama editors eternal stories exemplary models figure Flood myth FRAPH fundamental stories Haiti Haitian Hero myth heroic hijacking home run Huey Newton human interest story Hurricane images Joseph Campbell journalism journalists Jung killing Larry Rohter Leon Klinghoffer Mark McGwire mass media Mike Tyson military Mircea Eliade modern racism Mother Teresa Murray Chass mythic newspapers noted Oakland October offered photograph political portrayal portrayed president quest race racism radical rape readers record Rohter's reporting role Sammy Sosa Scapegoat scribes seen September social order society Sosa stereotypes storytelling suggested symbol television tell stories terrorism terrorist theme Times's tion told trans Trickster U.S. foreign policy University Press USA Today victim Washington Post widow wrote York

Jack Lule is Professor and Chair in the Department of Journalism and Communication at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA. He is the author of more than 50 articles, book chapters, essays, and reviews and has won numerous awards for excellence in research and teaching. He serves on the editorial board of Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly. A former bartender, truck driver and reporter, Lule continues to be an avid observer of the American scene and a frequent contributor to newspapers and periodicals.

All academic books seek to explain a phenomenon or a set of phenomena of some kind. The good books are able to explain phenomena by paying attention to the various processes that give rise to them. The evidence to support their arguments guides their development, layer by layer, while remaining clearly laid out. The not-so-good books offer explanations, but often sacrifice nuance and subtlety for the sake of these explanations. Evidence ends up being formulaic and is there to prove

the point the author has already suggested, not to tease out further complicating layers.

This essay reviews three books that cover the spectrum just described. They include Jack Lule's Daily News, Eternal Stories: The Mythological Role of Journalism (2001), Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone's The Form of News: A History (2001), and Richard Kaplan's Politics and the American Press: The Rise of Objectivity, 1865-1920 (2002). The phenomenon they examine is the changing journalistic form. In considering form, all three of these books also confront the practices that give rise to it and the implications of changes within these forms to the role journalistic forms fulfill within democratic cultures. Lule posits that myth functions within daily journalism to tie us to the "eternal stories" that have existed throughout time, giving rise to an approach to news that is grounded within the tradition of storytelling. Barnhurst and Nerone approach history through the relationships between content, readers, and politics to produce shifting newspaper forms. Kaplan, on the other hand, suggests that the newspaper, as a fundamentally political form, must be understood through the ever-shifting landscape of political history. Lule posits the continuity of form throughout time, while Kaplan, Barnhurst, and Nerone insist that changing forms must be understood within their political contexts.

Daily News, Eternal Stories: The Mythological Role of Journalism is Lule's attempt to bring some of the fundamentals of critical journalism studies to a broader audience of media practitioners and students. Insisting that journalism is first and foremost a form of storytelling, Lule contends that in order to fully appreciate the role of journalism, the role of myth must be understood. Myth fulfills the social role of providing archetypal stories that instruct, represent, and sustain the social values and core beliefs of a society. For Lule, the news is amenable to myth precisely because the latter fulfills a social function. Its role is to enact social dramas that sustain social order. Thus, "news stories offer sacred, societal narratives with shared values and beliefs, with lessons and themes, and with exemplary models that instruct and inform" (p. 18). But myth also does more than provide these sacred, timeless stories. In his most compelling discussion of the construction of news stories, Lule posits that myth also offers a structure through which we understand the unstructured world around us. Arguing against the common-sense notion that news is what's new, Lule locates seven essential myths within news stories published in the New York Times for an undisclosed period of time. They are: the victim, the scapegoat, the hero, the good mother, the trickster, the other world, and the flood. Using case studies, Lule illustrates how these myths are taken up in news stories and links them with common journalistic practices and forms. Lule ends with what he calls "twelve propositions" that primarily summarize the points raised throughout the book about news as myth.1

