

● Mar Chicharro
Madrid (Spain)

DOI:10.3916/C36-2011-03-10

Learning from Television Fiction. The Reception and Socialization Effects from Watching «Loving in Troubled Times»

Aprendiendo de la ficción televisiva. La recepción y los efectos socializadores de «Amar en tiempos revueltos»

ABSTRACT

Television fiction is often understood as a cultural product whose aim is entertainment and escapism. However, its functions are not merely commercial. In fact, this article aims to improve understanding of the socializing and educational effects of television's fictional messages. It also reflects on the active role of the audience in the process of reception, and on its capacity to define and interpret messages according to the viewer's personal and social characteristics. This work examines the informational usefulness and significance for personal identity of a specific television genre, the telenovela, a fictional product which, despite focusing its narrative on romantic events and personal conflicts, can also provide the viewer with explanations and interpretations of society's past and present. In particular, this analysis of the melodramatic format sets out to establish the meanings and representations in «Amar en tiempos revueltos» («Loving in Troubled Times») for its female viewers. Based on the analysis of in-depth interviews, the article will explore the female audience's reception processes through variables such as age and education. This study concludes that the majority of female viewers use fiction in an explanatory sense, and that the telenovela is a genre in which women identify themselves individually and as a group.

RESUMEN

La ficción televisiva suele ser entendida como producto cultural encaminado a la evasión y el entretenimiento. Sin embargo, sus funciones no son estrictamente comerciales. De hecho, el presente trabajo surge del interés por conocer los efectos socializadores y educativos de los mensajes de ficción. Del mismo modo, reflexiona sobre el papel activo de los espectadores en el proceso de recepción, sobre su capacidad para definir e interpretar los mensajes de acuerdo con sus características personales y sociales. Más concretamente, el trabajo se interesa por las utilidades informativas y significados identitarios de un género televisivo concreto: la telenovela. Si bien focaliza el grueso de sus tramas en los avatares románticos y los conflictos personales, este producto de ficción, puede además proveer al espectador de explicaciones e interpretaciones en relación con el pasado y el presente de una sociedad. Concretando nuestro análisis en un formato melodramático concreto, «Amar en tiempos revueltos», analizaremos los significados y representaciones que ofrece a sus públicos femeninos. A partir de ahí, y mediante el análisis de contenido de los discursos obtenidos a través de la técnica de la entrevista en profundidad, se explorarán los procesos de recepción de las espectadoras, en función de variables como la edad y el nivel educativo. De este modo, se concluirá señalando cómo el grueso de las espectadoras utiliza la ficción en un sentido explicativo, y se reconocen en ella personal y grupalmente.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Telenovelas, television, information, entertainment, woman, socialization, interviews, television effects.
Telenovelas, televisión, información, entretenimiento, mujer, socialización, entrevistas, efectos televisivos.

◆ Ph.D. Mar Chicharro Merayo is Associate Professor and Head of Studies at the Audiovisual Communication Degree. Aranjuez Campus (CES Felipe II), Complutense University of Madrid (mchicharro@ajz.ucm.es).

1. TV entertainment fiction / socializing fiction

The usefulness and gratification associated with the consumption of fictional television vary greatly. While entertainment is the most manifest, hegemonic and visible function of television, research has identified other uses and effects related to the socialising role of this medium. Indeed there are significant audience segments that value entertainment products provided they offer plausible and realistic representations (García de Castro, 2007: 149). This highlights the importance of guidance and modelling in fictional television for viewers. Alongside the traditional agents of socialization (family, school, peers, work environment, etc.), fictional television should be understood as a significant influence in shaping personal, group and community identities in the orientation of attitudes and behaviours, and in the acquisition of cognitive and informative elements, especially when it acts on our socialization processes during primary and secondary school (i.e. in childhood and youth, and the early adult stages).

