

Sally M. Miller, ed. *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987) xxii, 437 pp., \$65.00.

This book is first and foremost a much-needed reference text. It fills a scholarly void in media history by presenting the press histories of twenty-eight immigrant groups.

The ethnic groups studied are those whose immigration to this country dates from the early 19th century through the Filipino wave of immigration starting in the 1920s. Miller notes in her introduction that this leads to a “built-in bias” toward Central and Eastern European immigrant groups. Nevertheless, the book includes chapters on the Chinese, Japanese, Finnish, French, Greek and Irish press as well.

Excluded are the press histories of Afro-Americans, Native Americans, Koreans, Vietnamese, Sikhs, Pakistanis, Central Americans, East Indians, and others entering the country “in the 1970s.” (Miller includes Mexicans in this group, which is confusing considering the high quality of Carlos Cortes’s chapter on the Mexican-American press.) Black and Indian press histories are excluded on the grounds that they do not “reflect the immigration and adaptation process”—a statement that indicates a disturbing emphasis on acculturation. What about the role of the ethnic press in preserving cultures? And who can talk about Afro-American cultural history without talking about “adaptation” or at least the interactions between African and early American, enslaved and slaveholding cultures? Studies of the other groups mentioned above are excluded as “premature.”

As in any anthology, the quality of the entries is somewhat uneven, but on the whole all are useful. Read together, these historians illuminate common patterns: The role of religion, churches and missionaries in the establishment and/or maintenance of some presses (the Chinese, Romanian, Dutch); the involvement of the immigrant press with political issues of the country of origin (splitting the Chinese-American press, for example, and shaping at least some periods of the Arabic, Croatian, Irish, Russian, Serbian presses, among others). These patterns, however, illuminate some basic theoretical problems with the collection.

Miller states explicitly the implicit theory of the press in most of the articles: that immigrant presses “reflect the immigration and adaptation process.” This “mirror theory” of the media—that the press or other media are transparent reflections of an entire community—has been largely discredited in communications research in the past fifteen years. The authors ignore the substantial literature on the social construction of the news, do not treat newspapers as complex social institutions, and tend to accept American-style newspapers as an ideal.

Thus Lai’s study of the Chinese-American press, which notes that historically “most organs spoke for the interest of political groups or factions,” can refer to modern Chinese-American newspapers as a

“higher, more professional standard of journalism.” Other authors ignore significant questions about the ownership of Mexican-American and Japanese-American media by Mexican and Japanese corporations. *Shizouka Shimbun* of Japan has owned the *Hawaii Hochi* since 1962, which Harry Kitano says “improved” the newspaper. Cortes compares the Mexican-American press with what he calls “Chicano electronic media,” but never mentions that Univision (formerly SIN, the Spanish International Network) is owned and run by Mexico’s Televisa, that they have been accused of discriminating against Chicanos in their hiring practices and that almost all programming is imported from Mexico. What Chicano electronic media?

Only one author is identified as a communications researcher. Perhaps the absence of *media* historians, familiar with the contemporary literature in communications, explains the selection of a problematic media theory. Nevertheless, the book is a welcome addition to the scarce literature on ethnic media history.

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John P. Miska. *Canadian Studies on Hungarians, 1886-1986; An Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources.* (Regina, Saskatchewan: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1987) xiii, 245 pp., \$35.00.

Canadian Studies on Hungarians presents a wealth of information on most aspects of Hungarian and Hungarian-Canadian studies. Some 1271 entries range from reference works to theater, music, and sports. History and literature seem to predominate, although commercial relations and immigration and ethnic questions also form important sections. Independent monographs and parts of books are included, as are dissertations and periodical articles, so that the listing is truly comprehensive.

John Miska’s introduction states the purpose and organization clearly, but goes beyond that in commenting on the thematic organization and in citing some particularly important, relevant, or typical entries. For example, he invites those interested in immigration and assimilation studies to consult some dozen works ranging from ethnicity to nativism and discrimination. Such examples are useful for a thematic approach and guide even the inexperienced researcher to a fuller use of the text. He also identifies the major interests of historians, which are naturally influenced to some degree by their backgrounds: whether Hungarian-born and educated, or educated primarily in Canada. The collection also