

Television, Textuality and Transmission: How the Book Made It Big on the Small Screen

Since the appearance of the small screen in the 1950s, national television networks created literary programs for the readers within their audiences. Created by individuals used to making literary shows for the radio, television programs such as the French *Lectures pour tous* or the Spanish *Tengo un libro en las manos* also selected readings for their public, guided their spectators in their appreciation of the works, and had a direct impact on book sales. However, television producers were soon faced by the problem of the transmission of a written text through a new medium that required action and a moving image to be effective; unlike on the radio, readings of literary excerpts did not satisfy the public.

In this paper, I will examine the ways in which televised literary programs dealt with this very problem and how, depending on their cultural context, the television producers created shows that either favoured the author's presence or a critic's presentation of the chosen text. To do so, I will focus on two generations of French, Spanish and German programs, mainly *Lectures pour tous* (1954-68); *Tengo un libro en las manos* (1959-66); *Dialog* (1963-70), as well as *Apostrophes* (1975-90); *Das Literarische Quartett* (1988-2000), and *El lector* (1980-96).

Such a comparison will allow us to observe how the television, as an electronic technology, dealt with textuality by turning to already well-established modes of interaction with the written word. Specifically, I will examine how it redefined its relationship to the written text and to the book as an object. Illustrating an important step between the rule of the radio and the impact of the "digital revolution", this reflection will be placed in the realm of a broader reflection on the role played by technology in the way literature is distributed and consumed today.