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Quality in Television Programming

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"Quality" is a nice, Victorian word. Its meaning seems clear, at first glance. It may have been more clear in the Victorian Age, when almost everyone had a set of unquestioned "standards" by which to make judgements. Now, however, it becomes hazy around the edges when we begin to ask: "Whose quality? Under what conditions? What kind of quality?" It gets even fuzzier when we talk about quality in the mass media -- especially television.

People might agree on whether the picture quality is good or bad, and even whether the sets, lighting, acting, story and other technical and artistic components of a program meet certain minimal standards of acceptability. At higher levels of artistic evaluation, and especially when cultural and moral values enter the picture, disagreement rises. Quality for different viewers may differ depending on how they want to use the medium. In a pluralistic society, with numerous, often conflicting value orientations, estimates of the quality of television programming become problematic in the extreme.

Nevertheless, everyone wants to watch programs that are "worthwhile," in some sense. Government supervisory bodies want to ensure that the broadcasters to whom they have allotted part of the finite electromagnetic spectrum are using it in a worthwhile way. Conscientious producers want the satisfaction of knowing they are doing something worthwhile, rather than simply expanding the scope of a "wasteland." In short, quality may be difficult to define or to achieve, but everyone involved with television both wants quality and needs it.

This issue of *Trends* sketches some of the recent efforts students of the media have made in their quest for the "Holy Grail" of quality in television programming.

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Quality in Television Programming

I. Quality in the Public Service Broadcasting Tradition

Asa Briggs. *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom. Vol. 4: Sound and Vision*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Giuseppe Richeri. "Television from Service to Business: European Tendencies and the Italian Case." In Drummond and Paterson 1986, pp. 21-35.

"The Beeb": Philosopher Kings of Broadcasting

Western philosophy in the Classical Age saw aesthetic quality as embodying three metaphysical transcendentals: the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. That helps us a little -- but not very much -- in exploring contemporary ideas of what constitutes "quality" in television programming. Some television is good, some is beautiful, and some is true, in some sense, although all television is partly false from other perspectives.

In the more practical order, and more recently, we might note the famous triad of aims Lord Reith, "the father of the BBC," enunciated when outlining the public service broadcasting concept he envisioned for the British Broadcasting Corporation: to educate, to inform and to entertain. The quality of the totality of the programming of the BBC could be judged by how well it carried out these three functions, and how well it kept a sense of priority among them: first, to educate and to inform, and only lastly to entertain.

When the Independent Television Authority (ITA) was being established, in the mid-1950s, word-order remained significant in defining the differing purposes of the BBC and the ITA. "The basic aims of the new service were described as 'entertainment, instruction and information' and those of the BBC as 'information, education and entertainment'" (Briggs 1979: 960).

The emphasis on education and information in the mandate of the BBC seems to assume that the broadcasters were somehow an elite priesthood of higher culture, like Plato's "philosopher kings", with a responsibility to raise the cultural level of the mass audience. This attitude had been explicit under Lord Reith. "He believed that the public taste was too fickle and unstable to be taken as the guide for programme making. The task of the broadcasters was to set their own standards of taste and accustom the public to adopt those standards" (McDonnell 1987: 5).

One of his [Reith's] most often quoted dicta states

that it is futile to aim at giving the public what it wants because the public has no very clear idea what that is. 'He who prides himself on giving what he thinks the people want is creating a fictitious demand for lower standards which he will then satisfy,' he wrote. (Leapman 1987: 352).

"To Advertise or Not to Advertise, That Is The Question"

A fundamental principle of the BBC, as a whole, and BBC television, in particular, has been dedication to full support through license fees and opposition to any form of commercial sponsorship. Gerald Cock, the Corporation's first Director of Television wrote, in March 1939, "May I record my conviction that the two greatest disasters that could happen to television...would be (1) sponsored programmes and (2) delivery of the Television service in any shape or form to cinema interests" (Briggs 1985:168).

But the rise of a commercial system in Britain was almost inevitable, and the appearance in the BBC's monopolistic Paradise of a competitive serpent, Independent Television, bent chiefly on entertaining the mass audience and thereby earning money, threw the Corporation into a quandary. The BBC's Board of Management met in July, 1953, to confront the emerging problem. It issued a statement which said,

'It will be very difficult for the Corporation to continue to do something which is not being done by our rivals, ...if in so doing we sacrifice a large part of our audience... Our aims cannot be fulfilled unless we retain the attention of the mass audience as well as of important minorities.' To 'inform, educate and entertain' was a general task, and 'the justification for the existence of the Corporation, supported by a universal license, largely disappears if the mass audience is lost' (Briggs 1979:944-945).

Thirty years later, a study of the effects which competition with commercial channels for audience attention had on public service broadcasting throughout Western Europe showed that some of the early fears were justified. According to Guiseppe Richeri,

The quality of programmes tends to move towards the minimum common denominator of public taste, especially during the hours in which viewing is potentially high; while the programmes with a cultural, informative or educational content, where they exist, or the programmes which deviate from the average taste, are diverted towards secondary viewing hours (1986: 24-25).

Richeri's use of the words "minimum common denominator of public taste" and "average taste" suggests the statistical pressure of the mass audience on television programming, but it also implies that the quality of that mass audience's taste is -- almost by definition -- at a low level.

Furthermore, the commercial imperative of obtaining the maximum possible share of the general audience is said to lead to increasing the number of transmission hours, and the consequent need to fill them. This would reduce the number of original programs and increase the use of repeats and cheap syndicated and/or foreign programs.

The combination of these factors leads to a general homogenisation of programming (both public and private) and a tendency for national television production to move towards standardisation to increase its selling possibilities on the international market (Richeri 1986:25).

America: "Comp" and Quality Within the Commercial Ideology

On the other hand, American commercial television has developed a sophisticated approach to ratings in which overall totals of viewers, while still important, often take second place to "comp," the composition of a smaller audience. While acknowledging that, "despite all its talk about innovative quality, television remains a medium largely committed to numbers," Michael Leahy described the hospital series, *St Elsewhere* as having survived into

a second season despite low overall ratings because of its good audience composition.

The show had a much higher comp than other programs with significantly higher ratings, and that, in the end had saved it...An interesting thing, this *comp*. ...television executives had long waited for a device like it, something that could sift out the viewers with spending money from the multitudes without any. The implications were interesting, maybe ominous. Smaller audiences could shape programming, yet only if the smaller audiences had big money. ...It is programming by a new kind of numbers. (Feuer, Kerr and Vahimagi [1984: 269], quoting Michael Leahy, writing in *TV Guide*, November 12, 1983).

Betsy Williams (1994 [1993]: 144) indicates that this programming tendency has become firmly entrenched in American commercial television.

However, "quality," in this sense, seems more to describe the commercial quality of the audience being targeted than the contents of the programs themselves. Nevertheless, members of that audience -- "those between the ages of 18 and 49 with sizable incomes and an instinct for buying" -- do tend to expect more from television, and programmers must provide more, in terms of variety, high technical standards, interesting themes and characters, etc., to attract and hold them.

The Pluralist Challenge to "Standards"

Competition, in Britain, highlighted discrepancies between the "high" standards of the producers and the television preferences of the mass audience. It further indicated that in a pluralistic society audience tastes also are pluralistic. The legitimacy of different standards for different audience segments was recognized by the creation of a four channel system: with BBC1 and ITV catering to the more "proletarian" tastes of the mass audience, while BBC2 and Channel 4 carried programs geared more to the interests of specialized audiences. Implicitly, all were striving for "quality", but it was quality as varyingly defined by the needs of different segments of the population.

II. The Appeal to Standards

Richard Hoggart (ed.). *Quality in Television - Programmes, Programme-makers, Systems*. Broadcasting Research Unit Monographs. London: John Libbey, 1989.

J. M. Wober. *The Assessment of Television Quality: Some Explorations of Methods and Their Results: Research Paper*. London: Independent Broadcasting Authority Research Department, 1990.

"Quality Does Not Live By Decency Alone"

Hoggart's booklet (1989) reports the results of a query sent to several recognized British broadcasting producers, members of national broadcasting bodies, academics with broadcasting interest and experience, and journalists with broadcasting expertise. It grew out of dissatisfaction with the approach of the Broadcasting Standards Council, whose "terms of reference," according to Hoggart, "illustrate the tendency to equate or almost equate 'standards' with the amount of sex, violence and bad language in programmes." Standards of quality would thereby practically be reduced to "standards of taste and decency" (Hoggart 1989: "Preface" [unnumbered page]).

While admitting that decency plays a role, Hoggart wants to be able to conceptualize standards for "the quality of programmes across the whole range of broadcasting, having regard to the different types of programmes and to different audiences" (*ibid.*).

Responses of the contributors to Hoggart's query are quoted anonymously, and there are some disagreements or differing emphases among them. The editor has, however, sifted out some areas of consensus. These include calls for diversity and innovative imagination, truth, impartiality and depth in factual reporting, and challenge, controversy, experiment, originality and dissent in fictional programs. Much is seen to hinge on the existence of high personal standards among broadcasters themselves, such as truthfulness, restraint, courage, respect for the subject matter and people with whom they deal, and the ability to be in touch with audiences' situations and attitudes. In short they should have the professional virtues which have been developed by the broadcasting community as part of its tradition (Hoggart 1989: 6).

A Role for Sex and Violence

Sex and violence exist in the real world, and so must have a place in television if it is to honestly represent that world. Hoggart says that they

should be approached with one purpose in mind, the understanding of ourselves...not for any denial of reality, but, again, for openness, truthfulness and

balance (which includes humour); for responsiveness to changes in public taste or 'manners'; and for the avoidance of exploitation, false refinement and the meretricious (1989: 20).

Less attention is paid by Hoggart's respondents to the effects existing levels of sex and violence on television might have on audiences than is paid in the Broadcasting Standards Council's White Paper (1988), to which the Broadcasting Research Unit booklet is a rejoinder. David Docherty (1990) and Andrea Millwood Hargrave (1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1993) have discussed the Council's views subsequent to the White Paper.

Quality or Appreciation: Audience Perceptions

Wober's research paper, based on a survey of "three thousand amateur critics (members of the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board's Television Opinion Panel)," revealed a distinction between audiences' perceptions of "quality" in programs and their levels of "appreciation" of the same programs. To some degree, the genre of a program determined its designation as being of "lower" or "higher" quality, rather than its intrinsic merits irrespective of genre. Factual programming -- as available on British television in 1990 -- was generally regarded as of higher quality than series, serial dramas and light entertainment.

Programs of "high quality" did tend to rate higher on the "appreciation" scale; but the programs rated lowest on the "quality" scale received a substantially higher "appreciation" rating than might have been expected. "It is therefore clear that people are capable of watching and appreciating material which they themselves say is of low quality" (Wober 1990: 6).