1.1. Television fiction as a source of personal, group, community and national identity

Fictional TV stories can act as a mechanism in the construction and reconstruction of viewers' personal identity. Viewers can use fictional TV to reinforce their self-esteem, and as a self-reflective support tool to better recognise themselves. It can also be understood as a link to the experiences of others through which they can explain their own existence. This usefulness can be extrapolated to the group level, because TV fiction can orientate the relations of individuals by promoting their psychological linking to a reference group. If one of these groups occupies a subordinate social position, the fictional text might usefully build a more positive and valuable reflection on their status (Brown, 2009). For those whose identity is in the process of construction, such as adolescents, fiction could provide values, images, rituals, symbols and models that act as reference points for their personal and group perceptions (Montero 2005). Fictional texts might also reflect and transmit feelings of belonging to a wider community. The representation of cultural elements common to viewers (folklore, customs and traditions, gastronomy, dress codes and music) acts as a means to build and strengthen national identities (Rodríguez Cadena, 2004; Castelló, 2009).

1.2. Fiction as a source of information

Although fictional texts are not necessarily rigorous, accurate or representative, the viewer can

reinterpret their content as if they were. This perception is enhanced by devices that generate verisimilitude, ranging from product placement or Reality TV techniques to references to current affairs or historical events. Paradoxically, fiction can be used to obtain information about present-day reality and provide a framework for its interpretation. From this perspective, consumption of this product type could be taken as a dimension of public life. As viewers get involved on an intuitive and expressive level in a kind of public dialogue, they develop notions of how politics works and how to understand it (orientation role) (Porto, 2005: 355).

2. Hypotheses and methodology

This article presents a reception study whose objective is to analyse the socializing impact of a particular television fiction genre: the historical telenovela «Amar en tiempos revueltos» («Loving in Troubled Times»). Produced by Diagonal TV and broadcast daily during TVE 1's afternoon slot, this telenovela narrates the lives and occurrences of a large cast of characters whose relationships represent the evolution of Spanish society from before the Spanish Civil War to the 1950s. With a clear female emphasis, most of the plots focus on universal relational conflicts – love, family and friendship. They also address problems that women face today (combining work and family, the domestic roles of men and women, negligible promotion prospects at work, separation and divorce, single parenting, frustrated maternity, and so on) and suggest solutions for these problems.

The choice of this particular subgenre and format is justified firstly by the importance of this show in the programming of general national and regional TV networks, its high (and profitable) audience ratings and longevity (still showing since 2005), all of which indicates its socializing potential. Secondly, this historical telenovela has come to represent the most genuine adaptation or indigenization of this genre for Spanish viewers (Buonanno, 2009). The semantic richness of its text brings together a wide variety of socializing elements: an emotional and sentimental approach, community and identity proposals that recreate recent Spanish «intra-history», renewed models of femininity and historical references that give the fictional text a documentary character.

The article studies the cultural effects of this text based on several assumptions. Firstly, we maintain that fiction, and in particular the format under study, acts as an instrument of informal education for viewers.

Socialization is understood as a broad, never-ending sociocultural process. We also understand that this telenovela has been produced as part of an educative-entertainment strategy (Tufté, 2007), which aims to promote certain dynamics such as women's empowerment and gender equality. Secondly, we understand that this re-creation of recent Spanish history is used as an informational resource by a large sector of viewers, and that is why we examine the strategies of persuasion and verisimilitude embedded in the narrative. Thirdly, we maintain that this telenovela's connection with the public is based on, among other things, its ability to act as a source of identification: on a personal level (personal identity), group level (gender identity), or community level (national identity). The telenovela's melodramatic format, adapted or «indigenized» to the Spanish public, offers the viewer familiar landmarks that subsequently facilitate this type of learning about identity. Finally, we will reflect on the processes of re-semanticization, re-assignment and re-processing, and the negotiation of meanings that viewers can extract from the text (Martín Barbero, 1993).

The pedagogical and persuasive impact of the fictional text is measured via reception analysis based on in-depth interviews with 25 regular viewers¹. Nineteen of the interviewees were women aged 45 or over, intentionally selected according to such variables as age, educational level, occupation, and husband's occupation. The sample is a simplified snapshot of the most visible, representative viewing positions but focused on the variables of education and occupation. The six remaining interviewees were used to form control groups and to measure differences in the perception of the television text through age and gender variables. There were three interviews with young women (aged 21) and three more with men of varying ages.

