Stephen J. A. Ward and Herman Wasserman (Eds.), *Media Ethics beyond Borders: A Global Perspective*, New York and London, Routledge, 2010, 180 pages, ISBN 978-0-415-87888-3

Why a Global Media Ethics? With this question, Stephen J. A. Ward and Herman Wasserman, editors of *Media Ethics beyond Borders: A Global Perspective*, open their introduction into ten essays that "discuss, debate, and critique the very idea of a global media ethics that crosses physical and cultural boundaries" (p. 1). A global media ethics, which the editors describe as "a new ethics for a journalism that is global in reach and impact" (ibid.), does not yet exist. Nevertheless, it is necessary that we consider its construction due to the power of global communications and some urgent global issues, such as poverty, environmental degradation, technological inequalities and political instability. In a world that brings together a plurality of religions, traditions, ethnic groups, values, views and the power relations between them, journalism needs a global perspective so that it can help different groups understand one another better. However, even though the need for a global media ethics

has been recognised, there are no (final) answers as to what it should look like or how it could be realised. A number of reflections, analyses and arguments pertaining to media ethics beyond borders are presented in the three sections of this book, which are further divided into chapters, each written by a different author.

The first section—titled *Universals, Theory and Global Ethics*—begins with an essay written by Clifford G. Christians, who argues that a global media ethics should be a universal ethics of human dignity, truth and non-violence. These three basic ethical principles are grounded in the primal sacredness of human life—a protonorm that binds humans into a common oneness. The communication ethics has to respond to the rapid globalisation of communications as well as the reassertion of local identities. The author sees the integration of globalisation and ethnicity as today's extraordinary challenge; however, through "the sacredness of life we can make our way constructively

at the intersection of the global and multicultural" (p. 19). Lee Wilkins discusses how journalism is influenced by the moral growth of individuals. She focuses on how neuroscience and feminist theory of care, infused with a sense of duty, can contribute to understanding professional moral development. For journalists to reinvent themselves in a way that places public service at the core of professional autonomy within community, ethics must serve as a base and a marker of professional growth. "Ethics allows tools and economics structures to be informed by purpose. Purpose, in turn, invokes duty; public service invokes care," the author concludes (p. 39). Stephen J. A. Ward proposes we construct *"a global journalism ethics* by using a cosmopolitan ethics to reinterpret the aims of journalism" (p. 53). He develops a theory of moderate, democratic patriotism that is compatible with ethical journalism within a nation and a theory of global patriotism for global journalists, where the duty of journalists is to act as global agents, serve the citizens of the world and promote non-parochial understandings. Using neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, Nick Couldry presents a framework for a global media ethics that no longer separates media producers from media consumers. Because in limited ways, production and consumption are becoming part of the same con-

tinuum of experiencing media, media ethics cannot operate purely as an internal debate for the media industry. According to Couldry, "[B]oth the scope and the fundamental principles of media ethics need recasting for an age when all of us have a stake in, at times a direct responsibility for, the way our world (and that of others) is represented through media" (p. 69).

The second section—titled *Global, Local and Critical Theory*—consists of three essays. Herman Wasserman argues that if "human dignity is to serve as a universal value to be strived for by media globally, it would have to be interpreted and applied within local contexts, but in relation to a global set of power relations within which media producers, audiences and participants are mutually interdependent" (p. 86). A postcolonial approach to global media ethics is to be seen as a critical mode of inquiry that could provide a new perspective on global media ethics by posing critical questions and interrogating the basis upon which central concepts, like human dignity, rest. Shakuntala Rao proposes an "epistemic syncretism where media practitioners can adopt both a Western theory of media ethics (for instance social responsibility) as well as theories from local traditions and religious life" (p. 103). The local should be borne upon the universal in a non-coercive way; that is, the non-

Western and indigenous should not be rejected as non-theoretical. Both Western and non-Western ethical theories of media should be appreciated. Pieter J. Fourie emphasises that an appeal to indigenous knowledge should consider the realities of cultural assimilation and globalisation. Instead of contemplating *ubuntuism*—a unique African moral philosophy—as an ethical framework, "[E]mphasis in South African media policy, normative media theory and in media ethics should be placed on *difference* and *diversity*" (p. 119).