Commenting on another of the several studies of quality which were carried out by the BBC, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), and other British researchers at that same time, Timothy Legatt noted that BBC programs judged highest in quality and appreciation by professional peers did not do nearly as well in attracting audience share. The 16 programs with appreciation index ratings over 80 averaged audience shares of only 38% on BBC1 and 11% on BBC2 (Legatt

in NHK 1991: 117, citing Adam MacDonald 1989).

Wober's 1990 study also suggested that prevailing standards of "quality" generally tended to follow the perceptions of the over-55 age group, while the 12-15 year olds differed most from this perception (Wober 1990: 8). By contrast, as noted previously, the standards of quality appealed to by the American broadcast networks are those of the 18-49 age group. Nearly 90% of Wober's respondents agreed with the view that "A programme can be of high quality even if very few viewers like it" (pg. 9).

Although perceptions of higher or lower quality tended to be linked to reactions to specific programs in the IBA study, the respondents were able to sort out abstract criteria of the quality of channels' programming to some degree. Diversity -- "a broad range of programmes to

choose from" -- rated highest on the survey-type responses, with 96% agreeing, but the item asking for a definition of "quality television" in the respondents' own words elicited only 6% who in any way stressed range or variety of choice or diversity (Wober 1990: 19 and 30).

Entertainment value was next highest in responses to the researcher-formulated questions, and it was highest among the open-ended responses. A channel's adherence to the policy of keeping programs not suitable for general viewing in the "after 9 pm" programming slots was quite high among the closed questions (87% agreed). Also high were information content (80% agreed), and educational content (73%) (Wober 1990: 19 and 29). Nearly half (46%) felt that the quality of television would fall "as more and more people buy satellite and cable TV" (pg. 22).

III. Different Systems, Different "Qualities"

Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK). *Studies of Broadcasting - 1991: A Special Issue: Quality Assessment of Broadcast Programming*. Tokyo: Theoretical Research Center, NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, 1991. (Cited as "NHK 1991"). Reporting on this study was continued in the 1992 (No. 28), 1993 (No. 29), and 1994 (No. 30) issues of the same journal, cited as NHK 1992, NHK 1993, and NHK 1994, respectively.

Japanese Initiatives

As in other sectors of modern society, the rampant pluralism of values and perspectives affecting television broadcasting has carried with it a strong temptation to relativism. But if all points-of-view of every segment of society -- including deviant and marginal groups such as criminals and the insane -- were to be equally respected and reflected by the mass media any appeal to objective standards of quality would become irrelevant, or even subversively "intolerant."

This dilemma was disturbing to public service broadcasters everywhere, not only at the BBC. In 1990, NHK (*Nippon Hoso Kyokai*), the Japanese public network, initiated an international study on "Quality Assessment of Broadcast Programming." Researchers from Sweden, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan were assembled to sample approaches to quality assessment in different parts of the world.

Misgivings About Rating

Sakae Ishikawa says that Japanese efforts to assess quality of broadcast programming have been "motivated by criticisms against rating" (NHK 1991: 7). "Quality" in commercial broadcasting had been almost wholly concerned with audience acceptance, as measured quantitatively through rating surveys. Such surveys had

been introduced into Japan in 1961. Not only did that method measure only the single factor of a program's audience size as a rather dubious indicator of quality, but it was limited to assessing individual programs and said almost nothing about the overall product of systems of program production. Ishikawa concludes "that these studies have not so far produced any clear-cut system of quality assessment which is publicly recognized and can be widely employed" (*ibid.*).

Japanese scholars began to explore other dimensions of the problem during the 1960s, largely from the perspective of the needs of public service broadcasting and necessarily recognizing the heterogeneity of the audiences being addressed. Statistical generalizations were intentionally downgraded in priority, and stress was placed on intensive analysis of the responses of small samples by professional psychologists, sociologists and other experts to insure that the focus remained on quality. The industry, however, remained focussed on numbers, and the studies were not given due attention (Ishikawa, in NHK 1991: 16).

Diversity: A Clear Criterion

These studies have continued, intermittently, into the 1990s. Ishikawa's main criticism of them is that they have continued -- assess individual programs, neglecting

approaches to programming in general. He feels that the goals set for each channel need to be defined much more clearly and concretely.

One important criterion of programming quality that is clear is diversity, which Ishikawa believes should be studied first so that the value orientations of the many sectors of a pluralistic society can be adequately represented. He calls for better collaboration among like-minded researchers to gain an overview of what has been done and to move further "to determine the criteria and framework for the quality assessment of programming" (NHK 1991: 18).

This goal was pursued with regard to diversity in later stages of the NHK-sponsored international study. The status of diversity of television programming on open broadcast channels (not cable or satellite) in the five countries participating in the study was compared in an article by Ishikawa, Leggatt, Litman, Raboy, Rosengren and Kambara (in NHK 1994: 155-170). They judged diversity by the degree to which the various channels contained programs from a wide range of program categories. Whole day programming and prime time programming were analyzed separately.

Regarding all-day program diversity...the highest value goes to broadcasters in Britain, followed by those in Sweden, Japan and Canada. U.S. broadcasters had the lowest index value (1994: 159).

Most stations concentrate on particular categories of programming, especially in prime time. Public television in all countries showed considerably more diversity than commercial channels. Religion, as a category, was almost totally neglected in all-day programming and totally neglected in prime time programming in all countries (pp. 160-164, Figures 1 and 2).

Nordic Approaches

Karl Erik Rosengren (NHK 1991:21-80) agrees with the other European observers mentioned earlier that the need to address ways of assessing programming is growing more acute as commercial broadcasting becomes increasingly competitive with public service systems (pp. 21-22). A major factor in commercialization of television is loss of diversity.

The one-sided exploitation of already existing genres is one example of how the maximization of profits in commercially financed channels may negatively affect the innovative disposition. In the U.S.A., situational comedies, *sitcoms*, constitute

nearly one third of all programmes shown during prime time. This can be compared with news and current topics which make up about 3%. Different types of fiction and entertainment, including the *sitcoms*, make up about 97% of the total offered. The development which has, in fact, taken place, has mostly been *within* the already popular genres, *women's serials* (soap operas), *variety/show* (music and entertainment) and *sitcoms*. (Hillve and Rosengren, in NHK 1994: 91, citing Djerf Pierre 1992).

Six Normative Theories

Rosengren, following Denis McQuail (1987: 111ff.), lists the normative criteria characterizing six theories which might govern both press policy and television programming policy: Authoritarian, Free Press, Social Responsibility, Soviet Media, Development Media, and Democratic-Participant Media. Some norms are common to all theories, but most of those norms deal with institutional relationships, not content.

The "Authoritarian Theory" would place all media at the service of established authority. The "Free Press Theory" would put almost no limits on those in immediate control of media production. The "Soviet Media" and "Development Media" theories would put the media at the service of society, as "service" is defined by party or government. The "Social Responsibility Theory" presumes established cultural norms which the media should follow to help ensure a stable and just social environment. The "Democratic-Participant Theory" would remove media control from central governments or other bureaucracies and give it to local communities to meet the audience's felt needs most effectively (Rosengren, NHK 1991: 24-27).

Rosengren stresses the point that "quality is not a characteristic" of programs or programming, as such. Rather, "it is a relation between a characteristic and a set of values" (NHK 1991: 45). According to that view, the quality of programming in a system which operated under, for example, the "Soviet Media Theory" could only be judged according to the way that programming reflected and advanced the values embodied in that theory, not, for example, according to the values of a system based on the "Free Press Theory."

"Free Press" theory rejects all content-related norms, according to Rosengren, leaving almost all content up to the decision of each journalist or broadcaster. Most of the content-related norms could be accepted, in some form, by all the other theories. However, the media systems in which the theories are embodied are so different that

their interpretations would make any commonality so broad as to be almost meaningless. Rosengren concludes that "specific criteria for quality in programming can hardly be derived from broad normative media theories. We have to make our discussion more specific" (pg. 29).

Rewards and Control

According to Rosengren, much of the fear of changes in program quality has arisen from a perception that the chief institutional change is from a system in which the programmers produce their programs within a semi-independent context with its own reward system to a system in which most programming content "is produced almost exclusively within a hetero-cultural reward system" (pp. 32-33). The latter is a system whose product is largely determined by public demand, in its many forms, rather than according to standards set by the media professionals.

Whose Norms: Suppliers' or Audiences'?

Rosengren suggests a typology of quality of media supply. It is based, first, on whether the values used in the assessment derive from norms and rules or whether they refer directly to the experience of media reception. Those categories are, in turn, divided according to whether the assessment focusses on the level of, 1) the media system (as affected by prevailing local, national or international ideologies, laws, etc.), 2) the delivery organization (network, station, etc.), or 3) the individual program (pp. 33-34).

Profound differences sometimes can be found between "quality" as it is perceived by the media suppliers, according to their norms, and the "quality" of the same media content as it is experienced -- with satisfaction or dissatisfaction -- by an audience. Rosengren is concerned mainly with the organizational level of supply, which most directly involves programming. He wants to compare quality as interpreted by the networks and stations according to their own norms and rules with the audience's experiential evaluation of the quality of the

programming offered by those suppliers.

Types of Quality

The author also adapts to the description of quality a conceptualization of types of value originally developed by Kent Asp to study the role of the mass media in processes of public opinion formation (Asp 1986). The adaptation hinges on three relationships: that between media content, on the one hand, and "reality," receiver, and sender, respectively, on the other. After due adjustments, Rosengren says,

We thus end up with four main types of programming quality, namely,

descriptive quality (relation message-"reality"),
sender use quality (relation message-sender),
receiver use quality (relation message-receiver),
and
professional quality (relation message-professional competence) [NHK 1991: 37].

Research on television programming quality in the Nordic countries during the past 25 years has tended to be conceptualized in terms of these four kinds of quality, although its main stress has been on receiver use quality and descriptive quality, with much less attention given to sender use quality, and almost none to professional quality (NHK 1991: pg. 38).

Authoritarian and Social Responsibility theories, with their clearcut norms, dominated the first 30 years of Scandinavian broadcasting, but a shift occurred in the 1950s to "a crossbreeding variant of free press theory and social responsibility theory, with a sprinkling of democratic-participant media theory added" (NHK 1991: 40). The descriptive quality of news media was a topic of hot debate during this transition, which, in turn, inspired considerable research. Many of the studies of news quality evaluated data from the media by comparing it with data about the same events obtained from outside the media or from other media.

IV. Factors in Quality Assessment

Diversity: A Universal Factor in Quality?

Diversity as a factor in determining programming quality is stressed by Rosengren (NHK 1991: 47), in collaboration with Hillve (NHK 1994: 87-113), and in agreement with Ishikawa, as noted above, and also

McQuail (1986), as well as with Hoggart's (1989: 1-5) respondents, and, with some qualifications, those of Wober (1990: 19, 30). Diversity has become the focus of several studies in Japan, notably by Yasushi Nishino (in NHK 1994: 115), and Naoyuki Kambara (in NHK 1992:

195). Urte Sonnenberg (in NHK 1993: 71) studied the relationship between channel multiplicity and program diversity.

