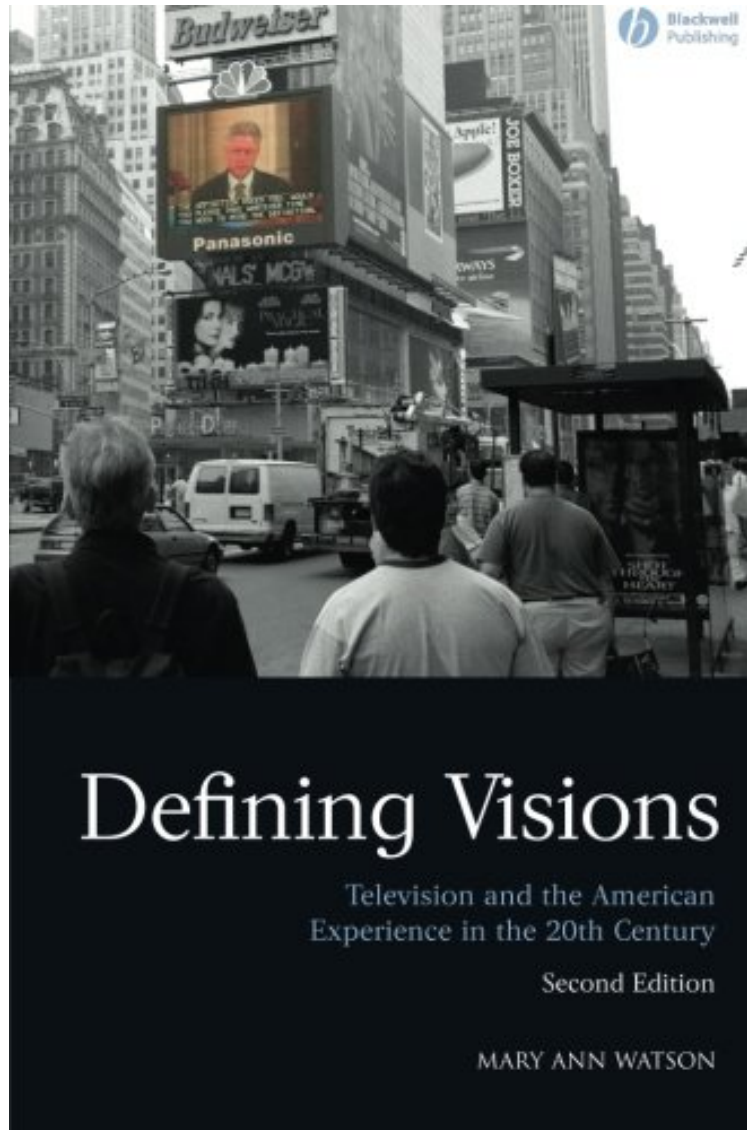


[Download pdf ebook] Defining Visions: Television and the American Experience in the 20th Century

# Defining Visions: Television and the American Experience in the 20th Century

Mary Ann Watson

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**Mary Ann Watson : Defining Visions: Television and the American Experience in the 20th Century** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Defining Visions: Television and the American Experience in the 20th Century:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very informed and thought-provoking book By Battleship This was a very thought-provoking book. The author does an effective job of showing the powerful impact television has had

since its inception until the late 1990's. The book is a little dated, but it is a rich resource as it covers many influential shows throughout history. Watson reveals how television has shaped public opinion in its portrayal of minorities, women, and people with disabilities. It was very interesting to me to note that there have always been special interest groups that have had a powerful impact on influencing how certain groups of people are portrayed on television shows. Women's groups have spent a lot of time and effort to lobby television producers to remove sexist materials from production. Certain professions, like medical practitioners, have had a lot of input on how the profession is represented. Watson's ideology is apparent in this book. She favors attempts to censor television shows that are vulgar or demeaning to groups of people. She is very critical of the level of violence and sexual exploitation present in shows. She had positive things to say about Newton Minow, a censor of the Kennedy years. She blames a lot of the present trends in television on Reagan-era deregulation. This viewpoint may not appeal to some readers. I liked the book, because it revealed the major controversies in television history, such as Dan Quayle's controversial comments about "Murphy Brown." She wrote about the changes in viewpoints over the years, such as disabled groups turning against Jerry Lewis by pointing out that the annual telethons were considered paternalistic and insulting to many Americans with disabilities. I certainly did not agree with all of Watson's conclusions. For example, she is critical of the "Cosby Show." Rather than praise a stable and successful African-American family, she takes issue with the show for not putting enough emphasis on the fact that the minority group has not "arrived" and several reforms need to be taken to ensure that the demographic reaches full equality. This is an excellent book and very informative. The author did her research and made lots of good points. Not everyone will agree with all of her conclusions. One weakness of the book is that she feels that television has had a strong impact on the culture, but she doesn't place much emphasis on the view that television may also reflect the changing values of society. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A textbook I will keep. By GD Esquire I usually sell textbooks back at the end of each semester however, I really enjoyed this book. I may order another copy for a friend who is writing a curriculum for his HS students.

