

The Media In and After 9/11

Review Essay

by

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Books Reviewed:

Tomasz Pludowski, editor, **How the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11: Essays from Around the Globe**, Spokane, Washington: Marquette Books, 2007, \$44.95 (paperback).

Lisa Finnegan, **No Questions Asked. News Coverage Since 9/11**, Westport, Conn. and London: Praeger, 2007, \$49.95 (hardcover).

W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, **When the Press Fails Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina: Studies in Communication, Media and Public Opinion**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, \$15.30 (hardcover).

Lawrence Pintak, **Reflections in a Bloodshot Eye: America, Islam, and the War of Ideas**, London: Pluto Press, 2006, \$17.79 (paperback).

Brigitte L. Nacos, **Mass-Mediated Terrorism: The Central Role of the Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism**, Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007, \$26.95 (paperback).

Brigitte L. Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna, **Fueling Our Fears. Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans**, Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007, \$23.95 (paperback).

Marc Lynch, **Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today**, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, \$18.50 (paperback).

Mohamed Zayani, editor, **The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media**, Boulder, Col.: Paradigm Press, 2005, \$25.95 (paperback).

The September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the World Trade Center Twin Towers in New York and on the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. were perhaps the most dramatic media spectacle in history. The 9/11 spectacle of terror was a global media event. Attacking the heart of U.S. symbolic power in the World Trade Center in the New York financial district and the symbol of U.S. military power the Pentagon, the terror spectacle took over live global media for days to come, becoming an emblematic event in media history, whereby McLuhan's "global village" became a site of horror, death, and destruction. The attacks

arguably inaugurated a new era in history in which global Terror War exploded, and countries legitimated political repression and military intervention as part of a "war against terrorism." The U.S. public was dramatically shaken by recognition that its spaces and citizens were vulnerable to the sort of catastrophic terror attack experienced by people throughout the world.

The Bush-Cheney Administration manipulated the fear experienced by the people of the United States to push through a rightwing agenda and to go to war in Afghanistan and Iraq with the complicity of the mainstream U.S. corporate media. The potency of media representations of 9/11 and the centrality of the media in the aftermath of the event have generated a wealth of empirical research, reflection, and debates about the role of the media in contemporary society and history. In this review-article, I will engage recent books on the representation of 9/11 in the global media, trajectories of the media in the U.S. after 9/11, and polarization and ideological struggle in global media and politics in the aftermath of 9/11 and the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

Global Media Representations of 9/11

There have been many studies of media representations of 9/11 and the subsequent roles of the media in the "war on terror" in the U.S. media, including my own.¹ We can thank Tomasz Pludowski and his collaborators for assembling a wide range of studies of *How the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11*. These "Essays from Around the Globe" provide a wealth of presentations of how the European countries, Asian, Middle Eastern, and other parts of the world, represented and reacted to the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

As Yahya R. Kamalipour notes in the Foreword to the volume: "The contemporary 'Electronic Age,' as Marshall McLuhan envisioned in the 1960s, has interconnected the entire world, but this interconnectedness has not ostensibly contributed to improved intercultural communication and international relations or a cooperative 'global village.' Rather, it has presented an array of previously inconceivable challenges and obstacles vis-à-vis media, culture, economy, and politics" (17). The conflicts, differences, and challenges of a divided global media and political world are part of the focus of the book's diverse studies.

In an Introduction, Editor Tomasz Pludowski describes the international, interdisciplinary, comparative, and cross-generational nature of the book that will combine journalistic and scholarly analysis, "native-like" studies of the specific media and political cultures, and an accessible style making it useful to media professionals and a general public, as well as academic scholars. Divided into five parts, it covers "European Media," "Asian Media," "Arab/Middle Eastern Media," "Australian and African Media," and "North and South American Media."

¹ See Douglas Kellner, *From 9/11 to Terror War: Dangers of the Bush Legacy*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, and *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy*. Boulder, Col.: Paradigm Press, 2005.

Part I unfolds with three studies of representations of 9/11 in the United Kingdom and Ireland. An opening reflection by Brian McNair on "UK Media Coverage of September 11" contains general observations on the contours of representations in the British media. McNair agrees with interpretations that suggest that September 11 meant "the death of detachment" (31), and more impassioned and patriotic national media. The BBC, he notes, embraced the CNN rubric "Attack on America" and September 12 headlines in the British Press included:

- War on America (*Daily Telegraph*)
- War on the World (*Daily Mirror*)
- Declaration of war (*Daily Express*)
- Assault on America (*Financial Times*)
- Apocalypse (*Daily Mail*)

McNair notes that there were only a few examples of anti-Americanism that blamed the attacks on U.S. policy and arrogance, while there was general solidarity and sympathy with Americans, claiming that a defining feature of British coverage was highlighting representations of international solidarity around the world with the U.S., punctuated by critical presentations of Palestinians celebrating the attack, a response that led Arafat to denounce the celebrations and criticize the Al Qaeda attacks.

Maria B. Marron follows with an analysis of how "Elite British and Irish Newspapers Reflect Ideology in Framing the 9/11 Catastrophe." In a detailed analysis of the London *Times*, the Manchester *Guardian*, and the Dublin *Irish Times*, Marron shows that representations of 9/11 followed the general ideological parameters of the papers with the conservative *Times* presenting coverage completely sympathetic to the U.S. and sharply critical of global terrorism, while the left-liberal *Guardian* presented some critical analyses of American policy and published a wide diversity of critical analysis, as did the *Irish Times*.

In "Breaking News': The First Hours of BBC Coverage of 9/11 as a Media Events," Gwen Bouvier opens with a detailed explication of Dayan and Katz's notion of a media event and how 9/11 qualifies as a dramatic example,² and then produces a structural analysis of the first hours of BBC coverage as a media event of the highest order. Bouvier combines Raymond William's analysis of "flow" with an Althusserian notion of "breaks" to explicate stages of coverage as the event unfolded. As the pictures of the World Trade Center attacks were first transmitted, British commentators struggled for words to define the event, highlighting terms like "terrorism" and "hijacking" as images and information flowed in (64f). The second break involved trying to explain what was happening in the live spectacle being broadcast and its significance under the rubric "Moment 2: Warning, Risk, Threat" (69). Warnings circulated about further attacks, dangers to travelers and citizens, and threats to everyday life from terrorist assaults, ratcheting up the significance of the story to become global and epochal.

² See the discussion of the Dayan and Katz and the later Katz and Liebes concept of "media event" and their recent updating of their analysis in this journal below.

