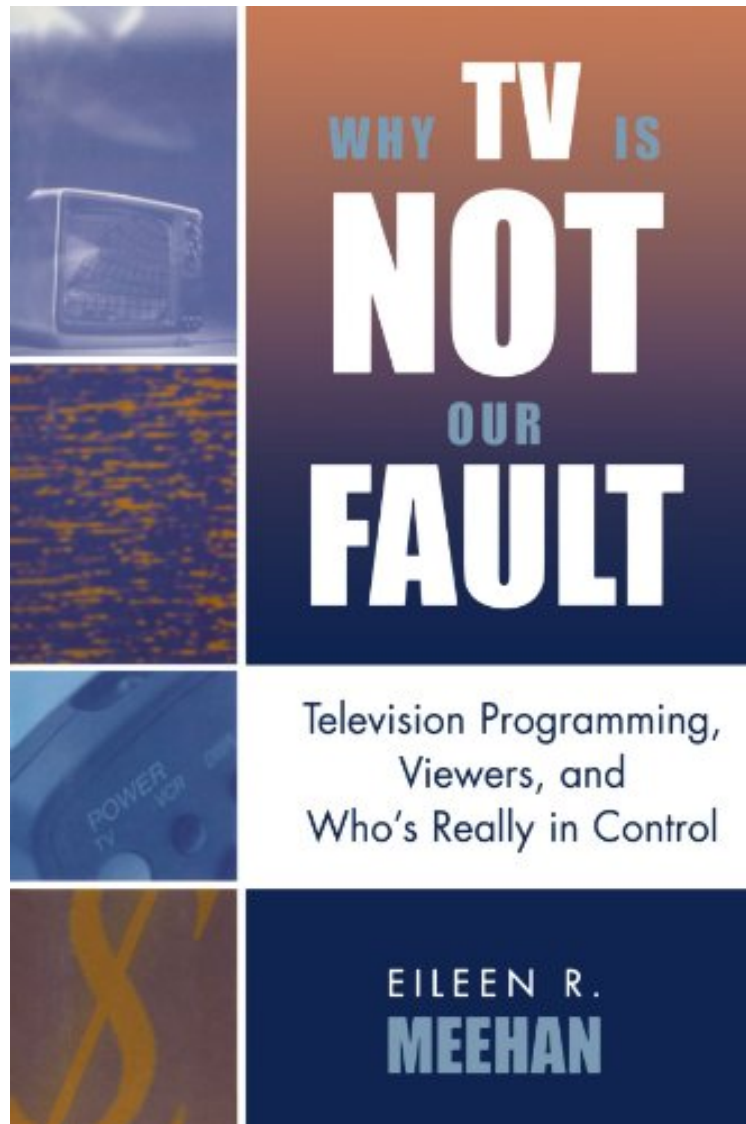


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## Why TV Is Not Our Fault: Television Programming, Viewers, and Who's Really in Control (Critical Media Studies: Institutions, Politics, and Culture)

*Eileen R. Meehan*

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**Eileen R. Meehan : Why TV Is Not Our Fault: Television Programming, Viewers, and Who's Really in Control (Critical Media Studies: Institutions, Politics, and Culture)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why TV Is Not Our Fault: Television Programming, Viewers, and Who's

## Really in Control (Critical Media Studies: Institutions, Politics, and Culture):

For more than five decades, we've been told by pundits, commentators, advertisers, scholars, and politicians that television is both a window on the world and a mirror reflecting our culture. We've been led to believe that it shows us the world's events through news programs and, through entertainment programs, reflects the preferences, values, beliefs, and understandings shared by most Americans. We're told that if you don't like what you see on TV, don't blame the industry, blame yourself. This book dispels the myth that the television industry is just giving viewers the programming they want to see and, thus, we as viewers are "responsible" for the existence of shows like *Fear Factor* and yet another *Survivor*. In fact, Eileen Meehan explains, viewers exert no demand in the market for ratings, advertising slots, program production, or telecasting. She also counters the idea that TV programs reflect our culture directly. Introducing us to the political economy of television, Meehan covers programming, corporate strategies, advertising, the misnomer of "competition" among networks, and organizations that seek more industry accountability. She tells us why TV isn't our fault and who's really to blame.

Meehan tells it like it is! Television is unmasked in this lively, well-documented, and sharply argued text that will be savored by media students and scholars. Meehan presents a thorough analysis of U.S. television's markets for consumers, ratings, and programs within the context of a transindustrial structure and corporate synergy. Thanks to this critical study, television viewers will be relieved to know that they aren't to blame for what has been called 'a vast wasteland.' (Janet Wasko, University of Oregon) In *Why TV Is Not Our Fault*, Eileen Meehan effectively explodes the notion that television ratings represent accurate measures of the number of audience members who exercise their demands for specific programming in a free, competitive market. This cogent and incisive book offers a historically contextualized, unassailable argument that corporate and not audience interest is what counts in television programming. It is distinctive in exposing that 'audience measurements' are shaped by advertisers' and network and cable owners' shared demand for consumers that meet the appropriate upscale demographics. The book is a myth-busting, political-economic analysis of the confluence of television programming and the selling of consumers to advertisers through ratings. It is long overdue and essential reading for students and scholars interested in television studies, and more broadly the political economy of communication. I only regret that *Why TV Is Not Our Fault* cannot be made required reading for all television viewers. (Lisa M. McLaughlin, Miami University; editor, *Feminist Media Studies*) In this carefully crafted book, Meehan contends that the audience cannot be blamed for the poor, and declining, level of television programming. Instead, as she posits in five closely argued chapters, one should blame the interconnected elements of highly successful commercial business. . . . Recommended. (CHOICE) A carefully crafted argument that we as the audience are not to be blamed for the poor and declining level of programming. Instead, as Meehan posits in five closely argued chapters, we should blame the interconnected elements of a highly successful commercial business. . . . This surely does suggest some different ways of looking at 'accepted' facts. (Communication Booknotes Quarterly) This is a really great, concise, and clearly written book. Meehan's insights are highly accessible. I'd had time to read this with an eye toward adopting in fall 2006! (Douglas L. Battista, Western New England College) Meehan's timely book finally lays bare the facts about who controls television programming and how and why they do what they do. It once and for all puts to rest the claim that television executives simply 'give people what they want.' This is a serious and sophisticated scholarly book; Meehan carefully analyzes the economics and sociology of the industry to reach her conclusions. But she does so in an accessible way, without hiding behind jargon or intellectual obfuscation. Policymakers, industry professionals, and concerned citizens should all read this book and will be glad they did. (Thomas Streeter, University of Vermont) Brilliant, readable, and highly teachable. (Kate Kane, Northeastern Illinois University) About the Author Eileen R. Meehan is the Lemuel Heidel Brown Chair in Media and Political Economy at the Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University.