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## Book Review: Journalism and Memorialization in the Age of Social Media, by Peter Joseph Gloviczki

Adam W. Tyma

University of Nebraska at Omaha, atyma@unomaha.edu

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# **Book Review: *Journalism and Memorialization in the Age of Social Media*, by Peter Joseph Gloviczki**

**Adam W. Tyma** University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE, USA

When reviewing for *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator (JMCE)*, I try to look at the text with the following questions in mind: “Do I see a pedagogical use for this text? Could I use this in one of my classes?” Initially, with *Journalism and Memorialization*, the answer was “no.” As I read further, however, that answer began to shift. It is that shift I wish to focus on here.

Gloviczki starts the text by telling his own story with the subject of the book. Memorialization in online spaces is not a new phenomenon, but the ease of access that social media provide not only changes the ubiquitous nature of these spaces but also presents those same spaces as sources of information for journalists. Rather than having to attend funerals or memorials for victims, events, or the like, journalists can now simply log in, post, play voyeur, or troll their way through hundreds of posts. This is what the author wants us to consider, both as researchers and as journalists.

This new digital reality is something that Gloviczki wants us to keep in mind as he walks us into his methodological approach for considering these spaces as legitimate sources *and* as sources that must be respected and protected. It is here that the book moves from yet another case study of a tragic event captured online to something that becomes truly beneficial to students, teachers, and practitioners alike. By presenting the readers with actual methodological elements (questions to ask, ethical realities to consider, etc.), the practitioners are able check themselves against what has already been done, the student is able to learn and add these items to her or his toolbox, and the teacher knows what types of questions to ask the students to get them to think critically about the process of fact and data collection while writing a story or conducting research.

I was drawn in particular to a call to action for practitioners and journalism programs on or around page 55 to get involved with the social media conversation. Do not simply see social media as just another medium to have to try and make sense of. Rather, recognize it for the unique collection of landscapes that it is. As the author states,

“[p]rincipally, journalists and mass communicators need to reach out and cover those voices that are prominent in social media” (p. 54) and “journalism educators need to

teach aspiring journalists about both the specifics of social media usage and the broader significance of the social media environment within a journalism and mass communication context.” (p. 55)

Given, again, the ubiquity of social media with my own students, I absolutely agree with these calls. If we do not teach our students how to utilize these items, respect them, and see them through a critical and ethical lens, we are missing the primary space where communication is occurring among and between various clusters of citizens, sources, and informants.

At its source, *Journalism and Memorialization* offers a series of questions that Gloviczki works to answer and, perhaps intentionally, does not. What is the purpose of the journalist today? What is the definition of journalism in the age of social media? How do we exist ethically within these spaces that are private and intimate, yet public and discursive, at the same time? These are questions that current and future practitioners and scholars need to be considering. Through reflecting on his own experiences with these spaces and trying to develop a process for better understanding them, the author works to get us there.