"Moment 3: Hesitation -- Reality Effect" describes the event cascading with overpowering images and spectacle that defied words and description, as commentators struggled to define and interpret what Barthes called a "trauma" that transcended words (75f). Bouvier describes the beginning BBC coverage of the Pentagon attack when pictures came in and the commentators struggled to define what was happening, reporting that the images were from Washington and trying to figure out where and what, admitting hesitation and uncertainty. The falling of buildings around the Twin Towers and their eventual collapse were also overwhelming, with commentators not able to adequately define which buildings were falling, producing what Bouvier calls a "reality effect," in which an overpowering reality transcends or eludes words, dramatizing the significance and horror of the event.

In conclusion, Bouvier reiterates that Raymond Williams' notion of the flow of television needs to be supplemented with analysis of breaks in presenting and interpreting spectacular events like the 9/11 terror attacks. Adding an interpretive element to Dayan and Katz's concept of media events, Bouvier suggests that dramatic media spectacles like the 9/11 attacks generate a contest of interpretations and struggles over their meaning, an argument confirmed by the articles on media coverage of 9/11 from around the globe.

The contribution by Jacques Portes, "'We Cannot All be Americans': French Media Reception of 9/11," follows French reaction to 9/11 from the opening banner editorial in *Le Monde* "We are all Americans" to growing criticism and distancing from the U.S. response in the war in Afghanistan and buildup to and intervention in Iraq. While on September 12, President Chirac and leaders of all major French political parties declared solidarity with the United States and against terrorism, criticism of U.S. policy and its response began developing in especially French leftwing circles, with *Liberation* noting on September 15 that there have been no such responses to deaths of Palestinians or Rwandans in the global media, where death and destruction in poorer countries of the South are generally neglected (86).

Portes contextualizes the growing critical responses to Bush's aggressive military reaction within an escalating French critique of U.S. power over the past years. Portes cites Hubert Vedrines' notion of "hyperpower," where the U.S. exerts not only its economic and military power, but "control of the communications network, 'dream factories,' new technology" in a virtually unprecedented array of cultural power (86). French critics had previously been skeptical of George W. Bush's ability to govern and were angry at his anti-environmental policies and breaking off of global treaties and organizations from the beginning of his presidency. Consequently, after 9/11, they raised questions whether the U.S. response to the challenges of global terrorism would be appropriate and effective. While France was divided itself on the Afghanistan war, Portes notes, a greater divide emerged between France and America on Iraq (89).

A study by Anne Koenen and Brigitte Georgi-Findlay on "Reactions to 9/11 in the German Media," also focuses on response to 9/11 in terms of the German political situation, and its increasingly strained relations with the U.S. Already by August 2001, disapproval of Bush's policies were higher among Germans (65%) than any European country, and there was widespread anger over his decision to abandon the Kyoto Protocol, leave the international criminal court, and break off negotiations on arms treaties. Further, the authors indicate that Germany had been more internally focused on its own

unification since 1989 and its integration into the European Union than in their traditionally close relations with the U.S. (93).

The shock of 9/11, however, led Germans to focus on dangers of global terrorism and their own potential security and military weaknesses, especially when it was revealed that some of the 9/11 hijackers, including Mohammed Atta, had lived in Germany. A poll cited by the authors indicated that while 66% of Germans believed their own leaders would respond competently and effectively to the terrorism crisis, only 36% believed that the U.S. administration would respond appropriately (98). The German public and media were divided over the U.S. response in Afghanistan and a mid-October issue of *Der Spiegel* presented the German public evenly divided among supporters and critics of the U.S., although politicians declared "unconditional solidarity" (101f).

While the articles on French and German response to 9/11 focused on the countries' general political and media response to the terror attacks and their aftermath in terms of the respective countries increasingly problematic relations with the United States, the article on Spain's response by Maria Teresa La Porte and Teresa Sadaba focuses on specific media responses. In a study "September 11 in the Spanish Press: War or Terrorism Frame?," the authors employ quantitative and qualitative approaches to content analysis of three Spanish newspapers for ten days after 9/11 from September 12 - 21 corresponding to debate in Spain over proper responses to the acts of terror, and over whether war or terrorism should be the dominant frame.

The Spain study opens with analysis of the importance of framing events for public consumption and how in Spain there was a debate over whether it was to be largely interpreted as an act of terror or war, and what would be the appropriate response. While quantitative analysis disclosed that the overwhelming majority of representations involved U.S. President George W. Bush, Osama bin Laden was second (111). The conservative television network *ABC* began framing the event as an act of terrorism, following the initial statement of the Spanish president, but quickly shifted to the war framing, evoking a notion of a global "Terrorist War" that would include crushing al Qaeda and the local Basque ETA movement associated with terrorism (111f). For *ABC*, the media were part of the struggle and there could be no neutrality in this battle.

The more liberal newspaper *El Pais*, by contrast, put a major emphasis on the need for international alliances and the importance of economic, intelligence, and cultural cooperation, as well as military action, warning against the dangers of a "preemptive war" (115). The paper also warned against alliances that were largely North vs. South, richer against poorer nations, and emphasized Spain's potential contribution due to its experience dealing with ETA, expressing hope also that other Europeans would support Spain's attempts to deal with terrorism (115f).

The Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*, according to the authors, shied away initially from characterizing the attempts and prescribing a solution, and throughout exhibited a balanced approach emphasizing "the legitimacy of the United States to take action," while providing "unconditional solidarity

but not blind involvement" (116). The paper also stressed, more than other sources, economic ramifications of the attack.

In general, the authors conclude, media responses to 9/11, and the unfolding events themselves, blurred the lines between war and terrorism and required new thinking on the subject. Different media responded in Spain in diverse ways, with varying dominant frames and responses. Yet while the media may help inform and educate the public, they will probably not offer new frames and will inevitably have difficulty in coming to terms with the novelty and complexity of significant events.

An article by Rune Ottosen and Tine Ustad Figenshou, "September 11 in Norwegian Media: Images of the Local Threat," provided an analysis of a national public broadcasting company representation of the event, NPK, and two Oslo-based national newspapers *Aftenposten* and *Verdens Gang* (VG). News stories and articles were coded by framings in five different categories: "U.S. Hatred," that explained the attacks in terms of U.S. policy and aggressions; "U.S. Critical," that strongly condemned the attacks, but argued that the response was an issue for the UN and not just the U.S. or NATO; "U.S. Friendly," that condemned terrorism and urged Norway to support U.S. actions; a "Norwegian angle" that reflected local concerns and issues; and "Neutral," which simply described the events, commentary on them, rescue operations, and so on.

