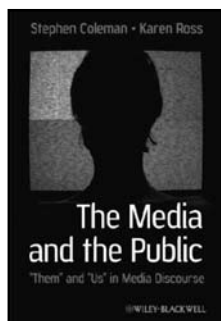


Book review

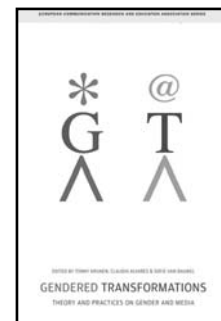
COLEMAN, S.; ROSS, K. *The Media and the Public: "Them" and "Us" in Media Discourse*. West Sussex [United Kingdom]: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 200 pages. ISBN: 978-1405160414



This volume provides a summary of the most recent research exploring the relationship between the media and their publics. The authors place the discourse between the media and the public and their relations within a historical context to show the origin of current public/political engagement. Coleman and Ross argue that there is no *a priori* public that is filmed or

recorded by the media; rather the public is invoked via mediation processes dominated by political, institutional, economic or cultural forces. On analysing the publics of the 21st century, the authors stress they are witnesses of themselves more than any other public in history, but this is a public that does not control its own image. By exploring citizen journalism, the free press, participation media, public online consultations and the blogosphere, the authors identify a series of more complete and wider-ranging public voices used by the media to talk about themselves. This volume is divided into six chapters. The first considers the different ways in which the public has been historically constructed as a group and as a social space. The authors then carry out an historical analysis associated with various theories of the public sphere. The next chapter analyses the media and the management of public voices through the selection of sources. The fourth chapter tackles alternative media, giving examples of the mediated self-representation of publics that are under-represented or vulnerable to the distortion of media images that fail to reflect their diversity and complexity. The fifth chapter questions simplistic claims that the digital media have transformed the elite's dominance of the dissemination of knowledge, allowing anyone to produce media. Finally, the last chapter reflects on the shift from an essentialist, universalist notion of public interest to a more pluralist conception of publics and their diverse interests.

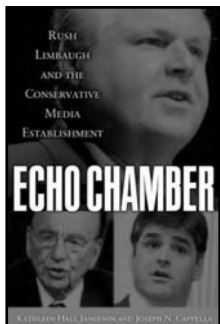
KRIJNEN, T.; ALVARES, C.; VAN BAWEL, S. (ed.) *Gendered Transformations: Theory and Practice on Gender and Media*. Bristol [United Kingdom]: Intellect Ltd., 2011. 239 pages. ISBN: 978-1-84150-366-0



This work is an initiative by a group of young media researchers, presenting a combination of classic themes concerning gender and the media analysed under new social and cultural conditions and with methodological innovations. Within a multimedia and inter-textual context, the chapters are based on questions such as socialisation, performativity and politics and there is an analysis of how certain media and the combination of media are structured within diachronic and synchronic contexts. In the first section, "Gendered Politics", Karen Ross considers the role played by gender in the selection of news sources, the use of female decision-makers, of elite commentators or members of the public. An article by Alvares critically analyses the results from a European Union research on the representation of women in two Portuguese newspapers. There is also an interesting article on gender analysis of mediated politics in Germany, asking whether the representation of women with top-level positions in the media has been positively altered in quantitative and qualitative terms as a result of the political success of Angela Merkel. In the second section, "Embodied Performativities", there is an article on the representation of homosexuality in three Hollywood productions of the 1960s. In this same section, another article by Goroshko and Zhigalina analyses political blogs as a crossroads between gender and culture online and suggests that culture and technologies have more impact on political blogs than the gender of the bloggers. Virtual networks are tackled in the article by Gader and Dumitrica on the creation and maintenance of virtual bodies in the three-dimensional world of *Second Life*. The last section, "Gendered Socializations", contains articles on how reality TV shows help to reflect and sustain gender differentiation in expressing emotion (male participants are shown focusing on achieving their goals while women are presented as centred on the "here and now"). Another article by Van Damme studies the gendered sexual discourse in American teen series. And, finally, we should also note the article by Torkkola and Ruoho which analyses gender equality in the journalistic profession within the Finnish context.

