Reality's Children: Young People and Factual Entertainment Television

Children's engagements with and appearances in factual entertainment television can tell us a great deal not only about the changing landscape of children's television, but also about some of the conditions of possibility of television now. Children, and teenagers in particular, are more and more visible as participants in factual entertainment and especially reality programs, despite the facts that most are not made specifically for a child or teenage audience, and that young audiences are widely considered to be abandoning broadcast television for other online platforms and pursuits. Such programs typically either appear in prime time slots and generally address the adult viewer, or are shown on children's channels that increasingly serve audiences under the age of 12. Examples of the former include *Educating Essex* (Channel 4), *Transgender Kids: Who Knows Best?* (BBC TWO*), Tourette's: Teenage Tics (*BBC THREE) and *Revolution School* (ABC), while examples of the latter include *Ice Stars*, *I am Leo* (CBBC), *Escape from Scorpion Island*, *Prank Patrol* (a Canadian format remade in the UK and Australia) and *My24* on ABCME. While these programs generally document children's and teens and their transformative experiences, they are typically produced for the edification of non-teenagers, with many accompanied by additional online content that is usually aimed at parents.

Analysis of these programs reveals how children's television and how television about children have been altered by digitisation and multi-platform distribution, both of which have also transformed the ways in which public service broadcasters fulfil their obligations to the child audience. They also throw in to sharp relief the evolving challenges for regulators around the representation of children on screen and their treatment during production, as well as shedding light on broader transformations in the relationships between children and screen content. And yet despite the growing prominence of children in factual entertainment programming – in particular, reality programs – and the range of issues and insights such involvements can provoke, there has been only very limited scholarly attention to this topic to date. In part this might be put down to the marginal status of research on children in media studies more generally, but a lacuna also exists in children's television scholarship where the focus in both textual and industry studies has long been on live-action drama and, more recently, on animated content. The principal points of difference between analysis of children's appearances in fictional and factual entertainment television are that the former uses professional child performers who are paid to play particular roles; their appearances are governed by laws and regulations regarding the employment of children as well as by broadcasters' codes of conduct and editorial policies. Children in factual entertainment television, by contrast, typically appear as themselves, are not always paid, and are not necessarily subject to the same laws, regulations, codes or policies. This raises a set of questions around informed consent, and how children are consulted and informed about the programs they appear in. The objective of this article is to open up and shed light on this space, to highlight some of the key points these programs, their production contexts and distribution patterns can teach us about television now, and hopefully to point the way and inspire further research.

Age-specific factual entertainment television featuring their peers has proven to be appealing for the child audience, exemplified by (relatively) high ratings for series such as ABCME's *Escape from Scorpion Island, Prank Patrol* and *Bindi's Bootcamp* (Potter 2013). Indeed children are frequently the focus of reality programs made for a general rather than

specifically child audience, with examples including TLC's *Toddlers and Tiaras* and *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*, MTV's *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Moms*, and *Brat Camp* (C4/BBC, UK). Spin-off versions of adult reality formats featuring children, such as *The Voice Kids* and *Junior Masterchef* (Australia)/*Masterchef Junior* (UK) are also popular with family audiences. And children also feature interstitially in reality programs in which they are not the principal 'stars' but are essential members of the on-screen cast. Examples can be found across the range and throughout the history of factual entertainment television, from early reality forms such as the docusoaps *The Family*, which screened in the UK in the 1970s, and Australia's *Sylvania Waters* (narrated by the teenage son of the central family) to parental guidance programs such as *Supernanny* (Channel 4, UK) and dating shows for single parents such as *All Inclusive* (Sjuan, Sweden).

