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The political-economic origins of Real-TV (<https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=comm>)

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Document Type

Book Chapter

Publication Date

2009

Publisher

New York University Press

Abstract

From the sea change in American television in the 1980s emerged a programming trend variously described as “infotainment,” “reality-based television,” “tabloid TV,” “crime-time television,” “trash TV,” and “on-scene shows.” The welter of terms created by television critics to describe these new programs masked their underlying connection as a response to economic restructuring within the industry. In this essay I offer a rough categorization of these programs, sketch the industrial context from which they emerged, and point to the economic problems they were meant to solve. I focus mostly on the distinctive conditions of prime-time series, putting aside made-for-TV docudramas and entire cable channels (such as Court TV) that may have similar production practices and genres.

Chapter of

Reality TV: remaking television culture (<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.08301.0001.001>)

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Raphael, C. (2009). The political-economic origins of Reali-TV. In S. Murray & L. Ouellette (Eds.), Reality TV: remaking television culture, 2nd Edition. (pp. 123-140). New York: New York University Press.

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