



Order Form

The free sample content follows this form.

Single book:

To purchase a single copy of this book, please follow the 'Buy this book' link on our website.

Single book price discrepancy:

If the price shown on the Amazon website exceeds by more than 10% the price listed on our website, we will honor the lowest price. Simply email us at sales@waterhillpublishing.com stating which book you want to buy. Shipping will be added to the price, and we will provide a detailed quote once you contact us.

Bundle purchase:

If you wish to purchase this book in a bundle of at least 2 different WaterHill titles, we offer a rebate on the total order. The rebate varies (usually starting at 5% of the suggested retail price shown on our website) so please email the information below to sales@waterhillpublishing.com and we will provide a detailed quote.

Titles of books you want to purchase	Quantity
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Quantity purchase:

For a minimum of 10 books of a given title to be delivered to a single address, we offer a rebate on the total order. The rebate varies (usually starting at 10% of the suggested retail price shown on our website) so please email the information below to sales@waterhillpublishing.com and we will provide a detailed quote.

Titles of book you want to purchase	Quantity
_____	_____

Bridging Gaps: Higher Education, Media and Society

Edited by

**Robert Caine, Hilary Wheaton, and
Louis Massey**

WH
WATERHILL
PUBLISHING

ISBN 978-0-9939938-0-0

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the publisher

© 2015 Papers are licensed by WaterHill Publishing. Copyrights of individual papers is retained by authors. The papers in this edited volume may not be reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the authors.

For the entire volume including cover image and design:

© 2015 WaterHill Publishing, Toronto

Contents

List of Contributors.....	iii
How Higher Education, Media, and Society Intersect: An Introduction to <i>Bridging Gaps</i>	1
<i>Robert Caine, Hilary Wheaton and Louis Massey</i>	
Media Literacy for Media Makers: Teaching Onscreen Violence in the University Film Classroom.....	8
<i>Laurie Trotta Valenti and F. Miguel Valenti</i>	
Self-critique or Self-promotion: The Vanishing Gap in Celebrity Public Relations Journalism.....	18
<i>Stephanie Patrick</i>	
Nigellissima: The Making of Nigella	27
<i>Gilly Smith</i>	
'I didn't know other people out there felt this way...': Gay Celebrities and the Construction of Role Models	34
<i>Michael Lovelock</i>	
Seizing the Microphone: A Case Study of a Higher Education Institution and the Messaging Battle over Education Reform	40
<i>Charles L. Carney</i>	
The Empowering Impacts of Chinese Social Media Weibo	49
<i>John Yu Zhang</i>	
Laughing while Learning: Using Comedic Reporting and Commentary in the Classroom	56
<i>Sarah Attfield and Liz Giuffre</i>	
Social Media in the Classroom	64
<i>Stephanie Sadownik</i>	

Bringing Rape Culture Media into the Classroom..... 70
Diana C. Direiter

When the News Reports on Higher Education Accountability, What
Does the Public Read and Hear?..... 77
Charles L. Carney

List of Contributors

Dr. Sarah Attfield is a sessional lecturer in communications at the University of Technology, Sydney Australia. Dr. Attfield can be contacted at: Sarah.Attfield@uts.edu.au.

Dr. Robert S. E. Caine's research focuses on Humane and Environmental Education and Ethics with a strong emphasis on Animal Liberationist Ideology and Philosophy. He can be contacted at: rsecaine@waterhillpublishing.com.

Charles L. (Chuck) Carney is a doctoral candidate at Indiana University (IU) and the director of communications and media relations for the IU School of Education. He is a former journalist who has taught journalism at various universities in the U.S. Charles L. Carney can be contacted at: ccarney@indiana.edu.

Dr. Diana Direiter is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and the Co-Director of the Women's Center at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA. Dr. Direiter can be contacted at: direiter@lesley.edu.

Dr. Liz Giuffre is a lecturer in communications at the University of Technology, Sydney Australia. Dr. Giuffre can be contacted at: lizgiuffre@yahoo.com.au.