In the third section, titled *Applications and Case Studies*, Fackson Banda examines the concept of glocalisation, drawing on the trajectories of colonialism, post-colonialism and globalisation that have altered the texture of media ethics in Zambia. He argues that the question no longer concerns whether globalisation affects the local practices of journalism ethics but rather "the degree of glocalisation or hybridisation of the criss-crossing experience" (p. 139). Ali Mohamed uses Islamic principles to evaluate the newspaper publication of the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, and he demonstrates how the application of these principles may differ from other ethical approaches. He concludes that "if media ethics are to be truly transnational, they must adequately take into account the endur-

ing religiosity of many non-Western populations" (p. 155). This means that society must contemplate limits on offensive speech, and these limits might enforce greater constraint than is typically allowed by liberal media ethics based on the assumption of secularism. Analysing media ethics in Ethiopia, Gebremedhin Simon ascertains that media ethics is culturally sensitive and that local realities have a strong impact on how media ethics will be manifested in a local context. Even though there is generally a point of reference for the code of ethics for global media, this may not necessarily address local issues and concerns. This is why "there is a need for further investigation in the areas of culture-specific codes which are at work in determining the perceptions of the journalists and their professional ideology," the author suggests (p. 169).

The essays in *Media Ethics beyond Borders: A Global Perspective* examine the topic of global media ethics from different perspectives and thus contribute significantly to the debate on the ever-important issue of media ethics. Although a universal agreement on the mission and definition of journalism has never been achieved, journalism has, at least in its normative visions, always emphasised ethics as its basic constituent, since the freedom of expression is tightly linked to responsibili-

ties. However, the circumstances in which journalism is practiced have been changing, and the media ethics we have known in the past may not be sufficient for addressing the future global issues of humanity. Ward and Wasserman's collection of essays offers a variety of theoretical reflections as well as their applications to specific contexts. Different views and ideas about universal principles in both global and local contexts provide some answers while at the same time raising new questions, thus inspiring the reader to reflect on media ethics from new angles and in different environments. As the editors wrote, this book is "an invitation to readers to join the robust and grow-ing debate on the prospects of a media ethics beyond borders" (p. 4). I hope that media ethics scholars will respond to this call with new reflections and suggestions relating to a global media ethics as well as applications and case studies from several different parts of the world. Only through a global dialogue can issues of a global impact and importance be well discussed, and only through a comprehensive and critical discussion can a media ethics that corresponds better to the needs of people in today's complex contemporary world eventually emerge.

Melita Poler Kovačič

Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble (What the Internet is Hiding from You)*, London, Viking, An Imprint of Penguin Books, 2011, 294 pages, ISBN 978-0-670-92038-9.

This book starts with a small event that didn't receive almost any public attention at the time, and yet the author takes it as the defining moment of the modern media, around which the whole book focuses: on December 4, 2009, a post appeared on Google's corporate blog. The headline said: "Personalized search for everyone." As the author later found out, Google would since that morning use fifty-seven *signals* – "everything from where you were logging in from to what browser you were using to what you had searched for before" – to make guesses about who you were and what kinds of sites you would most probably like. "Even if you were logged out, it would customize its results, showing you the pages it predicted you were most likely to click on."

This means that since December 2009, users of Google get different results for the same search, based on the Google's algorithm which suggests what is best for a certain user in particular. The consequences of this new practice are, according to Pariser, profound and at the same time symptomatic of the new era of media and technology. "You could say that on December 4, 2009, the era of personalization began," says Pariser.

Now, Pariser is not an academic: he is, as the book cover states, a pioneer of online campaigning. He helped start Avaaz.org, one of the world's largest citizen organizations, and is now President of MoveOn.org, which has more than five million members. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Roosevelt Institute and has written for the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal.

His background explains his approach and style of writing: it is the combination of news discourse, scientific discourse and a more activist approach. As is the case with many similar contemporary writers (Nicholas Negroponte, Clay Shirky, Nicholas Carr to name a few), he uses many anecdotal examples, personal history, small details, all with the aim of building a persuasive case for his main thesis, namely that we are faced with the increasing personalization of the Internet and fragmentation of mass communication, processes that

can have good effects, but which can also endanger some of the fundamentals of the democratic society.

