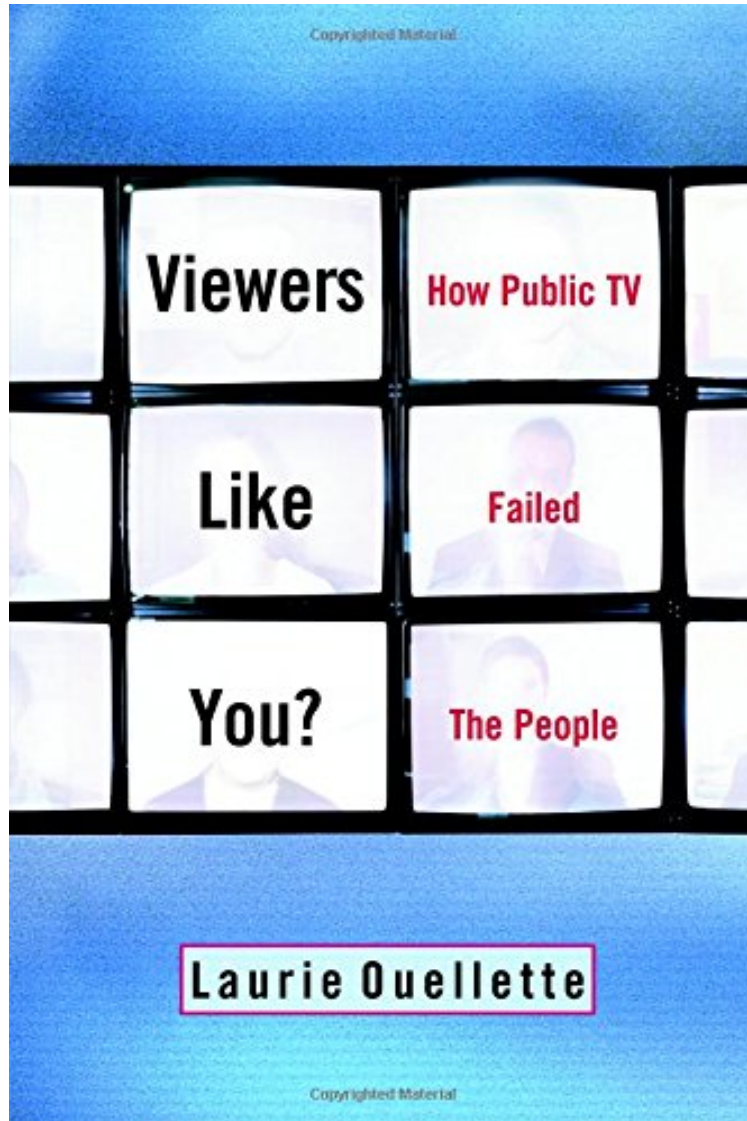


[Free read ebook] Viewers Like You? How Public TV Failed the People

Viewers Like You? How Public TV Failed the People

Laurie Ouellette

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#1972069 in Books 2002-10-15 2002-11-05Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .68 x 6.00l, .92 #File Name: 0231119437288 pages | File size: 42.Mb

Laurie Ouellette : Viewers Like You? How Public TV Failed the People before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Viewers Like You? How Public TV Failed the People:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Can public television ever be relevant to the masses?By Paul TognettiLaurie Ouellette has produced a scholarly work tracing the origins of public television. On the one hand, she points out that liberals complain that the PBS reliance on funding from private corporations compromises the networks ability to tackle controversial subjects that might be construed to be anti-business. Conservatives argue that PBS is