The interviews followed a thematic plan previously memorized by the interviewer, recorded and then transcribed entirely for subsequent analysis. The interviews polled the type of relationship the viewer had established with the story by registering, from the viewer's viewpoint, variables such as originality, verisimilitude, historical rigour, informative relevance and topicality. The reception analysis also identified the valuation viewers gave of the most

prominent characters and the connection they perceived in this telenovela to other TV series of the same subgenre. For the discourse analysis, the 19 interviews were divided in four homogeneous groups in terms of occupation and the educational level of the interviewees and their spouses:

- Group 1: Self-employed women and housewives (wives of self-employed men) with a basic or low educational level, aged from 45 to 75 (4 individuals).
- Group 2: Women working in the service sector and housewives (wives of men who work in the service sector) with a basic or low educational level, from 45 to 80 years of age (5).
- Group 3: Women in occupations that do not

The story's connections to irrational elements such as memories increase its persuasive force and enable active public participation. The female viewer can use fiction to see a reflection of herself, her gender group or the wider community she belongs to.

necessarily require a university qualification, with a medium level of education attained at high school, or through vocational training) and who might, nevertheless, have a university degree, between 50 and 60 years of age (4).

- Group 4: Women in occupations that require university qualifications, with a university education, aged 45 to 65 (6).

The content analysis revealed that the interviewees in each group provided coherent information until they reached saturation point. The discourses of the first two groups established constant continuities that differed remarkably from those in the last two groups, which were equally assimilable. Similarly, there were big differences in the discourses of the women in Group 5 (three 21-year-old university students) and Group 6 (three men of varied educational and professional ages and backgrounds).

3. Results

3.1. «Amar en tiempos revueltos»: History and information

«Amar en tiempos revueltos» presents an historical setting within which a series of plots representing

everyday life take place. The realistic component so characteristic of the «folletín» (serialised novel) seems to lend its discourse objectivity. Supported by historical references and informational film devices, it facilitates viewers' immersion in a text which, by sometimes transgressing the rules of fiction, manages to look like a documentary. This informative appearance strengthens its socializing dimension and, in the opinion of many viewers, makes it a pedagogical telenovela. Furthermore, the telenovela evokes old radio series and literary genres such as the historical novel, the Spanish Realist novel of the late 19th century, and the social and critical theatre of the early 20th century, reinforcing the feeling of reality attributed to the story.

Regardless of their socio-demographic

Realism, historicism and the documentary nature of the text are the most important and visible aspects of the brand image of the Spanish telenovela. Following the idea of national community and the reinforcing of national values, the Spanish nation is represented as having a common history built on the confluence of conflicts. The telenovela materialises its role as a community text by recreating the conflicts of a society and its ability to overcome such problems for the sake of future progress, that is to say, the viewers' present:

«I think that it is important for Spaniards to know how people lived during that time, to realise that we have not always lived as we are now, in democracy, and that before, we were not allowed to read what we wanted (...) people believe that what we do today is how it always used to be» (a 49-year-old primary school teacher from Group 4).

On the one hand, the «indigenization» of the telenovela in Spain ensures its familiarity and proximity, by offering stories that exalt Spanish idiosyncrasy. On the other hand, «indigenization» enhances the status of the product by associating it to features like verisimilitude, representativeness, reliability,

and the realistic feel of the stories which, at least in appearance, disrupts the inherent fictional and extremely romantic conventions of the genre. By contrast, the Latin American telenovelas are seen as increasingly more fictional and unreal:

«Amar en tiempos revueltos» seems more serious, more novelistic, and more historical. And the other (the Latin American telenovela) is more romantic (...). And the same happens in series and telenovelas from there, they are just romanticism and nothing more (...) (Amar en tiempos revueltos) (...) is more real». (a 60-year-old housekeeper from Group 2).

«(The Latin American telenovelas) are less informative than the Spanish ones because the former focus more on personal relationships and tend to exaggerate too much» (a 21-year-old female university student from Group 5).

