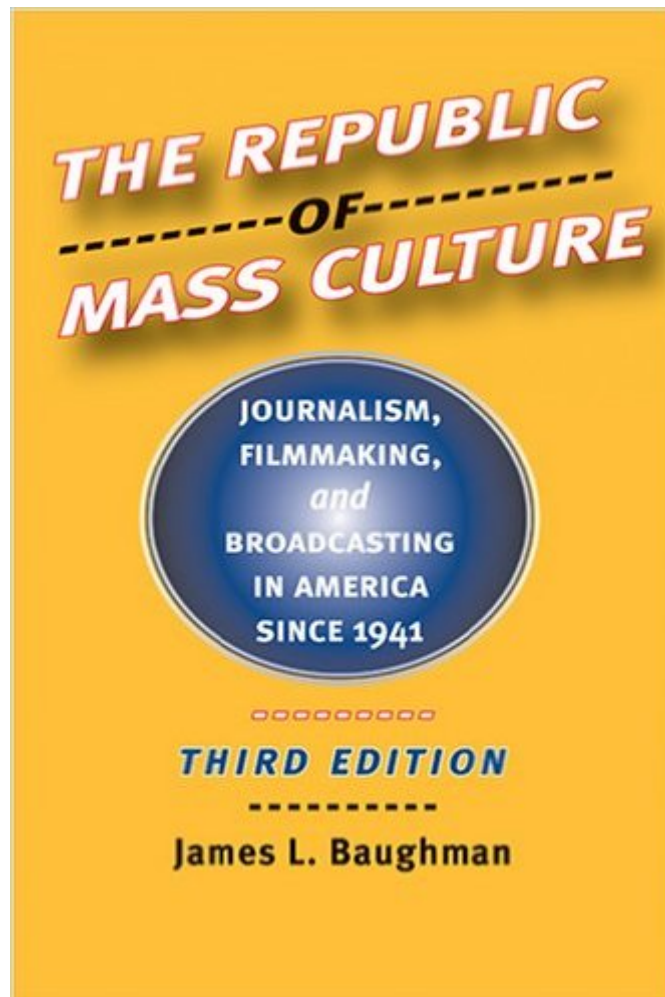


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The Republic Of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, And Broadcasting In America Since 1941 (The American Moment)



Synopsis

The new edition of James L. Baughman's successful book *The Republic of Mass Culture* examines the advent of television and the impact it had on the established mass media—radio, film, newspapers, and magazines. When television captured the largest share of the mass audience by the late 1950s, rival media were forced to target smaller, subgroup markets with novel content: rock 'n' roll for teenage radio listeners in the 1950s, sexually explicit films that began to appear in the 1960s, and analytical newspaper reporting in the 1970s and 1980s. The growing popularity of cable TV posed new complications, especially for network television. The capacity of individual media industries to adapt not only determined their success or failure but also shaped the content of their products. Two new chapters examine media entrants like Fox News, technologies such as the Internet, and increasing industry concentration. Baughman discusses significant changes in media economics and audience demand that are having profound effects on radio program formats, television news coverage, and the very existence of newspapers. Carefully drawing on interdisciplinary communication research, *The Republic of Mass Culture* presents a lively analysis of the shifting objectives and challenges of the media industries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This volume should be of interest to anyone interested in the transformation of television from a fringe consumer product to a central force in the creation of an American mass culture. As someone

who holds a special place in his heart for the printed word, I found the section on the decline of print media--especially of general-interest magazines such as LIFE and the SATURDAY EVENING POST--of particular interest. Today the decline has entered a new chapter, as newspaper organizations are shuttering their doors as advertising revenues plummet and consumers migrate onto the Internet to feed their need for news content. And as someone who has produced TV-news segments for national broadcasters, I find resonance in his description of the evolving tastes of popular audiences from high- to lowbrow content. At the dawn of the TV age, most viewers tuned in to watch Edward R. Murrow on CBS's SEE IT NOW and Sid Caesar's SHOW OF SHOWS, as networks catered to an informed audience. Soon, however, viewers drifted away from quality programming and ultimately made entertainment programs like CHARLIE'S ANGELS a national phenomenon. To this day popular content on television is dominated by programming designed for lowest-common-denominator audiences in the form of so-called reality television. If there is any criticism of this volume that prospective readers should be made aware of, it is that Baughman's writing style is a slough to muddle through. Enervating and taxing, at its low moments it can serve as an antidote to insomnia. But do not be discouraged, because as you navigate deeper into the book it becomes more and more illuminating and rewarding.

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