As with the two other books under review here, Lule insists there is a malaise within current practices of journalism. Like the other authors, Lule locates this malaise within the purpose and role of journalism. He insists that a framework for understanding the journalist's role can be found within myth: "news media . . . can be seen as powerful mythmakers . . . who tell us, daily, stories at the heart of human life" (p. 187). Ultimately, however, Lule does not "know precisely how story and myth might ultimately be used to address the current crisis in journalism" (p. 188). I would suggest that this is, in part, because his analysis cannot account for history. Though myth is precisely about something that seems to have a timeless quality about it, the journalistic forms that use it are not timeless, nor are the practices that produce them, nor are the values they are supposed to represent and sustain. In the end, Lule falls victim to the persuasiveness of myth. Recognizing that myth is enduring, Lule mistakenly posits there is an "enduring purpose" of journalism, of which myth is a part (p. 188). Indeed, what the other books under review here insist upon is that the purpose of journalism has changed over time, forcing its forms and practices to change along with it in order that they might better serve it. Specifically, Nerone and Barnhurst's analysis of the changing function of journalism posits that the current age of journalism functions as an index, not as a social map, as myth suggests for Lule (see Barnhurst & Nerone, chapter 9). Ultimately, the historical perspective Lule imagines myth to bring to news stories (by challenging the notion of the "new") renders his analysis ahistorical. By relying on this broad sense of humanness that is sustained through myth, Lule forgets that this too is a historically variant construct. It would seem that Lule confuses myth with history. Although myth connects generations through stories, it is not itself history. Indeed, myth works to exclude the very variances and dynamics that history thrives on.

There are clues within his work that suggest Lule's analysis did not need to take this turn. For instance, his discussion of the mythological role of journalism in an early chapter insists that myth serves an important function within the time-pressured world of journalism. As part of the routine of journalism, it allows journalists to pull the story out of the story. Here Lule begins to point to the connections between myth and ideology. Though not reducible to ideology, myth works in much the same way: to fix meaning. In this way, myth is indeed eternal and fundamental. Unfortunately, this is not the way Lule uses these terms. Although he does attempt to link myth with journalistic practices and conventions in his discussions of the master myths, he never brings this full circle by demonstrating how these practices serve to reinscribe and close down possible meanings day after day.

Furthermore, Lule never clearly demonstrates exactly what elements of journalism make it so amenable to myth, despite his efforts to do so. For instance, Lule uses the flood myth to comment on a common convention of international journalism: reporting on the disaster. Lule offers this lucid comment: "International news coverage is replete with stories about disasters . . . that are caused by the inadequacies of other nations, that are complete in their devastation, that humble humanity and that leave chastened survivors to reflect on their fate and renew their society" (p. 185). What is not as clear is how the myth of flood would work in a story about a continental disaster. What conventions or practices could be discussed then? Though the connection between myth and journalism may be clear, how they operate together is not as clear as it should be. Without this connection, the problematic power imbalances that framed the 1998 Central American flood story, for instance, cannot be taken up in any serious way. Though this book could serve many functions, it does not serve the function of explaining much about the practice of journalism.

To his credit, Lule did not write this book for primarily an academic audience. Rather, he is interested in introducing practitioners and new students of journalism to the ways news stories are constructed. Consequently, Lule has to work to convince his audience of this basic starting point and to show, again and again, how news is myth. To an academic audience, however, this book quickly becomes formulaic, illustrating more than it explains. For precisely this reason, it would serve as an excellent introduction to myth for students. Without complicating the relationship between practice and form too much, it offers a good starting point.

