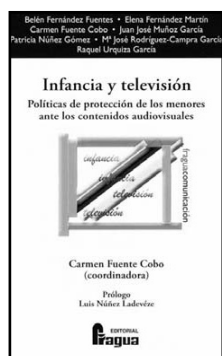


Books Review

FUENTE COBO, C. (coord.) *Infancia y televisión. Políticas de protección de los menores ante los contenidos audiovisuales*. Madrid: Editorial La Fragua, 2009, 263 pages. ISBN: 978-84-7074-296-5



With a prologue by Luis Núñez Ladevéze and an introduction by José Antonio Ruiz San Román, this six-chapter book exhaustively describes the policies behind communication in the field of child protection, analysing existing experiences and suggesting future lines of action. In the first chapter, the editor, Carmen Fuente, outlines, from an ethic and regulatory point of view, the challenge of regulat-

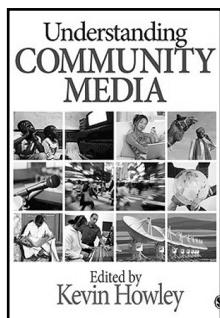
ing audiovisual content, taking into account the protection of children. Next, Rodríguez-Campra closely examines one of the most relevant aspects in the protection of childhood in audiovisual settings: advertising. He does so by revealing the effects of advertising on children, comparing cases from the European Union and United States. Next, Patricia Núñez and Elena Fernández review cases from audiovisual regulatory authorities in France, the United Kingdom and United States. They examine the regulatory situation at a state level and reveal the lack of an authority which, according to the authors, would protect the rights of television viewers if it did exist. In the fourth chapter, Juan José Muñoz compares Spanish, French, North American, Dutch and British regulations regarding their classification criteria for audiovisual content in the protection of minors. The author suggests standardising pan-European criteria in this field, with the aim of improving information directed at parents or teachers about content focusing on sex, drugs, alcohol, violence, fear, discrimination and foul language. The last two chapters answer useful technical questions on the general theme. First, Raquel Urquiza discusses technological tools that enable parental control over what children and teenagers watch, with particular emphasis on digital gadgets under development in the USA. And the last chapter, written by Belén Fernández, deals with the technical aspect of the labelling of audiovisual content, using metadata so parents or legal guardians can control it.

SHIMPACH, S. *Television in Transition*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 245 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4051-8535-6

Television in Transition analyses the transformations and continuities that predominantly occur in televisual content and programming, and focuses on the way in which this industry is being redefined by economic, political, cultural and technological changes. The book looks at different case studies based on one main thesis: the hero as a meta-idea and the main driving force of the author's reflections. It deals with various issues regarding four television series: *Highlander*, *Smallville*, *24* and *Doctor Who*. In each case, the way in which narrative language expresses different factors is considered, which are typical of what the author calls "the structural conditions and impediments to cosmopolitan existence". This is because each series is different, and uses an image of a hero who shows new ways of behaving, blurred by the usual domestic, public, work-related or leisure constraints, favouring the neo-liberal economic model. As well as from a cultural perspective, the author uses gender analysis since it can be seen, in the four cases studied, that the central figure of a white man is the basic matrix on which the hero is developed. Time and space are also central in the researcher's observational tools as, in each of the series, these are configured realistically for the plot, although not bearing any resemblance to reality per se. Moreover, all four series are characterised by a kind of "transcendental nostalgia" that permanently afflicts the protagonists. He combines the analysis of signified with observations about structure, and also looks at how television companies broadcast the series at the right time to economically benefit from its success, from merchandising items based on the characters of the series, to product placement strategies and the diversification of sales strategies that take advantage of the potential of new media. *Heroes* is also analysed, very apt given its subject matter, although it is not given its own chapter.



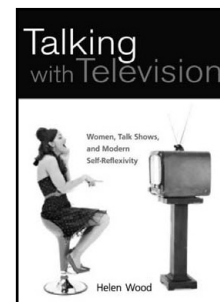
HOWLEY, K. (ed.) *Understanding Community Media*. London: Sage, 2010, 410 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4129-5905-6



This is a manual about community media, structured around the presentation of examples of alternative and community communication from around the world; a collective work divided into seven thematic sections. First, a rich panorama of theoretical perspectives that have come about, for example, because of terminology on community, alternative or radical media.

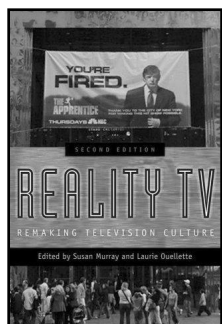
The following section looks at the role of this kind of communication in relation to civil society, the public sphere and democratic improvement in society. And the third section continues by looking further into experiences in the media to raise the idea of a "cultural resistance" to globalisation. Space has been dedicated to the promotion of community development by community media in the fourth section, with special attention paid to empowerment through these means and to specific cases in India, Scotland and Ghana. The fruitful relationship between community media and social movements is considered in the fifth section. The case studies move between Colombia, Mexico and the United States, where indigenous, ethnic minorities, urban and women's movements are analysed. The penultimate topic focuses on the position and relations of community media within the media system. The democratic nature of alternative media is again emphasised, but with specific cases in direct relation to politically adverse scenarios in Chile, Hungary, the EU in general and the USA. There is also talk of the technical transformation of the media system and its implications in the field of independent media. The book concludes with a section dedicated to the contexts created for community media in the era of economic globalisation, with contributions that provide, today, a certain perspective on phenomena such as the Independent Media Centers (Indymedia) or the innovative twist attributed to the Zapatistas of Chiapas in how they communicate.