Available: <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/43593722/Gendered-Transformations-Theory-and-Practices-on-Gender-and-Media>>

JAMIESON, K. H.; CAPPELLA, J. N. *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 320 pages. ISBN: 978-0195398601

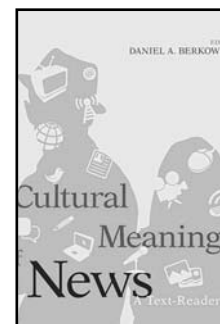


In this book, Jamieson and Cappella offer an incisive and critical analysis of the US conservative media conglomerate and its effect on the political sphere. The authors show how the number of conservative media has grown in recent years and how they operate with each other. The book analyses the period between 1994 and 2005 for the radio programme

The Rush Limbaugh Show (a daily three-hour programme during which its presenter, Rush Limbaugh, analyses the political scene from a conservative perspective); the Fox News channel (owned by Rupert Murdoch and which enjoys large audiences) and the editorial pages of *The Wall Street Journal* (conservative newspaper and one of the top-selling papers in the United States). Jamieson and Cappella therefore stress that Rush Limbaugh, Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal* have created a space where conservative sympathisers are protected from other sources of information and where highly negative views of the conservatives' political opponents are promoted. Over the last three decades, these three media have protected Reagan's conservative legacy and have isolated their audiences from the political *persuasion* of the Democrats and liberal media. The authors show how Limbaugh, *The Wall Street Journal* and the leading figures at Fox News think along similar lines and share common tactics in defending conservatism and attacking their opponents, primarily *The New York Times*, NBC, CBS, MSNBC and CNN. The three media undertake a reframing process which calls the audience to move towards the conservative media, held up as the only media to provide reliable information. The book also tackles the *hostile media phenomenon*, where viewers detect and offer examples where information supports an opposing ideology, while failing to detect the bias favoured by their own position. The book concludes with an analysis of the possible effects of the conservative media conglomerate and the impact of the partisan media on public deliberation and democracy: could this be a cause for concern or celebration of pluralism?

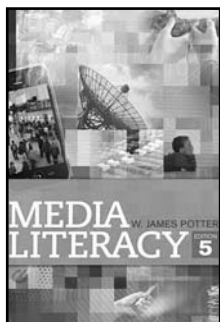
BERKOWITZ, D. A. (ed.) *Cultural Meaning of News: A Text-Reader*. Thousand Oaks [United States]: SAGE Publications, 2011. 432 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4129-6765-5

Daniel Berkowitz has edited this book which, from a cultural perspective, provides an analysis of news production and looks beyond what is termed the *sociology of news*, positioning itself in the wider world of *journalism studies*. The book is divided into six conceptual parts that present a series of original studies which apply qualitative analysis and construct the topics using



textual and ethnographic data. Part One contains three readings which offer a view of different questions regarding journalism and which establish how the cultural perspective differs from the journalistic perspective. Part Two, "Cultural Practice of Journalism", moves closer towards theory and analyses the work of journalists and the news they produce and shows how culture interacts with journalism at different levels. Part Three situates the news as a space where meaning is created, where the news appears as a creation resulting from the meanings that journalists share and uphold. The following part re-examines the idea that journalists carry out their work within a professional paradigm which dictates the rules of journalism. Part Five recovers the term *stories* applied to the news and reflects whether it is possible for news to be treated literally as a story. This part develops the idea that news items echoes within a culture thanks to the fact that they re-tell the stories from this culture in the way in which stories were traditionally told, complete with all the legendary figures and cultural values. The final part of the book, "News Collective Memory", looks at the concept of collective memory which helps journalists judge the magnitude of current events in view of how they unfolded in the past and influences the news-gathering process, while providing journalists with the necessary media to assess the "correct" presentation of their news. Finally, the epilogue moves beyond the readings that comprise the book and refers to issues that have not been discussed, as well as other implications for consideration at the crossroads between culture and news.