While most of the stories quoted were scored as "neutral," the authors indicate that the Norwegian frame was extremely popular with a wealth of stories focusing on Norwegians in danger in the U.S. or dangers to Norway from international terrorism (128ff). The authors conclude that while global communications studies should focus on global implications of major events, they should also focus on local reception and issues.

Book Editor Tomasz Pludowski's study "September 11 in Poland: America's Most Enthusiastic Ally in Europe" interprets Polish coverage in the context of the special affinity Polish people have for the U.S., which has long been a favored site of immigration. Pludowski indicates that initial coverage on both broadcasting and in print media was highly image-oriented with collages of television images repeatedly played, and with major newspapers and magazines splashing dramatic pictures on its covers. Solidarity with America indicated the need for Poland to support the U.S. response and develop global alliances of which Poland must be a part. There was a defocus in Polish coverage on who did it and why, but emphasis on not blaming Arabs or Muslims, the majority of which do not support terrorism. While the Polish government and media were strongly supportive of the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, with significant initial participation in the latter, the problems in Iraq have created some more critical discourses on U.S. policy in Polish media.

Ksenija H. Vidmar and Denis Mancevic's "Global News, Local Views: Slovene Media Reporting of 9/11" acknowledges the view that in a global era audiences become "Americanized" and are influenced by the global flow of dominant media, but stress that local inflections and interpretations are also important. They illustrate this thesis with analysis of a sampling of articles and visual materials "from the 9/11 attacks to the U.S. coalition's attack of Afghanistan on Oct. 7" (146), contrasting national news bulletin's

on *TVS*, a national public broadcasting service, a national daily newspaper *Delo*, and a weekly magazine *Mladina*.

TVS's coverage had "apocalyptic dimensions," dramatizing the attack and presenting commentators who asserted "the epochal nature" of the attacks and their immense consequences (148). The newspaper *Delo* often represented European views and had a "cacophony" of opinions and perspectives debating wide range of issues from the nature of the attack to appropriate responses (150f). The weekly magazine *Mladina* presented more "oppositional views" with three main critical frames: terrorism as a product of global capitalism and U.S. political domination; the media's role in producing a culture of fear; and the constructedness of the enemy and the so-called "war of civilizations" paradigm (156f). A Slovenian sense of "belonging" inclined the local media to more European views, and particularly the critical positions of France and Germany (161), thus specifically local factors helped shape the presentation of 9/11 and its aftermath in Slovenia.

A short piece on "September 11 in Russian Media" cites how a dominant information media company RosBusinessConsulting (RBC) tended to follow U.S. frames in presenting 9/11 and highlights a report that indicated: "9/11 was a turning point in the history of the world. The attacks changed the alignment of forces on the planet. Russia's foreign policy turned toward the West sharply. Russian President Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to call U.S. President George W. Bush and offer condolences and support" (165). The author concludes that: "Overall the Russian media has been supportive of the American response" (165). Here, one would like a more nuanced and updated analysis of what has become highly complicated relations between the U.S. and USSR in the past years.

A section on Asian Media opens with M. Zenaida Sarabia-Panol's "The 9/11 Terrorist Attacks on America: Media Frames from the Far East." The study presents a content analysis of an English-language daily over the period of September 12 - 20, 2001 from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Philippines. The author argues that: "In general, the analysis supports the expectation that a newspaper's coverage of 9/11 reflects the nature of the political relationship between the United States and the newspaper's nation" (176). The more positive the relation, the more positive the coverage, and vice-versa. Yet India and China emerged as partial exceptions to this model.

The Philippines, long closely connected to the U.S., had the most positive representations, although a Table that rated "balanced" reports indicated that the Philippines had the third-highest number of balanced articles (177). Indian coverage of 9/11 in the paper surveyed registered "the largest proportion of negative articles about America," (178), possibly because of internal needs not to stir up its own significant Muslim population and because they were worried about the U.S.'s growing relation with Pakistan, as well due to Indian concerns about war in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

In the Muslim countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan there was a largely unfavorable tone in the papers surveyed. While Malaysia's *The New Strait Times* initially carried official government condolences, it shifted to discussion of what caused the attacks, criticisms of the U.S.'s largely unilateral action, and calls to stay out of the Afghanistan conflict. Likewise, while Indonesia's *Jakarta Post* opened

with the president's declaration of a "great shock" over the attacks that were denounced as "barbaric and indiscriminating," a crescendo of negative, anti-American voices appeared. Further, the paper reported on a campaign by radical Islamic groups to tell American tourists to leave Indonesia, and there were reports that: "The Indonesian Ulemas Council called on Muslims all over the world to wage a *Jihad* should the U.S. and its allies go ahead with their planned aggression toward Afghanistan" (180). Pakistan's news agency PPI echoed similar themes and frames, but also alluded to an Israeli conspiracy in the 9/11 attacks, urged the U.S. to take notice of India's "state terrorism" in Jammu and Kashmir, and cited protests against Musharaf's decision to support the U.S., calling for a *Jihad*, if Afghanistan is attacked (180).

Somewhat surprising to the author, China's newspaper had the second biggest percentage of positive stories, attributing 63% of its 9/11 stories to government officials, who evidently wanted to create more positive relations with its major trading partner, the United States. The *China Daily's* major frames included strong opposition to terrorism and sympathy with the U.S.; calls for international cooperation in an anti- terrorism alliance, and emphasizing a dominant role for the United Nations. Its coverage of possible economic impacts of the attacks stressed the resilience of the U.S. and global economy.

Sarabia-Panol's study indicated that: "Next to China, Japan posted the second largest percentage of neutral stories and the second smallest proportion of negative articles" (182). The author concludes that the study indicated that while all of the Asian countries investigated initially unequivocally condemned the terrorist attacks and declared solidarity with the U.S., support for the U.S. began to fade as it prepared for war against Afghanistan.

A study by Mobo C.F. Gao, with Ming Liang, "Chinese: Print Media Coverage of 9/11 Since 2001" engaged some specific Chinese news coverage. Gao and Liang's study compared coverage of 9/11 in official Chinese Party media, semi-official media, and cyberspace and independent media. Official media took a strong anti-terrorism position, but insisted that a "war against terrorism must be conducted within the existing international framework" (199). The semi-official media took a similar position but "tended to have a much more nuanced analysis of the causes of 9/11" (199). Unofficial media, by contrast, presented both sharper critiques of the U.S. and strongly pro-U.S. support by dissidents who identify with the U.S.

Yoichi Shimatsu's "Off the Axis: Media in Japan and China" took on Chinese and Japanese coverage in a general analysis of how the two countries saw the events impacting on regional geo-politics and economy. Japanese media, like Chinese, were deeply divided over coverage, did not appreciate the constant references to 9/11 as the U.S.'s "Pearl Harbor" and indicated that with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, they had experienced apocalypses of their own. There was serious concern in Japan with the initial fall of its stock market, but the later decline of the dollar may have been, Shimatsu concludes, the most significant long-term economic effect (214).