However, the distinctive features associated to the Spanish telenovela go beyond this. The sample of women with a high level of education, and who are also long-time consumers of fiction, point to other elements by which «Amar en tiempos revueltos» readapts the telenovela genre. The use of Spanish TV

The influence of the educational factor has a varied effect depending on its combination with the age group. So, the youngest women, although they are educated, possess limited sources of verification, and place their trust in the veracity of the ambience and content of the TV series.

characteristics, all members of the sample noted the informational aspect of the telenovela. Indeed, apart from the content, the tale's familiar approach seems to increase the persuasive potential of the text. The most knowledgeable comments in the sample link the story to the «Unamuno» vision of the «intra-history», while the most prosaic interventions highlight the relationship between the plots and everyday life. Others reveal the ideological bias of the ethnographic discourses. All the female interviewees show how the anecdotal and everyday perspective of the TV series foments processes that reveal a significant psychological connection between the audience and plots which, in some cases, are highly personalized.

«If you think about it, it is like real life. And in the scenes, you see a bit of your life, like when you were a child» (a 60-year-old housekeeper from Group 2).

In its process of adaptation to Spanish viewers, the telenovela, which is an eminently Latin American genre, opted for an historical recreation of the social reality of a bygone era in Spain. This historical setting is the most important feature that identifies the product as Spanish in relation to its Latin American referents.

stars and «normalised linguistics», and less theatrical dramatic strategies reduce the cultural distance between Spanish viewers and Latin American television stories:

«Spanish actors (have) accents with which I identify more (...) In the South American telenovelas... (the actors) speak in a certain way... I don't know how to explain it... their expressions... their acting is not credible. (...) However in (the Spanish production) they speak your language, the acting is more credible, (...) it seems more familiar (...) I see actors who are well-known, in fact some of them have been actors their whole lives» (a 50-year-old, administrative assistant from Group 3).

3.2. Verifying the story, looking for identity

The ethnographic approach that recreates the lifestyle of post-Civil War Madrid allows viewers to establish ties of continuity with personal experiences lodged in their memory, and which measure the accuracy of the story. At the same time, the central role of plots that deal with the family and relationships, so characteristic of the serialised novel, enables the construction of a wide open space for identification, opinion and discussion in which any female viewer can participate, regardless of educational and occupational level.

In this sense, the groups with a lower level of education are the most credulous, although they articulate defence strategies that act as procedures to evaluate the story and its rigor (Callejo, 1995). The resources to measure veracity include the recovery of childhood experiences or plots that are inter-generationally referenced. This process requires the female viewer to recognise a part of her within the fictional text in order to activate the processes of evocation.

What they usually select for this comparison are the most material elements which are more firmly ingrained in the memory: dress style and home decoration. Some female interviewees suggested that the television text softens the post-war reality. The hegemony of black in the clothing of the era, the decorative austerity of households as well as the narrative ellipses that obviate the hardships that still live in their memories explain why the representation might be described as «rich people's post-war» reality (a 53-year-old housewife in Group 2).

This appreciation is, however, compatible with the tendency to seek coherence between the reality experienced and the fiction watched on television. That is why the message is particularly persuasive in those moments when it recreates and personalizes

those situations that are part of the viewers' personal oral heritage, producing a resonance:

«For example, my mother told me about the way political prisoners used to hide and all that, and now I am putting a face to that story» (a 47-year-old small business owner from Group 1).

«The telenovela showed the story of a man that was locked up, and well, I have lived that experience because in my town they locked up a kid. It is like my story, because I have lived that» (an 80-year-old housewife in Group 2).

By contrast, when there is a dissonance between the television representation and viewers' historical experiences, the fictional plots operate as cognitive correctors that reorganise viewers' memories. That is why the anachronisms of the TV text, far from being questioned, are frequently received as valuable informational input.

«We are dealing with an interesting subject: divorce. At that time... nobody would believe it!» (a 56-year-old housewife from Group 1).

«What struck me about the series is the case of homosexuality between two women, and seeing that during that time there were things that exist now» (a 47-year-old small business owner in Group 1).

