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Making News: The Political Economy of Journalism in Britain and America from the Glorious Revolution to the Internet. *Edited by Richard R. John and Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ix + 263 pp. Bibliography, index. Cloth, \$95.00. ISBN: 978-0199676187.

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If one dates the advent of the sea change in journalism to the appearance of the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s, journalism has now completed, or endured, its second decade in existential crisis—which may make the life story of the centuries-old institution that is the Anglo-American form of the newspaper all the more poignant and worth telling. Richard R. John and Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb, in their scholarly anthology *Making News: The Political Economy of Journalism in Britain and America from the Glorious Revolution to the Internet*, have assembled a history of the rise and fall of that former giant. Their compilation of eight essays by eleven authors attempts to assess the structural woes of modern journalism by analyzing “the interplay of four distinct elements: technological innovation, business strategy, professional norms, and public policy” (p. 22). The study period ranges from 1688 to 1995; one certainly cannot fault the editors for a lack of ambition.

The work’s underlying thesis, played out across the volume’s eight chapters, is that the free-market approach favored by contemporary Internet-focused journalists—as well as by many of today’s media business savants—will ultimately prove incapable of producing the kind of reliable, high-quality reporting serious news organizations were expected to deliver prior to the technological revolution of the late-twentieth-century arrival of the Internet. At its core, the central argument of the book is persuasive, all the more so because earlier revolutions in the business of news are explored deeply for the purposes of comparison, contrast, and agency.

Some readers may find that the success of the individual essays varies—as is often the case in anthologies, with their many authors and different authorial voices. In some chapters, stylistic issues detract from the strength and continuity of the overall argument. The volume’s early essays properly foreground the *London Gazette* (1666–present), and with the rendering of the period from the early modern era to the Age of Revolution, a large number of individual characters appear on stage, from tyrannical royalty to monopoly magnates to political activists. But there is an imbalance between names and stories. One might wish for less biographical detail and greater attention to, for example, the evolution of professional practices specific to the

journalism industry. The result would have been a fuller picture of the overarching narrative the volume is trying to convey.

However, a number of chapters represent extraordinary historical scholarship. The essay “The Victorian City and the Urban Newspaper” by David Paul Nord is an extended comparative case study analyzing the coevolution of the newspaper and Victorian urban economic ideology. Comparing Manchester and Chicago—the “shock cities” of their respective nations—and their main publications at the time of their rise, the *Guardian* and the *Chicago Tribune*, the author does a remarkable job explaining the densely entangled factors of urbanization, economic ideology, technological innovation, and changing cultural norms, as well their aggregate contribution to the evolution of journalism (p. 74). In sum, he executes precisely what the volume’s title promises, placing concrete examples in a narrative frame of a political economy. Similarly, James L. Baughman’s chapter, “The Decline of Journalism since 1945,” provides an insightful edge to the overall argument by explicating the different policy approaches used by Britain and the United States after World War II. Moreover, the author is not shy about detailing the unfortunate consequences of these policies for the quality of journalistic products. Included in the essay is the rise of Rupert Murdoch’s news empire and its singular role in the postwar decline of journalism—as in the chapter’s title.

The last two chapters, Heidi J. S. Tworek’s “Protecting News before the Internet” and Robert G. Picard’s “Protecting News Today,” focus on the pre- and post-Internet strategies deployed to defend newspapers’ “property rights in news” (p. 210). Both authors are successful in illustrating the difficulties news organizations face in dealing with the challenges presented by the Internet. Every avenue of potential defense—favorable legal decisions, appeals to private corporations, the largess of nonprofit foundations, experimental new business structures—faces its own onslaught of obstacles, and both Tworek and Picard chart the evident outcomes and consequences concisely. It is worth noting Picard’s conclusion: Due to the press of technological innovation and the rise of social media, “the news providers’ traditional monopoly over breaking news . . . no longer exists” (p. 233). He posits that, as a result, the best way to protect the cultural production of genuine news will likely be through as-yet-undefined “alternate institutional arrangements” more adept at accommodating the needs of news organizations (p. 233).

The volume’s epilogue, written by its editors, supports this sentiment, arguing that for the public good to be served, news organizations will have to redefine their way of doing business. The challenge will be to find new ways to maintain a level of quality journalism rather than

chasing a once-worthy but economically unfeasible goal of free-market journalism. The solutions to that challenge remain elusive, despite the 250-year history of journalism.

In conclusion, *Making News* provides a scholarly historical overview of the evolution of the news industry as a cultural product, a business enterprise, and a profession. Though varying in merit, the volume's essays are all extensively researched and well documented. A valuable addition to both business and media history, it contains many valuable insights often lacking in current debates over the future of the journalistic enterprise.

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