Despite these long-standing and broad-ranging engagements, despite the range of issues they raise, and despite the sustained and extensive scholarly attention to reality television over the last two decades, factual entertainment programs featuring children remain at the margins of critical work. In part this critical blind-spot reflects the marginal position of children's television (and indeed, television about children) in television studies; key recent collections in the field either ignore children's television completely (Spigel and Olsen 2004, Turner and Tay 2009, Jacobs and Peacock 2013) or limit their focus to children's drama programs (Lotz 2009). While there have been major content analyses of the representation of teenagers in television news (Amundson, Lichter and Lichter 2005), prime-time drama (Heintz-Knowles 2000), and 'the teen series' (Garcia-Muñoz and Fedele 2011), very few scholars have addressed the representation of children in factual entertainment television, with Potter & Hill's (2016) analysis of Bindi Irwin's winning performance on the US *Dancing With The Stars* and the industrial arrangements that underpinned that success being a notable exception. In the US, studies by Aubrun and Grady (2000) and Martins et al (2016) deal with reality television only as part of analysis of multiple genres rather than it being an exclusive focus. There has been only one detailed study to date of the range of factual entertainment television's engagement with children. In the late 1990s, research was commissioned for the British Broadcasting Standards Council in response to public complaints about distressed children in factual content made for general audiences. Máire Messenger Davis and Nick Mosdell (2001) revealed in their report that while protections were in place for ordinary children appearing in broadcast television, they were very different from those that applied to professional child performers. Further, few measures existed to ensure adherence to these protections. These studies focus only on US and UK programming, and most are at least five years old. Of the three studies that include consideration of reality television, two are over fifteen years old, and the other examines only three programs.

Children's engagements in and with factual entertainment, and particularly reality programming, are also largely absent from the literature on what in the US is termed 'teen television' (Davis and Dickinson 2004, Ross and Stein 2008) and in the UK 'youth television' (Lury 2001, Wood 2016). Both Lury and Wood contend that 'youth television' includes but also extends beyond television made for or featuring teenagers. Lury argues that youth "is not determined by age, but relates to a historical and mediated construction of 'youth' or 'youthfulness' as an attitude, or a series of traits, habits and beliefs" (2001, p.126). In other words, Lury suggests that 'youth' is a disposition that could apply to people of any age. Wood adopts the television industry's definition of youth as people aged 16-34. As we

discuss further below, public service broadcasters in the UK and Australia that have obligations to provide programming for children now define that group as ‘under 12 years old’, so that while Wood’s work is valuable in its focus on the emergence of channels and programs targeted at older teens and young adults, it also inadvertently highlights the fact that television producers, broadcasters and scholars are ignoring children aged 12-16.

There is now a longstanding tradition of work specifically on reality television in the broad field of media studies. This ranges from the work of media psychologists interested in its appeal to and effects on audiences (Nabi et al 2003, Bond and Drogos 2013, Reiss and Wiltz 2004), to cultural studies inflected scholarship that draws heavily on Michel Foucault’s (2008, 2010) work on governmentality and ‘the conduct of conduct’ in its interest in citizen formation, and the ways in which reality television transforms surveillance in to entertainment (Palmer 2003, Andrejevic 2004). There is also a growing strand of work in television studies that focuses specifically on the forms and styles of reality television and its audiences (eg., Holmes and Jermyn 2004, Hill 2005, Hill 2015). In recent years, reality television has increasingly been taken seriously by scholars of sexuality and gender (Weber 2014) and class (Wood and Skeggs 2011, Allen and Mendick 2013). Two general observations can readily be made about this scholarship. First, reality television is still overwhelmingly viewed negatively, and second, only a very limited number of books and articles make any reference at all to children’s engagements with the form. A core trope in the literature casts reality television as a laboratory or training ground for the formation of the neoliberal subject. It has been described variously as ‘the secret theater of neoliberalism’ (Couldry 2008), a ‘neoliberal theatre of suffering’ (McCarthy 2007) and ‘a system of cruelty’ (Vander Schee and Kline 2013). The narrow and typically negative frame of analysis, organised loosely around neoliberalism, is especially evident in the relatively limited scholarship that focuses on children and teenagers in reality television (eg. Ouellette 2014, Redden and Brown 2010, Sherry and Martin 2014, Vander Schee and Kline 2013). Furthermore, what has become almost a critical orthodoxy is overwhelmingly text-based, and often examines only a very few examples taken from a select group of sub-genres. Many of these studies also work with an insufficiently nuanced or defined understanding of ‘neoliberalism’, in the process failing, as Flew (2014:53) argues in a wide-ranging critique of the (mis)use of the term in a variety of disciplines, “to account for institutional diversity or innovation within governmental practice” or for national difference. ‘Institutional diversity’ for our purposes here means the wide variety of production companies and broadcasters that make and screen reality television, including PSBs, as well as the range of program types that fall under the broad heading of factual entertainment, while ‘governmental practice’ can be understood to mean policies and regulations of PSBs as well as rules applying to commercial television providers, and the ethics and approaches of producers to their subjects. While the articulation of neoliberalism and reality television is seductive and instructive, we argue that it does not necessarily map easily across all forms of factual entertainment, particularly when programs are commissioned or produced by public service broadcasters, and particularly when they involve children.