Pariser combines a historical approach, analyzing John Dewey and Walter Lippmann in particular, with contemporary analysis of documents, regulation, theories, and technology on one hand, and with personal interviews with relevant people from the media and computer industry, researchers, economists, managers and others, both on-the-record and off-the-record, anonymously. His main argument is that the personalization of the Internet and mass media can lead to the filter bubble, the bubble where you receive only certain information and certain interpretations, much like Cass Sunstein claimed in his discussions on "echo chambers". Ultimately, "the filter bubble can affect your ability to choose how you want to live." Yochai Benkler came to similar conclusion, namely that in order to be the author of your life you have to be aware of a diverse array of options and lifestyles. "When you enter a filter bubble, you're letting the companies that construct it chose which options you're aware of. You may think you're the captain of your own destiny, but personalization can lead you down the road to a kind of informational determinism in which what you've clicked on in the past determines what you see next – a Web history you're doomed to

repeat. You can get stuck in a static, ever-narrowing version of yourself – an endless you-loop."

The personalization happens with the help of new algorithms which decide what individual person may like, just like the button on the Facebook where users can define what they "Like" – a word or definition that isn't accidental and not without important consequences for the choices of users' recommendations or their friends. Although the button was first defined as "Awesome" and could be named "Important", it was later named "Like", a decision that had far-reaching consequences: "The stories that get the most attention on Facebook are the stories that get the most Likes, and the stories that get the most Likes are, well, most likable", leading to the so-called "Friendly world syndrome" where some of the biggest and most important problems fail to reach our view at all.

The filter bubble that occurred due to the process of personalization is thus problematic for a number of reasons: it tends to dramatically amplify confirmation bias; the proportion of content that validates what you know goes way up and as such it can ignore what Travis Proulx calls "meaning threats", the "confusing, unsettling occurrences that fuel our desire to understand and acquire new ideas". Thus, personalized filters can upset the cognitive balance between strengthening our existing ideas and acquiring new ones.

Another problem is that the dynamics of personalization shift power into the hands of a few major corporate actors, such as Google and Facebook. If Francis Bacon was right that "knowledge is power", then asymmetries in knowledge are asymmetries in power, says Pariser and warns of possible dangers that such concentration of power and data can pose for democratic society.

In the end, the activist part of Pariser defines the final chapter, bringing calls for particular possible actions in sub-sections titled "What individuals can do", "What companies can do" and "What government and citizens can do". Pariser's approach can be rather mixed, with theoretical approach based both on communication authors such as Lippmann and Dewey, and on authors from other areas, such as Jean Piaget and Arthur Koestler; this theoretical approach is then emphasized with Pariser's own research, mostly based on in-depth interviews and research of key actors and documents. However, in order to be more persuasive and to reach a wider audience, Pariser adopts many narrative techniques, including personal history and stories, anecdotes, as well as activistic comments and call-to-arms.

While certain aspects of Pariser's topic have been covered and analyzed, The Filter Bubble provides a coherent overview and insight into some of the key problems faced by today's users of Internet and today's societies as whole. Increasing personalization and fragmentation of media can be very attractive for individual users, at least at first sight; but in the long run it poses many problems that threaten the participatory and communicative basis of principles of democratic societies. The Filter Bubble thus represents an important call for more careful and thoughtful use of Internet on behalf of all of its users.

Marko Milosavljević

Manuel Castells, *Communication Power*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, 571 pages, ISBN 978-0-19-956704-1

This Castells' book expands on his previous analyses of the Information Age and the network society towards complex interrelations between power and communication which change social relations and human behaviour on global and local levels. He focuses on ways in which different actors use media and communication to establish their own interests, goals and domination. His main position is that "the most fundamental form of power lies in the ability to shape the human mind. The way we feel and think determines the way we act, both individually and collectively" (p. 3). For an analysis of this scope the book has a simple structure consisting of five rather large chapters, a conclusion and an appendix containing additional data on media conglomerates, ownership structures, Iraq war support in the U.S., political scandals, trust in democratic institutions, etc.

