of South Africa she particularly emphasises its contribution to the defence of democracy, the development of society, the protection of national construction, gender equality and the protection of historically disadvantaged groups. South Africa promotes a system based on three broadcasting sectors: public, commercial and community. The broadcasting services are controlled by the South Africans.

The third case studied, i.e., Ofcom in the UK, is the only one of the cases analysed that establishes the effective promotion of self-regulation, a debate generated in some forums of an international scope about diverse peculiarities of regulation (e.g., self-regulation and co-regulation), aspects that are of more concern in societies with an advanced democracy.

However, on this point, I thought there was a lack of justification, even if brief, about the reason for choosing these three cases and not others. I also would have liked a final reflection, by way of conclusions, although the first appendix does set out some of the elements essential for regulation in the author's opinion, in the format of an outline.

In short, *Guidelines for Broadcasting Regulation* is a basic and rigorous work. Although one may initially think the models Salomon provides are aimed particularly at states in democratic transition, I also feel that legislators and the people responsible for public policies in Spain should take them into account when it comes to approving and applying the future broadcasting law and the law creating the independent regulatory authority at the State level. They may appear to be basic concepts, but we should not forget that, at May 2006, the central government has still to create a broadcasting regulatory authority, an element considered essential for the development of a full democracy and for the preservation of the rights of its citizens.

The Screen: Neither Friend Nor Enemy - Quite the Opposite

FERNÁNDEZ CAVIA, JOSEP.
La pantalla amiga? Nens i adolescents davant el nou entorn audiovisual (The Friendly Screen? Children and Adolescents and the New Audiovisual Environment). Tarragona: Arola, 2005.
by Anna Estrada i Alsina, CAC Technical Services Officer

'Neither Apocalyptic Nor Integrated, But Quite the Opposite' is the title of the final point in this book and the periphrasis that defines the author's posture throughout the whole of the work. This attitude by Fernández Cavia makes the monograph an excellent and up-to-date examination of the question of the relationship between children, teenagers and the electronic communication and leisure media. From the very first pages, we can see the good sense of his viewpoint when he says "the media – television, Internet, videogames, mobile phones – are not intrinsically benign or wicked. [...] The difference lies in the content transmitted and the use made of them" (p. 23).

This work is structured around three major sections. In the introduction, the author establishes the idea that the electronic communication and leisure media have collaborated significantly in creating a new social context in which being a child or teenager today is not the same as it was a few years ago and therefore we cannot judge what today's young people do from our adult perspectives and memories of earlier experiences. Fernández Cavia holds that today's children and teenagers are characterised by daily contact with technologies that form part of their daily routines and which enable them to see and understand the world differently from previous generations.

At this point, the author introduces the concept of 'new audiovisual environment' to refer to all the media and devices within the reach of young consumers and which form a practically undifferentiated continuum. As a result of media convergence, it is not unusual to find common characters, stories and forms of entertainment on different screens (film, television, mobile phone, PC, console, etc.). To contextualise the information he will later present, Fernández Cavia then includes a brief but interesting review of the main trends in the electronic communication and

leisure media to which children and teenagers have access (film, radio, television, internet, mobile phone, videogames and advertising). From this review, he extracts important ideas like the fact that Spanish adults are not a good reference model when it comes to television consumption, with average adult consumption considerably exceeding that of the young. He also explains, among other things, that young people use the Internet to relate with their friends and have fun, something which runs counter to the stereotype that the new leisure media promote loneliness among adolescents, and that the overwhelming success of mobile phones is due to the use made of them as a symbolic tool of exchange and representative device of identity. All these figures are backed up by the use of the studies and the bibliography consulted.

Also in the introduction, the author explains one of the key concepts in the theory of current communication, i.e., the active audience. This concept, which in fact justifies the coherence of the position the author takes throughout the whole of the text, holds that receiver publics are capable of preparing the message received and giving it a unique, individual meaning by mixing it or negotiating with knowledge, attitudes and personal contexts. This theory is, for the author, perfectly applicable to children and adolescents, who are also able to understand audiovisual discourses and draw their own conclusions, abilities that depend on their education in the social, family and school environments and audiovisual literacy.

At the end of this dense introduction, Fernández Cavia analyses the electronic communication media as companies. The author is optimistic when focusing on the economic and industrial nature of the sector, which has led to a noticeable deterioration in the television product, and believes the trend of using the communication and leisure media as content platforms that appeal to the most basic and poorest part of the human condition, due to market pressure and the dynamics of the consumer society, can change if people demand media that are intelligent and are put to the service of the most progressive and social human values. For that reason, he reviews the main regulatory and self-regulatory measures of the audiovisual sector and the most important audiovisual consumer rights' associations in Catalonia and Spain.

