

that matter, then what's the point of bothering to participate? (p. 132)

Perhaps we can only hope that thoughtful readers will take the time to digest the implications of Hager's books and decide that they don't want to vote for politicians who use such tactics.

## Exposing celebrity reportage

***Conflict Coverage Promotion: High Quality or High Concept?*** By Chris Veits. Hamburg: Anchor Academic Publishing, 2014, 95pp. ISBN 978-3-95489-200-6

**D**UE to his background in entertainment television Chris Veits would seem uniquely qualified to conduct a semiotic analysis of the conflict coverage promotional spots on CNN International and Al Jazeera English. However, admirers of Al Jazeera English might be surprised to learn how both networks routinely employed high concept material in the segments lauding their reporting of the multinational intervention in Libya and the broader Arab Awakening. Although at times semiotic approaches can seem like the scrutiny of minutiae, the unusual choice of promotional clips provides an opportunity to demonstrate how image centric these channels' claims about their professional integrity and morality really are.

While this slim volume refrains from exploring Qatar's involvement and ambitions in Libya, Egypt and Syria, its strengths lie in its skilful exposure of the self-aggrandising poses struck by celebrity reporters in conflict areas and how their employers attempt to exploit them to retain viewers. The author isn't fooled by the accoutrements which journalists insist in equipping themselves with while no one else in the frame senses any imminent danger. This predilection for helmets and body armour—as well as the use of dramatic explosions filmed under uncertain circumstances—creates the impression of being close to the action, and fulfils the audiences' expectations of being taken there by the network. Yet if the crew were really as close as these outlets would have us believe, then the footage acquired would come at an even higher cost than their industry-leading production standards exact. This reminds us what quality journalism should and shouldn't be; and as he looks to move into non-fiction TV, it's comforting to realise that Veits feels CNN and Al Jazeera could do better.—*Steve Ellmers is a Unitec lecturer.*