

## Book Reviews

Nichola D. Gutgold, *Seen and Heard: The Woman of Television News*. Lexington Books, 2008. Reviewed by Shirley K. Drew, Pittsburg State University, KS.

This book is a careful analysis of the careers of some of the most successful women in the television news business. In particular, author Gutgold documents the careers and communication styles of twelve women who have risen (not without difficulties) to the level of news anchor. She notes that "it is crucial to evaluate the progress women have made toward gaining access to this most powerful position [of anchor]" (p. 3). These women have paved the way—and most continue to do so—for all women in broadcast journalism, as well as in other fields, who aspire to work and succeed in male dominated professions. Among others, she features Barbara Walters, Connie Chung, Diane Sawyer, Paula Zahn, and Katie Couric. Three of the women featured—Christine Craft, Candy Crowley, and Dana Bash responded to her interview requests. Also notable is that the *foreword* is written by Helen Thomas, the well-known newspaper columnist.

This book is written in an engaging and conversational style. It is thoroughly researched and will appeal to academic audiences, but is still quite accessible to the intelligent lay audience.

An understanding of broadcasting history and theory is not needed, for the author provides enough interesting background to frame the book but not so much that it becomes tedious. What is a bit tedious is the section in the introduction titled "Contributing to the Growing Literature." This section is a list of books and articles related to television news and history, as well as the more focused topic of women in television news. While this information is relevant, and she does provide descriptions of each item, the material would have been more appropriate in an appendix.

The remainder of the book seamlessly integrates into each chapter both academic theory and "popular" thinking regarding the world of broadcast news and the ever evolving roles of the women in that world. The author begins each chapter with personal and professional backgrounds on the women in question. She uses examples, actual excerpts from their work, as well as stories about the women featured. In the chapter about Barbara Walters, for example, the author relates a story about a group of 14 reporters who went to Cuba in 1975. Walters had begun to establish herself as a serious journalist by then, and when Fidel Castro did not see her among the reporters, he was supposed to have asked, "Where's Barbara?" (p. 36). These background sections are also important because they detail the frustrations these women experienced, frustrations that will resonate with most women in nearly any profession.

The author talks in detail about the relationship between personal appearance and professional success among the women. She cites Naomi Wolf as coining the phrase "professional beauty qualification" (PBQ). Others referred to it as "television beauty qualification," or TBQ. Most of the women featured made changes to their personal appearance and wardrobes during the development of their careers. They talk about an obvious double standard for appearance between men and women broadcasters.

There is discussion about the sexist treatment each of these women received at some point in their careers and how they managed to deal with it. The author paraphrases Barbara Matsuow when she notes that, "The most important barrier [against women in broadcasting] comes from the attitudes of male colleagues and decision makers" (p.5). Gutgold details Barbara Walters's pairing with Harry Reasoner on the *ABC Evening News with Harry Reasoner and Barbara Walters*. This is when Walters officially became the first female anchor on network news. But the relationship between Reasoner and Walters was tense, to say the least.

After the background information, Gutgold provides an Aristotelian rhetorical analysis of each woman's professional communication style. For each person, she talks about the use of *invention*, which in this context is an analysis of the type of interview questions the woman uses and why. The *disposition* is a detailed look at how and at what point during the interview the woman asks particular kinds of questions and how specific interviewees have responded. She evaluates each woman's *style* based on specific language choices and nonverbal behaviors, as well as the kinds of follow-up questions that she asks. *Delivery* includes a discussion of vocal qualities (e.g., Barbara Walters's slight lisp and how she has worked to overcome it), and interpersonal approaches, such as the perception among many that Connie Chung has been rude to her interviewees.

This book would make a good companion text in courses on gender, media, rhetoric or their intersections. This reviewer recommends it for anyone interested in women's career struggles and successes.

*Seen and Heard: The Women of Television News* by Nichola D. Gutgold is available from Lexington Books for \$27.95, ppbk; ISBN: 978-0-7391-2018-7.

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