Fortunately, Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone's The Form of News: A History offers a far more interesting analysis of the relationship between form and practice. While on the one hand the power of form is powerfully suggested, on the other, this power is said to be derived from a diffuse set of influences, ranging from the political, economic, and cultural to art history to shifting relations within the production and consumption of the newspaper. Indeed, the focus on forms for Barnhurst and Nerone is intended to consider the "whole newspaper" connected to democratic civic culture. Considering the extent to which newspapers were able to fulfill their mission, professed in part through form, Barnhurst and Nerone devise four formations (discussed below) in order to consider the various phases of newspaper history. Formations bring together the "look" of a newspaper alongside a system of newspaper production (or type) and a broader cultural configuration. In this way, a formation considers not only the material, but also the idealized relationships that exist between readers, content, politics, and form. The form of news allows Barnhurst and Nerone to consider it as environment, one which "invites readers into a world moulded . . . to fit not only the conscious designs of journalists and the habits of readers, but also reigning values in political and economic life" (p. 6). Arguing that there is a limited capacity for the reader to create meanings, Barnhurst and Nerone establish this perspective by insisting that the public does not exist outside of the idealized relationships created within the newspaper environment. Furthermore, buried deep within the form are the workings and distribution of power that arranges a multiplicity of material and political relationships that in turn, structure its reading. The impact of this deep structure is all the more powerful for the way it "plays out right under the nose of the reader" (p. 10).

The four formations mentioned previously structure the book - aside from special consideration given to the rise of the visual form considered within part two. The focused attention to the shifting design elements, including the use of illustrations and photographs alongside the shifts within the larger visual culture and art history, reveal not only the ambition of this project, but also a most novel

approach to understanding the history of the newspaper. The formations function as a structure for analysis as well as the basis from which to periodize, and thus make sense of, the long history presented here. Thus, the very logic and seemingly chronological ordering of their historiography belies the extent to which these periods are the result of their analysis. The formations - printerly, partisan, Victorian, and Modern - roughly govern a period of time that is analyzed according to three levels of analysis: the visual style, the type of work relations and practices that governed each formation, and the ideal form each one took, represented as a metaphor.

The periods run as follows. Within the printerly formation (1780-1820), the production of the newspaper was governed by the printer. This paper was largely unauthored, speaking a universal voice that was impartial and neutral, allowing it to construct an ideal operational metaphor of a town meeting. In the post-Civil War contexts this sense of publicness was necessary in order to construct a new nation (p. 48). As the printerly formation entered its transition phase into a partisan formation, it began to adopt partisan practices, while still being associated with the deliberative sphere (p. 50). It was only around 1820 that newspapers became openly partisan; the editor replaced the printer, turning the newspaper into a courtroom with many loud deliberative voices (p. 64). As political parties were eventually effaced by market forces, the newspaper responded by taking on an imperial style and then a Victorian one as ornate illustrations increased. Public life changed from a marketplace to a department store as the paper brokered diverging interests and continued implementing greater refinement in organization. As the pages expanded and the voices proliferated, the use of more white space within the former grey pages of continuous text emerged (p. 65). Newsgathering became an occupation in its own right with the correspondent and scavenger reporter emerging between 1890 and 1920 (pp. 17-18). Between the Victorian and the Modern period, the eventual displacement of the use of illustrations by photographs is considered as the necessary condition for the rise of Modernism. For the authors, modernism implies a fundamental irony: the use of bylines within a context of objectivity calls attention to the universal subject, while at the same time pointing out precisely how monovocal the modern newspaper had become. Within the corporate model of the late, modern (neo-Victorian) newspaper, the universality of the public sphere is no longer sustainable. This form no longer maps the social world, but merely indexes it as a farmer's almanac indexes useful facts (p. 306). Although the network newspaper is beginning to emerge, Barnhurst and Nerone offer only minimal hope it will produce the ideal form, described as combining "the participatory opportunities that the printerly newspaper gave to gentlemen with the civic gaze of early illustrated news and the universal reach of the industrial newspaper and the factual reliability of the modern newspaper" (p. 310).