As it progressed, the NHK international study of broadcast television quality assessment placed increasing stress on diversity as a mark of quality, closing with an article comparing the diversity found in the five countries of the study (NHK 1994: 155-170).

Television and other mass media should provide programming to meet the needs of at least the larger sub-groups within the population they serve, according to Rosengren. Appropriate representation, as opposed to underrepresentation and over-representation, of major social groups -- women, workers, children, the aged, racial or ethnic minorities -- in the media consequently stands out as one safe criterion of a channel's programming quality.

It may also be used as a cultural indicator... making visible the value ascribed to this or that population category by society's culture. Again, quality in programming stands out as a relation between, on one hand, a characteristic of media content, and on the other, a set of values (NHK 1991: 47).

Diversity and Ethnicity: A Rising European Concern

Claire Frachon and Marion Vargaftig (eds.). *European Television: Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities*. London: John Libbey, 1995. (Revised and updated from *Télévisions d'Europe et Immigration*, Paris: Institut National de l'Audiovisuel et Association Dialogue Entre les Cultures, 1993, by the same editors.)

Franchon and Vargaftig organized the first European Television and Immigration Conference/ Festival, in Paris in 1992, on the ways immigrants and ethnic minorities are represented -- and allowed to represent themselves -- on European television. This book, on one of the most important and urgent aspects of television diversity in any ethnically mixed population, grew out of that conference.

In his chapter, Antonio Perotti discusses the guidelines developed by the Council of Europe to improve the less-than-perfect response of European television authorities to a rising tide of xenophobia in their countries:

Television's difficulty in taking account of the diversity of society (or maybe its inability to do so), especially when this diversity is based on the inequality of immigrant groups, can be discerned in all official policies, even though different terms are

used (*immigrants* in France, *ethnic minorities* in the UK and the Netherlands, *guest workers* and *foreigners* in Germany) (Perotti in Franchon and Vargaftig 1995: 76).

The Council's guidelines evolved gradually, through several international conferences from the early 1970s into the 1990s. The Council asks the TV industry to help immigrants understand and adapt to their host society, to inform them about their culture of origin, and to give them access to media production opportunities. The guidelines ask that television give the indigenous population a better understanding of immigrants and immigration and that it work to habituate people to living peacefully in a multi-ethnic society (p. 77).

Unfortunately, the mass media have a seemingly ingrained homogenizing tendency which makes it difficult for them to deal with cultural pluralism. Perotti concludes that in the fifteen years from 1977 to 1992 "very few of the directives or clear, practical guidelines given have been embodied in documents liable to have a political impact" (p. 87). But there has been some progress. At least some "programme makers have moved on to attempting to work the social and cultural aspects of [immigrants'] lives into general-interest programmes: from taking account of a social problem to taking account of a social phenomenon" (*ibid.*). Although there has been little change in policies, at least the issue is being openly debated.

Diversity: A Public Service Monopoly?

The thrust towards diversification in public service broadcasting is contrasted, by Rosengren, with a seemingly natural tendency away from it in commercial broadcasting:

In the monopoly public service media systems for a long time dominating many European and Asian countries, the demand for diversity was especially mandatory already at the organizational level. In a commercial environment, on the other hand, diversity in output is always threatened by concentration on the production side (NHK 1991: 47-48).

As was previously mentioned, the NHK comparative study of five countries found that public service systems accounted for much of the diversity in program genres found on broadcast television (NHK 1994: 155-170).

However, Rosengren notes a recent tendency in the commercial media which shows some diversification to meet the demands of specialized markets "...a number of

narrow but potentially innovative channels specializing in news, sport, music, films etc. Diversity may thus slip in through the back door, as it were" (NHK 1991: 48).

U.S. Diversity

The more mature commercial television of the United States may show more development and stability in this aspect of quality television than the newer European commercial television Rosengren is discussing. The American networks and independent producers have been working in an intensively competitive environment for a long time, allowing such factors as close attention to audience composition to develop more fully. The U.S. brand of broadcast, prime-time "quality television" has adopted a style which, while somewhat standardized and formulaic, has diversity as one of its central canons. "Commenting on the fall 1990 schedule, *Variety* wrote: 'the search for innovative programming is no longer arbitrary or intermittent, it's an agenda'" (Betsy Williams 1994 [1993]: 146, quoting Elizabeth Guider 1991: 85).

Nevertheless, as has long been suspected and the NHK study has shown conclusively, "diversity" in U.S. commercial broadcast television is diversity within a narrow range of genres: entertainment dramas -- series and serials, for the most part comedies and mysteries -- or to news and public affairs. Art, classical music, dance, serious literature and drama rarely enter into consideration (cf., NHK 1994: 131-153 and 155-170). The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) accounts for the lion's share of diversity of genres found in U.S. prime time television broadcasting (NHK 1994: 167, Figure 6).

One ameliorating factor in the programming available in the United States is the wide distribution of cable television, which now reaches over 60% of households. Cable offerings, at least as of 1995, are very diverse -- including two CNN channels, two C-Span (public affairs) channels, shopping channels, exercise channels, religion channels, sports channels, foreign language channels tailored to regions, public access channels, etc. Approximately 35 to 40 channels are currently available to most cable subscribers in metropolitan areas. Of course this diversity is not accessible in many rural areas or to the urban poor, who cannot afford cable subscriptions.

There also is some question as to how long this cable diversity -- including the dedication of some channels to non-profit services, such as C-Span -- can continue as the audience continues to fragment and commercial pressures increase.

"Informativity" As a Sign of Quality in News and Informational Programming

Rosengren regards Kent Asp's concept of "informativity" as useful in assessing quality in news and information programming.

According to Asp (1980, 1986), informativity is the amount of information offered by a given news medium on a given set of phenomena reported upon in the medium, standardized for the amount of space dedicated by the medium to the set of phenomena. Amount of information, in its turn, is conceptualized in terms of density, breadth and depth (NHK 1991: 49).

"Density" is shown by the number of arguments in a given space; "Breadth" is operationalized as the number of different types of arguments provided by the medium, expressed as a proportion of the number of types available"; and "Depth of information" is revealed by the proportion of the story devoted to background material (NHK 1991: 49).

Clearly, an overemphasis on one or other of these factors within a given time period would create an imbalance which would be detrimental to over-all quality. On the other hand, the introduction of extrinsic factors, such as entertainment or advertising, into programs which are identified as "news" or "information" would inevitably diminish quality by reducing time available for increasing density, breadth and depth of information, according to a strict application of these criteria.

This, of course, has to be qualified. For example, news and information programs would probably disappear from commercial broadcasting if they did not sacrifice some of their time for advertising. Similarly, a judicious introduction of some "human interest" stories or moderate forms of "infotainment," despite their lack of much news value, might sometimes be necessary to keep the interest of a large enough audience to justify broadcasting the news or information program at all.

Other Dimensions of News Quality

More difficult to assess are the truth, neutrality, relevance and balance of news programming -- four dimensions used by Jörgen Westerståhl, at the University of Gothenburg, and developed further by Rosengren and others (Westerståhl 1970, 1983; Westerståhl and Johansson 1986; Rosengren 1970, 1979).

Criteria for judging a program on these dimensions can be derived from data originating within the mass media

and/or from data obtained from outside the mass media. These, in turn, can be approached from the starting point of the reports, themselves -- going outward to see how they match the actual event -- or from that of the event which they report -- looking first at the event, then studying how it has been reported. Obviously, subjective elements operate at all levels of this assessment process (Rosengren in NHK 1991: 39-50).

Receiver Use Quality

Jeremy Mitchell and Jay G. Blumler (eds.). *Television and the Viewer Interest: Explorations in the Responsiveness of European Broadcasters*. London/ Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1994.

Quality of programming as measured by its usefulness to the audience is probably the most common form of "quality" research. The quantitative audience ratings approach, of Nielsen and others, gives a very rough idea of the usefulness of various programs to the audience, simply by charting how many households are tuned to a given TV program at a given time. However, that method says nothing about people's reasons for watching, the social context of viewing, or about the degree of attention they pay to the programs.

Probing Beyond the Numbers

Audience "reception analysis" or "interpretation analysis" has been an effort, in recent years, to probe beyond mere numbers and try to study the dynamics of viewing and listening (White, 1994). Even earlier, communication researchers studied various dimensions of audience "use" of the media which touched on the values people derive from their media behavior. Rosengren lists these as, "Effects research, Uses and gratifications research, Literary Criticism, Cultural Studies," and, finally, "Reception Analysis" (NHK 1991: 52). He notes, however, that

there is a clear trend in present day audience research to transcend the borderlines between the five traditions and the distinctions traditionally made within them... Such transcendence often calls for a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, a combination of cross-sectional and longitudinal approaches, advanced multivariate statistical analysis (in NHK 1991: 53).

Broadcaster Responsiveness

The studies in 12 European countries edited by Mitchell and Blumler attempted "to investigate whether the claim

by television in numerous speeches and documents 'to work in the interest of the viewers' can be verified in reality" (1994: vii).

Most discussions of broadcasting policy have been "confined to an inner circle of regulators, existing and potential broadcasting organizations, those with a commercial interest in programme production and interested politicians." Others, for the most part, have been excluded (*ibid.*, pg. 2).

Television was deemed a medium to be enjoyed but not significantly influenced by its audiences. On the one hand, members of the public were unfit for involvement in policy and programming decisions, which were to be taken by qualified insiders... On the other hand, because broad-casters needed to know how their efforts were being received by those they were supposed to serve, ...various lines of contact with the wider world were organized... Thus, many broadcasters sought to 'have it both ways' -- to enjoy full freedom to plot their own courses while keeping in touch with the prevalent currents of taste, opinion and response. 'Insulation-with-feedback' seemed the preferred pattern! (*ibid.*, pp. 2-3).

But Europe, along with the rest of the world, is undergoing rapid social change. Educational and income levels are rising, with a corresponding rise in viewers' expectations. Authority structures are breaking down, and skepticism about leadership is increasing. Psychic mobility broadens life-style options and even causes ambivalence about personal identities. Moral certitudes have been blurred, causing increasing conflicts about taste and acceptability. Adding urgency to the question of broadcasting's role in these changes is the fact that a communication-dependent society has been created, with television at its heart (Mitchell and Blumler 1994: 228).

The editors see two dominant lines of conflict rising out of this fluid situation. One is the rivalry between private and public broadcasting organizations, with the advantage seen in most of the national reports as favoring "organizational pragmatism over a considered sense of responsibility to society and viewers" (pg. 229). The other conflict is between "hostile critics and defensive broadcasters" about everything from "trivializing politics" through "too much sex and violence" and "stereotyping" to "neglect and distortion of challenging or difficult ideas" (*ibid.*).

In the first case, it is as if ways are needed to envelope broadcasters in processes that will press

them to look beyond their immediate goals and interests. In the second, we need forums to facilitate more genuine and fruitful dialogue (Mitchell and Blumler 1994: 229).

