

# Think/Point/Shoot

Media Ethics, Technology and Global  
Change

**Annette Danto** and **Mobina Hashmi** with  
**Lonnie Isabel**



A **Focal Press** Book



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## Media Ethics, Technology, and Global Change

Annette Danto and  
Mobina Hashmi

*In collaboration with*  
Lonnie Isabel

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# Think/Point/Shoot

*Think/Point/Shoot* gives students a thorough overview of the role of ethics in modern media creation. Case studies emphasize the critical issues in global media ethics today in all stages of media creation from preproduction research and development to production and post-production. This volume features practicing filmmakers, journalists, and media creators who provide insight into dealing with real-world ethical dilemmas.

For this era, digital imagery, sounds, and web communication have opened doors to sharing thoughts and ideas instantaneously with potentially vast audiences. This presents exciting opportunities, but also serious ethical, legal, and social challenges. The cases and exercises found in this book are applicable to the current media field while still remaining grounded in strong ethical theory. *Think/Point/Shoot* explains the challenge of communicating a story to a worldwide audience while maintaining ethical standards.

A companion website provides additional resources for students and instructors:

- Quizzes
- Chapter summaries and case studies
- Important forms.

Instructors will also find:

- Classroom exercises
- PowerPoints
- Video from the “Global Media Ethics” conference of March 2013.

**Annette Danto** is a filmmaker and Professor in the Department of Film at Brooklyn College. A three-time awarded Fulbright Scholar in Filmmaking, she holds degrees from McGill University, Columbia University, and New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts Maurice Kanbar Institute of Film, Television and New Media.

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**Lonnie Isabel** is a reporter and former Deputy Managing Editor of *Newsday* and *Newsday-Laventhol* Visiting Professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Isabel is a 30-year veteran of the newspaper business and has worked as a political reporter, investigative reporter, and editor for *Newsday*, *Boston Globe*, *Boston Herald*, and *Oakland Tribune*. Isabel joined the newly created CUNY Graduate School of Journalism in 2005.

# Contents

## Acknowledgments List of Contributors

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1	Conceptual Framing <i>Amritje Datta</i>	45
2	Funding and Competing Agendas <i>Christine Choy</i>	62
3	Convergence of Journalism and Documentary <i>Lonnie Isabel</i>	78
4	F-Stop: Power Differentials <i>Tami Gold</i>	90
5	Identities: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class Privilege <i>Yoruba Richen</i>	105

# Acknowledgments

**R**ESearching, writing, and editing a book is like making a movie. Collaboration encompasses unpredictable challenges involving diverse craft specializations, simultaneous activities, and the cumulative effects of decisions.

Inspired by the documentary *Reflections on Media Ethics* (Danto, 2011, [www.forwardintime.com](http://www.forwardintime.com)), *Think/Point/Shoot* grew out of a conference on global media ethics in New York in 2013 and the discussions that followed from it.

First, my gratitude is extended to those interviewed in the documentary *Reflections on Media Ethics*: Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, Jon Alpert, and Baroness Mary Warnock. The late Albert Maysles and George Stoney were also pivotal to this project; both true pioneers of documentary cinema. While at the National Film Board of Canada and throughout his career, George Stoney exemplified ethical documentary practice.

On March 13–14, 2013, Mobina Hashmi and I, along with Lonnie Isabel, sponsored a conference, “Global Media Ethics,” held at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. The proceedings of that conference gave rise to this publication. Appreciation is extended to the following institutions and individuals for their support of the conference: Brooklyn College, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, New York Women in Film and Television, Loreen Arbus Foundation, and the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting. Special gratitude is owed to the following individuals: Maria Conelli, Dean of Visual Media and Performing Arts at Brooklyn College; Stephen Shepard, former Dean of the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism; Terry Lawler, Executive Director of New York Women in Film and Television; Loreen Arbus; Stuart MacLelland of the Department of Television and Radio at Brooklyn College; Tracy Lovett from the Television Center; Jay Kim of Brooklyn College’s Department of Film; George Casturani, Director of Broadcast and A/V Systems at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism.

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Annette Danto  
East Hampton, NY  
January 10, 2016

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Mobina Hashmi is Assistant Professor in the Department of Television and Radio at Brooklyn College, and the Director of the Center for Global Television. She has a BA in film and computer science from Dartmouth College, and a PhD in media and cultural studies from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She is currently working on a book, *Work and Television in Global America*, which analyzes how U.S. television programming negotiates the impact of labor globalization on the media, gender, and classed hierarchies of citizenship, and on an analysis of the formation of television news publics in Pakistan. Her work has been published in *Economic and Political Weekly* and in *South Asian History and Culture*.