As this account suggests, the project remains somewhat overly ambitious given the range of analyses conducted and the length of the history considered. Nonetheless, I found myself secretly rooting for the authors, particularly since their approach to media historiography is so unique. It is worthwhile to mention that there are many more interesting details and arguments offered within this rich book than can be justly considered here. In some ways, my comments that follow result from the necessary generalizations and sweeping historical changes Barnhurst and Nerone must execute in order to cram so much history into one book-length treatment. Indeed, in chapter after chapter, the same pattern is located within each period. Although they take care to argue against determinist understandings of these changes (e.g., technological or economic), their analysis often becomes somewhat formulaic. Much like Lule's, Barnhurst and Nerone's analysis falls prey to the demand to find patterns. This is not to detract from the persuasiveness of their argument. Indeed, what stunned me time and again was how neatly these changes related to one another once they were brought together under one interpretive frame. Nonetheless, my recurring suspicions about determinism might be explained by the conception of historical change that dominates. Although the authors are skilled in demonstrating how a change in one context may bring about another change in another context, it's not always clear why a particular emergent form arises or the how these forms are given meaning within material means. Given this lack of clarity, I was not always as convinced as I should have been about the ability of form to contain within it such a power to determine so many sweeping changes. Interestingly, the final chapter (in which some of the limitations of form are discussed) goes a long way in showing how this power was reigned in. Ultimately, I found this book to provide such an interesting approach that I would love to see the periods more fully developed with further evidence in a multi-volume approach.

Politics and the American Press: The Rise of Objectivity, 1865-1920 is an apt title for Richard Kaplan's densely argued and historically nuanced account of the emergence of an ethic of impartiality and objectivity at the beginning of the twentieth century. Arguing that the press is deeply implicated in the political sphere, the locus for this emergence is found in the presidential elections of 1896, which forever changed the party system that had previously organized the political culture and, consequently, the press system in the United States.

At risk in this shifting political landscape was the cultural legitimacy with which the press could speak authoritatively about events of the day. According to Kaplan, this legitimacy is borrowed, in a sense, from the political culture of which the press has always been a part. Although the press regularly claims to offer a formal, authoritative account of the day's most important events, journalism lacks any formal attributes or status that can shield it from competing versions of reality. Consequently, the press must rely upon the norms of the political culture, including its "legitimacy" within the public sphere. In this way, the press has never been outside of conflicts of the political world; indeed, it has been right in the middle of these conflicts, feeling the consequences in its construction of newsworthy events and in how its highest ideals are defined. If Barnhurst and Nerone can be said to read history through the form of the newspaper, Kaplan reads the newspaper and the relations that produce it through political history. In turn, for all three, the public mission of journalism drives the practices and relations that come to make up the newspaper. For Kaplan, to transform this is to change the overarching public sphere that governs this purpose.

When a crack in this structure appeared with the collapse of the party system following the 1894-96 "critical elections," newspapers, after having secured an economic stronghold in the decade before, were able to lay claim to independence. Replacing the role of the press as the public voice of the party, newspapers recast themselves within the public realm in terms of an ideal of public service - adherence to no particular position or party, economic agent or owner, in order to mediate between politicians and the public. The press would now draw its cultural legitimacy from the professional expertise of its journalists, who would make judgments on behalf of the public. Objectivity, along with shifting values of newsworthiness and selection, emerged as a new occupational ethos, drawn in part from the cultural ideals promoted within the Progressive movement.

Kaplan's book adds valuable insights to newspaper historiography. Set within a flourishing American tradition that has regularly reflected on how its histories have been written, this book is a treat for any Canadian media historian dissatisfied with the current state of affairs with Canadian media historiography - this reviewer included. For example, Kaplan's argument, which rests on the proposition that cultural authority of the newspaper must be forged, is an important addition to the traditional journalism-history literature, which too often simply assumes the centrality of the press within democracy. Rather than silently reproducing this assumption, Kaplan very carefully outlines, in a most compelling manner, how it is that this authority has been granted historically to the press and how it is that the press eventually forged it for itself. Given the crowded nature of this field, especially that devoted to the period of commercialization, Kaplan must jump into a weighty historiographic conversation. As a result, his introductory chapter provides not only an excellent account of the failings of several other approaches - including the progressive, economic, and popular social consensus histories of the press - but it further contributes to this conversation by building off of Michael McGerr's (1986) "new political history" (pp. 12-16). Using McGerr's cultural and symbolic constructionist perspective (focusing on the constitution of political identities within a ritualized partisan culture), Kaplan adds the missing element of the institutional organization of the public sphere, with its competing claims to power and legitimacy among political actors.

