General introduction

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This book draws on the interdisciplinary conferences "Child and Teen Consumption" that have taken place every two years since their launch by the School of Management of the University of Poitiers in 2004 in Angoulême (France). The "Child and Teen Consumption" conferences aim at facilitating in-depth dialogue between researchers from various disciplines: management, psychology, sociology, information and communication, anthropology, history, education, law, etc. Because of their interdisciplinary focus, the "Child and Teen Consumption" conferences tackle a wide variety of topics relating to the links between childhood and adolescence and consumer environments in different social and institutional contexts. The CTC conferences promote and enhance original research that explores and highlights what children understand about the market experiences in which they participate, and how they use the resources available to them to assert their child status vis-à-vis adults or their peer groups. The conference also welcomes studies that analyze production of goods and marketing techniques used towards young people as well as the socioeconomic mechanisms that shape and control childhood cultures.

An active interdisciplinary community has taken the opportunity to organize the following "Child and Teen Consumption" conferences: Copenhagen Business School in 2006, Norwegian Child Research Centre (NOSEB) in 2008, Linköping University (Sweden) in 2010, Università Libera di Milano (Italy) in 2012, Edinburgh University Business School (Great-Britain) in 2014, Aalborg University (Denmark) in 2016, and Poitiers University (France) in 2018.

The 8th CTC conference returned to the University of Poitiers and Angoulême, and gathered interdisciplinary research and dialogue on broad issues related to children and young people as consumers. Its

special focus was on "Cultural and Creative Industries of Childhood and Youth" to highlight research in this field and invite producers of cultural content as well as policy makers to bring their views to the debate. Indeed, Angoulême is a territory that hosts a wealth of creative organizations and initiatives. *Grand Angoulême*, an urban area including 38 communes, set up the Magelis Image Cluster in 1998. Magelis now includes 12 dedicated institutes of higher education that welcome 1300 undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students, as well as 90 companies from key sectors in the image industry: youth publishing, comic book publishing, audio-visual production studios, post-production studios, producers of video games, serious games, mobile games, and advertising and design agencies, etc. Second to Paris, Magelis in Angoulême is the largest cluster in France producing the greatest number of cartoons each year. Furthermore, *Grand Angoulême* is currently in the process of establishing a technology park – Eurekatech, where the cultural and creative industries are one of three main areas chosen to enhance economic development.

The chapters collected in this volume stem from papers first discussed at the 8th international conference "Child and Teen Consumption" with the purpose to produce a collective effort towards an interdisciplinary dialogue to examine various social issues related to prosumption and transmedial practices of children and adolescents in the cultural and creative industries.

The specificities of cultural and creative industries in relation to other types of economic activities are the subject of important debates which, according to Christian Poirier's longitudinal analysis, have progressively crystallized around five meta-narratives. Firstly, the industrialization of culture, which contrasts legitimate culture and popular culture. Secondly, the neo-liberal approach, which emphasizes that the market allows a plurality of artistic expressions. Thirdly, a relative autonomy of the cultural sphere that tends, through collective and critical appropriations, to reconfigure certain capitalist issues. Fourthly, a growing and unavoidable interpenetration between the spheres of culture and capitalism through new advertising techniques. Finally, a creative economy that considers culture to be an endogenous factor of economic growth (Poirier, 2014). These meta-narratives analyze the complex articulations between cultural and economic issues that accompany the transformations in the balance of power between different types of actors involved in the cultural and creative industries: authors, artists, publishers, distribution platforms,

advertising audiences, brands and advertisers, citizens, public authorities, regulators, etc. Numerous research studies from various disciplinary horizons have sought to highlight the specificities of the cultural and creative industries (Martell, 2012) in terms of value creation, entrepreneurial approach and innovation logics, viability of economic models, originality of organization and management modes (Hesmondhalgh, 2012; Bouquillion et al., 2013; Evrard and Busson, 2015; Arsenault and Perren, 2016; Khaire, 2017). Concisely, Bouquillion et al. (2014) remind us that the advent of creative and cultural industries rests on a triple transformation: that of the artist as an entrepreneur; that of the cultural worker as an artist; that of the user as a cultural self-producer.

In this context, the analysis of the place given to children – and more broadly to youth – in the field of cultural and creative industries remains an important scientific issue. Scientific works have brought together different perspectives on the links between childhood and the worlds of culture and media, in order to reveal the presuppositions that guide disciplinary approaches to youth media practices and their recent evolution (Jenkins et al., 2015; Brougère and François, 2018). Yet this field of social, professional and research practices is in constant turmoil, both in developing critical approaches to the equivocal links that cultural industries have with youth, and in raising ethical issues in marketing and management realms and more broadly, in social sciences research (Warde, 2017).

