

In terms of methodology, Carpentier places visuality in a vital position to help him create action research through the arts-based approach using photographic ethnography to collect memorial materials. This visual approach allows for stimulating participants' affectivity and imagination to produce nationalist memory and their discursive narrations. In practice, the author breaks the written-text routine of academic knowledge dissemination in order to create multimodal communication practices in the book. It could be a good reference source for alternatives to academic production. By adopting an approach of artistic exhibitions, the IC project has brought academic problems of nationalism into the public, inviting the visitors, participants, and media reports involved in the IC project, and enriching the pluralistic understandings and folk discourses around the nation, war, heroism, victory, sacrifice, trauma, and pain.

Nevertheless, the provision of more information on understanding photographic exhibitions might have been useful for those lacking visual literacy. We also wonder about the reasons and effects of the songs and their words exhibited in the work. Substantially, the most practical significance of this study is that it has made the national problems of Cyprus more visible and does not stop at interpreting the existing antagonistic nationalism; rather, it creates the hope of peaceful communication based on maintaining (self-) national identities between Greek Cypriot nationalism and Turkish Cypriot nationalism. Furthermore, aesthetics and the public's emotional structures are embedded in the project as a timely warning against world violence.

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Allison Cavanagh and John Steel (Editors)

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Sending letters to newspapers seems quite old-fashioned in this post-electronic era. Citizens have now other possibilities to be visible. However, this has not prevented authors Allison Cavanagh and John Steel to publish *Letters to the Editor. Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, hence delivering a passionate defence of this classic way of communication between readers and the media. Throughout nine chapters, 15 contributors engage in a remarkable discussion about the social, political and communicative dimensions of the letters to the editor. It is not a one-sided *manifesto*: authors acknowledge several pitfalls and downhills of citizens' intervention in the media, as described early on.

The book presents an interesting wide variety of perspectives, including different geographical perceptions towards this common topic: while six chapters are devoted to the

UK, other countries covered include Portugal, USA and Colombia. The book offers, on multiple occasions, a densely exciting theoretical discussion where authors engage with some of the most prolific scholars in the social sciences. The classic debate of the Habermesian ‘public sphere’ (1989) connects with recent approaches from Papacharissi (2009) or Dryzek (2009).

After the Introduction, Marisa Torres da Silva argues in chapter 2 that ‘Letters served as a pre-digital genre of user-generated content’ (p. 10). Her own research is into 74 previously identified frequent letters-writers in the Portuguese press through a survey questionnaire. In a ‘country characterized by very low newspaper reading habits and very high levels of media and journalists trust’ (p. 20), Silva found out that participants often felt disappointed – or even resentful – with journalists because they felt the media should grant them more attention and space. This recalls Moreno’s (2006) concept of media participation as a marketing strategy. Broadcasters use public opinion formats to promote the idea of openness to discussion, but do not truly include citizens in the media discourse, Moreno claims. In her study, Silva also noted that these regular participants do not engage in the online participation forums, which is consistent with the concept of ‘faithful audiences’, as citizens tend to stick into a format to participate and rarely engage with other similar ones (Ribeiro, 2017).

Chapter 3 goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, as Sarah Pedersen presents a study about women’s political correspondence in the Scottish press from 1918 to 1928. Political movements such as *Women Citizens Associations* played a pivotal moment in this context, after some women achieved the Parliamentary vote (p. 43), eventually allowing them to participate widely in the newspapers. However, Pedersen demonstrates that ‘Many [women] used gender-neutral pen names that asserted their rights to citizenship in their letters to the newspapers, such as “elector”, “citizen”’ (p. 43). The author acknowledges that this participation was not entirely free, with women mostly corresponding with other women, typically about family topics, far from other public and current affairs.

Moving on to the USA, chapter 4 presents another sociological analysis of letters. Stephynie C. Perkins, Brian Thornton and Tulika Varma studied how the African community engaged with the *Chicago Defender* to reinforce the role of black citizens in society. After observing a full year of letters, from October 1929 to September 1930, in an overall-tally of 2422 articles, the authors found a very steady community of participants with active presence in the letters to editors, using texts as a symbol to ask for more safety on the streets. In that period, 2 out of 10 letters were about crime and violence, the authors argue.