Isabel Isabel is a reporter and former Deputy Managing Editor of *Newday* and Newday-Invention Visiting Professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Isabel is a 30-year veteran of the newspaper business and has worked as a political reporter, investigative reporter and editor for *Newday*, *Boston Globe*, *Boston Herald*, and *Western Tribune*. As Deputy Managing Editor of *Newday*, he was responsible for directing the news September 11 coverage, the Iraq War, the Second Gulf War, President Clinton's impeachment, and several presidential campaigns. He joined the newly created CUNY Graduate School of

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xiii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Establishing Shot 1: Format and Practice</b> <i>Annette Danto</i>	<b>3</b>
<b>Establishing Shot 2: Media Ethics Theory</b> <i>Mobina Hashmi</i>	<b>15</b>
<b>Section One: THINK</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Introduction to Section One: Think</b> <i>Annette Danto and Mobina Hashmi</i>	<b>35</b>
<b>1 Conceptual Framing</b> <i>Annette Danto</i>	<b>45</b>
<b>2 Funding and Competing Agendas</b> <i>Christine Choy</i>	<b>62</b>
<b>3 Convergence of Journalism and Documentary</b> <i>Lonnie Isabel</i>	<b>78</b>
<b>4 F-Stop: Power Differentials</b> <i>Tami Gold</i>	<b>90</b>
<b>5 Identities: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class Privilege</b> <i>Yoruba Richen</i>	<b>103</b>

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<b>Section Two: POINT AND SHOOT</b>	<b>123</b>
Introduction to Section Two: Point and Shoot <i>Annette Danto and Mobina Hashmi</i>	125
6 Ethical Challenges for the Cinematographer <i>Scott Sinkler</i>	135
7 Technical Framing <i>Annette Danto</i>	150
8 To Zoom or Not to Zoom? <i>Jon Alpert</i>	170
9 Hidden Camera: A Conversation on Surveillance <i>Samir Chopra with Mobina Hashmi</i>	182
10 The Ethics of Sound <i>John Gurrin</i>	196
<b>Section Three: POSTPRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION</b>	<b>211</b>
Introduction to Section Three: Postproduction and Distribution <i>Annette Danto and Mobina Hashmi</i>	213
11 The Editor: A Story's Advocate <i>Terilyn Shropshire</i>	221
12 Case Study in Regulation and Censorship in Indian Cinema <i>K. Hariharan</i>	237
13 Copyright and the Right to Copy <i>Annette Danto and Tami Gold</i>	252
14 Digital Distribution Ethics <i>Mobina Hashmi</i>	269
<i>Index</i>	287



# Establishing Shot 1

## Format and Practice

Annette Danto

# Introduction

DIGITAL technology has catalyzed in our era a continuously evolving revolution. Digital cameras are with us everywhere; cameras are attached to high-flying drones, and wearable devices are capturing our lives. Interactive media are now embedded in over-day accessories—phones and other gadgets, toys, and appliances. Advancing technologies are transforming media creators' production, generating new high-speed or location speeds.

In all its variations, media has as its primary mission the challenge of communicating with audiences, whether through fiction, documentary, digital journalism, or social media.

Given the context of shared global communication, is visual media a universally accessible language? Are there gaps between messages sent and messages received? How much do the intentions of the media creator matter? Can we gauge whether communications are received as intended?

This is where media ethics comes in.

Visual communication is always an *unequal* universal language—given viewers' differing emotional needs, life experiences, cultural, religious, and educational backgrounds. Applying a "one size fits all" model does not work—certainly in global cultural politics, nor in aesthetics.

Images do not simply record factual existence; they interpret. As we make conceptual and technical choices, we remain part of a culture and work within a contemporary cultural code. We are therefore influenced in our creative and technical choices, often subliminally. This calls for greater mindfulness and scrutiny by media creators.

Existing ethical frameworks have evolved in the context of older media such as film and television. When we encounter Web 2.0 platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or Tumblr, we are faced with images, sounds, and advertisements that can shock, entertain, inform, and confuse us.

For media-makers, this presents added challenges and obligations. The impact of what we create, how it is created, how it circulates, and where it is seen can create ethical