nothing more than a programming service for the elite and that no government subsidies should be forthcoming. Ouellette makes the case that from the very beginning most PBS prime time programming was conceived by and directed at upper middle class and affluent white people. She also points out that in her opinion this remains the case today. I think she has a valid point. The author argues that as long as this attitude prevails public television will continue to be irrelevant to minorities and lower class whites. The author would prefer to see at least some prime time programming aimed at more general audiences. Whatever your opinion of the merits of publicly subsidized public television, this book is well worth your time. I must warn you however that this book is not an easy read and I deducted one star for that reason.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. How PBS came to be By A Customer Meticulously researched and refreshingly accessible, *Viewers Like You?* takes us through the debates that surrounded the birth of public television in the US through to today's congressional funding battles. Ouellette deftly outlines how PBS was forged in the crucible of the turbulent 60s, and how the cultural politics of this institution have played out over the last 30 years. Ouellette is just as adept at fleshing out the origins of Sesame Street and those tedious fund-raising drives as she is weaving in a plethora of voices from the realm of cultural studies. If you're a fan of Masterpiece Theatre--or can't stand it--this book will help you sort out the why's and wherefore's of your own relationship with PBS and gives us a vision of what it could have been--and what it could be still.

How "public" is public television if only a small percentage of the American people tune in on a regular basis? When public television addresses "viewers like you," just who are you? Despite the current of frustration with commercial television that runs through American life, most TV viewers bypass the redemptive "oasis of the wasteland" represented by PBS and turn to the sitcoms, soap operas, music videos, game shows, weekly dramas, and popular news programs produced by the culture industries. *Viewers Like You?* traces the history of public broadcasting in the United States, questions its priorities, and argues that public TV's tendency to reject popular culture has undermined its capacity to serve the people it claims to represent. Drawing from archival research and cultural theory, the book shows that public television's perception of what the public needs is constrained by unquestioned cultural assumptions rooted in the politics of class, gender, and race.

From Library Journal Conservatives have branded public television as elitist, while liberals decry its dependence on corporate sponsorship. As with television itself, however, the issues are rarely black and white. Seasoned writer/producer Smith and Ouellette (media studies, Rutgers) agree that public TV has failed miserably, but they disagree on just what it has failed to do. Ouellette sees in public broadcasting the potential to correct social injustice. PBS, she argues, has historically projected the views of the dominant (white, male) culture, while minorities, women, and blue-collar workers have been either ignored entirely or depicted as humorous or pitiable. She believes that public TV should embrace mass culture rather than trying to rise above it. Her ideas, though intriguing, are frequently obscured by social science jargon ("The history of KTCB problematizes geographic essentialism"), making the book appropriate for academic libraries. A refugee from the world of public broadcasting, Smith sees public TV as an art form whose potential has been repeatedly squelched by lawmakers and business executives. In sharp contrast to Ouellette's pleas for cultural sensitivity, Smith cites political correctness as a major obstacle to innovative programming. The authors' divergent views are best illustrated by their attitudes about the early-1970s program *The Great American Dream Machine*: Ouellette complains that the show poked fun at "the lowly, feminized masses," while Smith praises the show's "verve, style and originality" and intimates that it was dropped because of its controversial content. Smith envisions a national production center that would develop programs with backing from a national trust fund, unconstrained by government oversight. Smith's opinionated rant is more fun to read than Ouellette's work, but too much of the text has only marginal relevance to his thesis. The extraneous diatribes against affirmative action, local school boards, etc., make this an optional purchase for public libraries, though it may be appropriate for communications collections. Susan M. Colowick, North Olympic Lib. Syst., Port Angeles, WA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist How is it that public television, intended to provide a socially uplifting alternative to commercial broadcasting, is so often targeted for criticism, being labeled as corporate lackeys by the Left and as taxpayer-subsidized cultural elitists by the Right? Ouellette examines the history of public television, the personalities, and the issues that resulted in programming that sought to differentiate itself from the sitcoms and game shows of commercial television. The result has been programming that, despite the universal appeal of Sesame Street among children, has become a signifier of economic class and education. The author examines why public television hasn't been successful in providing a medium that expresses the interests of those outside of the white middle class, except for a few efforts during the turbulent 1960s. She also examines the cyclical threats to cut funding and how public television has sought to change the disconnection between its mission and its image. Readers interested in the media and American culture will enjoy this thought-provoking book. Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved An academic, thoroughly researched cultural studies analysis of PBS. (Lawrence K. Grossman Columbia Journalism) Thought-provoking. (Booklist) Intriguing. (Library Journal)