The accountability systems of both public and commercial broadcasters in Europe were, in general, found to be seriously flawed. Public organizations' accountability has lacked openness and has been largely filtered through political structures, which may reflect the interests of the politicians and broadcasting bureaucracies more than those of the viewers. Commercial broadcasters have depended almost exclusively on ratings, with little attention to other forms of audience feedback (pg. 230).

Some hope was seen in several countries where structures have been established to represent viewer interests in setting broadcasting policies, such as the Broadcasting Standards Council in Britain, viewers' councils in Italy, Switzerland and, for a short time, in Hungary, a mass-membership viewers' organization in the Netherlands, and regulatory bodies with at least some viewer representation in Sweden, France, Germany and Spain. Adaptation to change is needed, but some fear is expressed that established institutions may fight to defend their own interests, with little regard for viewers' needs (Mitchell and Blumler 1994: 239).

Willingness to Pay More

One measure of audience appreciation of media content, used by Ivre (1980, 1982) was based on cost per hour of consumption of different media by the audience. Radio listening was found to be cheapest, watching television twice as expensive, and cinema-going twenty times the cost of watching television. Control was felt to be a major factor justifying some of the higher expenditures. Music on the radio is scheduled at the discretion of the programmer, for example, while those who wish to listen to what they want when they want it are often willing to spend several times as much to buy records, cassettes, or CDs as radio listening would cost. Higher technical quality of the picture certainly influences cinema attendance in preference to television or video watching (cited by Rosengren in NHK 1991:60).

Quality of Listening/Viewing

Rosengren notes a Swedish method for studying the quality of radio listening:

Nordström (1986) devised a simple but ingenious 'QOL' index for Swedish radio, tapping the *quality of listening* to radio. The index builds on percentage

of listeners having actively chosen the program,
percentage listening to the whole program,
percentage undisturbed listeners,
percentage attentive listeners
(Rosengren in NHK 1991: 60-61)

That index could be applied with equal validity to television viewers. Of course, even the most active, dedicated listeners or viewers could be consuming a worthless program because of their shared poor taste. Audience surveys cannot allow for low community standards!

The NHK study explored receiver use quality further, as reported in articles by Greenberg and Busselle (in NHK 1992: 157-194; and NHK 1994: 17-48).

Sender Use Quality

Senders' values are generally more clearly definable than those of audiences, but, even they have been neglected, or only implicit in producer-oriented "how to do it" literature. Greenberg, et al. (NHK 1991: 136-137), note that by 1991 only one American textbook (Smith 1991) presented a specific evaluative framework by which to assess quality. Also, as mentioned above, senders' values will differ vastly according to the various theories ruling their different media systems. Furthermore, as audience interpretation research is showing more and more clearly, and Rosengren endorses,

As often as not...sender use quality has not very much to do with direct effects on the way audiences behave, think or feel, but rather with more roundabout and indirect effects (NHK 1991: 64-65).

Agenda Setting

But, he goes on to say, "agenda setting research, is concentrating not on whether media can change *what* we think and feel as audience members, but rather on whether media can change what we think and feel *about*" (pg. 65). Agenda setting research has been vigorously pursued in Scandinavia, especially with regard to advertising and media ethics.

In a Canadian project in the NHK international study, Robert Albers dealt with quality from the professional television program maker's perspective (in NHK 1992: 7-75).

Receivers vs. Senders: A Dialectic

Rosengren notes a "dynamic dialectics" existing between sender use quality and receiver use quality. Receivers, for example, wish to maintain some privacy,

but most senders want to broaden public communication to a degree that would give individuals few places to escape from their influence. The author feels that some exercise of authority is needed to protect individual rights from unethical media behavior. That kind of institution is acceptable in countries with a strong "Social Responsibility Theory" background, such as Sweden, with its "Ombudsman of the Press," or the United Kingdom, with its "Broadcasting Standards Council" (NHK 1991: 66-67). It would be more problematic wherever a "Free Press Theory" or a "Democratic-Participant Media Theory" has long been dominant.

Professional Quality

Systems dominated by the latter two theories, as well as by the Social Responsibility Theory place great reliance on professionalism and professional ethics to preserve mass media quality (NHK 1991: 67-68). Such "professionalization" is, on the other hand, repugnant to many advocates of Authoritarian, Soviet and Development Media Theories, since it appears to them to

V. Values in American Television

Newton N. Minow. "How Vast the Wasteland Now?" *Media Studies Journal*. Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 1995), pp. 3-8.

James W. Chesebro. "Communication, Values, and Popular Television Series--A Four-Year Assessment." In Newcomb 1987: 17-51. (Chesebro's paper was originally published in 1978.)

Greenberg and his collaborators (in NHK 1991: 133-190) have studied some differences in the intangible criteria of quality which influence American television production, in contrast to Britain. American producers are chiefly concerned with maximizing audiences and have had "difficulty articulating standards of quality in the abstract" (pg. 145). Surface values of quality accordingly have seemed dominant. However, some U.S. media executives claim that increased attention to particular audience segments may prompt greater attention to more fundamental criteria of quality (NHK 1991: 185).

The "Wasteland" Revisited

American television deserves special attention in any effort to establish criteria of quality in television programming because its long-established, overwhelmingly commercial pattern appears to be displacing, or at least supplementing the public service, or government-controlled patterns of broadcasting which have heretofore dominated the systems of most other

incorporate capitalist or colonialist value orientations.

Media ethics are obviously a central concern in establishing and maintaining one dimension of professional quality. Marc Raboy explored the ethical environment of public service broadcasting in one of the research projects of the NHK-sponsored international study (in NHK 1993: 7-35).

A broad liberal education of media professionals also seems essential to give them the knowledge and balanced perspective on which the maintenance of quality depends. But the multiplicity of standards of value in a pluralistic society makes such an education difficult to achieve or even to describe in a broadly acceptable way.

Rosengren notes the lack of studies of mass media professionalism in the Nordic countries, and he calls for international studies to help establish the institutional substructure a healthy professionalism will require (in NHK 1991: 73-74). Timothy Leggatt addressed the views of professionals as to what constitutes quality in television in another project (NHK 1993: 37-69).

countries. Many observers have found this prospect discouraging, but the U.S. broadcasting system, like systems in other countries, is undergoing continuous change and adaptation.

In 1961, Newton Minow, Chairman of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission, called upon television broadcasters to watch their own stations intensively, from sign-on to sign-off. He concluded, "I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland..." (Minow 1995: 5).

In 1991, Minow was asked by the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center to discuss the development of American television during the intervening thirty years. He feels that the chief test of television 3

quality is "public interest," the main point he wanted to make in his 1961 speech, which he feels was unfortunately overshadowed by the "wasteland" metaphor. Without doubt, TV offerings have become much more diverse. "The FCC objective in the early '60s to expand choice has been fulfilled -- beyond all expectations" (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, the maximum choice is achieved through cable, which not all can afford.

Laissez Faire: The Path to Perfection?

The more recent history of the FCC has been marked by the *laissez faire* attitude that the American "television marketplace" will regulate itself, resulting in "perfection" in realizing the public's best interest. Although market forces may have resulted in a developed technology, according to Minow, they leave much to be desired in the industry's use of that technology "to serve human and humane goals" (Minow 1995: 6).

In the last 30 years, the television marketplace has become a severely distorting influence in at least four important public areas. We have failed 1) to use television for education; 2) to use television for children; 3) to finance public television properly; and 4) to use television properly in political campaigns (Minow 1995: 6).

Diversification, Fragmentation, and Social Solidarity

Minow foresaw the next thirty years, to 2021, marked by converging communication technologies. Systems with 500 channels would permit even more diversification, but at a cost of audience fragmentation and possible loss of social solidarity.

..We need to remember that for all their presumed benefits these developments undermine the simultaneous, shared national experiences that comprise the nation's social glue... information overload without information substance or analysis...tiny sound bites without large thoughts.. (Minow 1995: 7).

Minow quotes a passage from a speech to broadcasters by John F. Kennedy, before he became president, which seems almost to echo the concerns of Lord Reith, although from somewhat different ideological presuppositions:

'Will the politician's desire for re-election -- and the broadcaster's desire for ratings -- cause both to flatter every public whim and prejudice -- to seek the lowest common denominator of appeal -- to put public opinion at all times ahead of the public interest? For myself, I reject that view of politics, and I urge you to reject that view of broadcasting' (quoted by Minow 1995: 7-8).

TV: Values "Pusher"?

As has been noted, Rosengren defined broad-casting

quality as a relation between values, on the one hand, and characteristics of programs and programming, on the other, rather than itself being directly a characteristic of programs and programming (in NHK 1991:45). James W. Chesebro, representing an American tendency, has concentrated on describing the values in TV series from what Rosengren would regard as a sender use perspective but without explicitly referring to quality.

Sender Values in U.S. TV

The central concern of Chesebro's project was to chart the values reflected in popular U.S. commercial television entertainment series over a period of four years (1974-1978) in terms of what types of human relationships were portrayed, how problems were resolved, what images and characters were portrayed, and how the series changed over the four years. The researchers' underlying concern was that producers consciously "dramatize certain values at the exclusion of others," and that the series might act as "subtle persuaders" which change the values of their viewers (1987[1978]: 17-18).

Lee Rich, producer of the family-oriented series, *The Waltons*, saw that series as promoting positive values:

the success of this series is because of what is going on in the country today, the loss of values. Many people see ethical qualities in this family that they hope they can get back to (as quoted by Chesebro 1987[1978]: 18).

Chesebro's study found appeals to ten "shared cultural values" recurring in many of the series throughout the four-year period, such as "puritan morality," achievement and success, effort and optimism, sociality and considerateness, etc. However, it also found intensive use of the "mimetic form" of communication -- that used by mimes, who act out their "stories without words" -- which is "intended to reflect what all of us do" (pg. 27).

The Dangers of Mimicry

That may seem innocuous, but Chesebro cautions:

the mimetic form is used to rationalize any moral standard whenever that moral is cast as a normal part of everyday experience. While other critics have acknowledged the persuasiveness of the mimetic form on popular television series, they have viewed these series as accurate reflections of reality rather than as strategies which attempt to control how people respond to reality... We are perhaps more cautious. It

seems obvious that the mimetic form is used to create the *impression* that typical behaviors and values are being reflected, for this is the function of the mimetic form. It is less evident that the actual behaviors and values of 'average' Americans have been captured in these dramas (1987[1978]: 29-30).

If we laugh at mimetic humor, we do so because of its divergence from some implied standard of behavior; and it is the mimic who sets the standard which we agree to in our laughter. Even humor can be ideological and hegemonic!

Implications for Quality

While the object of Chesebro's study was chiefly to develop theory and method to learn whether the TV series "selectively reinforce certain kinds of preferences, objectives, behaviors, and attitudes which may function as models for Americans" (1987 [1978]: 48), it did result in some findings with implications for programming quality.