Little is revealed in any of this scholarship about the production cultures from which factual entertainment programs emerge, thus it is almost impossible to gauge what contemporary practitioners think about the television they make, how they came to be involved in its production, or how the transformation of television in recent years influences their work and

the types of programs they make. Little is known either about the institutional affordances and constraints that shape how these programs are financed, produced and, in turn, experienced by their audiences. Furthermore, the voices and perspectives of children themselves on the form are limited. In the remainder of this article we will begin the process of addressing these deficits in knowledge and scholarship. In the next section we draw on interviews conducted with television producers to frame our discussion of the ways in which analysis of factual entertainment featuring or made for children can both instantiate and shed light on broader changes in television production, and in particular, public service broadcasting. The final section of the article analyses the policy context for children's engagements with factual entertainment television. In the process we seek to indicate the contemporary diversity of children's engagements with factual television, to examine public service broadcasters' increasing use of children's performative labour in non-drama productions, and to point the way for further research.

The changing production landscape of children's television

Analysis of the conjunction of children and factual entertainment can help us to understand how the production and broadcast of children's television – and indeed television more broadly – is changing. A new wave of factual entertainment television is being commissioned and acquired by public service broadcasting (PSB) services. These include the BBC, ITV and Channel Four in the UK, and the ABC, SBS and NITV in Australia. We are thus witnessing a new kind of reality television, cloaked in the public interest and implicitly intended to contribute to the public good. Rather than being produced primarily for profit, this reality television is being reinvented with a public service ethos, to educate its audiences. This "public turn" in reality television's orientation comes at a time when children – and in particular teenagers – are increasingly its subject. These changes are likely causally linked rather than coincidental.

Importantly, the focus on teenagers in particular as the subjects of reality programming on public service broadcasting services is occurring at a time that these services' offerings for teenagers in general are "problematically lacking" (Livingstone and Local 2016: 4). These organisations have in fact effectively abandoned the teenage audience. In the UK, the BBC's children's channel CBBC targets an audience of 6-12 year olds. In Australia, the ABC's children's channel was rebranded in 2016 as ABCME with "a keener focus on content aimed at primary-school aged children" (Canning 2016). This re-branding is illustrative of the ABC's withdrawal from the commissioning of live action drama for teenagers with the reduction of its target age group to 12 years in 2016. Thus the live action dramas such as *Lost Boys, Dance Academy* and *Tomorrow When the War Began* that characterised ABC3's initial offerings after its 2009 launch would not be commissioned now (Potter in press). Despite its withdrawal from the commission of teen drama, the ABC's 2016 management restructure led to a reduction in the Head of Children and Education's autonomy, which may explain the production of series such as My Grade 12 Life. This series, which gives a set of grade 12 students cameras to record their thoughts and experiences during the final year of school, was funded from ABCME's budget despite the fact that it is clearly not intended for an under 12 audience, ABCME's target audience. This illustrates the confusion that currently exists around the production and screening of programming featuring teens. Regardless of the internal machinations at the ABC, critically for our purposes here, while PSBs have "substantially cut provision for teenagers" (Livingston and Local 2016), they have

simultaneously increased their use of teenagers' performative labour in factual entertainment for both the child and general audiences. These programs help to achieve the public service broadcasters' objectives to represent social diversity, but importantly these programs are not made *for* teenagers. We contend that this paradox is indicative of broader trends in public service broadcasters' production and programming practices, including significant alterations and adjustments in their relationship with children and teenagers as both subjects and audience.

Despite national differences and charter obligations around national cultural representation, global program supply chains and reduced programming budgets ensure that the same programs as well as local iterations of global formats are seen on public service broadcasting services in different countries. For example, *Extreme Brat Camp* is seen on both Australia's ABC2 and the UK's Channel Four, while UK-originated format *The School* is localised on Canada's CBC as *This is High School*. The processes of globalisation are reinforced by transnational mega-indie production companies such as Shine Endemol and Fremantle Media operating in each country, often in partnership with public service broadcasters. PSBs themselves frequently partner on factual entertainment programming, especially in format production and distribution, areas in which the BBC's commercial arm BBC Worldwide specialises.