The first chapter is entitled *Power in the Network Society*. The author distinguishes four types of power in the network: networking power (operates by exclusion/inclusion), network power (imposing protocols of communication), networked power (relational and structural capacity to impose one's will) and network-making power (paramount power which includes constituting, programming and connecting networks). Castells states that the sources of social power such as violence, coercion, persuasion, political domination or cultural framing have not changed much over history. But the terrain where power

relations operate has changed in two ways: it is structured around the articulation of relationships between the global and the local, and it is primarily organized around networks (p. 50). This means that the state, for example, finds limits to its coercive capacity unless it engages in networking with other states. And second, "discourses of power provide substantive goals for the programs of the networks" which influence human behaviour (p. 51–52).

The second chapter entitled *Communication in the Digital Age* deals with such varied subjects as technological convergence, global multimedia business networks, regulatory policies, cultural changes and creative audiences. The author starts by differentiating between mass communication (books, newspapers, films, radio, and television) which is one-directional and new forms of interactive point-to-point communication which he calls mass self-communication. Mass self-communication can potentially reach a global audience and the production of the message is self-generated, potential receivers are self-directed and the retrieval of messages is self-selected (p. 55). Today, all forms of communication are included in a composite, digital, interactive hypertext. The media follow a specific organizational and business strategy: "the companies that form the core of global media networks

are pursuing policies of ownership concentration, inter-company partnerships, platform diversification, audience customization, and economies of synergy with varying degrees of success" (p. 84). Most regulatory policies since the mid 1980s follow the same line of liberalization, privatization, and regulated deregulation of both broadcast and telecommunication industries (p. 100). In his view cultural changes evolve around the opposition between globalization (globally shared culture) and identification (more territorially bound) and between individualism and communalism (p. 117). Creative audiences the author understood as subjects who activate horizontal communication networks and who are simultaneously senders and receivers of multidirectional messages (p. 130).

The third chapter entitled *Networks of Mind and Power* offers a rather surprising turn in Castells' theoretical orientation towards research in neuroscience which he connects with political communication and communication networks. He analyzes emotion, cognition, politics and political campaigns as well as politics of belief, framing of the mind, and also gives a very detailed case study of how the support for the war in Iraq was constructed through the media. He is interested in neuroscience attempting to establish how people construct reality and how they

react to actual events: "So, reality for us is neither objective nor subjective, but a material construction of images that mix what happens in the physical world (outside and inside us) with the material inscription of experience in the circuitry of our brain" (p. 139). The communication media enact power by activating associations between events and mental images.

The ensuing chapter entitled *Programming Communication Networks: Media Politics, Scandal Politics, and the Crisis of Democracy* deals with image-making, media politics, scandals, propaganda, control and the legitimacy crisis or the crisis of democracy. The main conclusion is that with the coming of globalization and the crisis of the nation-state, media politics and scandal politics have deepened the crisis of legitimacy further in a moment when the nation-state needs support from its citizens the most (p. 297). However, rather than abandoning their rights, citizens turn to new political leaders outside of the mainstream in what he calls *insurgent politics*, which holds the potential for changing democratic and political institutions: "If we accept the idea that the critical form of power-making takes place through the shaping of the human mind, and that this process is largely dependent on communication, and ultimately on media politics, then *the practice of democracy is called into question*

when there is a systemic disassociation between communication power and representative power" (p. 298).

The final chapter is called *Reprogramming Communication Networks: Social Movements, Insurgent Politics, and the New Public Space*. The environmental movement, global movements against corporate globalization, insurgent politics through wireless communication and the Obama presidential campaign are analyzed here. The author claims that social movements are characterized by their goal of producing cultural change, or change in values. When they aim at political change in political institutions they are called insurgent politics because they operate "the transition between cultural change and political change into a political system they were previously not a part of" (p. 300). The networks of mass self-communication give them chances for autonomy: "The greater the autonomy of the communicating subjects vis-à-vis the controllers of societal communication nodes, the higher the chances for the introduction of messages challenging dominant values and interests in communication networks" (p. 413).

