

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgements | .9 |
| List of Abbreviations | 11 |
| List of Tables and Figures | 13 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 15 |
| 1.1 Locating affect and emotion in reality TV | 15 |
| 1.2 Overview of the chapters | 22 |
| Chapter 2: Mass Media and Reality TV Formats in Post-socialist China | 25 |
| 2.1 Chinese economic reform and social transformation | 25 |
| 2.1.1 Economic reform and the introduction of neoliberalism | 25 |
| 2.1.2 "Socialism from afar" | 28 |
| 2.2 The urban-rural dual structure | 30 |
| 2.3 Reform of the Chinese media system: between market and state | 34 |
| 2.3.1 Marketization and transformation of the Chinese television industry | 34 |
| 2.3.2 State control and ideological reconstruction | 38 |
| 2.3.3 The "disjunctive media order" | 40 |
| Chapter 3: The Turn to Affect and its Application to Reality TV..... | 43 |
| 3.1 A brief history of emotions in Western and Eastern thought..... | 44 |
| 3.1.1 Ideas of emotions in Western history | 44 |
| 3.1.2 Ideas of <i>qing</i> (情) in Chinese history..... | 47 |

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| 3.2 | The different “affective turns” in the humanities and social sciences..... | 53 |
| 3.2.1 | Affect as bodily intensity | 54 |
| 3.2.2 | Affect as elemental state | 58 |
| 3.2.3 | Criticism and discussion | 62 |
| 3.3 | The social-relational framework of affect and emotion | 64 |
| 3.4 | Understanding reality TV: relational affect as a critical optic..... | 69 |
| Chapter 4: Reality TV Analysis: From Authenticity to Affect | | 75 |
| 4.1 | The politics of emotional performance on reality TV | 75 |
| 4.2 | Negotiations of emotion display rules in (Chinese) reality TV | 79 |
| 4.3 | Emotional labor and affective capitalism..... | 83 |
| 4.3.1 | Affective economics as a new television marketing model | 83 |
| 4.3.2 | Emotional labor in late capitalism | 85 |
| 4.4 | The role of emotions in the audience experience | 87 |
| 4.5 | The affective turn in reality TV analysis | 89 |
| Chapter 5: Researching Affect in Reality TV Text | | 97 |
| 5.1 | Rethinking affect and social structure | 98 |
| 5.2 | Developing methods to analyze affects in reality TV | 101 |
| 5.2.1 | Rethinking discourse analysis | 101 |
| 5.2.2 | Toward a multimodal textual and filmic analysis | 103 |
| 5.3 | Case selection and research design..... | 107 |
| Chapter 6: Telling Stories, Swapping Lives | | 113 |
| 6.1 | <i>X-Change</i> (2006–08): “The miracle of ordinary people” | 113 |
| 6.2 | <i>X-Change</i> (2012–15): “Strength from distant mountains” | 121 |
| 6.3 | <i>X-Change</i> (2017–19): “Find yourself in the world of others” | 126 |
| 6.4 | Conclusion and discussion | 128 |
| Chapter 7: Emotional Excess and Therapeutic Governance | | 131 |
| 7.1 | Producing the money shot | 131 |
| 7.2 | Reprogramming with neoliberal psychotherapy | 139 |
| 7.3 | Moral pedagogy with Confucian family affection (<i>qingqing</i>)..... | 144 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 8: The Politics of Suffering and <i>Kuqing</i> | 153 |
| 8.1 Mediate suffering through positive energy and dream narratives..... | 154 |
| 8.1.1 Articulating affect with the discourse of positive energy | 154 |
| 8.1.2 The dream narrative | 160 |
| 8.2 An invitation to empathy: visualizing <i>kuqing</i> | 164 |
| 8.2.1 Ruptures in meaning-making | 164 |
| 8.2.2 The affective scenes of <i>kuqing</i> | 167 |
| 8.3 <i>Kuqing</i> culture and the social pathos in a transitional China | 174 |
| 8.4 The vanishing of <i>Kuqing</i> ? | 180 |
| Chapter 9: Conclusion and Discussion | 185 |
| 9.1 Rethinking the cultural politics of Chinese reality TV and affect..... | 186 |
| 9.2 From the Chinese experience to Chinese affective structure | 191 |
| 9.3 Limitations and perspectives for future research..... | 194 |
| Bibliography | 197 |