

Enhancing Life Books in Communication and Media Studies

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Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication by John Durham Peters (Chicago University Press, 1999)

This intellectual history of the rise of “communication” in the modern age redefines the term as profoundly ethical and political. Combining insights from pragmatism, critical theory and Continental philosophy it proposes dissemination as an alternative to the domination of dialogue in traditional understanding of communication, opening thereby new horizons for relation and interaction.

Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis by Roger Silverstone (Polity, 2007)

A treatise on the moral significance of modern media, this book recasts the media as a space of appearance on a global scale in which relationships between neighbors and strangers, the near and the distant, are mediated and negotiated. It introduces the concept of mediapolis as a moral space where hospitality, responsibility, obligation and judgment are publically enacted.

Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice by Nick Couldry (Polity, 2012)

This social theory of media in the digital age revisits some of the most fundamental questions in media and communication studies in order to address the challenges of contemporary digitally-saturated lifeworlds. In so doing it provokes new thinking about the political, practical and moral implications of media practices and technologies in a globalized world.

Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics by Luc Boltanski (Cambridge University Press, 1999)

A seminal text in exploring the moral and political implications of watching the suffering of distant others through the media. By identifying the basic modes by which spectators relate to distant suffering, it has opened a new research agenda for the relation between humanitarianism and modern media, and for media ethics more generally.

Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty by John Ellis (I.B. Tauris, 2000)

This book introduces the idea of witnessing into communication and media vocabulary, discovering the various ways media technologies (especially the television) render audiences as witnesses. By allowing such witnessing the media reshape our moral horizons: we can no longer say, "we did not know."