Analysis of factual entertainment programming for or featuring children can help us to understand how public service broadcasters in different countries are reconfiguring themselves for digital regimes and fulfilling their charter obligations, particularly their educational remits. Approaching public service broadcasters' factual entertainment programs as pedagogical instruments (Giroux 2003), "entertainment-education" (Martins et al 2016) or in Hartley's terms as instances of "television as transmodern teaching" (1999: 38-47) invites interrogation of their modes of influence, the literacies they nurture and appeal to, and the ways they construct or form, for example, 'the individual', 'the public', 'civic engagement' and 'rights'.

For public service broadcasters, reduced program budgets and the need to develop digital services encourage the commission and acquisition of factual entertainment television, of which reality forms one ever-shifting part. Not only is reality programming generally less expensive than live action drama (although it is often far from cheap television), it can sometimes usefully contribute to public service broadcasters' portrayal of diversity. Factual entertainment television made for children is immensely popular on dedicated children's channels offered by the ABC, BBC and the UK's commercial public service broadcaster ITV. Indeed the highest rating series on the ABC's dedicated children's channel after its 2009 launch was not its expensive, award winning culturally specific live action drama *My Place*, but the localised version of *Prank Patrol*, in which children play practical jokes on their unwitting peers (Potter 2013).

In the UK the BBC's factual entertainment offerings featuring children include programs in the *My Life* strand, examples of which are the BAFTA-award winning *The Boy On The Bicycle*, filmed in a refugee camp in Jordan and *I am Leo*, about a transgender child's personal journey. UK children are also watching *School for Stars*, which follows the lives of children at the UK's Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts, *Ice Stars*, featuring a girls' competitive ice skating team from Nottingham, and *Where Am I Sleeping Tonight?*

portraying the plight of the rising number of children and young people sleeping rough in the UK. ITV's children's channel CITV commissioned *Bear Grylls Survival School*, with the series subsequently being acquired by ABCME. With a cast of 12-15 year olds from diverse backgrounds, the series was filmed in a remote location in Wales, where the teenagers were persuaded to abandon their electronic devices and face their fears, while learning survival skills and the value of team work.

While much of the existing scholarship on reality television assumes that those responsible for its production and distribution are intent on exploiting and humiliating its hapless participants, many producers working with children in reality television made for public service broadcasters are highly protective of the ordinary children with whom they are working. According to Donna Andrews, producer of *Bindi's Bootcamp* (which was entirely filmed at Australia Zoo, the Irwin's commercial enterprise on Australia's Sunshine Coast):

> There were no hidden agendas, this is a gameshow and a chance for children to have a competition, to have fun with that competition, maybe learn a little something along the way. If a child had done something we felt might have embarrassed them then there's no way we would have included that (Andrews 2013).

Escape From Scorpion Island a localised version of a format created by RDF, and a co-production by the ABC and the BBC, aired on ABC3 in 2011. The series features two teams, one from the UK and one from Australia, who have to compete with one another to escape from the island. The series placed children in a variety of challenging situations, including being parachuted out of planes onto the island. Experienced children's television producer Michael Bourchier was initially reluctant to become involved in the project:

> When I first heard about the idea of this show it kind of filled me with horror. When I saw the first episode of series one (which RDF had made in Brazil) I thought 'isn't it delightful to be wrong'. What the show really felt to me was very much about developing team work, being thrown into a situation where the conglomeration of kids had to find a natural place and where you're absolutely not setting kids up against each other (Bourchier 2013).

The production team was careful not to upset or humiliate the children, who had nonetheless been carefully vetted prior to their selection:

> We never had people voted off which would have been humiliating for kids. There was no humiliation. And certainly we were very careful about who we chose. We not only interviewed the kids, we interviewed the parents as well. And I said to the parents "tell me everything I need to know as well, because if your daughter is on the verge of getting her period or whatever it is, I don't personally need to know but I need to tell the production staff member who does, so that we're ready (Bourchier 2013).

The producers of *Bear Grylls Survival School* were similarly protective of their young participants. Jamila Metran who commissioned the series as head of CITV explains:

> Their production is so tight. There's Bear Grylls and three of his highly trained team who work with him a lot and off camera we had lots of other people who were all

> looking after the kids. There was a medic everywhere all the time, there was another camp near the children's camp, the camera people and sound people had to take turns filming through the night. There was someone there with them all the time. Safety was massive (Meltran 2016).

Reflecting on the genre and on the pressures producers face working with ordinary children, Bourchier admits the work is fraught with uncertainty:

> I think that what we're doing in creating reality TV is constructing a reality within which kids do what they do. But it's not reality in the sense that they can do anything at all, they can't. They're doing particular activities, living within a particular way so there is something of the social experiment about a show like *Scorpion Island*. And I can tell you it's very nerve-wracking to produce because you never entirely know what's going to happen (Bourchier 2013).

