The role of cultural differences in intercultural communicative interaction. However, the claim that students will consequently also become more successful communicators in intercultural settings seems too pretentious. This claim would be less pretentious if more attention had been devoted to linguistic and communicative factors and an analysis of intercultural language use from the perspectives of, for example, social psychology and second language acquisition. But perhaps such a claim should not have been made in this book. It is, after all, a textbook meant to introduce students to the field of intercultural communication and to raise their awareness of the importance of cultural differences in communicative interaction.

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The fourth edition of Denis McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory is certainly an impressive piece of work. With its six parts, 20 chapters and 542 pages it is an expanded and revised version of the third edition which was published in 1994 and contained 416 pages. The layout and format of the book have also been improved so that now it has the look and feel of a true encyclopaedia of mass communication theory. The basic structure of the book, however, remains very much the same as it was in the 1994 edition.

The book is divided into six parts, which cover Theories, Structures, Organizations, Content, Audiences and Effects, followed by an Epilogue. What has been changed is the content and organization of (parts of) some of the chapters in the book as well as the distribution of (parts of) the chapters over the categories Theories, Structures, Organizations, Content, Audiences and Effects. This has been mainly the case in the first two parts of the book, for instance in this 2000 edition the Introduction chapter from the 1994 edition has been incorporated in the Theory part.

Also included in the Theory part I is a new chapter six ‘New Media – New Theory’ that deals with the information society, new media, new media theory and media technology. Some elements of this new chapter were incorporated in various chapters in earlier editions of the book but have earned a separate chapter in this updated edition. A new chapter seven on Normative Theories is now included in part I: Theories. This
seems a logical thing to do especially since in the 1994 edition the chapter on Normative Theories of Media Performance was an element of part II: Structures. This former chapter has been divided in two separate chapters: Normative Theories, and Media structure and Performance, which as chapter eight has become element of the part II: Structures in the newest edition.

Two other chapters have been included in the book. Chapter ten with the title Global Communication, also in part II: Structures and a new chapter 17 in part VI: Effects, titled The Effects Research Tradition. The chapter on Global Communication is very much a compilation of topics related to international and multinational media structures and institutions which in the 1994 edition were treated in the chapter Media Structures and Institutions. The chapter on the Effects Research Tradition used to be part of the chapter on Processes of Short-Term Change in the 1994 edition but now serves as an introductory chapter to part VI: Effects, which also includes chapters on short-term effect and on longer term and indirect effects.

All in all, the 2000 edition of the book is a better-organized and better-presented version of the 1994 edition. Earlier editions of the book (1983, 1987, 1994) have already won a solid international reputation as a general textbook for communication students and scholars and this improved version will certainly maintain and consolidate that reputation.

For communication students and scholars the value of the book lies mainly in its encyclopedic nature, although for first year communication students the book must be a monster to take a test on. In the course of their studies, more advanced students will value the book as a work of reference for an introduction to a vast array of theoretical topics, and as a source of literature and references for assignments – the references section alone cover 31 pages. The added glossary at the end of the book and the addition of suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter will certainly contribute to that. As is the case with many introductory texts, communications students at the end of their studies will probably value the book more than they did in their first year as student.

As for communication scholars, they too will appreciate the book as a vast work of reference to relevant elements from what McQuail calls in his Last Words on page 489 the ‘theory workshop’. It will be difficult for any communication scholar to find a theoretical topic related to the mainstream of mass communication theory that is not at least briefly touched on in this book and/ or in the references. But here may also lie a weakness in McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory for communications scholars. Because of its comprehensiveness and impartiality, the book covers all angles and theoretical perspectives on mass communica-
tion theory, without making any choice or stating any preference for a specific theoretical approach.

In comparison to for instance Rosengren’s Communication: An Introduction (2000, Sage) McQuail’s book offers very little room for discussion among communication scholars about the merit of one theoretical approach above the others. In that sense the book is not, as the new title suggests ‘McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory’. But it certainly is McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory in the sense that it is an impressive and successful legacy of a lifelong career in teaching, writing and introducing students to the vast and ever developing field of mass communication theory.

References


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In Becoming Intercultural, Young Yun Kim presents an integrative theory of the process of cross-cultural adaptation, bringing together various disciplinary perspectives and approaches to the phenomenon. This integrative theory has to form a more comprehensive and general system of description and explanation by identifying and formulating the uniformity and regularity in what are infinitely varied individual experiences of cross-cultural adaptation.

The interdisciplinary integration has been worked out through the use of constructs that are broad and general enough to represent various well known but narrower concepts (cf. chapter 2, Existing Approaches to Cross-Cultural Adaptation). Thus, the term strangers (not immigrants, expatriates, sojourners, refugees) represents all individuals who find themselves in a cultural or subcultural milieu for varied time periods under varied circumstances. Likewise, the concept of cross-cultural adaptation incorporates a number of other more restrictive concepts, such as acculturation, psychological adjustment, assimilation, and integration.

Given these concepts, the domain of the theory is broad, limited by three boundary conditions (chapter 3, Organizing Principles):