A wide range of topics relating to the links that interweave childhood or adolescence and the worlds of cultural practices and media consumption in different social and institutional contexts call for further interdisciplinary investigation to go beyond the representation of the child as a mere impulsive consumer or a captive prosumer in an attention economy (Johansson, 2004; Buckingham, 2011). Children are active, playing with marketing mechanisms and rehearsing marketing scripts, to the point that the socio-technical networks or platforms they handle have transformed some of them into influencers who now work as marketing practitioners…

Thus, a large array of research on children's media practices highlights either the ambivalence of the figure of children as vulnerable consumers in need of protection or, on the contrary, as involved and creative content producers who are knowledgeable of the commercial offers addressed to them, and are capable of discernment in order to make a relevant choice in the marketplace. In this way, certain cognitive vulnerabilities

peculiar to children have been underlined, as well as the skills that children demonstrate by mastering, sometimes better than adults, certain socio-technical devices that the market makes available to them. William Corsaro reminds us of "the importance of appreciating children's active construction of their own peer worlds and cultures. (…) children's construction of and participation in their peer cultures also contributes to the reproduction and change in adult society" (Corsaro, 2011, p. 365). His conceptual contribution about the interpretive reproduction that characterizes children's inventive cultural practices has paved the way for exploring children's media consumption to understand how children's reception of cultural content may differ from that of adults.

While the issues specific to the cultural and creative industries are recognized and explored by different disciplines – economics, sociology, psychology, management sciences, history, information and communication, literature, design, etc. – they are not necessarily the only ones to be addressed. The way in which each of these perspectives defines and problematizes the very notion of "childhood" deserves greater attention and sustained interdisciplinary scientific debate. The collected chapters in this book point to the diverse social and ideological roots of the child consumer and prosumer in cultural and creative industries.

> Rather than thinking in terms of a moment of birth or the progressive unfolding of a universal category, it may be useful to think in terms of the multiple and changing boundaries of the [child][1] consumer. The consumer was bounded in terms of ideas, social composition, representation and, significantly, by consuming practices. (Trentmann, 2006, p. 10)

Indeed, in the field of cultural and creative industries, multiple visions of the child convey the presuppositions of various disciplines:

– an apprentice consumer who gradually becomes more rational in order to achieve a relative optimization of his/her media choices;

– a child who, by nature, is in search of entertainment and gathers playful experiences at the crossroads between media activities and other forms of childlike sociability;

– an essentially vulnerable child whose attention is captured by the media at an early age and to whom the media impose their content through increasingly invasive marketing actions;

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[1] The word "child" is our addition.

- a "child prosumer," acting as co-creator of innovative cultural content (User-Generated Content) that can be monetized according to the possibilities offered by various commercial socio-technical devices (social networking sites, digital platforms, etc.);
- a child who has become a veritable marketing expert that brands use to promote their innovations targeting children and adolescents on the platforms used by young people: YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc.

This is why, in order to highlight these issues in a well-argued way through a rigorous interdisciplinary dialogue, this book is titled *New Frontiers in Cultural and Creative Industries of Childhood and Youth* and is structured in three main parts.

The first part of this volume draws attention to the fact that the child "consumers do not emerge on their own but in dynamic relations with other social actors and agencies. These relationships involve uneven access to expertise, authority and power" (Trentmann, 2006, p. 14). Multiple groups and agencies speak on behalf of children in order to defend their interests against the persuasive discourses and consumer engagement strategies deployed by industrial and commercial interests. By developing the concept of "cultural pedagogy", Shirley Steinberg evidences the fact that "Patterns of consumption shaped by corporate advertising empower commercial institutions as the teachers of the contemporary era" (Steinberg, 2011, p. 18). This invites social researchers to take into account the influence and co-responsibility of media groups in the social construction of contemporary childhood, in relation to other institutions such as family, school, health policies, etc. (Stiegler, 2008; De La Ville, 2007 and 2014; Livingstone, 2017). The influence of social networks and content distribution platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, Amazon Prime or Disney+ over children's cultural and media activities, destabilizes the grounds on which to regulate these powerful economic actors who organize a global circulation of cultural content aimed at young people (Brougère, 2008). Social researchers should pay special attention to unanticipated ethical problems arising from the innovation dynamics interweaving technological advances and cultural practices in the creative and cultural industries aimed at children (Devinney et al., 2010). Could a structured debate about how to guide children's mediated cultural practices help parents, educators, corporations, and public

authorities to feel support in the social responsibilities they ought to assume in relation to children's prosumption practices?

