

AVENUES OF RESISTANCE - WORLD CULTURES, WORLD TELEVISION

Outline of a book based on a season of Channel 4 programmes

This will be a collection of essays from around the world about how television influences, and is influenced by, different cultural identities. Television is seen increasingly as a homogenising global force, a threat to cultural difference, and, by some, as a colonising tool of Western, predominantly American, capitalism. This book, along with the Channel 4 season, will examine this issue in a number of different cultures, but, more importantly, look closely at how a range of groups in very different countries are using TV to resist and subvert these homogenising pressures.

The proposed authors come from a range of backgrounds: 'developing' nations and the 'developed' West, and from Indigenous peoples in colonised countries. Grouped together, their contributions will demonstrate that the related questions of national, regional and ethnic identity, and of the distribution of economic, political and cultural power in television, are of global significance; not least in the UK where they are being raised by a range of factors including 'deregulation' and increasing Europeanisation.

The book will run to approximately 80,000 words - 10 chapters of 5-10,000 words each. We are confident it will attract an enthusiastic readership in tertiary education in the UK and abroad, as well as being accessible enough to gain many general readers with an interest in media.

Other books in the field:

There is nothing else on the market we have found that closely parallels what we want to do. There are some recent US/UK works - Timothy Lukes' 'Screens of Power', John Tomlinson's 'Cultural Imperialism' and Beranard Mieges's 'The Capitalisation of Cultural Production' - that deal with similar political/cultural terrain from a more theoretical and academic perspective. In 1988 MIT Press produced Issue 9/10 of Wedge on 'Global Television'; this again is more theoretical than we intend, and concentrates, in their words, on 'hegemonic culture, the television that is dominating global traffic'.

Our book, on the other hand, will for the most part focus on indigenous peoples' production (in chapters that will be written mostly by indigenous TV workers and activists themselves). Whilst being informed by the theoretical debates, and overall political context(s), it will concentrate on local resistance to globalisation from a practitioners point of view.

Proposed Contents:

INTRODUCTION

This will outline the major themes of the book, provide a coherent context for the following chapters, introduce them and link them to the overall themes. It will outline the competing definitions of what TV is for, and ask to what extent and in what ways the strategies of resistance described in later chapters are threatening dominant television.

Authors: Alan Fountain and Tony Downumt.

Alan is Senior Commissioning Editor for Independent Film and Video at Channel 4, and has a wide ranging knowledge of the kinds of television this book is about.

Tony co-produced SATELLITE DREAMING, a programme about Aboriginal TV in Australia which will be part of the Channel 4 season, and has worked for the last 16 years in community-based TV in the UK. he is the author of 'Video with Young People' - (Cassell).

1) THE WORLD

This will examine the impact of the globalised market on indigenous production, using drama production in Zimbabwe and Newfoundland, Canada as specific cases. It will outline how the international market for programming operates against, and the effects of technological changes on, this type of production.

Author: Tom Perlmutter scripted DISTRESS SIGNALS, another programme in the season. He has written both books and articles on Film and TV, published here and in Canada.

2) BRAZIL

An examination of the growth in size and power of TV Globo, its domination of the airwaves, its links with right wing political forces in the country, and its ruthless suppression and exclusion of any opposition or Workers' Party influence within it. This will also describe some of the oppositional media groups (eg.: TV Viva) that operate in Brazil.

Author: Roberto Mader is a Brazilian TV and print journalist. He teaches at the Catholic University in Rio and has recently completed an MA in Communications Policy Studies at the City University, London.

3) UGANDA

A description of national TV in Uganda, but concentrating on two recent examples of the use of TV in development work, which raise the issue of the extent to which Ugandans themselves are in control of these media interventions.

Author: Su Braden has written widely on art and the media ('Artists and People' RKP, 'Committing Photography' Pluto) and is currently in Uganda doing TV/development work. She is Senior Lecturer in TV at King Alfred's College, Winchester.

4) AUSTRALIA

A critical review of Aboriginal TV production in Australia, ranging from the city-based national programmes, to local production in remote desert communities. It looks at ways in which Aboriginal peoples are using TV to maintain and extend their own culture, in a situation that is severely circumscribed by the economics of mainstream TV.

Authors: Philip Batty and Stephen Muecke (?)

Philip is co-founder and Deputy Managing Director of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), a large Aboriginal-owned TV, Radio and Music company in Alice Springs. CAAMA co-produced SATELLITE DREAMING in the Channel 4 season.

Stephen is Head of Text Production and Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney. He has written widely on Aboriginal culture (including 'Reading the Country', Fremantle Press)

5) CANADA

Concentrating on the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), who transmit a full and regular schedule of programmes in Inuktituk (the Inuit language) by satellite across the Arctic, this describes the function of IBC for the political and cultural survival of the Inuit people in Northern Canada

Author: (?) Saali Peter is a journalist and member of the IBC staff engaged in production in Iqaluit.

6) AOTEAROA

Maori people in Aotearoa (New Zealand) have achieved a lot politically over the last twenty years, and this is reflected in a considerable presence in mainstream TV. This chapter will concentrate on current struggles over the extent to which they

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have genuine control over how Maori programming is produced, and so how they are represented.

Authors: Derek Fox

Derek runs Mana Maori Media, a Maoru owned news agency specialising in Maori perspectives on current affairs. He has worked in broadcasting for the past 21 years, and a couple of years ago headed a Maori bid for New Zealand's third TV license.

7) ITALY/EUROPE

Using the deregulated TV system in Italy as the prime example, this chapter will analyse the economic pressures on European television that are working against regional representation and alternative practices. It will also consider instances of local resistance, and the likely outcome of pan-European political opposition to 'American domination'.

Authors: Julian Petley and Gabriella Romano

Julian writes extensively about media in Sight and Sound, the Guardian, Broadcast and elsewhere. He is Head of Communications Studies at Brunel University. Gabriella has an MA in Communications from Goldsmiths College, for which her thesis was on Italian TV.

8) BRITAIN

This will examine the prospects for public access, community-oriented and oppositional production in our current situation: Public Service TV threatened but not yet transformed by deregulation, Cable continuing to grow, access programmes on TV seemingly healthy, but with the workshop sector in decline.

Authors: Jon Dovey (?) wrote REMOTE CONTROL, a 1990 Channel 4 documentary about the politics of access, and currently programmes special events at the Watershed Media Centre in Bristol. He has written on Scratch (of which he was a leading practitioner) and other alternative media questions, in Screen and Independent Media.

9) UNITED STATES

The heart of hegemonic TV also houses some of its most innovative oppositional practices. This is an account of the Gulf Crisis Project, in which groups throughout the States collaborated to produce anti-war programming.

Author: Marty Lucas

Marty works at Deep Dish, who specialise in alternative uses of satellite and helped co-ordinate the Gulf Crisis Project.