Haider, Jutta and Sundin, Olof. *Paradoxes of media and information literacy: the crisis of information*. London: Routledge, 2022. 159 p. ISBN 978-0-3677-5619-2. £35.99.

There is also an open access version of the book on the Taylor and Francis site.

Reading this book on paradoxes of media and information literacy has brought to my mind the discourse of tensions or the oppositions that logically and functionally negate one another, but even more so the dialectic interplay and contradictory relationships that the authors have exposed as paradoxes.

As a young lecturer, teaching first-year maths students how to use information resources available at that time for mathematicians (an early version of information literacy course, then taught to each and every first-year student at Vilnius University) I was consumed with doubts: is it wise to teach users of information self-service skills and what will happen with the professionals if their customers do everything themselves? On the other hand, it is convenient to get rid of the responsibility when they do not find what they want; it is their fault if they have not paid attention to my lectures! At the same time, both the teacher and the audience understood perfectly well that, in the Soviet Union where we lived, the situation with information was much more complicated: tight ideological state control of all information channels and any published content and scarcity of alternative information sources (even in maths) required specific skills of discovering information that were not trained either at school or university, and building one's own opinion (or at least voicing it) about certain things could be not only undesirable, but dangerous.

This book is not based on vague suspicions of a fledgling lecturer, it lies in another historical era, affected by major and even revolutionary political, social, economic and technological shifts, and several major crises. This has changed the scope and quality of the issues of media and information literacy but the concept of paradoxes applied to its study reveals the problems that most probably would manifest

themselves in different ways in any historical era and any cultural context. In the concluding chapter we find the example of how the members of the anti-vaccine movement skillfully employ the main principles of media and information literacy and apply the possibilities of information technologies for attracting people. This shows an information strategy of 'empowerment' of information users by sowing doubt and setting a particular track for their search, which echoes the strategy of conditioning the citizens with the help of state-wide education and information system in the Soviet Union: in both situations people should not understand what is actually happening and follow the set path feeling more or less in control. The aim in both cases was to apply smartly all technologies of the time to manipulate people.

The parallel above does not reflect the actual richness of the scholarly arguments and the rigor of scientific thought that we actually meet in the book. The authors have concentrated on the exploration of theoretical materials and political documents, as well as on the analysis of empirical data of several projects, conducted by them. The conceptual reflection and discussion of the tensions helps to focus the attention of readers on contradictions that are outlined in five main chapters of the book.

Responsibility paradox (Chapter 2) highlights the contentious issue of individual responsibility of a person who is acting in the information environment set and controlled by powerful private and public actors.

Normativity paradox (Chapter 3) brings to light the tension between different information literacy goals advancing human development and democracy that may be pre-set by educators and policy-makers or understood as situated and plural by many media and information literacy researchers. The latter is also wed to the understanding of human development and democracy.

Temporality paradox (Chapter 4) is devoted to information and time management related to future orientation of media and information literacy as well as to historical awareness that it inevitably embraces. It also identifies the issue of encountering and avoiding information as well as generational tensions.

Trust paradox (Chapter 5) attracts the attention of critical evaluation of information that may result either in 'constructive distrust' or 'cynical distrust' that effectively gets rid of any cognitive authorities or trustworthy institutions.

Neutrality paradox (Chapter 6) shows distinctively that neutrality is not related to 'middle ground' and defending both sides of the issue, but to the transparency of the positions of message creators.

The paradoxes run into each other and are intertwined in many different ways. The authors extract evidence of their statements either from the political documents, previous research, or their empirical data. Some of it is related to the Swedish context, such as the study of 'källkritik' (source criticism) skills, but this does not make this evidence less universe. On the contrary, it shows the integrity of the authors.

I hope that this short text will waken the interest of many readers. The book is clearly directed towards researchers, but also educators and policy-makers in any sphere that is concerned with media and information literacy. Any university with the departments of media, communication, library and information, computer and data science departments should see the acquisition of this small book or at least including its open access copy into their catalogues as a must.

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