One of these was strong support for the hypothesis that

the "popular television series do not reflect the American culture; they disproportionately dramatize particular lifestyles at the expense of others" (*ibid.*). The implications of this for quality vary, of course. If to "reflect the American culture" is a value, then the series are to be found lacking in quality. If emphasis on the dramatized lifestyles is valued, then the programming has "quality," at least from the senders' perspective.

The study also found that the four-year period had been marked by "the emergence of short-term series, one-of-a-kind specials, made-for-TV-movies, semidocumentaries, mini-series, and 'regular' series." If diversification is a universal factor in television programming quality, as many have suggested, then Chesebro's work indicates that American commercial programming showed an improvement in this dimension of quality between 1974 and 1978, at least in the genres of comedy, drama and news/public affairs. Minow's remarks suggest that this trend continued into the 1990s (1995: 5-6); while Betsy Williams (1994 [1993]) and others imply that it is becoming a solidly institutionalized dimension of U.S. TV.

VI. "Counterculture" as "Quality" in the 1970s

Jane Feuer, Paul Kerr and Tise Vahimagi. *MTM 'Quality Television'*. London: British Film Institute Publishing, 1984.

Doubts About "The System"

In the wake of rising hopes for brotherhood/ sisterhood and universal love in the early 1960s, quickly dashed by assassinations, riots and the military quagmire in Vietnam, the United States in the early 1970s was questioning its institutions and established value system, perhaps as never before. The television industry responded with a generally correct, although restrained, reading of the national temper in a succession of program series which raised controversial topics and even mildly questioned aspects of "the system."

Commercial considerations prevented this questioning from becoming too radical, but the rising culture of discontent encouraged, or even demanded at least the appearance of a "counter-cultural" attitude on the part of programmers. Artistic control, at the time, was moving into the hands of an age cohort which had supplied articulate rebels during the 60s; so many of the programmers themselves were sympathetic to the newly critical audience.

Those familiar with that period of American television

need only be reminded of series such as *M.A.S.H.*, *All in the Family*, and *Maude*, the miniseries *Roots*, and the documentary *The Selling of the Pentagon* to recall the spirit of the times. Some programs of even greater "relevance" failed, perhaps because they were *too* relevant.

The frequently-voiced British complaint about American media seems at least partially applicable: "American electronic writers, as an entire literature on the subject demonstrates, were and are subject to industrial and financial pressures which emasculate their effectiveness" (Hoggart 1989: 19). Many of television's creative people may have been idealists, but the industry's driving motive continued to be "the bottom line." As Les Brown put it,

'the networks' intent was not so much to involve themselves with the real issues of the day as patently to exploit them for purposes of delivering up to the advertisers more of the young consumers than before'

(Brown 1971: 30-31, as quoted by Feuer, Kerr and Vahimagi 1984: 4).

Pacesetting in "Quality TV"

Feuer, Kerr and Vahimagi (1984) studied MTM Enterprises, producers of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Lou Grant*, *Rhoda*, the hospital series *St. Elsewhere*, and *Hill Street Blues*. MTM was one of the most successful production companies of the period, and one which struck the right note: relevant, but not *too* relevant about issues which could alienate significant portions of the audience, and thereby alarm potential advertisers. The three British authors state two "ambitions":

The first... is the desire to chronicle and in some cases even to celebrate programmes which some British and American critics...firmly believe to be among the best and most interesting presently to be seen on either side of the Atlantic. The second is to stand back a little from such enthusiasms and to subject MTM itself and its reputation for 'quality' to critical analysis...its apparent ability to make 'quality' pay makes MTM both typical and untypical: at once artistic and industrial, a veritable 'quality factory' (1984: ix-x).

Work Family As Setting

MTM series tended to develop the theme of the "work family" as an alternative to the nuclear, or sometimes extended family so frequently portrayed in other series. MTM's work families included the staffs of a TV station (*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*), a newspaper office (*Lou Grant*), a hospital (*St. Elsewhere*), and a police station

(*Hill Street Blues*), among others.

From the points of view both of ratings and of critical acclaim MTM produced many highly successful series, but *Hill Street Blues* was probably the most successful, despite getting off to a slow start in the ratings, in 1980. It created an impression of realism as it chronicled the hectic activity of a police station in a high-crime area of an eastern American city. Hand-held cameras, murky lighting, tangled plots and subplots, quick cuts and "a gritty mix of comedy, police procedure and domestic melodrama," gave it a "split identity" -- cop show and soap opera -- which was "difficult to pin down" and confusing to the critics (Feuer, Kerr and Vahimagi 1984: 186).

A panel which discussed *Hill Street Blues* on the BBC2 "talking about television programme *Did You See*" was divided in its conclusions.

Every observation on, and criticism of, the series stumbled over the question of what it was exactly they were talking about. This meant, for [Ludovic] Kennedy, that 'you don't really know where you are and I think you should.' To which Jill Craigie offered the only possible rejoinder (not taken up): 'Not knowing where you are makes you think and that's a change' (*ibid.* pg. 187).

Looking back at these mid-80s reactions from the perspective of the mid-1990s, the identification, "postmodern" comes to mind, as does the far more mystifying series, *Twin Peaks*, whose surrealistic non-sequiturs kept everyone guessing in 1990-91.

VII. American "Quality Television"

Betsy Williams. "'North to the Future': *Northern Exposure* and Quality Television." In Newcomb 1994: 141-154. Originally published in *The Spectator* (USC School of Film and Television), 1993.

Gene F. Jankowski and David C. Fuchs. *Television Today and Tomorrow: It Won't Be What You Think*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Robert Hughes. "Who Wants to Watch it Anyway?" *Television: The Journal of the Royal Television Society*. Vol. 32, No. 2 (February/March 1995), pp. 6-10.

Quality Television: A Narrowing Focus?

"Quality television" suggests many things to many people. But in commercial television, "one rule is that the biggest hits on television are usually considered quality series'" (Betsy Williams 1994 [1993]: 141;

quoting Steve Coe 1991: 3). Less sympathetically this might be rephrased as, "The biggest money-makers on television are what is meant by 'quality' series." Nevertheless, real quality and the ability to attract viewers and advertisers are not necessarily mutually

exclusive.

The independent producer, MTM Enterprises, set out specifically to develop "quality" programs in the 1970s, concentrating on situation comedies. These met with such commercial and critical success that an "MTM style" (Feuer, in Feuer, Kerr and Vahimagi 1984: 32-60) came into being which has continued to dominate much U.S. entertainment programming down to the present. "Quality TV," in the MTM sense, involved, "television's ongoing negotiation of the tension between economics and aesthetics, or as Feuer puts it, 'the relationship between textual production and commodity production'" (Williams 1994: 142, quoting Feuer [*ibid.*]).

Northern Exposure, "a kinder, gentler *Twin Peaks*" (Williams 1994: 141), can be considered a "grandchild" of MTM, since its producers worked on MTM's series, *St. Elsewhere*. *Northern Exposure* continues and develops the MTM style, as Williams says:

The show is 'quality' in terms of industrial lineage and its structural elements; but it also further refines the MTM style in four important ways: (1) its aggressively hybrid nature; (2) the composition and configuration of its ensemble; (3) its unprecedented and completely innovative use of backstory to structure episodes; and (4) its self-consciously 'bardic' voice (1994: 144).

Northern Exposure is set in a remote, but contemporary Alaskan village. The location is both familiar and yet unfamiliar enough to most American viewers to allow for explorations into themes and situations which might be outrageous in another context. The village was founded -- according to its "backstory" -- in the 1890s "by two gay women seeking sexual freedom" on the frontier (Williams 1994: 148). Like *Twin Peaks*, *Northern Exposure* ventures freely into the preternatural, assisted by the shamans among the village's large proportion of Native American inhabitants. The frontier setting permits the producers to assemble a collection of unlikely characters, such as might drift to the margins of civilization, and to make them interact in unlikely ways. The format allows experimentation and even the chance to explore philosophical issues which could not be raised in more "ordinary" programs.

The constructedness of culture(s) and the inscription of humans within those fragile edifices are renegotiated week after week in *Northern Exposure* to a degree unprecedented on television, even within the self-reflexive and humanist tradition of quality

TV (Williams 1994: 152).

But this is "not everyone's cup of tea," and audiences are fickle. *Northern Exposure* slumped from a ranking of 20 and a market share of 19, in Nielsen's June 20-26, 1994, prime-time rating, to 73rd, with a share of 11, in the week of April 3-9, 1995 (*Broadcasting and Cable* 1994: 19; and 1995: 37).

The television audience is fragmenting, according to Williams, and programming must appeal more and more strongly to narrower and narrower segments. "The quality series of the seventies and eighties didn't have to reach a mass audience; the quality series of the nineties simply cannot reach a mass audience" (*ibid.*). The critical question in a commercial system is whether the narrower audience carries sufficient advertising potential to enable such programs to survive.

More of the Same?

Jankowski and Fuchs are former CBS executives. Their thesis is that the rumors of the death of the big American commercial broadcasting networks have been greatly exaggerated. What this means for quality programming depends on how one evaluates the product of network television.

Although channels are multiplying towards the magic number of 500 -- and beyond, if one counts video rentals and various other alternative uses of TV monitors -- the authors' view is that productivity cannot keep up. In their opinion, the vaunted 500 satellite/cable channels will be filled mostly with dingy reruns, rather than the up-to-date prime-time programs with high audience appeal which they believe that only the broadcast networks can keep in adequate supply.

The cost of such programming is high, and many new programs fail after millions of dollars have been gambled on their success. The networks are large enough to absorb such losses, and the authors say that in the United States only the broadcast networks can muster the three essentials of successful large-scale television: production, circulation and funding. Quality production (in the commercial sense) is necessary to attract audience. The product is distributed, free, to a nationwide audience by hundreds of network affiliate stations. Finally, advertisers are attracted by this guaranteed mass audience to the degree that they are willing to pay the high rates which keep the whole process going.

Jankowski and Fuchs dispute the idea that mass audiences are a thing of the past. According to them, cable will never achieve the same coverage as open broadcast channels, both because subscribers must pay

for it and because its channels' smaller audiences cannot attract sufficient advertising revenue to support sustained production of competitive programs.

The logic is simple. Despite all the hyperbole about their being dinosaurs, the three major networks and their affiliated stations still are the only means of reaching the whole country as well as its individual communities, and the only ones that offer a full menu of current live and original programs free of charge... The signal, the service, and the audience are already there, a known commodity with a record of half a century of community acceptance (Jankowski and Fuchs 1995: 188).

As if to bear out this argument, a fourth broadcast network, Fox, has recently arisen to challenge the long-established big three (ABC, CBS and NBC). The creation of two more open-broadcast networks is rumored to be imminent (Jankowski and Fuchs 1995: 186).

Commercial broadcasting -- the "wave of the past" -- is also the "wave of the future," in the view of the authors. Network public broadcasting in the United States, faced by financial difficulties as well as by competition for its small audience from "PBS type" programming on commercial cable channels, is given short shrift by Jankowski and Fuchs: "...the answer to the question... 'Is there still a need for noncommercial television as we know it?' will be no" (pg. 174).