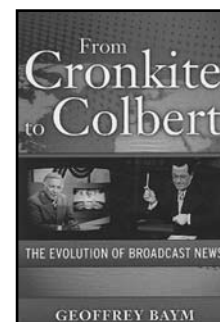
POTTER, W. J. *Media Literacy*. Thousand Oaks [United States]: SAGE Publications, 2011, 5th edition. 462 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4129-7945-0



The fifth edition of a classic book on media literacy studies presents updated content and is an essential text for introducing communication studies students to the literacy process in the media. James Potter divides the book into twenty-one chapters arranged into seven parts: an introduction to media literacy, audiences, industry, content, effects, regulation and how to improve

media literacy, which he terms the *springboard*. The book opens with an introduction that sets out the reasons why media literacy needs improving and a definition of this and of its three pillars (personal locus, knowledge structures and skills). Part Two presents three chapters that help build audience-based knowledge structures, focusing on the audience from an individual perspective and from the media industries' perspective. It also studies childhood as a special audience. Part Three analyses the development of media industries, their economic perspective and the current convergence of the sector. The following part contains five articles that focus on media content. This part covers questions such as what is reality, whether the news is a reflection or a construction of reality, the objectivity of journalism, entertainment content, advertising and the interactive media. The two articles in Part Five focus on the effects of the media: on the one hand exploring how these effects work on audiences and, on the other, defining what they are and how they act on the audience on a cognitive, attitudinal, emotional and physiological level. Part Six presents five questions that require our consideration when thinking about the media: media concentration (localism, efficiency, cross-ownership, control and deregulation); privacy (what it is, invasions of privacy, public opinion and regulations); piracy (what is considered piracy and legislation regarding this question); violence (definition and effects), and sport (the economic movement surrounding it and the influence of the media on sport). Finally, the book concludes with two chapters that deal with personal strategies for increasing levels of media literacy and different strategies for helping others.

BAYM, G. *From Cronkite to Colbert: The Evolution of Broadcast News*. Boulder [United States]: Paradigm Publishers, 2010. 197 pages. ISBN: 978-1-59451-553-8



This excellent book offers a historical look at the news in the United States from Walter Cronkite, CBS journalist during the 1960s, to Stephen Colbert (anchor of the satirical programme *The Colbert Report* on the Comedy Central channel). Baym takes a close look at the decomposition of "real" news and the rise in infotainment and analyses the paradigm shift undergone by information, a symptom and cause of one of the most extensive transformations in the media landscape. He begins the book by comparing the coverage of Watergate with that of the impeachment of Bill Clinton. While Watergate is presented as coverage that demands responsibility of power, the impeachment of Clinton is commodification coverage based on infotainment, competing for audience in a multichannel era. In addition, while the representation of Watergate reveals the modern search for realism and its attempt to present reality transparently and let the facts speak for themselves, the latter shows a post-modern indulgence in the use of real-world elements to create a television spectacle. Chapter Three looks at the language of news, starting with the choice of words within the conceptual frameworks used to explain national politics. The next two chapters examine the coverage of the 2004 presidential campaign and suggest that the re-election of George W. Bush marked a watershed in the evolution of TV news, heralding the collapse of authoritative news programmes and the start of news manipulation by a governing administration. However, this period is also seen as the start of the reinvention of the news with the appearance of alternative political information sources and the creation of news programmes designed to reach a much more defined and differentiated audience. Lastly, it examines the appearance of programmes which are not presented as news programmes and which reject the dominant conventions in the conventional creation of news. These are programmes that open up new spaces to the representation of politics and public issues and that also move television very easily towards the online world, expanding broadcasting and the relationship with the audience.

Other books of interest

JONES, A. *Losing the News: The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 256 pages. ISBN: 978-0199754144

COULDRY, N. *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism*. London: SAGE Publications, 2010. 184 pages. ISBN: 978-1-848-606623

ROBERTSON, A. *Mediated Cosmopolitanism: The World of Television News*. Cambridge [United Kingdom]: Polity Books, 2010. 186 pages. ISBN: 978-0-7456-4947

GRAY, J.; JONES, J.P.; THOMPSON, E. *Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-Network Era*. New York: NYU Press, 2009. 288 pages. ISBN: 978-0814731994

JONES, J. P. *Entertaining Politics: Satiric Television and Political Engagement*. Lanham [United States]: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009. 328 pages. ISBN: 978-0742565289