The conclusion offers a summary of all the analytical tools and hypotheses developed through the book in order to establish a communication theory of power. Power is exercised through the production of meaning

in the processes of communication in global/local multimedia networks of mass communication, including mass self-communication (p. 414). "What is theoretically relevant is that the actors of social change are able to exert decisive influence by using mechanisms of power-making that correspond to the forms and processes of power in the network society. By engaging in the cultural production of the mass media, and by developing autonomous networks of horizontal communication, citizens of the Information Age become able to invent new programs for their lives with the materials of their suffering, fears, dreams, and hopes. They build their projects by sharing their experience" (p. 431).

In the field of media and communications all theories soon lose their analytical edge due to the fast pace of social and technological change.

After producing a contemporary social science classic in his three-part book *Information Age: economy, society and culture* Castells is able to keep the pace with the latest information age developments in this book. Although it is hard to repeat the breadth and depth of his trilogy, this book nevertheless matches its analytical clarity and simplicity which are based on numerous case studies, statistical data and research results. Castells' strength lies in the socio-technological and socio-historical considerations which are the basis of his thought, enabling him to deal with the constant changes. The main message of this book is that, in the global world, power is increasingly decided through communication processes that are global and networked.

Paško Bilić

Melita Poler Kovačič and Karmen Erjavec, *Uvod v novinarstvo: Učbenik za študente prvega letnika študijskega programa novinarstvo na FDV* (*Introduction to Journalism: Textbook for Students in the First Year of Journalism Studies at FDV*), Založba FDV, Ljubljana, 2011, 243 pages, ISBN 978-961-235-425-1

Uvod v novinarstvo (Introduction to Journalism) is a polemical textbook in that it reconsiders journalism during contemporary times and is used as an introduction to the field at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. The textbook, written by associate professors at the university's Department for Journalism*,* is divided into three sections: theoretical and ideological issues of contemporary journalism and journalists; theoretical and practical basics of constructing journalistic contributions; and a critical overview of the prevailing thematic types of journalism. The first two sections are written by Melita Poler Kovačič, the third one is a work of Karmen Erjavec.

Each section contains summaries and several content-oriented exercises set up on the basis of theoretical and empirical investigations, which provide the essentials of critical thinking and good practice of journalism. The authors' achieve their goal of presenting issues "shorty and concisely" (pp. 11), even though at first glance it appears as if Poler Kovačič and Erjavec are trying to achieve too much. However, their syntheses do not appear as vague generalisations or as strict guidelines, but instead they rather smoothly guide the reader toward gaining basic knowledge and primary skills to critically assess the theory and practice of contemporary journalism.

In the first section, entitled "Kaj je novinarstvo, kdo je novinar?" ("What is Journalism, Who is a Journalist?"), Poler Kovačič assesses the difficulties contemporary journalists face in terms of the identification process and the multi-faceted role journalism plays in society — from both normative and empirical perspectives. She places special emphasis on professionalism and ideology, particularly in terms of disseminating knowledge on political, economic and cultural realities. In this regard, critical assessment of the idea of journalism

as a profession appears to be crucial for revitalising the field in a contemporary media environment, where boundaries between journalism as a practice and as an occupation has shifted considerably in the last couple of decades, and where the practice — embedded in and dependent on political, economic and cultural systems — needs to constantly reconsider its role in society and find new ways to reconnect with the public. Furthermore, the author also deals with the normative predispositions of gathering, assembling and providing news within the prevailing classical or high-modern paradigm of journalism, which is grounded on the liberal concepts of democracy, participation and power. She then contrasts them with the realities of "market-driven journalism", which is facilitated by "rapid technological progress, growing competition for audience attention and the rise of global media markets" (pp. 68) and which, according to Poler Kovačič, legitimises the passive gathering of information, commercial imperative in news selection and monolithic versions of reality. In the conclusion of this section, the author presents Slovenia's self-regulatory system of journalism, which is grounded on the idealistic concepts of freedom and responsibility, expressing the need that journalism practice is based on prevailing ethical premises of con-

temporary journalism, which are somewhere between deontology and teleology.