Public TV: Sinking Ship, or Oasis?

Some advocates of public service television are equally outspoken on the opposite side of the issue. Robert Hughes, art critic of *Time* magazine, recently stated his opinion of American commercial television. He said that the producers of American commercial network television recognize that there are many important aspects of life with which commercial television is

incapable of dealing. In his view their response is cold-bloodedly cynical.

Because it knows this, because there is quite a lot of IQ behind it, tv would like to create a mind-set in which those things no longer matter.. Instead it wants us to content ourselves with a seductive blizzard of images, a fast surface a few electrons thick, full of what is called 'information' but is in the main just emotively skewed raw data. Its content lurches between violence of action and blandness of opinion. And it never, ever stops (Hughes 1995: 7).

Hughes says that "Commercial tv teaches the people to scorn complexity and to feel, not think." Impressions are more important than substantive content, and sensationalism is the rule.

It has come to present society as a pagan circus of freaks, pseudo-heroes and wild morons, struggling on the sand of a Coliseum without walls. Multi-culturalism comes down to a match between the Ethiopian with the trident and the blond Dacian with the net... By the end of 1996 the networks will have given more tv time to the demented rituals surrounding the murder trial of O. J. Simpson than to the entire history of America itself (*ibid.*).

Hughes concludes that public broadcasting is the only oasis in this desert, so it is needed as badly as ever.

I don't think PBS [the U.S. Public Broadcasting System] is either a spotless lamb or a spring of pellucid wisdom. But I am convinced that whatever its defects, it is still America's best hope of responsive, intelligent and humane television broadcasting (Hughes 1995: 9).

VIII. Production Values and Quality

David L. Smith. *Video Communication: Structuring Content for Maximum Program Effectiveness*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1991.

A program can be produced with the best intentions in the world, embodying the highest moral and religious values, and nevertheless be bad television. The first priority among producers is to create programs which are attractive and interesting to viewers, because if the audience is lost the whole production process is in vain.

Smith (1991) addresses the many details involved in producing *good* television as the necessary first step in producing *quality* television. One section of his book is devoted to chapters on audio values (how to get the sound right), video values (how to get the picture right), and postproduction values (how to get the editing right).

He closes the book with a chapter which points to the considerations of ethics and integrity -- "Knowing what's right is different from doing what's right, which takes integrity" (pg. 368) -- which round off the process of making quality programs.

The whole process of television *production* is an art, beginning with attention to the highest technical standards, carried out with imagination, insight into the human condition, and all the other tangible and intangible qualities of artistic creation, and completed by ensuring that the product is both created and used in

Perspective

Quality and Purpose

The question, "What is quality in TV?" can be answered only in the context of the purpose assigned to TV according to particular perspectives and value orientations. Lord Reith sought quality in adherence to the values of the elite British society of his day, and his heirs in the BBC have attempted to follow that clear criterion. They face increasing difficulty, however, as agreement about standards of value breaks down under the force of increasingly pluralized contemporary culture. Other public services, such as NHK, face much the same challenge.

American commercial television producers are equally clear about what they mean by "quality." For them, it is the kind of programming which best attracts viewers who can then be converted into commercially saleable audiences.

Defects in the Systems

These two positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, even though the one places the decision on what constitutes quality in the hands of a well-educated group of specialists, while the other leaves that decision to "majority rule," as expressed through the audience ratings. Both have their virtues, but both also display inherent weaknesses.

Public service broadcasting, supported by taxes or license fees, thrives if it enjoys a monopoly, but its essential legislative base is weakened if it cannot hold its audience against commercial broadcasters' competition. Most viewers watch prime time TV for entertainment and relaxation, and only a few will willingly choose the intellectually and artistically more stimulating offerings among a range of programming available to them at the end of an exhausting work day. Good, sustained

ways which are constructive, rather than destructive of human psychological, social, cultural and spiritual values.

Much the same can be said about television *programming*, which should adhere to the same criteria but in a more complex environment than that faced by people whose chief concern is with production alone. Programmers have to juggle many factors, including audiences, advertisers and critics, while respecting the artistic integrity of the production. To do so while giving full attention to the human implications of their decisions is a big order.

production of attractive programs costs large amounts of money. With occasional exceptions, budget cutting in production results in a loss of the kind of slick presentation which audiences have come to take for granted.

On the other hand, the quality achieved by slick commercial network production is an instrumental quality designed to attract large audiences. Prime-time programs must appeal to an average well-educated viewer in the 18-49 age bracket -- at least in the United States -- so a certain level of intellectual and artistic quality has to be maintained as well as entertainment value.

Some good things can happen in that process, but they happen within a limited range of possibilities. Quality prime-time network programming is quality *entertainment* programming, because that is what the commercially significant, 18-49 age group appears to want during prime-time. Intellectual stimulus and challenge may be present, but they cannot be so stimulating or challenging that significant proportions of either the audience or potential advertisers are offended.

What is Left Out?

Large blocks of human experience are, accordingly, omitted or deemphasized -- such as religion and controversial views on really fundamental issues which seriously divide society. How many sitcom characters ever pray or go to church? How often do current events programs ever clearly and fully state the basic moral issues involved in the abortion controversy? Can the moral acceptability of a "gay" lifestyle or pre-marital sex ever be seriously called into question on network TV?

"Higher culture" -- opera, ballet, symphonies, in-depth discussion of graphic or plastic arts or of literature, etc. -- appears rarely, if at all on commercial broadcast

television, since audiences would inevitably be small and its commercial value not adequate to cover the costs of production.

The Possibility of Improvement

Evolution and improvement are possible, however, as artistic development in one or other kind of production comes to be recognized as having commercial potential. Laurie Schulze (in Newcomb 1994: 155-175) has reviewed such an evolutionary process in the case of the American made-for-TV movie. She quotes critic Judith Crist as saying, in 1969, that the TV movies of that period were characterized by cheap production values, "not quite casts and hiccuping plots," geared more to commercial breaks than to the artistic development of the story. But the genre has matured, now often providing a flexible forum for the serious dramatic treatment of social issues which cannot be dealt with as well in sitcoms, drama series or serial melodramas.

Wasted Talent

Jankowski and Fuchs have cited three essentials of a viable television enterprise: production, circulation or distribution, and financing. It would be difficult to argue with them on the latter point, but methods of financing can vary from system to system. Distribution need not be extensive if a compensating financial arrangement can be found. Production, of course, requires funding -- usually in large amounts -- but their pessimism about the limited pool of creative talent -- "there will never be enough talent" (Jankowski and Fuchs 1995: 37) -- seems misplaced. By their own admission, the current system of program selection in American network television is extremely wasteful not only of money but of talent as well.

According to them, each American commercial network may see thirty to forty new pilot productions per year, of which ten become series, but only two or three can be expected to survive into a second season -- a "research and development" process which costs more than \$50,000,000.-- (pg. 37). It is doubtful that there is less talent, creativity or quality present in the eliminated shows than in the successful ones, since the elimination process is based far more on commercial than on artistic or technical factors. A huge creative potential is actually being frustrated and wasted by this system. With it is wasted months or years out of the lives of some of the nation's most talented television professionals, time which could be highly productive under different conditions.

No Final Answers

The question of what constitutes quality in television -- whether in individual programs or in programming policies -- raises issues which can never be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. Circumstances and value orientations vary, making theoretical criteria difficult to apply. Nevertheless, research -- especially the NHK study, which arguably has become the central document in this field of research -- has highlighted points to look for in particular cases. It can help us recognize signs of quality or the lack of it in particular programs and programming policies.

Technique Plus Respect

As Smith (1991) makes clear, good production standards are a necessary starting point. The best intentions in the world cannot make up for faulty production techniques. But, as Smith also makes clear, quality television goes beyond good technique. The literature which we have reviewed in this issue of *Trends* specifies many of the factors involved in that "going beyond." They include a fundamental respect for the human dignity of the audience, including respect for its diversity and for both the needs and the vulnerability of its various sub-groups.

Sex and violence exist in the real world, so television must deal with them, but in doing so it should be respectful of the sacredness of both human sexuality and of human life. News programs that focus on the menu for a condemned prisoner's last meal, rather than on the human tragedy of the crime and execution, are symptomatic of the degrading tendency which we have come to expect from TV. Coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial has demonstrated the extremes of low quality to which the appeal to audience interest alone can carry the medium. Television should stimulate thought. It should challenge. In challenging, it sometimes might legitimately offend; but there is no advantage in being *gratuitously* offensive.

Respect for both the moral and psychological integrity of the audience is one of the greatest challenges for programmers, especially in view of the pluralism which inevitably characterizes a mass audience. Fragmentation of the audience, however, is no excuse for a fragmented presentation -- randomly juxtaposing the sacred with the profane or the profound with the inane -- which is traumatic for everyone. Fragmented presentation breeds incoherence in the over-all viewing experience and in the transmission of any particular message. Incoherence not only destroys the meaning in specific programs but it also can contribute to an expectation of incoherence and

loss of meaning in all media experience and even in one's experience of the real world. If that should happen, television would lose its great humanizing capability and become a force for dehumanization and brutalization.

Advertising and Fragmentation

A special cause of fragmentation is advertising -- which is admittedly necessary, in some form, to finance quality programming in the commercial systems which are coming to dominate television in most countries. Perhaps the greatest potential for audience rebellion is against unreasonable numbers and thoughtless placement of commercial breaks. A subtle aspect of quality is editorial respect for the artistic integrity of a work and for the flow of related images needed to communicate it.

Diversity and Creativity

One kind of diversity as a mark of quality programming requires that each channel present a wide

range of genres and topics appropriate to its audience. It should recognize the need to include all significant groups among its potential viewers: young and old as well as the 18-49 year-olds; minority population groups as well as the majority; etc. This need may sometimes -- or often -- clash with commercial imperatives. But the honest pursuit of quality and of the public interest requires it.

The prime-time audience's desire for relaxing entertainment needs to be respected. Entertainment has value and therefore it can have its own kind of quality, but it should not be pandered to as the only criterion of attractive prime-time programming. Diversity demands continuing experimentation, which may sometimes recognize that "higher culture: -- classical music, opera, ballet, art, etc. -- when creatively presented may have as much relaxation value as an endless parade of sitcoms.

Perhaps the key word, here, is "creatively."

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AFTERWORD

Quality television is the result of the interplay of many factors, some of which might not be evident to all observers. Basic, technical production values are fundamental and indispensable, and so are good narrative sense and simply having something worthwhile and interesting to say. After that, the issue becomes a little less obvious. Intangibles of audience composition, changes in culture between times and places, juxtaposition of programs in a broadcasting schedule and many other elements must be brought into the calculation. Despite the fact that advertising may seem to work against quality, in a commercial broadcasting system the ability to attract advertisers contributes to quality, because if there are no advertisers to pay the bills there can be no programming at all!

Different genres of programs each have their own, internal criteria of quality. Sitcoms and soap operas can have their own kinds of quality, precisely as good or bad sitcoms or good or bad soap operas, although many observers may rate their overall quality as genres lower than that of serious dramas or grand opera.