During Kim Dalton's tenure as Director of Television at the ABC (2006-12) he and the Australian Children's Television Foundation worked together to obtain funding to establish the children's channel that was known as ABC3 at launch. Dalton is pragmatic about the public service broadcaster's use of reality television for children and its use of child celebrities like Bindi Irwin, host of *Bindi's Bootcamp.*

> The ABC can't take responsibility for the rise of celebrity culture and stand as a bastion against it. If you are going to have a publicly funded broadcaster which is expected to engage with a fair percentage of the Australian child audience and appear to be modern and engaged and contemporary then it's going to have to engage with popular culture and the reality that children engage with every day (Dalton 2013).

First-hand interview material gathered with producers who work with children on reality TV made or acquired by public service broadcasters suggests that the vast majority are extremely protective of their young participants, which is somewhat at odds with much of the literature on reality television more broadly. It must be emphasised however that these specific examples of reality television using children's performative labour are without exception made for or by public service broadcasters and intended for child audiences not general audiences. Many of the children watching these programs will be younger than those on the screen, given that children tend to watch up in age. Far less is known about the production cultures of reality television featuring children and teenagers that is made for commercial television and intended for general or adult audiences.

Children, factual entertainment and policy

While children's engagements with television are guided by a range of laws, regulations, policies and industry codes, a cursory examination quickly reveals three key points. First, the vast majority of rules and guidelines applying to broadcast television relate to what children should or should not be permitted to see, rather than what they can or cannot do on television. Second, the rules and guidelines around the employment of children in television do not necessarily cover all kinds of children's appearances in factual entertainment in the same ways that they cover the work of professional child performers. This is because 'employment' is typically defined in the relevant legislation as 'paid work' or work that leads to the provision of some material benefit for the child. Depending on the type of program on which they appear and the extent of their involvement, children in factual entertainment

programs may receive no payment or material benefit from their work. Third, there are differences between codes of conduct and guidelines developed for commercial television around on-screen use of children and those developed for public service television broadcasters. In this section we will focus on this latter point.

The rules and guidelines relating to children that are most relevant for commercial television providers in Australia say virtually nothing about the representation of children in any form of television. The Children's Television Standards (ACMA 2009) that, *inter alia*, require commercial free-to-air television services to broadcast minimum amounts of children's programming completely ignores the representation of children on television. Somewhat bizarrely, perhaps, there is no rule or guideline requiring the appearance of children themselves in programming made for them that is broadcast on Australian commercial free to air television. The industry code of conduct for subscription television in Australia (ASTRA 2013), contains a series of guidelines for licensees regarding program classification, advertising directed at children, and the need to protect children from 'unsuitable' material in program content, promotions, and news, but makes no mention at all of children appearing on television. The commercial (free-to-air) television code of conduct contains similar guidelines regarding the protection of children from inappropriate content and advertising, and makes only one reference to the representation of children: a prohibition on the portrayal of children "participating in betting or gambling" (Free TV Australia 2015, p.34).

Public service broadcasters, in addition to broad responsibilities to provide programming in the public interest, are typically bound by editorial guidelines and policies that establish standards for their dealings with children. Children – including, importantly, teenagers under 18 years of age – are in theory at least protected by these policies from being involved in (and to some extent exposed to) the types of exploitative or humiliating scenarios that can characterise the most excessive forms of (reality) television. The ABC's editorial policy, for example, requires its employees and contractors to "Take due care over the dignity and physical and emotional welfare of children and young people who are involved in making, participating in and presenting content produced or commissioned by the ABC" (ABC 2011: 8.1). In similar vein, the BBC's editorial guideline on children and young people as contributors to BBC content cites the Ofcom Broadcasting Code, which requires broadcasters to take "Due care…over the physical and emotional welfare and dignity of people under eighteen who take part or are otherwise involved in programmes" (BBC nd). The BBC guideline also acknowledges the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which notes children's rights to speak out and participate. Interestingly, the BBC defines a child in this guideline as "someone under the age of 15 years", while "[y]oung people are those aged 15, 16 and 17" (BBC nd). The Australian Children's Television Standards, by contrast, defines children as those aged under 14. Neither of these definitions seems to have been accounted for in the BBC and ABC's recent decisions to limit programming on their dedicated children's channels to children under the age of 12.