WOOD, H. *Talking with television: women, talk shows, and modern self-reflexivity*. Urbana and Chicago (United States): University of Illinois Press, 2009, 238 pages. ISBN: 978-0-252-03391-9



Taking gender studies as its base, but from a multidisciplinary view that includes perspectives such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, social theory and cultural studies, this volume basically focuses on an analysis of relations between television and its audience. Helen Wood analyses British programming between 9 am and noon, a timetable dominated by talk shows, programmes mainly aimed at a female and heterosexual audience, in which a conservative discourse prevails. The first chapter reviews the existing debates concerning talk shows. The next traces the way in which media and audience research is moving away from an analysis of the rituals of communication and discourse. The author then offers an analysis of the programmes under study, in which she concludes that the traditional notions of the female viewer are being eroded with the emergence of a social sphere in which the female public is supposed to share space, time and cultural power. This highlights the fact that the genres of gossip, intimacy and revelations have become the structural frames for discourse. In chapter four, a research paradigm is presented that can take into account the temporary experience of broadcasting, which the author calls "text-in-action", a new methodology that analyses the broadcast and audience discourse at the same time and captures the life of text in the home. Chapter five includes a transcription of focus groups that the author carried out with a dozen women. Chapter six details the "text-in-action" of the study, where the responses of the women are shown after seeing the programmes being studied. Finally the author ends with a picture of how textuality and subjectivity are linked, how personal details and stories overlap within and through the televised discourse.

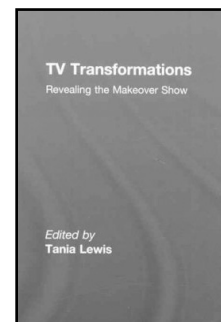
MURRAY, S.; OUELLETTE, L. (eds.). *Reality TV: remaking television culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2009, 377 pages. ISBN: 978-0-814-75733-8



Originally published in 2004, changes to TV programming and the rapid growth and omnipresence of reality television on networks have led to this volume being reviewed and updated. Of the seventeen authors who contributed to writing this book, Anna McCarthy's text is particularly of note, in which she takes a historical approach to reveal the roots of reality TV.

While John Corner suggests that our culture is moving towards a "post-documental" phase, Susan Murray's text questions the discursive differences between documentaries and reality television, suggesting that these are to be found in aesthetic aspects, brand images and audience expectation. Nick Couldry focuses on how reality television reformulates documentary reality. Next, Chad Raphael explores the economic origins of the reality television genre and attributes such factors as deregulation, the increase in competition and financial problems faced by television channels. Analysing these factors, the author dispels the myth that the audience is responsible for the growth in reality television and shows how political and economic forces have been key in their development. Likewise, John McMurria analyses trans-national trends in reality television beyond their production and concludes that reality television programming is a product of capitalism while, for Jon Kraszewski, reality television is a space for ideological manoeuvres. The structure of the reality television genre is studied in Heather Osborne-Thompson's article. The last part of the volume considers interactivity with the audience. Amber Watts reminds us that interactivity is not new to television, citing the participation of audiences in the post-war era. Mark Andrejevic questions the idea that reality television "democratises" culture and invites the masses into the area of cultural production. Finally, Henry Jenkins, taking as an example the case study *American Idol*, demonstrates how interactivity and branding have developed simultaneously.

LEWIS, T. (ed.) *TV Transformations. Revealing the Makeover Show*. New York: Routledge, 2009, 166 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-45148-2



"Programmes about 'changing image' have become a cultural phenomenon" and, based on this fact, Tania Lewis dedicates this volume to analysing the phenomenon of the "makeover show", which fills television programming in different countries. The volume, comprising thirteen articles, is organised into four distinct sections. The first deals with issues related to the industry. The second analyses the socio-cultural framework in which this type of programming has emerged. The third focuses on analysing the genres and sub-genres of these programmes, and the last section deals mainly with audiences. In the first part, Albert Moran's article is worthy of mention, as he describes the growth of this genre within the very development of televised and standardised formats, enabling franchises to be made worldwide, "indigenising" the product to meet local needs. In the second part, Laurie Ouellette and James Hay examine the changing relationship between television and social wellbeing. The authors suggest that life-intervention formats such as *Supernanny* play a central role because they lead viewers to new neo-liberal models of autonomous citizenship. In the third part, dedicated to sub-genres, an interesting article by Meredith Jones analyses cosmetic surgery programmes and relates this sub-genre to horror films. On the one hand, both focus on rebirth and, on the other, they share the permeability of the boundaries of skin-screen. Finally, the section dedicated to audience reception has, as a high point, Katherine Sender's and Margaret Sullivan's article about programmes that deal with obesity issues. The authors discovered that audiences were fairly critical of many aspects of these programmes, such as the humiliating representations made of obese people or the limitations to the advice offered by "experts" who appear on these programmes.

Other books of interest

MITTELL, J. *Television and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 465 pages. ISBN: 978-0-195-306675

TURNER, G., TAY, J. (eds.). *Televisión studies alter TV: understanding televisión in the post-broadcast era*. London: Routledge, 2009, 214 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-477697

RABOY, M., SHTERN, J. *Media Divides. Communication Rights and the Right to Communicate in Canada*. Vancouver (Canada): University of British Columbia - UBC Press, 2010, 408 pages. ISBN: 978-0-774-817745

ZAID, B. *Public Service Television Policy and National Development in Morocco: Contents, production, and audiences*. Saarbrücken (Germany): VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2010, 420 pages. ISBN: 978-3-639-246940