The second major section of the book, 'Education and Media', refers to the nature and operation of the media in the role of educating in this new audiovisual environment. Here, Fernández Cavia examines the approach the education system has taken towards technological innovation and its application with educational purposes. After summarising the impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the education system and setting out what is meant by 'educational technology', the author calls, as a number of education and communication professionals did a few years ago, for a place for audiovisual education in our schools and in our country, too.

To date, audiovisual communication entered schools as a study object with the aim of educating about the peculiarities of audiovisual languages as a specific form of expression and teaching people to critique the media. According to the author, this work should also include education in responsible consumption, as excessive and indiscriminate consumption of the electronic communication media stops people from engaging in other activities, who then lose initiative with regards their free time. Audiovisual communication should also be introduced into schools as a pedagogic resource. Educational psychologists have mainly assumed that this type of resource contributes to a rounder development of the personality and to students' cognitive abilities. These two perspectives were set out by the Audiovisual Education Cross Discipline Board at the Generalitat of Catalonia's former Department of Education. However, Fernández Cavia proposes adding a new dimension for audiovisual education in the compulsory schooling years: audiovisual communication as a socialising agent. The author believes it is essential for audiovisual education to address in depth the socialising role of the media. He thinks it is important to study the effects of audiovisual communication on individuals and how they behave, and what the children and adolescents born, raised and educated in an environment densely populated with audiovisual images think and believe.

Aware that audiovisual communication has still not found a stable and defined place in school curricula in our country, after so many years of its presence in people's daily lives, the author insists throughout the whole of the work, and particularly in this second part, on the importance of the family in the relationship between children and adolescents and the electronic communication and leisure media. For

Fernández Cavia, the people mainly responsible for this relationship today are parents. Only they know what their children watch and play, and how they spend their time and manage these habits and intervene in them with an educational purpose.

To support his line of argument, in this part of the book the author includes ideas of all postures, from the most critical (which are the most abundant in the educational sphere) through to more favourable ones about the electronic communication and leisure media and the content they propagate in society. For Fernández Cavia, the electronic communication media can and must play an important cultural function with regards children and adolescents, and he cites the human need for nourishment from fiction - whether through oral, written or audiovisual narratives. He says that approaches which criticise the cinema or television for impoverishing culture are unjust, because both involve a popular, mass culture that cannot be compared with the highbrow one books represented at the start of the 20th century, reserved as they were for a small part of the population. A highbrow culture still exists today (and it is good that it does), which only under exceptional circumstances is conveyed through the media, and a popular culture which in principle seeks pure entertainment.

The author closes this chapter with a description of the presentation of audiovisual education (or media or audiovisual literacy) within the compulsory schooling cycle in our country today. This presence, despite advances made by the documents drawn up by the Broadcast Media Programme of the Generalitat of Catalonia's Department of Education, has yet to take into account the integration of the content of audiovisual education in the common curriculum of the compulsory schooling cycle with its own space, but continues to be limited to a number of aspects in the visual and plastic arts areas and the across-the-board curriculum.

The third major section of the work develops in more detail the new dimension that Fernández Cavia proposes for audiovisual education: the influence of audiovisual communication on children and adolescents. Aware of the radical transformation in the forms of children's and teenagers' leisure activities in recent years, and supported by contributions from a constructivist or cognitive perspective, the author challenges some of the most recurrent myths in the representation on the part of adults of children and teens

as consumers, viewers and users of the new audiovisual environment. He introduces interesting ideas such as the fact that qualitative research by experts has found that children from a very young age develop a number of abilities, criteria and understandings of the media that are much more evolved and independent than adults realise and that minors watch less television in Spain than older age groups do.

Fernández Cavia then goes over some of the supposed effects of this type of leisure and communication with regards the understanding, attitudes and behaviour of children and adolescents, and summarises the current state of studies on the issue. In particular, he focuses on the relationship between television and family, advertising as a stimulus for consumption, possible connections between the electronic media and the generalised feeling that violence is on the rise, problems arising from the representation of sexual content on-screen, the dangers of addiction and broadcasting on the part of the communication and leisure media, stereotypes and ideologically marked representations of reality.

This book does not disappoint the reader who, as well as information, has turned to it for solutions. To finish, Fernández Cavia devotes the conclusions to forming a number of general reflections which, even if one accepts are based on a particular ideological and ethical perspective, may be of use in guiding adults when it comes to facing the issues raised throughout the text. In line with the rest of the work, the author ends with the following warning: "As parents and educators, we have to learn to defend ourselves and to defend our children and students from any harmful effects the media may have, but we also have to learn to make the most from the good things about them, of which there are many" (page 184). The exhaustiveness of this volume, despite the author's proven ability for summarisation, ends with an extensive bibliography that invites the reader to reflection.

All up, this is a very complete book that addresses the relationship between children and/or adolescents, the electronic media and education without prejudices and with good sense. In short, it should be compulsory reading for education and communication professionals and the general public alike.