Kaplan's arguments about the partisan press are rooted in the classic Habermasian conception of the public sphere. Indeed, every aspect of the partisan press is described within and measured against the standard of facilitating public, rational deliberations. Although Kaplan tries hard not to present the partisan press as the ideal in terms of democracy, his final chapter betrays a tiny hint of nostalgia that leaves one wondering if, in fact, he doesn't miss the good old days of partisan journalism.

It is perhaps this nostalgia that filters into his somehow dissatisfying discussion of the public sphere. I was surprised to see that Kaplan did not address the serious feminist critiques launched against the public sphere, particularly given his turn toward public journalism in the final chapter. As Haas and Steiner (2001) have convincingly argued in their critique of this journalistic trend, without an adequate redress of the very concept of the public, of who gets counted within that public, whose voices are consistently heard the loudest, and what constitutes rational deliberation, public journalism will fail in its attempt to revitalize a healthy civic culture. Indeed, the partisan press served the political community so well precisely because of the structural inequalities that kept some out of this sphere. Kaplan seems to be aware of this, but doesn't bring it bear on his analysis.

Unlike Barnhurst and Nerone, who recognize that even at its best, the partisan press was a tool for propaganda, Kaplan's most serious critique of partisanship rests, not in the failure of this model of civic culture, but in political power gone awry (pp. 35-43). Again, this issue becomes important because the partisan model is held up as operating more effectively in terms of serving the public sphere. What is not asked is how effective this sphere and the press would be if there were more than two voices being heard or the consequences for those excluded from this sphere were considered (see Barnhurst & Nerone, pp. 68-69). Barnhurst and Nerone are at odds with Kaplan in this regard, as they struggle in their concluding chapter to imagine a form that would allow for this kind of multivocality (pp. 298-310).

Furthermore, Kaplan's argument, centred as it is on the role of politics, leaves unexplained some changes that took place at the end of the nineteenth century. He insists that although economics did not drive the commercialization of the press, it did establish part of the impetus for publishers to make changes to content, including adding sensational crime stories, women's pages, and children's columns. In turn, Kaplan insists that changes in consumer taste - that is, from a partisan to an apolitical news product - must be culturally and politically forged. This pattern of change began after the 1896 elections, setting up the political conditions that would lead to the independent paper. Kaplan asserts that the economic dimension must be supplemented by a political and cultural analysis of consumer demand (evident in his account of the post-1896 changes). Oddly, however, this analysis is never applied to changes that took place only several decades before. How were formerly partisan readers persuaded to accept not only non-partisan, but sensational content? Kaplan describes appeals to an urban, immigrant worker population, but stops short of explaining their "taste" for sensationalism. Instead he offers only the following cryptic comment: "The Gilded Age press, like the department store, evolved into a new public space suitable for the promenading of middle-class women down its columns" (p. 128). Why this market orientation necessarily means sensationalism is not explained. Furthermore, Kaplan is at a loss to explain how an avowedly partisan paper (even if less virulently so) coexisted with such non-partisan news. Put differently, what, outside of a changing market, allowed women (who remained officially excluded from the public sphere) to be given direct access to - and a public voice within - this sphere? Lastly, if those changes were significant enough to create whole new appetites for particular kinds of content, how did these changes work within the later political revolution? Although it's possible that (following Barnhurst and Nerone's argument) this period was one of transition - half partisan, half sensationalist - helping to pave the way for the later changes at the end of the nineteenth century, Kaplan never makes this argument either.

Despite these persisting questions, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and found it amazingly provocative. For the most part, its overall structure is solidly advocated, supported by excruciating historical detail, making the main arguments very compelling. Perhaps the strength of the narratives that preceded Kaplan's entry demanded a subtle, carefully constructed argument, as compared to Barnhurst and Nerone's arguments, which attempt to explain a multitude of changes across three levels of analysis. Nonetheless, given the choice between the scope of Barnhurst and Nerone's work and the nuance of Kaplan's more confined arguments, the latter would be my choice.

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