



[Scholarly Resource](#) | [Critical Forum](#) | [Television Studies](#) | [Research Networks](#)

in association with:



sponsored by:

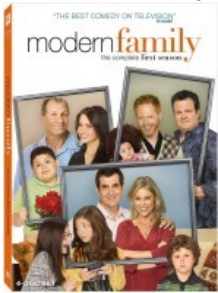


[Home](#) [Confs/Events](#) [Blogs](#) [Journal](#) [TV courses](#) [Resources](#) [CFPS](#)

Related



- [AGAINST OCCUPATION](#) by Jason Jacobs
- [Useful Links](#)
- [In Media Res: Reality TV and Otherness](#)



- [THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN SITCOM \(V\): MODERN FAMILY](#) by David Lavery



- [DANGEROUSLY FUNNY - AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BIANCULLI](#) by Janet McCabe

Latest from Guest blog



- [AGAINST OCCUPATION](#) by Jason Jacobs



- [A THOROUGHLY MODERN MILDRED?](#) by Steven Peacock



- [SUBMISSION TO DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT](#) by John Ellis



- [AGAINST DR WHO](#) by Steven Peacock



• [LETTER FROM AMERICA by John Ellis](#)

THE PIRATE SPECTATOR by Toby Miller

Friday 30 September 2011 Last updated at 15:27

I watch pirate television. Will you forgive me some narcissography in this first blog, given that enticing new status?

I live in Mexico City, the biggest in the world. It also lays claim to more political demonstrations than anywhere else, more film clubs than Paris, more abortions than London, and the region's most corrupt police force.

My landlady lets me use her cable service. She dug a hole in the wall between her loft and mine. A cable runs through it and I have independent channel-changing access. I'm not sure this makes me a pirate, but would like to think so.

I'm in Mexico for six months, running the University of California's study-abroad program. My TV habits are quite different from back in Los Angeles.

I'm largely uninterested in US TV commercials and don't enjoy using a DVR, so that basically rules out the networks in the US, where I watch premier stations—HBO and Showtime. I don't consume public broadcasting. I'm 53 and it feels too elderly.

And I watch in three venues. [My LA loft](#) is very open, so you can see and hear almost universally, but I have a little television in the bedroom for English football at 4 in the morning and a big one in the living area for more conventional times. Plus I watch reprised TV on a desktop via Amazon Prime. That's how I learnt to love *Spooks* ([which we call MI-5 for racial reasons](#), as do Canadians).

The only commercials I watch in LA are because of football. They give me an idea of who is being targeted: men of a certain age (erectile dysfunction and hair loss); women of a certain age ([Katy Perry's acne cure](#)); and youth of all kinds (join the military).

In Mexico, my viewing life is quite different. My on-line subscription to English cricket via [WillowTV](#) doesn't work here, even though the company boasts that it covers 'North America.' Willow doesn't seem to realize there are three countries in the region.

My landlady doesn't subscribe to premium cable, which means no golden age of contemporary drama.

But unlike in LA, there is no premium charge for watching English football on television. I get several games each weekend. We don't have Anglo commentators, so 'foreign' names aren't mangled. We *do* get great chants of 'Golazo' from the LA-based production team.

The loft is unfurnished, and the decoding device and TV need to be close to the limited amount of cable. I watch the television from a single futon mattress on the floor, a rather desolate spot. I watch less and enjoy it more because of the physical discomfort.

My pirate ways are fairly harmless, don't you think?

[You can listen to more about pirate modernity via the culturalstudies podcast episode of August 25, 2011 with Ravi Sundaram and André Dorcé Ramos](#) and read all about it in Ravi's marvelous 2010 book on Delhi and the media [here](#).

Comments:

- Contact us: editors@criticalstudiesintelevison.com
- Site by [Media Citizens](#)