The programming of whole broadcasting schedules -- in contrast to the production of individual programs -- seems to require diversity as a necessary element in any claim it makes to quality. But even that statement has to be qualified, since some stations or networks are narrowcast to special audiences for special purposes. They need less diversification of programs, as long as they both meet the expectations of their audience and fulfill the purposes of their producers. But a service which enjoyed a monopoly in a given "market" would have a special need for very wide diversity in its programming, because it would have to try to meet all

the viewing expectations of its diverse, and captive audience.

The effective presentation of religion on television encounters many dilemmas, and they often involve quality. A primary consideration in quality is the attractiveness of the program to an audience, and "attractiveness" itself involves many complexities. A program need not be "entertaining" to be "attractive," although entertainment programs must be attractive to compete with each other for a share of the audience. A program can be tailored to be attractive to a particular audience, but aspects of that attractiveness might alienate a different, possibly larger audience.

Religious programming faces that dilemma, and often may cut itself off from a larger potential audience through preconceptions about the character of its primary target audience. It may, for example, be attractive to a small, elderly, Catholic, female audience, but in appealing to them it might cause a larger, younger, more generalized audience to turn it off. Study after study (e.g., Horsfield 1984; Hoover 1988) has suggested that the so-called *televangelists*, are not preaching the Gospel to the unconverted, as the word "evangelist" implies, but mostly to the already converted, who are sympathetic and receptive to their words.

A religiously-oriented station or network which wants to reach the largest possible prime-time audience should recognize what the American commercial networks have long recognized: that the need of most people at that time of day is to relax and be entertained by relatively undemanding narrative of some sort -- often sitcoms, mystery melodramas, quiz shows, etc. To compete for audience in that time period even religious programmers

should recognize that they might have to use one of those genres, adapted to their own purposes, rather than a less attractive form of programming, pious and uplifting though that may be.

The communication of an effective religious message through drama or other forms ordinarily thought of as "entertainment" takes much more effort, organization, talent and creativity than doing a program consisting mostly of "talking heads." But the payoff, in increased size and broader composition of the audience, can be well worthwhile.

Holy content and good intentions alone do not necessarily add up to quality religious television -- or

even to religious television with any significant audience appeal!

--The Editor

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CURRENT RESEARCH

Canada

Marc Raboy (Department of Communication, University of Montreal, Box 6128, Station A, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 3J7; Tel: +1 514 343 7171; Fax: +1 514 343 2298; e-mail: raboym@ere.umontreal.ca) has been involved with NHK's international study on quality assessment in television programming. In 1994 he collaborated in the comparative analysis of diversity in television programming in five countries, one of the later phases of the NHK study. His book, provisionally titled, *Public Service Broadcasting for the Twenty-First Century* is scheduled for publication by John Libbey, London, in late 1995.

Germany

Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem (Universität Hamburg, Fachbereich Rechtswissenschaft II, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, 20146 Hamburg; Fax: +49 40 41 78 70) continues to publish extensively on topics related to quality in broadcasting, with special reference to media policy, law and regulation. (See also, "Additional Bibliography.") He has a chapter, "The Regulation of Public Service Broadcasting in Germany," in Marc Raboy's forthcoming book (see "Canada"); and he also contributed several chapters to the book, *Television and the Public Interest*, edited by Jay G. Blumler (London: John Libbey, 1992).

Japan

Sakae Ishikawa (Sophia University, 7 Kioicho, Chiyoda Ku, Tokyo 102; Fax: +81 3 3238 3094) has written a book, due for late 1995 publication by John Libbey, publishers, London, which correlates the findings of the extensive international study of quality in broadcast television programming initiated by NHK's Broadcasting Culture Research Institute in 1990.

Naoyuki Kambara (School of Health and Sports Science, Juntendo University [no further information available]) published an article, "Study of the Diversity Indices Used for Programming Analysis," in the 1992 issue (No. 28) of *Studies of Broadcasting* and co-authored "Diversity in Television

Programming: Comparative Analysis of Five Countries," in the 1994 issue (No. 30) of the same journal.

Ken Tsuchiya and Masaharu Obara (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, 2-1-1, Atago, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105, Japan; Tel: +81 3 5400 6800; Fax: +81 3 3436 5880) edited the 1994 issue of *Studies of Broadcasting* (No. 30), which contained some of the final papers of the international study of quality assessment of television quality, initiated by NHK in 1990.

Mexico

Yolanda Lazo de Batiz (Universidad Anahuac del Sur, Puebla 18, Tizapan Progreso, C.P. 01080, Mexico, D.F.; Tel. and Fax: +52 5 550 0175 and +52 5 550 3046) is organizing the Spanish-American Forum of Television for Children, to be held September 25-29, 1995. One of the major objectives of the Forum will be to study ways to improve the quality of structural aspects of television production for children at both the national and international levels. The Forum is being developed in cooperation with Prix Jeunesse International and the Goethe Institute.

Silvia Molina y Vedia (Facultad de ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, circuito Mario de la Cueva, s/n, Ciudad Universitaria, México, D.F., Mexico; Fax: 666 83 34) is organizing a seminar featuring presentations by **Sakae Ishikawa** on the theme of "Quality Assessment of Broadcasting," scheduled for September 4-8, 1995. Dra. Molina and her Faculty have recently collaborated in two seminars on somewhat related topics: with Iberoamericana University, Metropolitan University and the Journalist for Tomorrow Association on "The Moral Quality of Journalism," and with the Latin American Federation of Journalists on "The Risks of the Journalistic Profession."

Netherlands

Dennis McQuail (Department of Communication, University of Amsterdam, Oude Hoogstraat 24, 1012 CE Amsterdam; Tel: +31 20 525 3985; Fax: +31 20 525 2086) has included

considerations of quality in his theoretical treatments of communication for at least the past decade, most notably in his book, *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*.

Peter Nikken, Tom Van der Voort and Ellen Van Bochove (Children's Television Information Center, Posbus 1206, 3800 BE Amersfoort; Tel: +31 33 651220; Fax: +31 33 610 823) hope soon to publish their research findings on "Dimensions of Quality in Children's Programs."

Sweden

Karl Erik Rosengren (Media and Communication Studies, University of Lund, S-221 00 Lund) has continued to be involved in the international study of quality assessment of television programming sponsored by the Japanese network NHK. He has concentrated on quality in Swedish public service television, and, with **Peter Hillve** of the same department, wrote an article, "Swedish Public Service Television: Quality for Sale?" in the 1994 issue of NHK's *Studies of Broadcasting* (No. 30).

United Kingdom

Barrie Gunter (Head of Research, Independent Television Commission, 7 Wavertree Rd., South Woodford, London E18 1BL; Tel: +44 742 826 736; Fax: +44 181 532 9905) continues to promote research on quality for the ITC.

Timothy Leggatt (Broadcasting Research Unit, Mantell Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9RF) was involved in the NHK-sponsored international study of quality assessment of broadcast programming. He reported on his research on the views of professionals regarding quality in television in NHK's *Studies of Broadcasting* (No. 29).

J. M. Wober (Department of Media Production, Bournemouth University, Poole House, Talbot Campus, Fern Barrow, Poole, Dorset BH12 5BB; Tel: +44 202 524 111; Fax: +44 202 595 530) continues the interest in television quality which he had developed in the course of several projects at ITC Research. In 1992, he wrote an ITC Research reference paper, "Who Shall Judge? Opinions On Who Is Most Suitable To Assess Television Programme Quality."

United States

Barry Litman, Robert LaRose, Robert Albers and Bradley S. Greenberg (Department of Telecommunication, 409

Communication Arts & Sciences, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1212; Fax: +1 (517) 432 1224) have been extensively involved in the international study of quality assessment of broadcast programming, initiated by the Japanese network NHK in 1990. Greenberg has been especially interested in the audience perspective on quality. With **Rick Busselle**, of the same department, he published an article on "Audience Dimensions of Quality in Situation Comedies and Action Programs" in NHK's *Studies of Broadcasting*, No. 30 (1994). Albers recently studied views on quality among Canadian program makers and published an article on that research in the same issue of *Studies of Broadcasting*. The Canadian study was a follow-up to a similar study Albers had done in the United States and published in the 1992 issue (No. 28) of the same journal. LaRose reported on "Perceived Transmission Quality Assessment" in the same issue. Litman has recently worked on the measurement of diversity in U.S. television programming and published an article reporting that research in the 1994 issue (No. 30) of *Studies of Broadcasting*, which he co-authored with **Gretchen Barbatsis, Kazumi Hasegawa** and **Seema Shrikhande**, all of the same department.

David L. Smith (Television Center, Xavier University, 3800 Victory Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio 45207-2821; Tel: +1 (513) 745 3461; Fax: +1 (513) 745 3466; e-mail: SMITHDL@ADMIN.XU.EDU) is writing a book, *Good News: A Producer's Guide - The Consumer's Hope*, designed for a general audience and intended to encourage television journalists, in particular, to produce more "good news" stories and disseminate them in magazine, talk and news formats, to balance "hard news" -- generally bad -- with "good," positive news which will present a more accurate picture of the world as it really is. The book will include examples of higher quality programming in a variety of television formats to illustrate how news that is both good and interesting might be presented.

Betsy Williams (Humanities Editor, University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, University Station, Austin, TX 78713-7819; Tel: +1 (512) 471 4278; Fax: +1 (512) 320 0668) has been doing her doctoral studies at the University of Texas on changes in the Hollywood film industry in a changing media and economic environment [see review article, above, for her work on "quality television"].

Late News Flash! The *Gesellschaft für Medienpädagogik und Kommunikationskultur* (GMK - The Society for Media Education and Communication Culture) will sponsor a one-day program on "Power Rangers, X-Base, Mosquito: What are the Criteria of Quality for Children's and Youth Programs" at the North Rhine-Westphalia Media Forum, in Cologne, Germany, on June 21, 1995. Presenters will include **Jürgen Lauffer, Renate Röllecke, Heinz-Werner Poelchau, Dieter Baacke, Dieter Czaja, and Gerhard Müntefering**. Contact: GMK, Körnerstraße 3, D-33602 Bielefeld; Tel: +49 05 21/6 77 88; Fax: +49 05 21/6 77 27.

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Karl Erik Rosengren (Lund)
David L. Smith (Cincinnati)
Elizabeth Thoman (Los Angeles)
Mallory Wober (London)

BOOK REVIEWS

Reviewers:

Bruce "Wayne" Bassinger (BWB)
W. E. Biernatzki, S.J. (WEB)
Miguel Rodrigo Alsina (MRA)

Baró i Ballbé, Maria Josep. *La Publicitat Il·lícita i a Defensa dels Consumidors* (Illicit Advertising and Consumer Protection). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació, 1992 (In Catalan). Pp. 291. ISBN 84 393 2613 0 (pb.). n.p.