Janet Fine's "Alternative Viewpoints: The Indian Media Perspective on the 9/11 Attacks" and Ralph D. Berenger's "Impact of 9/11 on the Middle East: Personal Reflections" are both wide-ranging and impressionist reflections that are too rich and complex to simply summarize. Likewise, while Qustandi Shomali provides an excellent "Semiotic Analysis of 9/11 in the Palestine Press" and Birol Akgun and

Orhan Gokee engage "September 11 in the Turkish Media," I am going to hold off on discussing Middle East media until the final section that takes on some books on new Arab media and public spheres.

As for Australian and North American representation, Scott Poynting and Greg Nobles' "Muslims and Arabs in Australian Media Since 9/11" provides sharp analysis of stereotypes and negative representations, as does Ross Perigoe's "September 11 in Canada: Representation of Muslims." Kirsten Mogensen's "How U.S. TV Journalists Talk About Objectivity in 9/11 Coverage" analyzes TV coverage of the opening days of 9/11 and interviews 37 journalists who worked for the TV networks discussing themes of "balanced sourcing," "legitimate views," patriotism, conformity to reality, and concern about viewers' reactions.

Nicolene Botha and Arnold S. De Beer in "Between Scylla and Charybdis: 9/11 in South African Media" describe sharp divisions and conflicts over U.S. responses to 9/11, anger at Nelson Mandela for supporting the Afghanistan invasion, and official government efforts to show good will toward the United States in the face of widespread anti-American sentiments in the country. Likewise, Sallie Hughes and Jesus Arroyave's "September 11 and the U.S. Image in Latin American Media" use survey data and content analysis of a sampling of newspapers in Latin American countries "where the U.S. image is more or less positive than the regional average." The survey results show that within the 18-country region taken as a sample, "opinions of the United States dropped significantly after 9/11 and the wars" (341). The situation is necessarily complex and the authors indicate that reaction to U.S. policy is correlated roughly to their own economies and relations to the U.S., although there are anomalies, such as Mexico which despite much trade and immigration between the countries has an image of the U.S. "among the lowest in the region" (341).

The articles reviewed in *How the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11* are quite disparate in terms of focus, methodology, and substance. They reflect a wide global diversity of views toward the 9/11 terror attacks and the U.S. response, as well as varying models of communication studies. The chapters indicate that although 9/11 was a global terror event with epochal consequences for the entire world, coverage reflected local politics and concerns, framing the event and its aftermath in terms of local positions on the U.S. and terrorism, and often in terms of local consequences or concerns. Most of the articles that engage in specific media analysis of particular national or local media do so in term of frame analysis that has become something of a dominant paradigm in global media studies. The diversity can be partly explained, as Cees J. Hamelink indicates in the "Afterword," by the fact that in news reporting "there are different stories to be told, with sometimes conflicting interpretations," and a complex reality that lacks transparency and gives rise to a wealth of interpretations (364).

In the next section, I compare two recent books that focus on the U.S. media in the aftermath of 9/11, indicating some differences in focus and interpretation as well as similarities and overlaps. Both books under review, as we shall now see, are highly critical of the performance of the Bush-Cheney administration and the U.S. media from the standpoint of democratic norms and critique.

The Media After 9/11 in the U.S.

News coverage and the trajectories of journalism in the United States since 9/11 are the focus of Lisa Finnegan's *No Questions Asked: News Coverage Since 9/11* (2007). Finnegan is severely critical of the post-9/11 media and begins by indicating that the press never really sorted out the facts of the events, even of the first day of the attacks. While a videotape of President Bush's visit to a Florida High School the morning of the terror spectacle, memorialized in Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2002), indicated that Bush was present around 15 minutes and sat, seemingly forever, listening to students read after receiving the information of the attack on the second Tower (3ff), there were wildly contradictory accounts of when and how the President received the information, how long he sat and absorbed it, how he processed it, and why he flew around the country the rest of the day rather than returning to Washington (3ff).

Likewise, Finnegan complains, the press never sorted out conflicting accounts of how the hijackers got aboard the airplanes, took control, and were able to crash them into the Twin Towers and Pentagon (8f). Generally, the press followed the 9/11 Commission Report, did not question or probe into its results, or do much independent reporting or investigation.

In addition to passivity, Finnegan goes into detail how the press promoted fear after 9/11, bought into the assumptions of the Bush Administration's "war on terror," elevated Bush to the status of Supreme Leader, and then largely reproduced the Administration's lies and propaganda that propelled the country into the Iraq quagmire. Finnegan presents examples of a "traumatized" press, documenting how reporters and respected anchormen like Dan Rather were deeply affected by the 9/11 attacks, assumed a highly patriotic stance, and served to bolster the shaky image of George W. Bush into that of a strong leader (25ff), helping generate soaring popularity with over 90% support and deep public trust in the government and Pentagon (27ff).

When Bush declared in his "war on terror" that you are "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," the press firmly got behind the President — with disastrous results. Finnegan points out that when Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (Dem-SD) raised legitimate questions concerning the nature and scope of the war on terror, (questions the media themselves should have been raising), he was savaged as unpatriotic by Republican senators and media pundits (17-18).

Fear led to obedience, passivity, and conformity as the press became a willing accomplice of Bush Administration policy. Finnegan notes a variety of stories that the media did not pursue such as the arrest and detention of 1,200 Arab men following the terror attacks (31); the curtailment of the Freedom of Information act (12ff); the threats to civil liberty in the USA Patriot Act (49ff); or even the question as to why the U.S. was the target of such vicious attacks and hatred (32ff).

Finnegan also indicates the price paid by those who refused to conform to Bush Administration policy, including longtime White House reporter Sarah McClendon losing access to the pressroom because of a past record of asking tough questions in Presidential news conferences (42). Further, columnist Dan

Gutherie of the *Oregon Daily Courier* claims that he lost his job for criticizing Bush for "hiding in a Nebraska hole" the day of the September 11 attacks, while Tom Gutting, the city editor of the *Texas City Sun* was fired for writing a column critical of Bush's leadership, leading his publisher to print an accompanying column "Bush's Leadership Has Been Superb" (43).