Michael Lovelock is a PhD candidate at the University of East Anglia, UK. His thesis explores the ways in which LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) identities are represented in British reality television shows. He can be contacted at: m.lovelock@uea.ac.uk.

Louis Massey, PhD, is an artist and an Assistant Professor at the Royal Military College of Canada. He investigates cognition and the social impacts of media and technologies. Dr. Massey can be contacted at: massey@rmc.ca.

Stephanie Patrick is a doctoral student in Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa. She can be contacted at: spatr045@uottawa.ca.

Stephanie Sadownik is an Ontario Certified Teacher and a first year PhD student at the University of Toronto in the department of Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development. She can be contacted at: stephanie.sadownik@mail.utoronto.ca.

Gilly Smith is a senior lecturer at the University of Brighton. She researches the politics of celebrity food culture and the impact of media food narratives on food consumption and food security. Gilly Smith can be contacted at: gs103@brighton.ac.uk.

Laurie Trotta Valenti, PhD, works to raise awareness about social issues in the media through research, writing and education. Dr. Trotta Valenti can be contacted at: latrot@yahoo.com.

F. Miguel Valenti is a university professor and film producer interested in ethics in entertainment, currently director of the Quinnipiac University in Los Angeles campus. Miguel can be reached at f.valenti@quinnipiac.edu.

Dr. Hilary Wheaton is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Exeter in the College of Social Sciences and International Studies. She is also a member of the Editorial and Advisory Board for the Centre for Media and Celebrity Studies. Dr. Wheaton can be contacted at: hilary.wheaton@gmail.com.

Dr. John Yu Zhang is a faculty member at the China program of the New York Institute of Technology. Dr. Zhang can be contacted at: yzhang54@nyit.edu.

How Higher Education, Media, and Society Intersect: An Introduction to *Bridging Gaps*

Robert Caine, Hilary Wheaton and Louis Massey

Abstract. This paper introduces how the three themes of this book, namely higher education, media, and society, interact and overlap. We aim at pointing out implicit relationships between the papers and their broader, underlying ideas. The book itself contains some of the papers presented at the international conference *Bridging Gaps - Higher Education, Media and Society* held at Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada) in May 2015. The conference aimed at bringing together media professionals, educators, academic researchers, and independent public intellectuals to discuss issues, opportunities, and synergies offered by media and education as forces involved in social transformation.

Keywords: Higher education, media, society

What is Bridging Gaps?

Our goal with this edited volume is to ‘bridge gaps’ — as the title states — among three broad topics: higher education, media and society. Bridging gaps is about looking at social and cultural themes from a multidisciplinary and practice-based perspective, hence breaking away from knowledge and methodological silos that exist between disciplines. Bridging gaps also invites academic researchers to reach out to the public and address real world issues. To reach out, higher education professionals need to embrace popular media as an opportunity to participate in public debates and influence public opinion. Similarly, instead of narrowing our focus to academic publications, academics should use their voice and expertise to reach a wider audience by utilising opportunities to write opinion editorials for newspapers and magazines. A good example of this approach is the popular website theconversation.com which operates as an independent media outlet, offering in-depth analysis, research and news to the public from the academic and research community. As such, bridging gaps is constructing bridges between topics, between people, between approaches, and between academia and the public.

Originating from the international conference *Bridging Gaps - Higher Education, Media and Society*, held at Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada)

in May 2015, this edited volume explores the many intersections and interactions among the three themes of education, media, and society. Given the nature of an edited book comprised of conference papers, each one with its individual and separate take, it is not possible to paint a comprehensive and completely coherent picture of the complex landscape resulting from the ‘tectonic’ meeting of education, media and social change. Each author has, however, been able to position a metaphorical stake in the ground that allows readers to draw of rough map delineating some of the important issues and interesting solutions. We provide further connections within this introduction.

