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**Sinclair, John - *Advertising, the media and globalization: A world in motion*, Routledge, London and New York, 2012  
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At the launch of this, his newest book, John Sinclair wryly observed that doing research on advertising is a fairly solitary vice. It is precisely this fact that makes this book so welcome to fellow advertising researchers. It's good to know that there are others whose wisdom one can draw on: who are blazing a trail for those who follow. In keeping with Ford and Merchant's (2006) call for advertising research which keeps up with rapid technological changes taking place within the industry, Sinclair presents an up-to-the-minute account of advertising and media in today's world. In doing so, he fulfills Ford and Merchant's challenge to advertising researchers to 'stay on the cutting edge of research' and thus provide a 'forum for dissemination of that information to their academic discipline, their students and the business community at large' (2006: 69).

For a career academic, Sinclair has an unusual knack of being able to connect and empathise with the industries he writes about. Much of what he presents has the air of being 'inside information' – fresh, insightful and in-tune with contemporary practice. In this way, Sinclair overcomes the main criticism leveled at academic research by industry – that academics are not familiar with the problems faced by practitioners and that research outcomes and recommendations are often irrelevant to practice (Nyilasy & Reid 2007). One of the best examples of Sinclair's depth of insight into the advertising industry is his discussion of the vulnerability of advertising creatives where he states:

“ for all the current discourse on user generated content and co-creation, the blurring of the line between amateur and professional ... advertising creative personnel evidently retain a clear understanding of the value of having a paid job, and that of the branding of their identity as creatives as an essential means to that. Similarly it is because there are so many young people who are outside the industry but who aspire to securing creative paid employment that their self-branding activities make them vulnerable to exploitation (88). ”

I'm not sure that this was Sinclair's intention for the book, but one of the many benefits it provides is that it is a one-stop-shop for background information on the advertising industry. It brings together many diverse sources into a comprehensive text that would be equally useful to academic researchers, advertising and media practitioners who want to get a sense of their own history and context, as well as those studying in advertising and media disciplines.

Sinclair provides a comprehensive and thorough background to the practice of advertising – such as how the various agencies and their global conglomerates came into being and the separation and rise of media from the creative process. He explains and contextualises much that is taken for granted within – and about – the industry. Some of the facts he presents are almost the stuff of advertising urban mythology. For example, who knew that the gargantuan WPP group initially started out as 'Wire and Plastic Products' or that it was the Saatchi brothers who made the often (mis)quoted remark: 'there are probably more social differences between mid-town Manhattan and the Bronx ... than between midtown Manhattan and the 7th Arrondissement of Paris (118)?

From the initial discussion of how Marxism and feminism influenced and informed not only the way society views advertising but also the direction of advertising research, the first chapter moves into an examination of consumerism, conspicuous consumption, and the rise and role of brands. Having laid this groundwork, Sinclair concludes the chapter by introducing the topic of globalisation as it relates to advertising and media – a theme which from here underpins the entire book.

The next two chapters are dedicated to examining the process by which advertising became a global industry and with it, clients and media agencies as well. Sinclair expands on Saatchi and Saatchi's self-fulfilling prophecy that one day, mega-agencies would be set up to handle mega-clients. He goes on to look at business models for a global context, advertising and (to a lesser extent) media regulation, and ethical issues specific to the digital communication age. He includes the case of Phorm and British Telecom who, in 2006 and 2007, scanned individuals' online page views and sent targeted ads to the same individuals. The interesting point of this example is that although this was a blatant breach of privacy, at the time there was no legislation in the UK against which it could be charged. Sinclair also examines the seemingly unconnected topics of childhood obesity and the 'greening' of advertising in the context of ethics and regulation in this new era, before moving to the fascinating issue of the contribution of brands to a sense of national belonging.

At this point, Sinclair moves into a discussion of what is arguably one of the most insightful and intriguing themes of the book – that is, the obvious lack of marketing activity directed towards cultural minorities and immigrant populations within 'destination' countries. While on the surface it may seem a positive, that these potential audiences remain unbothered by invasive advertising messages, Sinclair actually posits that these minority populations are effectively discriminated against – deprived of the right to fully participate in the host culture: 'To be at the margins of the world of goods so created, is to live a restricted form of citizen-consumership which now links all of us to our contemporary nations, and thus enforces a diminished cultural citizenship (100).

The final chapter of the book provides a broad yet rich overview of the media and advertising trends occurring across the world – beginning with a 'regional round-up' as Sinclair describes the region-by-region analysis that prefaces this section. He examines media trends in the rapidly developing markets (such as the BRICs nations – Brazil, Russia, India and China) that are the complete reverse of those in developed markets. Television, for example, is in 'robust health' in the developing world for many reasons including the fact that in populous regions like China, the majority of the population doesn't have ready access to the internet.

Sinclair provides a detailed account of the advertising and media activity of each major region, including a breakdown of the most significant players – agencies and clients – in each. This information is invaluable for anyone interested gaining a global perspective on advertising and media industries, including as it does a helpful explanation of the origins and definition of 'glocalisation'.

I initially purchased Sinclair's book for the deep insights it provided into the Chinese advertising and media industry and, to this end, I was not disappointed. However, the book has proven to be so much more, providing as it does a source of cutting edge research – to borrow a phrase from Ford and Merchant (2006) – and up-to-date information about this rapidly changing field of advertising and media. Of course, the risk with books is that they date very quickly – as no doubt Sinclair's will – but in the meantime, I have ended up recommending it as a foundational text for postgraduate advertising students and indeed, also commend it to advertising practitioners and academics alike.

In closing, I would venture to say that, at times, the book seemed like an eclectic mix of themes that left the reader wondering how it would all come together. In fact, it is not until the Coda that we begin to understand Sinclair's logic in linking the seeming disparate issues and concepts. Like a good dessert, Sinclair's book looks deceptively light and even entertaining from the outside – but once embarked upon, it proves to be rich and complex, certainly far more than one could manage in a single sitting. Yet, even as the final sentence is read, Sinclair denies us a neat ending, with the cryptic remark: 'For a book about all this, there can be no conclusion: the dogs bark and the caravan moves on' (135).

## References

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## About the reviewer

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