Finnegan provides examples of how the media abrogated their responsibilities after 9/11, slavishly following Condoleezza Rice's injunction to only provide brief snippets of Osama bin Laden's communiqués (37-38), and succumbing to administration and rightwing pressure not to show civilian casualties during the Afghanistan war (41, 105ff), a stricture that would later be followed in Iraq. Failure of the U.S. media to present and report on civilian casualties in both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars is the topic of a chapter "The Indifferent Press" that presents shocking examples of how U.S. media either failed to report on civilian casualties and friendly fire episodes, or gave official U.S. government and military accounts, compared to the foreign press that presented information and evidence demonstrating civilian casualties or U.S. military mistakes, such as "friendly fire" attacks on their own troops (105ff).

A chapter on "The Buildup to War" (63ff) provides a probing analysis of how story placement of bogus stories about Iraqi "Weapons of Mass Destruction" (WMD) on the front page of newspapers privileged the dangers, while more skeptical accounts were delegated to back pages, if even allowed. Likewise, the standard "inverted pyramid" style of mainstream journalism privileged the alarming claims about Iraqi weapons at the start of the article, and, if skeptical accounts were included, they tended to be further down in the story. In addition, Finnegan notes how editorials during the buildup to war in Iraq tended to favor the pro-war case (70f), and indicates how the Department of Defense hired a P.R. firm, the Rendon Group, to produce alarming accounts of Iraqi weapons and pro-war opinions that, according to one critic, resulted in at least 50 manufactured stories that circulated through the U.S. media (73).

A striking account of "The Defining Moment" indicates how dominant U.S. media bought into Colin Powell's Feb. 5, 2003 UN speech concerning Iraqi threats lock, stock, and barrel, while British and foreign media were highly skeptical of the claims concerning Iraqi WMD (77ff). Finnegan points fingers and names, providing an embarrassing litany in this, and other, chapters of how major U.S. media figures went along with the Bush-Cheney Administration buildup into a disastrous war in Iraq.

Likewise, Finnegan's account of "Embedded Reporters" documents how U.S. reporters bonded with the military, tended to give largely uncritical accounts, and later recalled with fondness their bonding with the troops and being part of the Iraq story (85ff). Her detailed examples here provide damning evidence of how the U.S. media became part of a Bush Administration/Pentagon propaganda apparatus, not only leading up to the war by providing bogus accounts of alleged Iraq "Weapons of Mass Destruction," but during the war itself, even when things began to go bad. She also has a detailed account of how after initially presenting the shocking pictures of evidence of brutality and torture of Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib scandal, the U.S. press was complicit in isolating the examples and not pointing to policy or higher-ups as responsible.

Although Finnegan provides a wealth of useful material and documentation of failures of the U.S. media post-9/11 and into Iraq, her account indicates the limits of liberal views of the press. While she mentions corporate ownership of the press and competitive pressures toward the bottom-line (160-161), she does not provide adequate analysis of changes in U.S. journalism during the past two decades of corporate-conglomerate takeover and tends to blame the trauma of 9/11 and manipulations of the Bush Administration for the failures of the press, rather than structural and ideological factors. She fails to note that one of the major problems with the corporate media is the paucity of sources used, mostly official ones that benefit the party in power, a point I return to just below. Moreover, while Finnegan makes useful comparisons throughout concerning how the U.S., British, and foreign press provided alternative accounts to key post-9/11 events, she does not mention in her book the excellent alternative media sources in the U.S., nor does she mention websites, blogs, and other Internet sources as important sites of information, thus keeping her purview conventionally within the framework of establishment corporate journalism.

Interestingly, another 2007 book by W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina*, covers much of the same material and period as Finnegan's book, but has more ambitious theoretical intentions and more specific in-depth focus. Both books sharply critique U.S. media in the buildup to the Iraq war, and during the war itself. Both briefly engage Bush Administration media strategy, that includes passing off government-produced videos as media reporting, paying news commentators to reproduce the administration line, the use of fake news sources like Jeff Gannon/Gucker, and intimidation of media personnel or sources who dare to question or criticize the administration.

Both engage Abu Ghraib and the eventual defusing of the explosive crisis by the Bush-Cheney administration and with the complicity of the mainstream media, although Bennett et al. have a much more in-depth analysis. Researching the use of words like "torture" and "abuse" in the *Washington Post* and other newspapers, they document how the media moved from more critical representations of Abu Ghraib to the discourses and framings promoted by the Bush Administration, displacing terms like "torture" with "abuse," focusing on lower-level functionaries rather than higher administration officials like Donald Rumsfeld, and failing to focus on the actual prisoners in the prison scandal, most of whom were innocent and picked up in random sweeps. The authors recognize that a dramatic story like Abu Ghraib, especially if supported by compelling images or video emerging from new digital media sources outside the mainstream circuit of image and information, may create a disruption of dominant news frames. But then a battle for framing sets in that privileges institutional sources and a dominant "Washington consensus." Thus, the authors conclude that:

We attribute the ultimate collapse of the torture policy frame in news about Abu Ghraib to the mainstream press's well-documented tendency to follow the lead of high institutional authorities and, correspondingly, to have trouble elevating available challenging perspectives when sources at institutional power points fail to corroborate them. The 'torture policy' counter-frame was pushed out of the news by a deluge of official events that promoted the "isolated abuse" frame, an effect reinforced by a lack of high-level public debate on torture such as occurred much later around Senator McCain's

amendment. The curious result of these intertwined event-driven and official news management dynamics is a semi-independent press characterized by moments of relative independence within a more general pattern of compliance with government news management (105-106).

In a strong chapter on "The News Reality Filter," Bennett, et al., discuss "Why It Matters When the Press Fails" (108ff). They indicate how the U.S. press's filtering of Abu Ghraib differed dramatically from global media framing, creating a gap between American perception and that of much of the world, a gap that emerged from the build-up to the Iraq war through the war itself when American publics were ignorant of the degree of opposition to the Iraq intervention throughout the world because of the frames of the U.S. media.

In addition, both Finnegan and Bennett, et al. have a chapter on Hurricane Katrina and how the event presented a radical departure from the previous media failure to criticize the Bush-Cheney administration and particularly George W. Bush, but Bennett, et al. have a more substantial analysis than Finnegan of how after a critical moment during the first week following the Hurricane, more conventional and uncritical frames came to dominate and the media once more became a mouth-piece of the governing administration (165ff).

Furthermore, Bennett, et al. have a much more ambitious theoretical agenda attempting to both articulate the role of the press in democracy, explicating the concept of a "watchdog press," and indicating how the press generally works in the United States, and how and why it so miserably failed during the post-9/11 era. The authors argue that the mainstream media in the U.S. generally mirror the balance of political power in deciding which frames, sources, and stories will be decisive. Drawing on Bennett's analysis of "indexing," the media, on this model, open the gates to new stories and frame them with sources and language from dominant political elites (49f). If there is a conflict, then the media turn to the most powerful representative sources of competing establishment parties. Further, if one party, like the Republicans in the post-9/11 era, control Congress and the Executive, and the oppositional party is timid in producing alternative discourses and frames, then the dominant political party determines the frames and limits of discussion.

