Claude-Jean Bertrand, a French student of American civilization, recently updated his *Que sais-je?* (What do I Know?, a famous encyclopedic collection of pamphlets each written by highly-respected scholars in their disciplines) on mass media in the United States.

This tour de force surveys the American press, radio, television, and the new electronic media; unfortunately space restrictions force Bertrand to exclude the important book and record industries. Bertrand not only describes these media and the national and local industries making them work, but, as a student of civilization, also places them within their historical, political, sociological, legal, economic, and, even, technological contexts.

The encyclopedic nature of the publication does not impede Bertrand from coming to grips with the multifaceted aspects at stake in communication and information industries' related issues.
Contrary to what we have come to expect from French media analysts, Bertrand does not use the fashionable, leftist and elitist Parisian daily, *La Monde*, as the yardstick against which American papers are compared. Quite amazingly, this scholar prefers to scrutinize American media through American-made pieces of criticism. If, in general, the tone is positive and quite sympathetic to the U.S. media industry, there are here and there strong and even savage pieces of criticism albeit inspired by American writers. Among them, the economics of the media are blamed for the fact that American mass media generally see prone to attack labor organizations and unions while remaining silent about the financial establishment, especially big business.

Surprisingly, media monopolization at the local level is not blamed for the increase of ideological bias or the weakening of the information value of content. Instead, the weaknesses of various newspapers, especially their parochial emphasis, are blamed upon their great number, their smallness and their geographical dispersion.

If Bertrand's approach to the weaknesses is original for a French scholar, it leaves out some recent and savage pieces of criticism made by foreign, especially Third World, experts against the sacred cows of American journalism: "objectivity" and "freedom of the press".

Aside from this neglected point which, after all, is quite consistent with the writer's American approach, there is not another book this short (128 pages), even in English, that offers as much relevant information about Ameri-
can mass media and related issues as this one. Already translated into Spanish, an English version should be useful to English-speaking communication scholars and journalists even in the United States.