In the second section entitled "Osnove novinarske teorije in prakse" ("Basics of Journalism Theory and Practice"), Poler Kovačič discusses the meaning of journalistic texts and the conventions of their construction. She uses the notion of journalistic genres as the key element of her discussion and considers its role as "a common ground for journalists and addressees that makes mutual informing and understanding of the world easier" (pp. 90). In this context, Poler Kovačič introduces the continuously evolving process of the "schematization of mass (journalistic) co-informing", which defines the conventional ways of constructing journalistic contributions in specific political, cultural, economic and technological circumstances. These stable, context-related conventions influence the events and processes from societal life that are presented in reports, the reasons why certain parts of reality are represented and for what purpose, as well as the logic that shapes how are they presented by journalists and understood by people. By basing the debate mostly on the work of Manca Košir, the author more or less adopts the pragmatic understanding of reality and divides the prevailing functions of journalistic writings as being "informative" and "interpreta-

tive" that is grounded on the difference between "fact" and "opinion", which is the foremost characteristic in the classical or high-modern paradigm of journalism. By presenting the process of the hybridization of journalistic discourse with other treatises, and assessing the possible negative consequences of linking people to societal life, the textbook goes beyond its functional approach of being a "how-to" manual. Most importantly, Poler Kovačič questions the often taken-for-granted division between "hard" and "soft" news, and sketches the problems with the eroding boundaries between journalism, entertainment, advertising and public relations. In the conclusion of this section, the author stresses the importance of conversation for shaping the character of journalism. This position indicates a more communitarian approach to journalism, implying a rather different relationship between journalists, sources and the audience than in classical journalism, which is often used to elucidate on the detachment of journalism from the public in western democracies in contemporary media studies and to question the liberal conceptual grounding of the prevailing high-modern paradigm. In this light, however, one might slightly miss some insights into the changing relationship between journalists and the audience in relation to easy-to-use online tools for gathering, as-

sembling and providing news, which have reshaped the notion of conversation in the last decade or so, and redeveloped conditions in which texts get constructed by both press and non-press news providers. But such emphasis might go beyond the aim of the textbook.

In the third section of the textbook, Erjavec assesses the twelve different types of journalism, "which together make the mosaic of contemporary journalism practice" (pp. 131). Each of these interconnected types of journalism, namely labour, economy, agriculture, culture, international, environmental, sports, religion, war, health, science and lifestyle, are historically overviewed with their political, economic, cultural and technological specifics reassembled and their problems revealed. Each unit in the section is based on theoretical investigations and empirical research conducted by members of the media and journalism studies. As Erjavec writes (pp. 132), the most valuable sources are the six volumes of *Encyclopaedia of Journalism* (2009). However, Erjavec does not provide overly simplified generalisations – on the contrary, she provides contextualised and historicized insights into Slovenian journalism through the prism of thematic journalism. This, however, is not an easy task, especially, if one takes into an account the fact that there is a considerable

lack of research within certain types of journalism in Slovenian media and journalism studies. Hence, this section is valuable not just for first-year students, but for others as well because on the one hand, it provides an overview of journalism in Slovenia and, on the other, it reveals empirical holes in journalism studies in the country.

Uvod v novinarstvo offers a concise and coherent insight into some of the central issues of journalism theory and the problems in its practice in certain social circumstances. However, as a textbook, it best serves students under the guidance of a teacher, since even the authors stress that it should not be regarded as "a substitute for lectures" but more as "a study material" complementing the processes in the classroom (pp. 10). Through exercises, Poler Kovačič and Erjavec invite the readers to overview scholarly and expert debates on certain issues related to contemporary journalism and to reconsider them by analysing the actual outcomes in the press. The results of these exercises might be rewarding not only for the students doing them, but also for the authors if they decide to publish a revised edition sometime in the future. What might be useful is to go beyond the traditional textbook format and rethink the possibility of cross-referencing and interlinking it with a related website, which could demonstrate the application of the skills covered in the book, provide examples of "good" and "bad" journalism, keep the textbook updated and consequently become a valuable source for the authors to learn how they can develop some sections or exercises to better serve their purpose. Nevertheless, by looking at journalism from its historical and social context, *Uvod v novinarstvo* enables first-year journalism students to approach a wide range of issues faced by contemporary journalists and more easily comprehend the complexities of journalism, the responsibility that comes with it, the traits of news making and the heterogeneity of the practice of journalism.

Igor Vobič