At the formal level, this group is less aware of gender diversity and the various languages that shape the small screen. That is why some resources deployed in the TV series to increase the sense of reality and to give it a documentary feel do not achieve the desired effect of continuity. This is the case of informative archive images, which mostly come from news and documentary footage. These images are inserted at the beginning of some narrative sections and act as transitions between sequences, and give an historical context to the plots to enhance their documentary quality.

«Is it because of the sections that present the history before the telenovela starts? (...) «Amar en tiempos revueltos» wants to show how life was lived before and how it is today. This is why they present short fragments, about Franco going to certain places, and that kind of stuff... And then, bam, the telenovela really begins» (a 60-year-old housekeeper from Group 2).

«A long time ago, at the cinema, people watched the news. And then the telenovela shows pieces from NO-DO (the news and documentary programme). It is useful to show the date, day and year» (a 59-year-old small business owner, Group 1).

The evaluation of the representative meaning of the TV series becomes more complex and sophisti-

cated in the discourse of the more educated women. Using the same material (memories of family experiences), they diversify and expand the indicators while simultaneously analyzing them more exhaustively. They mirror the observations of the lower socio-demographic group, but in more detail, and extend criticism of the excessive use of other objects such as the telephone, and what at the time might have been considered luxury food items:

«You see their trousers and you think these trousers are pleated! And the sofas, everybody has sofas! And this makes you wonder whether, at that time, they all had three-seater sofas? (...) For breakfast, strips of fried dough and muffins, the only thing missing is the fridge!» (a 49-year-old primary school teacher, Group 4).

But the distinctive feature of this group is its reiterated reproach of the representation of the female condition and its performance in the telenovela. Aware of the difficulties faced by women, they highlight the contradiction of certain key characters that embody the values of the contemporary female, such as empowerment, job promotion for women and the balancing of work and family life. This group notes the rigidity of women's progression in the telenovela, and the difficulties in educational, job and social mobility they have inherited. Through their criticism of these non-contextualised fictional stereotypes, these interviewees underline the genuine progress of real women who lived during that time, and with whom they identify and maintain referential and affective ties.

«There are things that are very incongruent, like the fact that a woman in that time could lead a company by herself, even when she was married (...). When my mother got married she immediately had to stop working because that was the tradition. It was the same for my sister's workmates when they got married (...) they stopped working because their goal was to maintain the family» (a 50-year-old administrative assistant, Group 3).

At the same time, the discourse of these women still defends the dramatized merits of the female characters, which often seem to reduce the real merits of their female viewers to the banal. The female characters and the female viewers share conflicts, although the former resolve theirs more successfully than the latter. That is why the modernity, sophistication, exaggeration and lack of credibility, and even the derision awoken by these fictional women, are the most recurring accusations. After watching the story, these female respondents are perhaps made more aware of the almost inherently domestic nature

of their role and of the obstacles to overcome to achieve social change in a more egalitarian society:

«For example, the character of Manolita, who has three daughters, is at the bar, and she has been working in big department stores for a while. Women of that time would either take care of their children or work. But she does the two things at the same time, which is very difficult. And the daughters are always very well taken care of, and wonderful, and the mother is always at the bar, and the father at the bar, and the grandfather at the bar. Who takes care of these girls? (...) There are things that do not make sense» (a 52-year-old administrative assistant in Group 3).

However, the ability to judge the accuracy of the story is reduced in those groups that no longer have a direct link to the historical period represented. The generation gap between female viewers and the epoch represented results in the lack of material and indicators to articulate this verification process. In other words, the influence of the educational factor has a varied effect depending on its combination with the age group. So, the youngest women, although they are educated, possess limited sources of verification, and place their trust in the veracity of the ambience and content of the TV series. In fact, they see this fictional text as an educational text. Thus, the story is used less as a reference for the status of women. For this group, «Amar en Tiempos Revueltos» is above all a useful tool for verifying the accuracy of the oral histories of their families, and to compensate for the lack of knowledge of that era which they did not acquire from the formal educational system:

«I have never really understood it... I know what Francoism is... what happened in the transition, what happened before... but I never studied it. I don't know, I never studied that part of our history in high school and I have only learnt about it from this and other telenovelas or series or other programmes, and based on what my grandparents have told me... that it (what the telenovela shows) is actually true» (a 21-year-old university student, Group 5).

