

motivations for conducting their papers in such a seemingly indecisive manner. Because the writers' intentions are crucial to Jordan's main premise, providing more primary materials as support would have enhanced his argument and enabled a better understanding of the publishers' precarious position and resulting strategies.

Nevertheless, this book provides valuable insight into the role the black press played in America during and after World War I and what it meant to race relations in wartime. Although Jordan walks down a path already well traveled by previous historians, he has found a new way of looking at the black press of this period. His book offers insight into how publishers fought to operate within prescribed guidelines established by white society, especially the federal government, while promoting black advancement and funneling black concerns into the public arena. By describing their actions against the backdrop of a country caught up in the war effort, Jordan presents a more human side to the black journalists, showing that although they were not always successful in their campaigns, they continuously succeeded in providing a voice for disfranchised blacks in America.

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■ *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest.* David Croteau and William Hoynes. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2001. 302 pp. \$25.95 pbk.

It can be enlightening, as poet Robert Burns pointed out, "to see ourselves as others see us."

That's certainly true in this book where journalists, as well as the professional business managers steering so many U.S. media companies, are examined by two sociologists.

David Croteau and William Hoynes have produced several books on the media

both separately and together over the last few years. Their previous collaborations were in 1994 on *By Invitation Only: How the Media Limit Political Debate*, and in 1997 with *Media/Society: Industries, Images and Audiences*, now in its second edition.

In their latest book, Croteau and Hoynes provide an even-handed look at the media industry's new age of giants, and by the nature of their discipline of sociology, they look at the "big picture."

There is a need for such analysis. When Marty Linsky interviewed newsroom journalists and the CEOs of several media companies for a Poynter Institute report, he was exasperated by the refusal of either side to even consider the other's viewpoint.

"There is much mutual misunderstanding, often cloaked in the language of contempt or disdain, and mindless blaming on both sides," Linsky observed. "There needs to be a conversation about having a conversation before one can truly begin."

As sociologists, Croteau and Hoynes are able to position themselves above the fray—as observers and evaluators of the newsroom and boardroom adversaries.

Such a vantage point strips much of the emotionalism usually dominating books about how media companies conduct business in today's market of fragmented audiences, technology-driven dissemination of news and advertising, and publicly traded conglomerates pursuing strategies of consolidation and convergence.

The authors note that, as with all corporations, media companies have a "market model" of selling as much product as possible for maximum profit.

But they also immediately emphasize the unique "public sphere model" for media companies, pointing out that media companies hold major obligations to the public not found in other commercial ventures. This is what the Hutchins Commission referred to as the social responsibility of the press.

Croteau and Hoynes declare the public sphere model is the defining role for media

companies—especially those dealing with news—and they show the interplay of the market and public sphere models throughout the industry.

From the very first paragraph of the introduction, the authors focus on the continuing importance of the public sphere model in media companies, even though “the media that the authors of the First Amendment knew were radically different from the ones we have today.”

Croteau and Hoynes recognize that this dual nature of news media companies leads to unrelenting “quandaries (that) are really variations on one recurring theme: the tension between profits and the public interest.” Later, they add: “The media’s role in facilitating democracy and encouraging citizenship has always been in tension with its status as a profit-making industry.”

This book remains faithful to its presentation of historical perspective and analysis by relatively detached observers—until the seventh and final chapter. Then, like referees at a fight who just cannot stay neutral any longer, Croteau and Hoynes jump into the ring and throw some punches of their own, mostly at the managers and owners.

Their efforts result in no more than moral support for underdog journalists because chapter seven, “Choosing the Future,” lapses into well-meaning utopianism that is unachievable. Its nearly twenty proposed solutions embrace socially responsible ideals, but none has a chance of prevailing against the opposing forces of capitalism and politics in the foreseeable future.

An example of how the best intentions can be counterpunched by conglomerates is in the approval of low-power radio stations, which was being worked out when the book went to press. The authors must be as disappointed as anyone in the final result. Low-power radio stations should have been a great step toward more public access to at least that medium. Corporate lobbying of Congress, however, turned the stations into poison pills for anyone wanting to make a

profit. About 3,400 low-power radio licenses have been issued in the past two years, but only six stations are actually broadcasting.

The book’s call that “antitrust laws must be more actively utilized to stem the concentration of media ownership” echoes Ben Bagdikian’s futile quest since 1983. Where can we find a good trust-buster like Teddy Roosevelt again?

Because of its comprehensive overview of the industry, *The Business of Media* already is being included as a text in courses such as media management and media history.

Management students will need a business operations text to supplement this book because it overlooks the internal business dynamics of financial, operational, and managerial decision making.

Despite doubts about the efficacy of chapter seven, the rest of the book is a compelling account about colliding missions in media companies today. Croteau and Hoynes provide insights that both journalists and media executives might have been too confrontational, or too smug, to notice about each other until now.

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■ *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers.* David Paul Nord. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001. 293 pp. \$29.95 hbk.

In this book, twelve articles produced across twenty years reflect arguments about American engagement with community and about the inextricable link of communication with community. Author David Paul Nord says curiosity about how journalism relates to community, how newspapers are “made,” and how readers use them, shaped an overarching question driving the research: What is the function of a newspaper? Concluding that a two-fold press function, fact and forum, has persisted across history, he argues that journalism builds communities. But the fact model, alone,

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