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Particip@tions Volume 2, Issue 1 (August 2005)

Introduction to Volume 2 Issue 1

Martin Barker (Editor)

Welcome to Issue #1 of Volume 2 of *Participations*. First, our apologies for the delay in getting this issue finished and available. It is simultaneously a problem and an advantage for web journals that they do not have such fixed deadlines as are imposed by print publishers. Indeed, it has been occurring to us for some time that producers of web Journals have a number of quite distinctive needs and possibilities, and that it would be sensible if we could meet and talk through their future. To us, they seem an increasingly vital academic resource. We have begun some conversations with some other journals, to try to set up such a meeting. We would be very interested to hear from others, if the idea interests you.

The fact that this issue has been delayed may make it seem that the future of *Participations* may be insecure. Actually, we are now more sure of its future than we have dared to be up to this point. Our evidence is that public knowledge and use of the Journal is rising. The number of submissions to the Journal is also rising, and we are confident of a second 2005 issue by November, and a flow of issues into 2006. The quality of submissions is also generally very encouraging. We are particularly pleased by the response of authors to our system of open refereeing. This is leading to authors feeling that they are getting highly supportive and helpful feedback.

In this issue we have three very different essays. Thomas Austin, whose book *Hollywood, Hype and Audiences* was a significant contribution to thinking about the ways in which audience responses to Hollywood fiction films are shaped by, and respond to, processes of publicity and marketing, here writes about reactions to the French documentary film, *Être et Avoir*, and the differences that are introduced by its documentary status, and also by its French-ness.

By coincidence, our second essay concerns France, and its relations with other countries. Regular visitors to our Journal will remember that we have been working to achieve publication in English of the important set of essays which emerged from the Versailles Audience Research Conference. In this issue, we publish the first of these, by Joseph Jurt, who is Professor of Romance Literature at the Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg, Germany, and who has translated his own essay for us for which we are very grateful. Jurt explores the ways in which French naturalist literature, and in particular the work of Emile Zola, was received and evaluated in Germany in the late 19th century. *Participations* is delighted to be able to publish this, both because of its source, and because of its (unusually, transnational) topic.

Finally, Victoria Knight's essay explores the role of the media in the lives of young male offenders in prison. This is a contribution to an area of work that was, until very recently, completely ignored. As she points out, there has been a powerful tendency to see media reception as centrally domestic. This just does not fit all cases, and the over-concentration on the home as a sphere of reception leads to a missing of some very important other ways in which the media may matter.

Finally, we have begun to think some more about the future most effective operation of the Editorial Board. We would like to hear from readers and users of the Journal who are not currently involved in any way with its production, but who might be interested in becoming involved. Please email me if you would like to know more about this.

Contact (by e-mail): Martin Barker