Going a little down south to Colombia, Marta Milena Barrios and Luis Manuel Gil offer an example of how letters were an emotional gateway in critical times when the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were discussing the Peace Accord, eventually signed in 2016. Chapter 5 shows Colombians’ public emotions in the *El Tiempo* and *El Heraldo*, arguably the most important newspapers in the country. Although the authors did not provide information about the period of the data collection, ‘Letters show a politically aware community ready to express their most profound emotions to try to find solidarity with their fellow citizens’ (p. 74). Yet recognizing some level of hopelessness in the texts, Barrios and Gil show evidence that letters were the space to foster emotions, nationalism, social virtues and a desire of peace and freedom.

Chapter 6 follows this civic engagement dimension of letters to the editors. Alisson Cavanagh went back to the 19th century and looked into the archives of the newspapers *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Daily Mail*. Cavanagh found important traits of collectiveness: ‘By taking a place on a national media stage, Victorian letter-writers saw themselves reflected as citizens, and saw their own lives and life experiences as political and national questions’ (p. 106). This contribution can be regarded as political evidence, which testifies how citizens may perform an important role as key players in the public affairs dimension.

Jane L. Chapman included another feminist approach in chapter 7, ‘The Struggles and Economic Hardship of Women Working Class Activists, 1918–1923’. The book previously offered a glimpse of how women discretely participated as writers, but this chapter moves one step further. Chapman reveals how empowered women ‘were given confidence by their own newspaper, *Labour Woman* [1913–1971]—originally the organ of the National Women’s Labour League’ (p. 110). This chapter explains how women used letters to ask for several rights, such as an equal paywork policy and a protective legal framework for mothers with jobs. As such, the letters were wide open to multiple topics: from working and factory conditions, to international issues (e.g. the exploitation of women in India) and women’s representation in unions and institutions, thus demonstrating how vastly interested women were in discussing the many concerns and struggles of that time.

Andrew Hobbs offered another recollection of the Victorian times in chapter 8 with a focus on local journalism as a space for readers to express their views. Focusing on the newspapers outside London, the author argues that local newspapers were more popular than magazines and books. Studying *Preston Herald*, *Preston Guardian*, *Preston Chronicle* and *Lancashire Evening Post*, in the time frame 1860–1900, Hobbs interestingly stated that ‘Letter-writers’ use of pseudonyms declined rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century’ (p. 141). The author noted that anonymity fostered citizen participation in this media format, but it eventually was no longer used because individuals needed some social recognition. This article is just an example of the perfect dialogue between an historical perspective and the present features of modern social media, where authenticity, anonymity and self-promotion all sit at the same table.

Finally, chapter 9 paves the way for a renewed discussion of public participation in the media. Todd Graham, Daniel Jackson and Scott Wright walked into the *The Guardian*’s newsroom and explored journalists’ views on this topic. This work is rooted in previous studies investigating the continuous restrictions to the letters of editors (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2002), as a consequence of some ‘journalists’ biases resulting from newsroom rules and procedures, and journalism practice and culture more broadly’ (p. 148), according to Kapoor (1995), Lemert and Larkin (1979). The authors conducted several interviews with journalists, first in 2012 and then in 2017, as a whole demonstrating some disenchantment of journalists towards readers’ comments and contributions: (1) journalists do not interact with readers in the comment boxes, because they are afraid of online abuse; (2) journalists play a key role in initiating interaction: when journalists responded to their readers, in 84.8% of the cases a discussion was initiated; (3) journalists feel that spaces for interaction with users are just a matter of business, a crucial tool to ‘increase advertising revenue through the use of meta-data; and increase the visibility of the website via search

engines' (p. 163); (4) journalists consider Twitter as the perfect social media to grasp some sort of 'readers' loyalty' and self-identity, hence nurturing egos and elite networks.

The book *Letters to the Editor. Comparative and Historical Perspectives* serves as the perfect metaphor for the archaeology of online comments, which are so vastly popular in today's media landscape, from mainstream outlets to social networks. This relevant contribution misses an important debate towards hate speech, a very hot topic in today's discussion about the implications of citizens' participation in the media (Kunst et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it surely fills a gap in the literature by granting an historical overview of citizens as permanent actors in the media discourse. As Kovarik (2016) once noted, the history of communication is filled with repetitions and patterns. Since Gutenberg's invention, audiences are invited to take part in the media at some level. Technology has only reshaped these forms of interaction, raising the classic *mojo* of participation in the media as an 'old wine in new bottles' (Peters et al., 2014).

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