The contributions gathered in the second part of this book critically explore what children and adolescents understand about the commercial cultural experiences in which they participate. In order to promote cultural content dedicated to children, the discourse and marketing actions of media groups translate into gender and age logics while taking into account the influence of peer groups on social-digital networks (Corsaro, 2011; Ruckenstein, 2011). By targeting a hybrid "parent-child" consumer, cultural industries take into account adult concerns about family budgets, the tensions and crossbreeding between the logic of entertainment and the logic of academic success or the degree of autonomy left to children in the reception and social use of cultural products. The cultural consumption practices of children and young people are then directly linked to debates about children's agency (Mayall, 2002; James, 2009; Garnier, 2015). As they are increasingly depicted as "active," this also highlights the resistance and transgression practices that they bring to processes of consumption. Young consumers use the resources offered to them by creative and cultural industries to assert their status as children *vis-à-vis* adults, or to individuate themselves by drawing on their peer groups (De Singly, 2006; Jenkins et al., 2015). Conversely, this depiction of the child's agency reveals how children's consumption also brings into play the figure of the "good" parent, a normative figure imposed on them by various institutions, to which parents aspire according to their own educational goals (Martens, 2018).

The third part of the book explores the processes used to create cultural content for young people, as well as the way in which children appropriate, reinterpret, transform and divert it according to various sociocultural contexts. Interactions between these different sectors (audiovisual, publishing, toys, video games, internet, etc.) are already long-standing, as evidenced by the simultaneous presence on different media of the same franchise via cross media, transmedia or "360°" strategies as well as the implementation of licensing policies (Kline et al., 2003; De La Ville and Durup, 2008; Johnson, 2013). Children are then confronted with different media that allow them to appropriate the content. Authors and rights holders must find the path, which is different for each of them, between a control that has become impossible, and a drift in their creation or ownership that would excessively modify its meaning. The series of studies collected in this part of the book analyze

the techniques and strategies deployed by cultural industries as well as by the authors in different contexts to underpin and nurture the formation of children's cultures. In a context of globalized circulation of cultural content on multiple media, children's products exemplify emblematic transformations of cultural products, whether it is transmedia scripts (Jenkins, 2006), "media mix" (Ito, 2007; Steinberg, 2012), "circulations" within children's culture (Brougère, 2008) or new innovative and creative combinations between various media that permanently redraw lasting attachments and social ties (Cochoy et al., 2017).

Finally, the interdisciplinary perspective of this volume contributes to a rethinking of the language of separate disciplinary spheres. Indeed, understanding the evolution of cultural prosumption and transmedial practices by children and youth is a complex research endeavor that calls for a subtle and demanding interdisciplinary dialogue. The main scientific challenge social scientists confront is to design innovative research perspectives at the crossroads of various disciplines: sociology of childhood (Garnier, 1995; James and Prout, 1997; Sirota, 2006; Corsaro, 2011), childhood studies (Qvortrup et al., 2009), relational economy (Cochoy, 2012) and marketing and management research (Robertson and Feldman, 1976; McNeal, 1992). By offering a balanced interdisciplinary scientific dialogue about youth culture and media consumption practices, we aim to study the evolutions of several socioeconomic devices that underlie, promote and shape children's expression in cultural and creative industries. This attempt to get out of one's disciplinary comfort zone might enrich our collective understanding of how marketing socio-technical devices transform the meaning of children's cultural practices within their family or peer community.

These changes make it essential to take a different look at children's and teens' prosumption and transmedial practices, in order to go beyond univocal descriptions of children's activities in the media and cultural spheres. Moreover, they underline the importance of developing truly interdisciplinary and critical approaches by mastering the epistemological underpinnings of the competing theoretical frameworks put at work to decipher children's and teens' complex social practices. And finally, deciphering in depth the ambiguity of the prosumption and transmedial practices of children and young people might also help social researchers in grasping the market which is itself "in the process of being made". Moreover, it could help researchers understand how the market is constantly in the process of undoing and redoing institutional, social and

cultural ties, and urge them to explore the consequences of such transformations (Zelizer, 1985). A demanding interdisciplinary work on child and teen cultural consumption might help go beyond a pure social critique of economic theories (Polanyi, 1944). What is at stake in child and teen consumption is the need to develop an in-depth interdisciplinary reflection that would make it possible to explore how commercial exchanges produce both "economy" and "society", interwoven realms within which children and teens develop their cultural practices. This raises the question of how the youth market-mediated prosumption and transmedial practices are capable of "producing, evils, or if possible, goods, i.e. entities that can function both as objects and moral contributions" (Cochoy, 2012, p. 15).

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