As one of the participants at the October 2016 British Academy of Film and Television (BAFTA) industry conference, Children on Camera noted, this generation of children is "the most witnessed ever". Given the complex relations between children, television and PSBs, given that PSBs are developing and changing their services on multiple platforms and services for all audiences but particularly for children, the issue of children's appearances in factual entertainment television becomes even more important. Recent events such as this

conference indicate not only that producers are well aware of such concerns and issues particularly when programs involving children are being produced for PSBs, they are often careful, rigorous and ethical in their practice. The conference included a panel of program producers who create factual programming featuring children and teenagers, including titles such as *Our School, I Know What You Weighed Last Summer* and *Inside Birmingham Children's Hospital*. The discussion was moderated by Joe Godwin, Director of the BBC Academy and BBC Midlands, and former Director of Children's BBC. The panel addressed the demonstrated need, in light of the rising volume of factual television featuring children and teenagers, for professional development and knowledge-sharing in the television industry about working with young people.

Reality programs made for PSBs however are generally made by producers with established track records who are accustomed to working within a PSB tradition. Further, the BBC provides compulsory training for all production staff working on factual television that uses children's performative labour (although generally this takes the form of online training modules) while particular processes and protocols are required to be in place. As Tamsin Summers of BAFTA-award winning production company Drummer TV explains, these processes are expensive while production budgets have not increased:

> I absolutely agree with all of the safeguarding, the protocols, the data protection, but the problem is implementing it all as the budgets haven't increased. We pretty much have to psych test all our key children if there is any question of them being vulnerable, whereas before we would just sit them down and talk to them and to their parents and teachers, to see if they felt comfortable about putting them on TV. But now we have to psych test - and while I totally agree with that, we haven't got an endless budget to do it with (Summers 2016)

Children are consulted when series are repeated, even though legally consent forms are binding, and producers will edit out particular sequences if, several years later, an older child is unhappy with their onscreen portrayal in reality programming. This does however put the onus on the producer to maintain the relationship with the child (Summers 2016). The BBC will also drop programs entirely if necessary (Godwin 2016). Legitimate concerns exist around the capacity of children to consent to participate in reality television, and risks from participation are always present (for example one boy's screen shotted photo was used on a gay porn website).

Children can also benefit from their inclusion in factual television. Summers points out the benefits to the refugee children who were featured in *The Boy On the Bicycle*, which was filmed in Zatari, the largest refugee camp in Jordan:

> the feedback we got from Unicef after that programme was made was that their confidence has improved so much and just their levels of happiness because they have been able to tell their stories to a global audience. That film has now been seen all over the world and it's just help them to feel connected, to enable their voices to be heard. (Summers 2016)

So as we have seen, producers with public service commissions who are steeped in a public service ethos adopt a particular duty of care when creating content for child audiences that features children and teenagers. The picture here is necessarily narrow

however, because of the absence of work on factual entertainment television featuring children but for which they are not the intended audience, and the production culture and industrial circumstances that shape such television.

Conclusion

In this article we have sought to outline first, the absence of scholarship on children's appearances in factual entertainment made either for the child or general audiences; second, the importance of considering children's engagements with factual entertainment for analysis of the state of television now; third, the particular role of public service broadcasters in the provision of such content; and fourth the policy contexts in which such content is produced. Necessarily in a scoping exercise such as this, we have not provided a comprehensively detailed picture of developments and issues in this space. Rather, we have sought to offer a broad overview of this neglected area in order to open up some lines of enquiry that can usefully extend the focus of both children's television scholarship and television studies more generally. Albeit in a limited way, we included the voices of producers in part as a counter to the weight of existing television scholarship that virtually ignores production contexts and constraints in its rush to analyse (and usually to castigate) particular programs. Future work could consider in more detail and on an international scale the different types of children's appearances in factual entertainment television: in programming made specifically for the child audience, and in programming made for general audiences. Other aspects that could usefully be developed include the similarities and differences between commercial factual entertainment featuring children, and that made by or for public service broadcasters; the similarities and differences between representations of children in the various sub-types of factual entertainment (quizzes and game shows, magazine shows, reality programs, and more traditional documentary programming, for example; and the policy conditions under which such programs are produced. It would also be extremely valuable to hear the views and voices of children themselves on factual entertainment television, not least because today's youngest generation will, in their viewing choices and modes of participation, to a great extent determine the future of television.

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