The authors illustrate this model with both the buildup to the Iraq war and Abu Ghraib. As mentioned above, after the shock and scandal of Abu Ghraib, Bush-Cheney administration frames came to shape the story until Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) brought up the issue of torture in Congress and once again the term was used in Abu Ghraib and other prisoner abuse scandals (105f).

While the indexing model provides a strong structural analysis of how the press has come to function (and fail!) in the contemporary moment, and provides a very useful model to interpret the role of the media in the U.S. from 2001-2006, the model underplays the ongoing role of corporate control of the media, fierce political division in the United States, and in particular how administrations have been brought down, or severely undermined, in part by the media. These events include Nixon's fall in Watergate, Reagan's Iran-Contra crisis, Clinton's Monica-gate near impeachment, and the current crises of

the Bush-Cheney administration, all of which show a highly contested political terrain and its replication in the media.

For a variety of complex reasons, media in the U.S. often take the sides of one party or grouping or another, despite who is actually in power. Bennett, et al. do not discuss how the media became “attack dogs” against Clinton, although they do indicate how the media became “lap dogs,” at least from 9/11 through 2006 for Bush.³ And while they mention David Brock’s analysis of “the Republican Noise Machine” and the roles of blogs and Internet activism, their focus is generally limited to establishment corporate media, and they do not adequately indicate how new media and alternative journalism are shaking up the media mix in the United States and elsewhere.

It is, however, beyond the scope of this review article to adequately explicate and engage *When the Press Fails*’ challenging general theory of how the media work in the U.S. and its reflections on how to reinvigorate a watch-dog press. As noted, the book provides a strong critical overview of the failures of the U.S. corporate media post-9/11, as well as original perspectives on the U.S. media.

One of the themes of Finnegan’s book, and other media scholars whom I review in the next section, is that U.S. media present a skewed view of U.S. policies and their global impact, as well as misleading perspectives on the U.S.’s relations in the Middle East. As we’ll see in the next section, differences between U.S. and other global media help provide a polarization between media and worldview in the United States in relation to the rest of the world, and in particular, the Middle East. Hence, I will next focus on the polarization in media, culture, and politics between the United States and the West and the Arab and Islamic world, a dangerous polarization that has created a new era of Terror War.

Polarization and Ideological Struggle in Global Media Post-9/11

A series of books have explored how the dominant frames, discourses, and circulation of global media have helped polarize the Western world and the Arab and Muslim world. The story is two-sided: how the Western media have produced dominant negative stereotypes and demonized Islamic fundamentalism, and in turn how Arab media have promoted negative images of the West, although on the latter story, it is, as we’ll see below, more complex.

Lawrence Pintak’s *Reflections in a Bloodshot Eye* (2006) provides a very useful overview of the skewed perceptions Americans and Muslims and Arabs have of each other. The distorted picture is grounded, Pintak suggests, in fundamentally different religions and views of the world that create dichotomized relations and mutual viewing of each camp as “the Other” (15f; 77ff). Through a quick

³ For comparisons of the ways the corporate media positioned themselves contra Clinton and for Bush, see Eric Altermann, *What Liberal Media? The Truth about Bias and the News*. New York: Basic Books, 2003, and Kellner, *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy*, op. cit.

survey of "U.S. Coverage of Islam" (30ff) and "The Arab and Muslim Media" (58), Pintak suggests how media produce stereotypes of the other side and exacerbate differences and produce cultural tensions.

In a section on "The Framing of an Era," Pintak shows how during the post-9/11 era tensions and hostilities have been intensified due to the Bush Administration "war on terror" and Osama bin Laden and other radical Islamic groups promoting "*Jihad*." Pintak provides clear and accessible accounts of both Bush and bin Laden's rhetoric and worldview, how they tend to discursively mirror each other, and how their binary discourses and extremist rhetoric have shaped the representations of each side in their respective media.

While Pintak provides a broad historical framework concerning conflicts in the Middle East, based on his experience as a correspondent for CBS and ABC, much of his book concerns the story of the aftermath of 9/11, and, particularly the buildup to and unfolding of the Iraq war (although there is also a chapter on Palestine and the Israel-Palestine conflict that he had reported on over the years).

Pintak argues that through the biases and preconceptions of politicians, media, and publics on both sides, each views the other "through a bloodshot eye" riven with blindspots and tunnel vision. He illustrates the thesis through many concrete examples and concludes by indicating how politicians, publics, and the media on both sides need to put aside preconceptions, listen and talk to the other side, and try to overcome stereotypes and hostilities.

Brigitte L. Nacos has long written on the media and terrorism and the second edition of her book *Mass-Mediated Terrorism* has appeared in 2007. While Pintak tries to present a balanced analysis of flaws of perception on both sides and the need to enter into new political and cultural relationships, Nacos tends more to critique of terrorism and the ways that the Western media, however inadvertently, promote terrorist agendas. While her focus is on Middle Eastern and Islamicist terrorism in the book under review, she has a broad array of examples ranging from Animal Liberation groups and so-called "eco-terrorism," and domestic terrorists like Timothy McVeigh of the Oklahoma City bombings and the Unabomber.

Nacos builds upon Dayan and Katz's notion of a "media event" and responding to critique of her use of the concept in the first edition, she responds that while their conception defined a media event as "being televised 'live,' ceremonial, and preplanned, such as the funeral of President Kennedy, a royal wedding, or Olympic Games," "terrorists, too, put a great deal of preparation into staging media events — albeit without letting TV networks in on their planning" (2). Against Nacos, however, one might argue that the Dayan and Katz media events are staged to help reproduce the existing social system or a particular type of establishment hegemony, while terrorists aim to disrupt a social system, creating fear and terror through orchestrated media spectacle, in which the media become unwitting accomplices of their goals.⁴

⁴ Interestingly, Katz and Liebes have revised the original Dayan and Katz analysis to distinguish between "media events," "the ceremonial Contest, Conquests and Coronations that punctuated television's first 50 years," contrasted to disruptive events "such as Disaster, Terror and War." See Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes, "No More Peace!": How Disaster, Terror and War have Upstaged Media Events" in the first volume of the *International Journal of Communication 1 (2007)*, 157-166 at

In an interesting analysis of how the media makes terrorists celebrities, Nacos indicates how both McVeigh and bin Laden were made into major celebrities by the media framing and presentation. In a detailed account of McVeigh's achieving celebrity status in the six months before his execution, Nacos cites how MSNBC presented a program about McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing on its series *Headliners and Legends*, usually devoted to celebrities and stars, thus calling attention to McVeigh's transformation into a celebrity. She also cites Neil Gabler's analysis of celebrity and entertainment, indicating how a *Newsweek* color photo by Eddie Adams, the famed Vietnam and war photographer, made a romanticized McVeigh appear "more like a typical Gen-Xers than a deranged loner, much less a terrorist" (Gabler, cited on Nacos 97), while the actual article and interview "was pure *Photoplay*: gushy, reverent, excited" (ibid).