3.3. Re-signifying the characters

«Amar en tiempos revueltos» presents a branched narrative structure, built from a network of plots sustained by personal conflicts, some of them timeless, others strictly of their time. It thus offers the female viewer models for action and the resolution of ordinary problems. The female characters, on the one hand, articulate a sort of historical panorama of the situation of women under the Francoist regime, and on the other hand, present evaluative, attitudinal and

behavioural patterns with persuasive power based on the psychological commitment of the viewer to the text.

The most consensual and extended alliances revolve around the character of Manolita (Itziar Miranda), who arouses a range of positive meanings in female viewers, regardless of age and education. The female viewers witness Manolita's vicissitudes through «El Asturiano», a small bar she runs with her family. This bar is used as a scenographic resource to present the dual role of the archetype: the family and the professional roles that are mainly to this space. Interview analysis shows that this character exemplifies the value of the family in its classical dimension, and embodies the processes of female re-accommodation and the central responsibility of women in the cohesion and continuity of the family as an institution.

The interviewees with better jobs perceive the character as a symbol of the reconciliation of family and work. It combines tradition and modernity, and shows the high expectations placed on women who wish to pursue this dual role. At the same time, Manolita's simple psychological characterisation includes proactivity, optimism, emotional intelligence and the ability to perform. All these features conform to a model of compulsory features the contemporary female must possess. This already broad portrayal also includes virtues such as charity or social solidarity, which stimulate loyalty in the female viewers who have been sensitized to ethical and even religious attitudes. In addition, the popular halo enveloping «El Asturiano» connects the bar to places and characters that are typical of genres such as the «zarzuela» (traditional Spanish operetta), which give this space a certain humorous character that is much appreciated by the female interviewees.

The character of Ana Rivas (Marina San José) evokes very different meanings. The evaluation of her character divided opinion in the sample. Her presentation as a highly educated and socially successful business woman who owns and manages a big company arouses emotions ranging from admiration and psychological projection from those women not in the public space, to disdain from others who consider her to be an implausible, anachronistic and improbable character. While this character

symbolises the processes of women's empowerment, the critical vision that she awakens, especially among the higher educated interviewees, reveals the growing barriers to social and job mobility that they experience.

In fact, the highest educated group of women shows its special appreciation of the characters that embody a femininity that is consistent with the cultural rules of that time. The character of Carmen (Pepa Pedroche) is singled out by several interviewees due to her credibility, the strength of her psychological construction and her coherence with the era of the narrative.

According to this reading, the stereotype of the unwearying and selfless woman comes to symbolise the silent work done by most women of the time.

The story's connections to irrational elements such as memories increase its persuasive force and enable active public participation. The female viewer can use fiction to see a reflection of herself, her gender group or the wider community she belongs to.

Embodying the mythical role of the mother, which distinguishes and grants exclusivity to the genre, the character symbolises women's sacrifices and compromises for the sake of family survival and harmony. On the one hand, the dynamics of the sharing of domestic power portray the character as a subordinate figure and yet, paradoxically, her strength and resistance to adversity portray her as an indisputable pillar on which the rest of the family depends physically and psychologically.

4. Conclusions

The socialization process is never-ending, indeed during this process several resources are deployed depending on the viewer's current mindset and socio-demographic characteristics. The media, including television, collaborate in these pedagogical dynamics through formats whose explicit function is entertainment.

This is how the «Amar en tiempos revueltos» can help to build identity and perform informative functions for its female viewers, provided the women's evaluation and verification filters are penetrated. On

the other hand, the story's connections to irrational elements such as memories increase its persuasive force and enable active public participation. The female viewer can use fiction to see a reflection of herself, her gender group or the wider community she belongs to. The force of variables like gender and age in the re-signification of the telenovela is unquestionable. The comments of the male interviewees (Group 6) reveal how their view of the telenovela is influenced by their intense involvement in the public space. The informational dimension of the plots and their usefulness as texts of representation of the political situation of post-Civil War Spain is the aspect most highly valued by these viewers, who watch the telenovela with a more informative and less emotional involvement. However, we still need to investigate the individual psychological processes the male viewers go through. The use of indicators such as the evaluation of the male characters, or plots and conflicts in personal relationships could advance the research in this area.