Why three themes such as higher education, media and society? The reason is simple: higher education and media are key to maintaining and improving society. This is our starting point that we posit as a base assumption, from which we explore the challenges and complexities they face. The three themes also offer a natural overlap that we feel needs to be further ‘collided’ and ‘shaken up’ to see what ‘falls off.’ Our intention is to draw new connections, hence bridging gaps among the topics and among the various stakeholders interested in how these topics intersect. As such, this book will be of interest to media professionals, scholars, students, activists, and anyone interested in how media and education impact social transformation.

Exploring Relations and Synergies

Higher education, media and society form a highly dynamic set of topics, indeed a manifold with multiple interactions involving both traditional and new media technologies and leading, we hope, to social transformations that move the world forward, and toward more awareness, well-being, and equity. However, in the meantime, there appears to be worrisome upheavals such as the so-called crisis in academia and higher education, increasing social inequities boiling under the cover of neo-liberal market driven ideologies, and skilfully exploited media and mindless entertainment to preserve the existing power structure. Yet, at the same time, we can observe wonderful examples of innovative social evolutions enabled, among others, by new media technologies and a new sense of awareness and connection that arise from questioning the established order. The paper by Zhang in this volume provides an interesting case study of such social progress. It shows how Weibo, a Chinese social media platform, empowers the population and creates new opportunities of interactions with political powers. The author raises an interesting question: is this online interaction between the masses and the political elite, known to be unresponsive to human rights, giving rise to a new form of direct democracy?

In higher education, media studies bring critical awareness of representations and reproductions of popular personas, artefacts, processes, and practices in social, economic, and political contexts. Lovelock delves into the very essence of popular persona in his article whereby he examines celebrity athlete Tom Daley's coming out as an openly gay athlete. Celebrities carry great influence with respect to their public; the discussion that ensues over heteronormativity and whether celebrities possess a social responsibility for disclosing the nuances of their personal lives remains open for debate; some may assert that celebrities, such as Daley, have a social responsibility to bring critical awareness of 'oppressed others' into the forefront of social consciousness. From the perspective of cultural studies, critical discourse analysis of media productions enables scholars to go beyond observing aesthetic aspects and to understand social underpinnings of cultural productions. For example, Smith's paper on Nigella Lawson explores the careful construction of persona for the purposes of celebrity and commodification. Importantly though, Smith also illustrates how the public response to this construction, and the acting of it, can create an authenticity that surpasses the requirements of the screen. In a similar fashion, journalism can use investigation to educate and inform the public on the limits and potential of social systems. Journalistic facts can then become credible sources for academic research and effective solutions to critical issues in society. The issue of 'rape culture' is a powerful example, not only of journalism as credible sources for academic research, but also social commentary as a response. Direiter's paper provides an exploration of 'rape culture' in the media and our social responses as a suitable means by which to bring the discussion into the classroom and consequently connect with students. A related matter is the ethical role of media producers. Trotta Valenti and Valenti address the contentious issue of violence in film making whereby a highly controversial debate unfolds with regards to the responsibilities of film makers when producing violent-laden media products. Should film students be encouraged to give critical consideration to the element of violence in their productions? And, furthermore, do such portrayals of violence (in film) influence and/or stimulate reactionary outcomes in the real world, thus effecting and motivating social behaviour?

Furthermore, tabloid journalism uses narrative devices of gossip, rumour and scandals to commodify meritocratic fame while many news media have abandoned facts and intelligent analysis in favour of spectacular outrage and incivility; both situations act as testaments to the lack of informed opinions. In this respect, Patrick's paper in this volume draws particular attention to the distinction between news media as PR versus news media as journalism, and investigates how celebrity journalism functions within our society. Researchers in both academic and non-academic career paths possess useful

knowledge and authority on many important social issues but may lack accessibility and visibility due to their more theoretical and intellectual views that are generally confined to academic gatherings and journals. However, their expertise could greatly benefit journalism and the development of progressive media, and provide impetus for social transformation. The inclusion of scholarly commentaries and advocacy in media is imperative to the development of a knowledge-based economy and social innovation based on critical thinking and ethical action. Carney's paper *Seizing the microphone* illustrates the unfortunate situation that journalists, under pressure from financially strapped media outlets and lacking tools for critical analysis, may succumb to the apparent open-access granted by agenda-driven think tanks and consequently, fail to properly report all sides of a story. Carney's paper is particularly relevant to this volume because it demonstrates how the debate about higher education in the U.S. has been distorted by politicians who exploit media, turning an important debate into a one-sided spectacle with potentially disastrous social side-effects.