Defining Visions is a powerful narrative social history that examines television's rise as the great certifying agent in American life. This newly updated and fully revised edition extends its coverage to the end of the 20th century. It defines the Television Age as a discrete period in American history bracketed by monumental events: the triumph of the Allied victory of WWII and the devastation of 9/11. A powerful narrative social history that examines television's rise as the great 'certifying agent' in American life. Extends its coverage to the end of the twentieth century, and defines the 'Television Age' as a discrete period in American history that is bracketed by the end of WWII and 9/11. Includes discussions of the Monica Lewinsky scandal and Clinton impeachment; the massacre at Columbine High School; the 2000 presidential election; and the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Considers the cultural impact of recent prime-time programs such as Seinfeld, CSI and Will Grace. Presents a sweeping account of the connections between TV and American culture.

In this engaging, old-fashioned look at television, Watson argues that television defined for Americans the social issues of race, gender, violence, sex, work, consumption, behavior, and values in the decades following WW II. The book delights with its engaging style, sometimes savoring of Variety. Includes new illustrations, bringing each chapter up to the present, and significantly expanding the epilogue. Highly recommended. Choice. Once again one of our most eminent broadcast historians has produced a work that is both good history and good reading, and a brilliant and analytic integration of sources many of them mined from heretofore unavailable material. This elegant history of television is a study of the box that changed history and its changing status in the era of the web with implications for democracy and society writ large. Everett E. Dennis, Fordham Graduate School of Business, New York. A really good book about the history of American television would, by necessity, also be a book about all of the most important social and cultural themes of the last half of the twentieth century. Defining Visions is that really good book. Robert Thompson, Newhouse School of Public Communication, Syracuse University. Praise for the first edition of Defining Visions: Cogent and discerning assessment ... A comprehensively revised second edition. As one of our most astute media observers, Watson makes an estimable case. Television Quarterly "[Defining Visions] is a beautifully-written, textured analysis of American television. Watson has produced good history and good analytic integration of sources and original observations..." Everett Dennis, Felix E. Larkin Distinguished Professor of Communications and Media Management, Fordham University "Watson's Defining Visions ably introduces the reader to television culture in an informative, often entertaining manner. ... Watson might well join the ranks of authors Neil Postman and Erik Barnouw... attracting those within and outside the academy. As it stands, Defining Visions will most likely find a receptive readership among undergraduates." Robin R. Means, Journal of Popular Film Television Especially versatile for teaching the influence of television on race, class and gender and presents a rich background for examining violence, advertising, character and democracy. The Docket "This refreshing approach--devoid of cultural studies--has an important strength: in revealing television as a powerful part of American life, not just an idle preference, it presents youthful readers with a view that contrasts with much they have heard about television. The book delights with its engaging style." -R.W. Morrow, Morgan State University From the Back Cover Defining Visions is a powerful

narrative social history that examines television's rise as the great certifying agent in American life. This newly updated and fully revised edition extends its coverage to the end of the 20th century. It defines the Television Age as a discrete period in American history bracketed by monumental events: the triumph of the Allied victory in World War II and the devastation of 9/11. The new edition includes discussions of key events in American history and TV history since the book's original publication in 1997, including the Monica Lewinsky scandal and Clinton impeachment; the massacre at Columbine High School; the 2000 presidential election; and the television coverage of September 11, 2001. In addition, the book considers the cultural impact of recent prime-time programs such as *Seinfeld*, *CSI*, and *Will Grace*. As with the successful first edition, *Defining Visions: Television and the American Experience in the 20th Century* is thematically organized and presents a sweeping account of the connections between the medium and American culture. It tells the story of how television not only covered history in the 20th century but also actively influenced its course.

About the Author: Mary Ann Watson is Professor of Electronic Media and Film Studies at Eastern Michigan University. She is author of *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years* (1994) and has been a consultant to several museum exhibitions and documentary films. Watson serves on the editorial board of *Television Quarterly* and is a frequent contributor to its pages.