

Mr. Fred DeVinney
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4/21/92

Dear Fred,

This morning I began to look at Barbie Zelizer's thesis, "Covering the Body," I have a low opinion of it and of Zelizer, and I'll spend no more time on it. When I came, in skimming, to the statement that Charles Roberts used his being part of the LBJ induction pool as the reason for writing his sycophantic book about the JFK assassination, I lost any possibility of respecting Zelizer's maturity, judgement or credibility.

I've not seen any identification of the School to which he submitted the thesis so carelessness also can be added to criticisms of the thesis. But even if I knew the School I'd not be able to judge whether his table of contents is mumbo-jumbo or the lingo used to make simple, everyday things seem mystical and beyond the comprehension of those of us who have not followed these studies. It is far from plain English to me.

First I read the sources. This list includes some rather dubious ones for real scholarship; some that are anti-Kennedy, like The Nation, where he distills some of Kopkind's bile but does not list my criticisms of it that The Nation published; he has few real experts and draws heavily on non-experts, ^{like} ~~like~~ Don DeLillo, whose name he also spells Delillo, and of all this in a work of supposed scholarship, his crappy novel as a source, plus some articles; he cites Ed Epstein's New Yorker Garrison article without saying it was expanded into a book; and of books he includes Jim Bishop's treatise, for all the world as though Bishop's writing is suitable for a thesis; he has Groden listed as the sole author of High Treason, and where he lists High Treason he says it was published in ~~the~~ New York when it was published by the press he lists, Conservatory, in Baltimore (Groden was co-author, the book actually written by Harrison Livingstone); he lists vanity publication, by Exposition, of Mayo, but does not list Sylvia Meagher's magnificent Accessories after the Fact (or Howard Roffman's Presumed Guilty, both great books); under Reports he does ~~not~~ list the official one but under "Warren" he does (or is it she?); Documentaries and Video-Tapes includes fictions, like the British commercialization and exploitation of the re-enacted "Trial" but it does not include the one really good and dependable one, Selby's Reasonable Doubt, which won the CINE highest award in the history division; and all in all - have the impression that this is largely padding, mostly irrelevant and mostly also of incompetent opinion on the alleged subject.

According to Zelizer I wrote only two books, the last published in 1966.

In terms of the title, I did not see the name of a single reporter who pretended "journalistic authority" on the subject matter. (Oh, I see ~~the~~ school is Communications. I can only wonder what kind of profs it has when I see this garbage accepted as a scholarly thesis.)...I noticed that you highlighted the Abstract. - hope you think carefully before you use this as authoritative in your own thesis.

Harold
Best, Harold Weisberg