We also often read about the crisis in academia due to an emphasis of higher education institutions on efficiency, commercial support, and market orientation (among many works on this topic: Whelan, Walker and Moore, 2013). As well, while graduate enrolment has quadrupled in the last decade, most aspiring PhD graduates struggle to find tenure or tenure-track jobs. Universities are increasingly hiring sessional teachers, thus limiting research and the dissemination of much needed critical perspectives by a new generation of scholars and practitioners. A related issue is the so-called higher-education crisis. Many have started to question and raise alarms about the direction higher education is taking. One of the issues is that our conception of higher education is being transformed from a public good to a private privilege, and from a social investment into business cost. The effects on society of this shift in conception are multiple, wide ranging, and potentially dangerous. Higher education is becoming increasingly expensive due to lack of public funding and competition among institutions who try to attract students with 'superficial' but expensive considerations like fancy residences and sports facilities. Carney questions the value of investment in higher education through his essay *When the news reports on higher education accountability, what does the public read and hear?* Concretely, does the money, time and efforts exerted by students pursuing a higher degree coincide with the benefits and long-term rewards in terms of securing employment and achieving career success? Carney addresses the fast rising costs of higher education and the debt acquired by students with the hopes of realising lifetime rewards for such a monumental investment. In addition to affordability, issues of 'quality of education,' 'whether students are actually learning,' 'purpose for individuals attending programs,' 'rates of completion of

programs,' and 'trends in higher education' all comprise the ongoing discussion and discourse pertaining to perceived versus real value of earning a degree. One may wonder whether high student debt (now totalling 1 trillion\$ in the US) further shifts higher education away from its goal of educating citizens by producing critical thinkers who are socially and politically engaged. Instead, is our education system moulding young adults into job focused consumers who work to pay off their debts while trying to emulate the materialistic life intensely reiterated by media, which has further spending and debt generation effects? Hence, due to our desire to be educated, are we increasingly becoming prisoners of an economic system that often forces us to give up our true dreams?

Another major issue with higher education is that since universities are under pressure to produce employable consumers, there is a shift away from the often perceived 'non-essential' or 'useless' degrees delivered within the Humanities, and instead towards the science/technology and business degrees. Yet one must ask whether 'less Humanities' could result in a loss of deeper knowledge about who we are and what we do as a society? Without the Humanities we may lose our writers, our critics, our voices of reason that stand against the commodification of our society as a whole. The papers in this edited collection are examples of the importance of Humanities degrees for understanding the role of media, interpreting and utilising it for greater academic growth, and critically assessing current practices in journalism.

This is just a brief and partial overview of the issues associated with higher education, including academia, and media, and how the social fabric is being affected, effectively, one might say, approaching a point of rupture but also offering formidable opportunities to reach out and change.

Launching Forward

We would not dare to claim that this book leaves no gap to be bridged. However, we started to create linkages, identified some of the overlaps and synergies, and hinted to the incredible diversity of possibilities that exist in the problem-solution space of higher education and media as they relate to social transformation. It is important to note that higher education and media need to be questioned and not merely taken in their existing form as ultimate truths. For example, contemplative approaches (Miller, 1994) and Tagore's 'learn in and from nature' philosophy (O'Connell, 2002) could be integrated in higher education to make it more holistic and connecting. Another powerful tool to be seriously considered in the classroom is 'laughter.' Attfield and Guiffre explore the idea of looking at the usual dry curricular content using a

less formal approach by integrating humorous teaching methods such as the language of the teacher as well as comedic learning materials. In their article, Attfield and Guiffre remind us that comedy is a legitimate form of communication; as such, comedic approaches can be strategically implemented so as to preserve the dignity and seriousness of the curricula while allowing students a greater level of enjoyment throughout the learning process; some even say that integrating comedic strategies enhances and strengthens learning outcomes.