From a macro-perspective, the continued exercising of this socializing role could contribute to the articulation of wider social changes. The message of «Amar en tiempos revueltos», as a means of strengthening worldviews that favour women's empowerment, could be an instrument for greater gender equality, as has happened with other telenovelas and other contexts (La Pastina, 2004: 177).

Its effect might be reinforced by the consumption of other intra-textual products working in the same ideological direction («La Señora», 2008-10); or counteracted by the consumption of more conservative and opposing discourses. Finally, the role of interpersonal communication dynamics in the remaking of fiction is another element to consider in proposals for the analysis of the effects of this message.

Notes

¹The in-depth interviews were carried out thanks to the invaluable, indispensable and committed assistance of students from Sociology of Communication course (2009-10) of the Degree in Audiovisual Communication at the Centro de Estudios Superiores Felipe II, at the Complutense University of Madrid.

Financing

This article was written during a research fellowship at the Real Colegio Complutense at Harvard University, 2010, thanks to a research scholarship granted by that institution for the research project «fvb The globalization of fictional television. Telenovela and soap opera in Spain and United States: messages, consumption, effects, 1990-2010».

In addition, this article forms part of the following research projects:

1) «The history of entertainment in Spain under the Francoist regime: culture, consumption and audiovisual content (cinema, radio, and television». Reference: HAR2008-06076/ARTE, Ministry of Science and Innovation, Spain; 2) Complutense Research Group «The history and structure of communication and entertainment». Reference: 940439, Gr 58/08, BCSH-UCM; 3) «The army on screen: the audiovisual representation of the armed forces in fictional television and videogames». Reference: 023/01, General Directorate of Institutional Relations for Defence, Ministry of Defence, Spain.

References

- BROWN, L. (2009). Pleasuring Body Parts: Women and Soap Operas in Brazil. *Critical Arts. A South-North Journal of Cultural and Media Studies*, 1; 6-25
- BUNONANNO, M. (2009). From Literacy to Formal Adaptation. Multiple Interactions between the Foreign and Domestic in Italian Television Drama. *Critical Studies in Television*, 4, 1; 65-83.
- CALLEJO, J. (1995). *La audiencia activa*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.
- CASTELLÓ, E. (2009). The Nation as Political Stage: A Theoretical Approach to Television Fiction and National Identity. *International Communication Gazette*, 71, 4; 303-322.
- GARCÍA DE CASTRO, M. (2007). Los movimientos de renovación en las series televisivas españolas. *Comunicar*, 30, 15; 147-153.
- LA PASTINA, A.C. (2004). Telenovela Reception in Rural Brazil: Gendered Readings and Sexual Mores. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21, 2; 162-181.
- MARTÍN BARBERO, J. (1993). *Communication, Culture, and Hegemony*. From Media to Mediations. London: Sage.
- MONTERO, Y. (2005). Estudio empírico sobre el serial juvenil «Al salir de clase»: Sobre la transmisión de valores a los adolescentes. *Comunicar*, 25.
- PERALES, A. & PÉREZ CHICA, A. (2008). Aprender la identidad ¿Qué menores ven los menores en la televisión? *Comunicar*, 31, XVI; 299-304
- PORTO, M.P. (2005). Political Controversies in Brazilian TV Fiction. Viewers' Interpretation of the Telenovela Terra Nostra. *Television and New Media*, 6, 4; 342-395.
- RODRÍGUEZ CADENA, M.A. (2004). Contemporary Hi(stories) of Mexico: Fictional Re-Creation of Collective Past on Television. *Film and History*, 34, 1; 49-55.
- TUFTE, T. (2007). Soap Opera y construcción de sentido: mediaciones y etnografía de la audiencia. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 8; 89-112.