

Sheoran, Nayantara, George Mason University, United States

Emergency Contraceptive Advertisements: Cultural Manifestations of Scientific Knowledge

A vast literature in Science and Technology Studies (STS) has proposed that scientific and technological artefacts (re)constitute the self. Similarly, within cultural studies, literature has pointed to how and where media participate in shifting identities. However, limited work has explored the space where media and medicine combine – both theoretically and empirically. Emergency contraceptive advertisements are one such space that allows us to explore the emergence of commodified cultural articulations of medical knowledge. Raymond Williams once proposed that advertising is the art of our times and Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer articulated advertisements as apparatuses for mass deception. Judith Williamson saw advertisements as reflections of our cultural values and aspirations. Furthermore, Sjaak van der Geest has proposed that pharmaceuticals are not only products of human culture, but also producers of it also. Drawing on the rich literature in these two fields of knowledge and their insistence on a critical approach to reified practices and spaces, the paper looks at emergency contraceptive advertisements in India with the intent to make clear the boundary crossing work scholars in non-disciplinary projects need to undertake.