> … one of the most influential, amateur, arrogant and ignorant documents in the entire history of British broadcast policymaking. It was the Peacock Committee which influenced the Broadcasting Act of 1990 which Peter Kosminsky agrees (*Guardian*, 5 January 2016, p.29) changed the broadcasting world and ushered in the need to 'maximise profits and led to an almost immediate collapse in ITV programme standards'.

Tunstall's book was published in 2015, yet many of the interviews are from 2010 and a more up-to-date analysis of events would have been useful; for example, in his discussion of Craig Oliver, and the section on history and *Timewatch*, which he finishes after the departure of Laurence Rees. However, an examination of the BBC's recent history of television genres and their role in public service broadcasting is a timely contribution to the debate when the future of the institution is at stake.

Reference

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08109028.2016.1207861

A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about knowledge management, by Joanne Roberts, London, Sage, 2015, 168 pp., £15.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780857022479

This is the latest in the series of *Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap* books. Its topic is knowledge management. It is indeed very short. It can be read cover-to-cover within a few hours, and as all chapters are about 20 pages long, and written in an engaging, easily accessible style, they can be read individually in 20–30 minutes. For such a short book, it succeeds in giving a reasonably good overview of the academic topic of knowledge management. Each chapter is well focussed on a particular topic, and can be read as a self-contained, independent essay. The first three chapters give an introduction to foundational issues, including why knowledge management has become a popular topic, the academic discipline in which the topic is located, and how it links to the topics of information management and learning, and the nature of management, knowledge and knowledge management. The next three chapters are focussed on particular types of knowledge process that can be managed, the acquisition, transfer and retention of knowledge, innovation processes and the creation of knowledge, and the relatively neglected topics of ignorance, forgetting and unlearning.

While I have a number of critical comments about the book, in general terms I enjoyed reading it, and it succeeded in giving a succinct introduction to many of the key issues, authors and concepts in the domain of knowledge management, from the linkage between knowledge, data, information and wisdom, through the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge to Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory of knowledge creation and communities of practice. In fact, the range of topics

examined is such that it is impossible to summarize them all here. While the book engages seriously with the intellectual ideas and concepts discussed, it is written in an accessible style, which I think students would find appealing, and which makes the book accessible to anyone not familiar with the topic of knowledge management. Another positive aspect of the book is that it is not narrowly focussed on outlining mainstream perspectives, and does not simply summarize and dryly describe the key issues, authors and concepts. Instead, it locates the ideas discussed in a broader, critical perspective, which locates the issues in their social and historical context. Thus, the discussion of the growth of interest in knowledge management begins by talking about Egyptian hieroglyphics before getting on to the contemporary knowledge economy, and the chapter on innovation and knowledge creation begins by discussing the nature of creative industries. A good indication of the book's willingness to engage in topics at the margins of mainstream debate in knowledge management is the fact that a whole chapter is devoted to the topics of ignorance, forgetting and unlearning. A persuasive argument is developed for the benefit organizations can derive from acknowledging and embracing ignorance, and engaging in processes of unlearning, as they can ultimately be a source of innovation and creativity.

The first of my two main criticisms of the book is that some topics which I think important are neglected. The second is that, because of the size/space constraints of the book, discussion of some topics feels too brief to be adequate. In terms of neglected topics, this may well reflect my personal interests and focus, but I would have liked more discussion on the challenges of sharing knowledge across cultural boundaries, as well as on issues of power. More generally, discussions are typically focussed at the level of the organization, which to some extent neglects individual/worker-level perspectives, such as how factors like trust, conflict and organizational culture may shape their willingness to engage in knowledge management activities. In terms of the brevity of debate, examples include the discussion on Nonaka and Takeuchi's knowledge creating theory (1995), and the chapter on ignorance. Nonaka and Takeuchi's knowledge-creation theory is a complex and sophisticated model. Discussing it adequately in a few brief pages is challenging. Equally difficult is developing a detailed, complex argument about the nature of ignorance, and the benefits that organizations can derive from managing it. But these criticisms and concerns relate to the fundamental purpose and character of the book, which is intentionally to provide a brief overview of a topic. To address these concerns effectively would result in the book losing its key distinctive features. However, a simple improvement which would not threaten the book's brevity would be listing further reading at the end of each chapter rather than in a single, generic list at the end of the book.

A final comment on this book (and all the other books in this series) relates to who the target audience is. This is something that is just not clear. The book is not really targeted at knowledge management academics, who are likely to know the issues under discussion and who may be frustrated by the brevity with which they are discussed. And the book's format and style hardly make it suitable to be the core textbook for courses on knowledge management. Coverage of issues is patchy, and detail limited. Still, the number of books in the series suggests that Sage must be content with sales generated. For me, the book is useful as a source of secondary reading on my knowledge management courses, for students who want a quick overview of the topic.

Reference

Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H. (1995) *The Knowledge-creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*, Oxford University Press, New York.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08109028.2016.1207862

A history of the modern Australian university, by Hannah Forsyth, Sydney, NewSouth Publishing, 2014, viii + 279 pp., A$34.99 (paperback), ISBN 97817422334120

The modern university is now a busy place. It is characterised by bureaucracy, internationalisation, a profit orientation and specialisation in terms of the disciplines it is prepared to support. Universities have undergone momentous changes over the past 30–40 years, changes accompanied by a plethora of commentary and analysis. *A History of the Modern Australian University* stands out as a valuable contribution to this literature. The book is a reflective and intelligently-written account of change in the Australian university sector, focussing mainly on the period since World War II. While the book has a decidedly Australian focus, the lessons drawn from this history will be of interest to readers from other countries as well. The author, Hannah Forsyth, is well qualified to write this history, with degrees in history, archaeology and educational design. She teaches history at the Australian Catholic University in Sydney and describes herself as an educator with more than 15 years' experience in higher education.

This is not a bricks and mortar history of Australian universities (the first of which were established in the 1850s). It is more than that. Forsyth states in the first chapter that it is a book about knowledge, via the history of the university in Australia (p.4). She observes that knowledge can assert power, but not under all circumstances. Power is not her main focus, however. Significantly, she states that:

> … knowledge operates a bit like money. Knowledge does not *have* to work like money; indeed money does not have to work like money. But just as the flow of money and the institutions that regulate it, the systems that lead people to desire it, the imperatives that compel business owners to pursue it, all structure the conditions in which society functions, so too with knowledge. Who has access to knowledge? Who decides on the value of knowledge, or its price? How do universities (which have grown to such proportions that we might point to their functions as loosely analogous to the task banks perform in relation to money) work? What compels them to work in the strange and alien way that they seem, in recent decades, to have adopted? (p.5)

Boldly, Forsyth states that her book shows '… how the things that are wonderful about collecting clever people together to study, research, think and teach *and* the dreadful, corrupted, ridiculous and wasteful aspects of higher education are wrought by history' (p.5).

Forsyth acknowledges that the literature about universities over the past 20 years is rather gloomy. She describes that as 'Jeremiad' literature – a literature that argues