

Understanding Media



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著者:Evans, Jessica (EDT)/ Hesmondhalgh, David (EDT)

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Visit the Understanding Media series microsite. This book introduces the study of the media in an innovative way using the sustained example of celebrity. Across four chapters, the construction of celebrity is examined using four essential concepts in media studies: history, text, production and audiences. The authors argue that individuals do not become celebrities as a result of their innately alluring qualities but rather, that celebrity is a resource created and deployed by a range of often interlocking media, such as television, film and the press, and to which audiences respond in diverse ways. Drawing critically on current scholarship, the key areas of discussion include: the historical claim that there is something unique in today's society called 'celebrity culture'; the media's role in the celebrityisation of politics; the analysis of celebrity texts for their explicit and implicit meanings; how media organisations and institutionalised practices produce celebrities; and the role of audiences and individual viewers, readers and listeners in actively interpreting celebrity texts. A substantial introduction sets out why any study of celebrity necessitates a study of the media and addresses the politics of mediated celebrity. The authors take students carefully through the chapters, using readings from important research and providing carefully designed student activities. Case studies of the media construction of celebrity range from Louis XIV to Kylie Minogue, from bomber Timothy

McVeigh to the politics of spin, from music making and soap stars in the popular press to Tom Cruise and Oprah Winfrey.

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