

Best Book Award

The Israeli Communication Association

For the book:

Noy, C. (2015). *Thank You for Dying for Our Country: Commemorative Texts and Performances in Jerusalem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chaim Noy's book is found worthy of the Award because it embodies a rigorous and well-founded approach to ethnographic research methodology, which brings together different ways of collecting data, while acknowledging the role of the researcher in the field and his view of the subject matter. The book appeared in the esteemed Oxford University Press, which strengthens the book's academic quality and its contribution to furthering research in the field. The book expands the field of Communicating Studies beyond the study of mass media, which enjoy a nearly canonic hold in the field. Even if there are those who think and who fear that our discipline's borders are too breached or fluid, the book demonstrates the special flexible quality of the discipline of Communication Studies.

The book offers a unique approach to the charged relations in Israel between military and citizens, which is to say between the meeting of citizens, mostly young, with the events of a known battle in Israel's history. The case study of the Ammunition Hill Museum is analyzed with the help of ethnographic skills, while seeking to engage in a rich and multilayered text. By studying the museum's setting, the research offers a broad discourse that includes the exhibition itself, how it viewed, and how visitors address what it represents. Furthermore, the symbolic roles that the visitors themselves embody are also discussed: their names, their family relations and status, their personal insights into the historic battle and the meanings it bears, their willingness to partake and fit into a national heroic story, and the degree of their identification with the national-heroic narrative.

Communication scholars may find inspiration in the way that Noy seeks to address the activity of writing as carrying a special performative character, as well as in the concept of PDA (Performative Discourse Analysis) which he seeks to establish. In other words, the written text cannot be analyzed apart from the moment of its production. To repeat, the text cannot be separated from the situated context in which it was produced. This type of analysis cannot but address the affordances of the special characteristics of the activity of writing. This approach differs, according to Noy, from an approach that sees writing as “a documentation of something already existing,” or as a mere pale reflection of the message that was communicated orally; as but “another text” accompanying things that are said or as a collection of signs that can be analyzed outside the context of their creation.

In light of the quality of the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to the extended field of the study of media in its different forms, and for its contribution to the understanding of the complex Israeli reality, we have unanimously decided to award Cham Noy the Best Book Award of the Israeli Communication Association for the year 2015.