Education-enabled social transformation, as Mazirow (1981) puts it, happens by “making problematic our taken-for-granted social roles and expectations” (p. 124). To achieve that aim, critical thinking and media literacy – understanding and questioning the influence media have – should be high priorities in education. Furthermore and consequently, social progress should not be seen only as traditional progressive-conservative tension or strictly in its usual drive towards Western style democratization and legal rights, but as truly deep transformation in our worldview.

One may thus choose to take issues associated with higher education, academia, and media as opportunities to re-think the way we do things and start building anew. There are indeed many interesting ways in which academia and higher education could reinvent the world, starting with themselves. Academics can reach out, as we have previously alluded to, with popular media, but this may not be enough. Autoethnography (Spry, 2001) and performativity (Nandy, 2015) could take academic research beyond the limitations of linear writing and revolutionize how research is communicated, going from dry and distant to touching and inspiring. Another example is Sameshima & Leggo (2010) who wrote a paper that consists of a series of letters and poems on love and learning. This raises an interesting question: can we, in academia, transform ourselves and others by using the powerful tools of art and love?

Finally, media offer great opportunities for social evolution if we decide to fully harness their transformative power, instead of falling for market-driven mindless entertainment, and accepting them as instruments of mass manipulation (Chomsky, 2013). New media, enabled by the Internet, have a key role to play but are also subject to the same risks as traditional media and could become mostly industrial tools of sales and conformity. Yet, they also have the power to connect and emancipate. One can only guess what kind of social transformations could be born from yet to come media technologies, applications, and developments if we collectively choose to pursue a path of betterment. It is a choice we have to make and actions we have to take. Sadownik’s article touches one aspect of this issue with existing technologies that are not always easily integrated in our practices. She suggests that

educators need to integrate social media throughout the curricula as teaching/learning tools for encouraging collaboration and the building of a stronger and more cohesive learning community; concretely, social media is a reality of today's students and rather than shying away from this technology, teachers may find it both productive and practical to include this emerging arena that contributes students' own perspectives, beliefs, and new ways of knowing.

These are but a few ideas for further gap bridging to propel the world forward with media and education. This edited volume is hence a starting point that can serve as a platform for researchers, students, journalists, and other stakeholders in personal and social transformation to launch into further explorations of the sometimes worrisome but otherwise exciting prospects opening ahead of us.

I hope you too, dear reader, will join us in bridging these gaps and thus creating strong foundations for future social transformation.

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the Centre for Media and Celebrity Studies (CMCS) and the Centre for Ecological, Social, and Informatics Cognitive Research (ESI.CORE) who sponsored the conference on which this book is based.

References

- Chomsky, N. (2013). *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Mazirow, J (1981). A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education. *Adult Education*, 32 (1), p. 3-24.
- Miller, J. P. (1994). *The contemplative Practitioner*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Nandy, S. (2015, March). Selfies in Celebrity Activism: Persona in Celebrity Photography and Social Justice. Paper presented at the European FEDER Conference Public and Private in Mobile Communications. Covilhã, Portugal.
- O'Connell, K. M. (2002). *Robindranath Tagore: The Poet as Educator*. Kolkata: Vista-Bharati.
- Sameshima, P. & Leggo, C. (2010). The Poet's Corpus in Love Passionate Pedagogy. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 26(1), p. 65-81.
- Spry, T. (2001). Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7 (6), p. 706-732.
- Whelan, A., Walker, R. & Moore, C. (2013). *Zombies in the academy: Living death in higher education*. Bristol, UK & Chicago, IL: Intellect.