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## **Book Announcements**

**Arrie de Beer**

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### **Abstract**

From this edition on the *Global Media Journal-African Edition* will regularly present new books in the field of media studies in an additional section. Readers are invited to contact the Book Editor (asdebeer@imasa.org) to suggest books to be reviewed. Readers can also contribute their own reviews (not longer than 800 words). Refer to instructions to authors elsewhere in this journal for the copy presentation.

In this edition, a number of relevant new books are announced:

**Fortner, R. & Fackler, M. (Eds.). 2010. *Ethics and evil in the public sphere: media, universal values and global development*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.**

In order to honour Prof Clifford G. Christians, this *estschrift* consists of 21 chapters with authors from 13 countries on the six continents who address the issue of universal values within the larger context of global development.

For many years Christians has been at the international forefront of media ethics research in general and more specifically in his search of *proto norms* and the obligatory question whether such norms can be truly universal.

Underlying the work of Christians is a Christian reformational approach. It would however be a mistake to frame the contributors as writing from within the same Christian mould. On the contrary, they write from different approaches and from different paradigms. As the editors note, the authors in this book share three basic convictions. First “whatever religious or humanistic foundation we start from, the end result of our communicative efforts should reflect a genuine love for humankind.” In Christians’s case this could perhaps best be found in his vision and application of the idea of agape. Secondly, the broad approach of the book is to encourage and legitimise those who strive for the best, while those who reflect the unfortunate tendencies in humankind, should be discouraged throughout; and thirdly “communication and culture in all their manifestations are crucial in this process.”

As Tom Cooper writes in his foreword, Clifford Christians is the “undisputed senior spokesman and scholar” within the field of media ethics studies. Scholars, students and teachers groping with the illusive nature of media ethics are all indebted to him. This gratitude is well summarised

by the editors: “All of us save one (Professor Clifford Christians, who also contributes to the book) also share one other characteristic. We have all been inspired by the years of effort that Cliff has put into creating an environment in communications scholarship where ethical reflection could thrive. We have been encouraged to think deeply by his work, to reach beyond our own philosophical comfort zone to battle with the frailties of the human condition and the distortion of values by corporate control. We have been challenged to rise above expediency to embrace first principles and to approach every problem from a platform that is ‘proto-normative’ rather than merely professionally normative. So, this book is a special kind of *festschrift* that owes its genesis to both the character and intellectual acumen of our friend, Cliff Christians.”

**Donsbach, W. Ed. 2008. *The international encyclopedia of journalism*. Malden, CA: Blackwell**

This encyclopedia of 10 volumes is one of the major publishing events in communication and related fields over the last number of years. It is a huge undertaking. The editor, Professor Doctor Wolfgang Donsbach, gathered an impressive field of scholars to write up one of the most authoritative and up to date versions of communication as it is presently studied and taught. It offers great functionality to students, lecturers and researchers.

The volumes each consist of shorter, medium and longer entries depending on the nature of the topic. A few examples from volume B are discussed below.

It is not always clear what the basis for the number of pages is. For instance, the entry on the media system in the Baltic States runs over eight pages. An article on Roland Barthes over two pages, whilst the history of cinematography also runs over six pages.

Written in the present time, for the present time, the encyclopedia offers a multitude of information on new developments such as blogging and citizen’s media, as well as citizen’s journalism. This is not to say that trends well known from the previous century such as the bandwagon effect are not covered.

The question obviously would be whether a large ten-volume encyclopedia printed on paper is still the best way to go, especially at the price of more than US\$ 2000. No wonder then that the online version has already been adapted and updated since the appearance of the print version. It might be an indication of times to come that the entry on the book is only about half the length of the entry on Bollywood.

Even so, the encyclopedia offers a valuable tool for knowing the field of communications better at a time of constant change.

### **Reviews invited**

Reviews are invited for the following books:

Josephi, B. Ed. 2010. *Journalism education in countries with limited media freedom*. New York: Peter Lang.

Khumalo, A. 2009. *Through my lens*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Schudson, M. 2008. *Why democracy needs an unlovable press*. Malden, CA: Polity Press.

Stromback, J. & Lee Kaid, L. Eds. 2008. *The handbook of election news coverage around the world*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. & Hanitzsch, T. Eds. 2009. *The Handbook of journalism studies*. New York, NY: Routledge.

De Waal, S. Ed. 2010. *25 Years of the Mail & Guardian*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

**Author details**

Arrie de Beer is a lecturer and book editor at The Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

Contact details: [asdebeer@imasa.org](mailto:asdebeer@imasa.org)