Responding to media celebrity treatment, women sent McVeigh nude photos of themselves, marriage proposals and money to him, angering families of the victims (98). Moreover, Nacos indicates, it was not just TV and news magazines that helped McVeigh achieve fame and celebrity. In a similar fashion, newspapers carried frequent articles on him such that during the last six months of his life he "received almost a third as many mentions as the President George W. Bush, and stories about him far exceeded the volume of coverage devoted to Vice President Dick Cheney, who was widely seen as equally influential and important as the President" (100).

Similarly, Nacos claims that Osama bin Laden was made a household name even before 9/11 with significant media coverage for his previous terror attacks. "In 2000, for example, CBS News and NBC News broadcast significantly more stories mentioning bin Laden than segments referring to Great Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair and Germany's chancellor, Gerhard Schroder. ABC News presented the same number of stories mentioning bin Laden and Blair, far fewer referring to Schroder" (100).

Nacos' chapter on "Terrorism as Breaking News: Attack on America" is quite disappointing, however. After a few pages describing the 9/11 terror spectacle, she indicates that the attacks "and their aftermath were the most watched made-for-television event ever," suggesting that it was a great success for the terrorist group in terms of publicity (47). Nacos concludes that "the public gave the media high grades for its reporting" of the event and aftermath, but does not go into any detail how the media created fear and hysteria, privileged military metaphors and war to describe the event and appropriate response, and basically became a propaganda apparatus for the Bush-Cheney administration to push through its rightwing agenda, leading to the Iraq war.

Nor is Nacos' critical of the media and George W. Bush's "War against Terrorism" or the Afghanistan war. While she briefly criticizes the media for reproducing false claims about Iraqi "weapons of

<http://ijoc.org/ojs/index.php/ijoc/article/view/44/23>. My own view is that the Bush-Cheney administration has orchestrated events in its "war on terror" to strengthen their regime, but that their media spectacle of the Iraq war got out of control and became a highly disruptive event; see Douglas Kellner, *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy*, *op. cit.* In fact, war itself has arguably become an orchestrated media spectacle since the 1991 Gulf War. On the latter, see Douglas Kellner, *The Persian Gulf TV War*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1992.

mass destruction," and has a brief section "The News Media Failed" on the Iraq fiasco, she does not go into detail concerning the nature and extent of the media failure, nor is she significantly critical of the Iraq invasion and occupation that revealingly appears in a chapter on "The Mass Media and U.S. Anti- and Counterterrorism." Thus, inadvertently or not, she reproduces Bush Administration discourse of Iraq as part of the "war on terror" and thus a "counterterrorism" intervention.

Nacos' book is partly conceived as a textbook that avoids too controversial and too polemical positions, and its language and studies are more geared toward a general audience than academic audiences. A coauthored study by Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna, by contrast, *Fueling Our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans* (2007), contains a wide range of empirical studies and analysis of "Muslim Americans in the News before and after 9/11," "The Visual Portrayal of Arabs and Muslims," "How Americans View Islam and Muslims at Home and Abroad," and other topics.

While fully engaging each study in Nacos' and Rottes-Reyna's book would take me beyond the parameters of this study, I might note that the opening chapter usefully goes into the concepts and methods used in the study, while an "Appendix: Research Considerations and Methodologies" displays the specific goals, samples, research strategies, and methodologies used in each specific study. The Epilogue makes a useful analogy to the need in the 1960s for the media to improve representations of African Americans after the Kerner Commission *U.S. Riot Commission Report* in 1968 which followed urban unrest and recommended some ways that the media could improve race relations. Nacos and Torres argue that a similar problem exists today concerning representation of Arab Americans, and that the media need to present fuller pictures of their lives, more diverse representations, and hire more people from the community to help engage in this project.

Marc Lynch's *Voices of the New Arab Public. Iraq, al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today* (2006), by contrast, provides a comprehensive overview of the historical rise of new Arab media and public sphere, in which Arabs attempt to break with the stereotypes and represent themselves, while giving voice to views and ideas that are usually absent in both their state controlled media and Western media. Lynch's focus is more on Iraq and the rise of a new Arab public sphere rather than 9/11 and terrorism. He notes how on Sept. 11, 2001, he was halfway finished with a book about the sanctions on Iraq, when he became increasingly fascinated by the role of the media in the political struggles of the day and the rise of a new Arab public sphere.

The emergence of satellite television stations like Al Jazeera and the Internet are creating a new Arab public sphere, according to Lynch, outside of the previous monopoly over the flow of information by the state. It recognizes the value of debate and differences, and allows disagreement. It has forced politicians to justify their policies and has created a new level of accountability. Yet such a public sphere is "rife with paradoxes. It is fueled by a determination to bring publicity to the closed, repressive Arab political world, shattering every taboo and crossing every red line with abandon. At the same time, its politics of identity could all too easily slide into a tyranny from below, excommunicating those who disagree and demonizing outsiders to enforce internal unity" (3-4).

At present, Lynch asserts, the direction and effects of a new Arab public sphere are unclear, but already political talk shows have transformed the nature of Arab public opinion, [and] the impact of the news coverage has similarly revolutionized political behavior. News coverage has inspired contentious politics on the so-called Arab street, from the fierce demonstrations sparked by al-Jazeera's coverage of the American-British bombing of Iraq in December 1998, to the intense waves of sustained popular protests over the bloody fighting between Palestinians and Israel in 2000 and 2002, to the demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq in 2003, to the wave of protests demanding political reform that swept from Lebanon through Egypt into the Gulf in the first months of 2005 (5).

In an opening chapter on "Iraq and the New Arab Public Sphere," Lynch indicates that since the 1980s there have been fierce debates about Iraq and Saddam Hussein in Arab media. After Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, the imposed sanctions on the regime were widely opposed in the Arab world and there was growing sympathy for the suffering of the Iraqi people, while at the same time many were strongly critical of Saddam Hussein and his regime.

