

Media and Participation

by Nico Carpentier



Review by Mónica Rodrigues

In **Media and Participation**, work divided in two parts, Nico Carpentier discusses participation as a structurally unstable concept and as an object of ideological debate between two kinds of participation: the minimalist and the maximalist.

In the first part, Carpentier uses a set of theoretical reflections to discuss the concept of participation and its role in the media in five different fields (democracy, art and museums, development, spatial planning and communication). Through them he presents the various forms of articulation of participation and shows the common citizen's need to participate, despite the structuring and limitations to which he is subject.

In the second part, the author demonstrates the applicability of these theories with several case studies that attest to the different forms of participation adopted by society, using five keywords: the **power** operations exercised by media professionals on television are exposed in the talk show *Jan Publiek* and in *Barometer*; the question of **identity** and subject positions in the media sphere is debated also resorting to *Jan Publiek* and the reality show *Temptation Island*; **organization** is evidenced in the *Video Nation* show and in *Radio Swap*; the influence of **technology** on citizen participation is exemplified in the world's first interactive film, *Kinoautomat*; and the importance of **quality** as a discursive tool is illustrated again with *Barometer* and the social network *16plus*.

Media and Participation constitutes an exhaustive and interdisciplinary analysis of the participation of society in the media. It offers balanced doses of theory and practice and aims to stimulate the debate and make people aware that participation is not always as genuine as it appears as it undergoes media manipulation for the sole purpose of entertainment. Carpentier concludes that "...the right to participate should [not] be transformed into an obligation to participate. Participation must remain an invitation – permanently available and inserted in the relations of power balance – for those who want their voices heard."

Media XXI has published the Portuguese version, *Media e Participação*, available in print and digital, on Amazon's website and at www.mediaxxi.com.