While the emergence of al-Jazeera in 1997 was a major factor in the rise of an Arab public sphere, it constitutes far more than just the one TV network, encompassing "dozens of competing satellite television stations, independent newspapers, state-backed official media, and even on-line news sites. It comprises Islamic networks and mosques, NGOs and transnational organizations, and prominent public figures and intellectuals. It includes a vast Arab diaspora that is increasingly able to maintain contact with and actively engage with the politics of the Arab world through information and communications technology" (22). Indeed, the Internet has made it possible to circulate Arab newspaper and television reports, as well as a diversity of views and debates.

In a chapter titled "The Structural Transformation of the Arab Public Sphere" that plays off the title of Habermas's famous 1962 book *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*, Lynch discusses historical stages and emergence of an Arab public sphere. While there were influential Arab media like Voice of the Arabs, Egypt's radio service of the 1950s, the 1970s and 1980s are described by Lynch as "The Dismal Years" in which Arab media tended to be tightly state-controlled and repressed. After a "Domestic Liberalization" in the early 1990s that saw the rise of an explosion of newspapers in Jordan, emergence of papers, competing television stations and magazines in Yemen, and even a brief liberalization of media in Kuwait following the 1991 Gulf War, this brief opening was followed by a "Retreat" which created the market conditions for the emergence of al-Jazeera, a proliferation of other Arab broadcasting outlets and voices, and the emergence of the Arab public sphere.

A chapter titled "the al-Jazeera Era" documents the television network's beginnings in 1997, its rise to prominence in the Arab world following the U.S./UK bombing of Iraq in 1998, and its central role in presenting the Israeli-Palestine conflict and other issues of the region to Arab publics. Yet for Lynch it is with the buildup to the war against Iraq and eventual U.S./U.K. invasion and occupation that the Arab public sphere came into its own. While during the Afghanistan war, a global public came to see and hear of al-Jazeera, perhaps for the first time, it was during the Iraq war that it became the subject of vilification by American leaders and media, as well as a subject of hot debate among Arabs. No longer did the U.S.

control media frames of major events, but rather a diversity of perspectives appeared in the global arena and Arab voices competed with Western ones for hearts and minds of people throughout the world.

Lynch concludes that there has emerged "A Real Public Sphere" in the Arab world which is "characterized by self-conscious, open, and contentious political argument before a vast but discrete audience" (247-248). Yet it is a "weak public" that is "cut off from any viable means of directly influencing policy outcomes," a situation with contradictory and unpredictable effects. It is not clear if it will become a "liberal public sphere" full of diverse opinions and tolerant of opposing views because "the politics of the Arab public sphere tend toward populism, the politics of identity, of authenticity, and of resistance" (26) — although in his concluding summary Lynch holds it open whether it will become "a populist public or a liberal public" (248).

Lynch concludes with "a Call for Dialogue" with the emergent Arab public sphere (249ff). He calls attention to the Bush Administration's failed approach to the Arab public sphere which involved treating it either as "an enemy to be defeated (in a 'war of ideas') or as an object to be manipulated (via public relations)" (250). Instead, Lynch calls for "a real dialogue with the Arab public sphere" (250).

One could argue that Lynch idealizes a too homogeneous "Arab public sphere" in the same way that Habermas's critics claim that he idealized the "bourgeois public sphere." Further, one could raise the question of whether Habermas's notion of the public sphere can be imported to different parts of the world. There are arguably a diversity of Arab public spheres, just as there were a "proletarian public sphere" (Negt and Kluge), women's public spheres, and those of diverse groups and movements in the West. Also, Arab public spheres arguably take different forms than the bourgeois public spheres described by Habermas, including mosques, tea houses, public baths, and other sites that Lynch does not explore, given his focus on broadcasting and newspapers. Further, his research appears to have ended in 2005 before its 2006 publication, and since then there has been a dramatic expansion of Islamic media and voices that tend to be underplayed in Lynch's narrative.⁵

Yet clearly the rise of Arab news media create a new situation in which public opinion and political action can be shaped outside of traditional political elites in the Middle East, and there are new possibilities for Arab consciousness and union as well as diversity and conflict within, and new dialogues with the West without. Lynch, unlike Pintak, more positively valorizes the Arab media and public sphere which, in many cases, attempt to present a broad range of Arab voices, counter Arab and Islamic extremism, and give Western voices a fair chance to participate in a dialogue.

⁵ One could also argue that Lynch does not pay attention to television entertainment or other forms of popular culture in the "new Arab public sphere," concentrating instead on news and information. On the rising importance of Arab reality television and entertainment, see Marwan M. Kraidy, "Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and the Changing Arab information Order," in *International Journal of Communication* 1(2007), 139-156 at <http://ijoc.org/ojs/index.php/ijoc/article/view/18/22>.

It is probably al-Jazeera which has gone furthest in globally disseminating Arab voices and positions, and causing controversy! To engage detailed and nuanced analyses of the phenomenon, we can turn to Mohamed Zayani's edited volume *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon. Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media* (2005). The text provides a wide range of analyses of emergent Arab media from an international collection of communications scholars and journalists. Mohamed Zayani's "Introduction — Al Jazeera and the Vicissitudes of the New Arab Mediascape" provides an extremely cogent and informative overview of "Al Jazeera's New Journalism," its history, specificity, and the debates over its transmissions and influence. Zayani's discussion of "A News(s) Media Order" (27f) and "Al Jazeera and the Public Sphere" (33f) anticipate Lynch's book, as do studies in Section I, "Al Jazeera, Regional Politics and the Public Sphere," which includes Mohammed El Oifi's analysis of "Influence without Power: Al Jazeera and the Arab Public Sphere" (66-79). Other sections engage "Al Jazeera Programming" and "Al Jazeera and Regional Crises."

Concluding Comments

Ideological and political conflict between the Western and Arab and Muslim world is one of the most significant phenomena of the present era and the struggle is mediated, reproduced, and circulated by the media. While U.S. and Western media have previously dominated the global mediascape, the emergence of new Arab media and a new Arab public sphere open the way for productive dialogues and better mutual understanding. Yet Western media must break with stereotypes of Arabs and Islam, incorporate more Arab and Muslim voices into its programming and production apparatus, and provide real dialogue and debate rather than ideological posturing and polarization. Likewise, the emergent Arab public sphere should be open to Western voices and dialogue, as well as the diversity of points of view in its region. The media can facilitate informed dialogue and debate, or increase polarization. Hence, it will be one of the challenges of the coming years for critical communication scholars to track media and politics in the interaction between the Middle East and the West which has been so fraught with danger, and will no doubt continue to be a site of immense importance and conflict.