The author, who is professor of civil law at Girona University, first discusses the concept of advertising, its various forms in Europe, and the laws of Spain and its various regions controlling advertising. Then he reviews laws regarding various categories of advertising, particularly as they control liquor and tobacco ads and those affecting fundamental rights of consumers, such as health. Prohibitions against subliminal advertising and naming competitors are also discussed. Part III discusses types of sanctions, professional self-regulation and judicial actions and responsibilities. -- MRA

Brungs, Robert, SJ, and Marianne Postiglione, RSM (Eds.). *Beauty in Faith, Science, Technology: ITEST Silver Jubilee Convention, Mont Marie Holyoke, August 1-6, 1993*. St. Louis: ITEST Faith/Science Press, 1994. Pp. x, 199 (bound with ITEST Membership Directory, separately numbered, pp. iii, 76). ISBN 0 9625431 8 7 (pb.) \$12.95.

Postiglione, Marianne, RSM, and Robert Brungs, SJ (Eds.). *The Science and Politics of Food: Proceedings of*

the ITEST Workshop, October, 1994. St. Louis: ITEST Faith/Science Press: St. Louis, 1995. Pp. iii, 279. ISBN 1 885583 01 X. \$12.95.

ITEST--the Institute for Theological Encounter/ Science and Technology -- was founded in 1968, by the Jesuits, to promote dialogue between scientists and theologians on topics relevant to both disciplines. These volumes present the proceedings of two of the annual conferences in which the Institute brings together scientists and theologians to exchange views from the two perspectives on selected topics.

Brungs admits, in the Foreword, that he left the convention with more questions than answers -- which he regards as a highly successful result. Everyone knows what beauty is, yet no one can adequately define it or describe it in terms of other dimensions of existence. Nevertheless, it is not merely "in the eye of the beholder," but has a foundation which stretches into every corner of creation, from the quark to the furthest reaches of the universe. Earlier philosophers have expressed this as the transcendental aspects of all being: unity, goodness, truth, and beauty.

Father John Staudenmeier's discussion (pp. 24-53) of "Technology as Beauty" focusses on the unlikely theme of Henry Ford as artist in his orchestration of the foundation and early growth of the automobile industry. Ford was obsessed with exercising total control -- artistic control, if you will -- over every technical and organizational detail. One of many examples was the legendary \$5.00 a day wage, instituted by Ford in 1914. It was a bold socio-economic stroke by which he simultaneously reduced worker resentment over their assembly-line drudgery and doubled their wages so that, among other things, they could buy Ford cars! Many of

the details of Ford's management activities were not "pretty," but the totality of the industrial empire he put together nevertheless expressed an aesthetic symbolism which went far beyond the merely pragmatic.

In his "Epilogue," Robert L. Morris, a chemical engineer, emphasizes that one of the most striking manifestations of beauty in both science and technology -- and one with strong theological implications -- is the teamwork through which both scientists and engineers accomplish their goals. Their dialogue with theologians can expand the horizons of this team effort to fit its beauty into the all-encompassing beauty of the divine plan.

The second book contains papers and discussions on various aspects of the theology of the world's food supply, touching on environmentalism, biotechnology, and the politics of food distribution and population policy. Participants included biochemists, environmental technologists, political scientists, and other experts in scientific, technological and policy aspects of food production and distribution, as well as theologians. No consensus was reached, although there was some agreement on the need for accountability -- to both God and all human beings -- as well as practical and sustainable solutions to the complex and urgent problems which were discussed. -- WEB

Burns, Gene. *The Frontiers of Catholicism: The Politics of Ideology in a Liberal World*. Berkeley/New York/Los Angeles/London: The University of California Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 304. ISBN: 0 520 08922 7 (pb.), \$15.00.

Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the Catholic Church had been an apparent bastion of conservatism, political as well as religious. But even in the nineteenth century, with the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, for example, signs of latent "radical" tendencies had begun to appear. Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, in 1962, declaring that he was "opening the windows" of the Church. To many, it soon appeared that the Council actually had "opened the floodgates" for rapid, even chaotic change in the Church -- both in its inner life and its external relations to other institutions.

Burns tries to put this process in perspective, chiefly in a case study of the Catholic Church in the United States, but with necessary attention to the worldwide Church as context for understanding the American case.

From the outside, the ideological positions manifested by various sectors and agencies of the Church, often

seem enigmatic. Burns notes that the characterization of ideologies as "left" or "right" arose in a secular political milieu -- revolutionary France -- totally foreign, even antipathetic to religion.

It is, therefore, not surprising that conceptual categories that originated among the Church's antagonists do not correspond to those of Catholic ideology.. It is true that we have to look at the politics of Catholic ideology, but much of the relevant 'politics' is internal to the Church and does not reflect secular debates. (pg. 3)

The book is

...an analysis of how various groups within the Catholic Church have developed different ideological positions depending on how much and what type of power they have within the Church. The title's reference to Catholicism's 'frontiers' refers not only to the new paths that many Catholics have forged, but also to the internal and external boundaries that define the politics of contemporary Catholicism. (pg. 4)

Chapters are devoted to the evolution of the papacy's perspectives on European and world politics, how those perspectives interacted with the restructuring occasioned by Vatican II, and how the American Church, with its own, particular history, has been affected by both the dynamics of the worldwide Church and of its own social and political situation. A separate chapter is devoted to "a detailed analysis of the ideological transformation of a group excluded from the center of institutional power, namely, American sisters" (pg. 5). Finally, the author considers ideological changes in Latin American Catholicism and discusses the implications of the study for the prospects for future ideological change in the Church. -- WEB

Carrillo, Marc. *La Clàusula de Consciència i el Secret Professional dels Periodistes: (Una aproximació a l'estatut jurídic dels professionals de a informació)* (The Conscience Clause and Professional Secret of Journalists: [An approximation of the juridical situation of information professionals.]) Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació, 1992 (In Catalan). Pp. 193. ISBN 84 393 2149 X (pb.). n.p.

Carrillo, who is Professor of constitutional law at

Pompeu Fabra University, in Barcelona, discusses the protection of journalists' sources under Spanish law and compares it with other countries. -- MRA

Casasús, Josep Maria. *El Pensament Periodístic a Catalunya: Assaig sobre l'evolució de les idees teòriques i professionals en matèria de periodisme* (Journalistic Thought in Catalonia: An Essay on the Evolution of Theoretical and Professional Ideas on the Subject of Journalism). Barcelona: Curial, 1987 (in Catalan). Pp. 187. ISBN 84 7256 294 8. n.p.

The author, dean of journalism at Pompeu Fabra University, in Barcelona, discusses theories and perspectives on journalism as they have developed in Catalonia since the beginning of the twentieth century. During much of the period the Catalan language was suppressed, so the expression of Catalanian culture and spirit through the Spanish language is a topic of special interest. -- MRA

Casmir, Fred L. (Ed.). *Building Communication Theories: A Socio/Cultural Approach*. Hillsdale/Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Pp. ix, 321. ISBN 0 8058 1516 3 (hb.) \$59.95.

Fred Casmir comments in the introduction of this work that although, "... all of us theorize-- ... [we] almost automatically react negatively to the term, theory." Taking this into account, this work attempts to synthesize communication theory and present it in clear, concise language, yet give adequate coverage to the complex nature of the subject matter.

The text is divided into four parts. Part I is a description of the role of communication theory, explaining the process by which theories are developed. Part II evaluates the assumptions that undergird communication theory, charting the evolution of communication theory, with one chapter devoted to explaining ethnographic study. Part III outlines the foundations of communication theory by demonstrating how researchers orient themselves to the phenomena they are studying. Part IV provides examples of the theories that are being developed in different areas of communication study, specifically: interpersonal communication, media studies, group communication, and rules perspective.

Casmir and his fellow authors provide a text that as he states, "... [does not] assume that one set of methods, one

set of tools, or one area of human inquiry is superior to all others. Rather we attempt to understand, if not celebrate, human diversity." -- BWB

Collins, Richard. *Broadcasting and Audio-Visual Policy in the European Single Market*. London: John Libbey, 1994. Pp. 177. ISBN 0 86196 405 5 (hb.) £22.00.

When the Commission of the European Community created a single European broadcasting policy through the *Television Without Frontiers* Green Paper and Directive, it also encountered tension in the need to gain unity while maintaining diversity. Smaller nations in the Community believe unity will result in, "permitting a dangerous American assault on Europe," and that diversity is the key to blocking that assault. The larger nations believe unity is vital to expand markets and improve the quality of the programming that is provided.

This work elaborates both viewpoints and concludes with examples of policies that balance unity and diversity. Article 128 of the Maastricht Treaty is one example. This article gives the Commission jurisdiction in the "cultural domain," bringing unity while still allowing a one nation veto of any commission initiative, to protect diversity.

Although some of the Commission's policies have balanced unity and diversity, battles in this area will only increase as other nations join the union. This work articulates the viewpoint for both unity and diversity, shows where problems have occurred, and highlights successful balancing of both interests. Collins' work should be a helpful guide to understand and chart the coming audio-visual policy in the European market.

-- BWB

Corbella, Joan M. *La comunicació social a Catalunya, 1981-1991: Una dècada de canvis* (Social Communication in Catalonia, 1981-1991: A Decade of Change). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre de Investigació de la Comunicació, 1991 (in Catalan). Pp. 127. ISBN 84 393 1834 0 (pb.). n.p.

Changes in Catalanian society between 1981 and 1991 are discussed by Corbella, who then sketches the larger tendencies of change in social communication in the region. Individual chapters then take up those changes, in detail, for the press, radio, television, book publishing, the record industry, cinema, video, and advertising. The last chapter is devoted to a discussion of tele-

communication services laws. -- MRA

Corominas, Maria. *Models de Ràdio als països occidentals: Evolució i Perspectives* (Models of Radio in Western Countries: Evolution and Perspectives). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació, 1990 (in Catalan). Pp. 74. ISBN 84 393 1365 9 (pb.). n.p.

Corominas discusses the history of legal and financial aspects of the development of radio in Western Europe and the United States. Various models -- public, private, mixed, and monopoly -- are treated in terms of regulation, control, programming and coverage. The prospects for radio in the 1990s are discussed. -- MRA

Cupach, William R. and Brian H. Spitzberg (Eds.). *The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication*. Hillsdale and Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Pp. vii, 337. ISBN 0 8058 1167 2 (hb.) \$69.95.

The editors of *The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication* feel that the positive aspects of interpersonal communication have been given sufficient coverage in the literature, while the negative, darker aspects have been neglected. This book is meant to explore, as stated in the preface, "how individuals cope with social interaction that is difficult, problematic, challenging, distressing, and disruptive."

The work divides its analysis of these darker aspects into four parts. Part I, "Shades of Darkness in Interpersonal Relations," seeks to examine the various negative aspects of interpersonal communication with an emphasis on points that should receive further investigation. Part II, "The Maze of Messages," samples scientific inquiries into the power of hurtful messages, focusing on the content and context of those messages. Part III, "Face Beneath the Masks," probes how communication competence is affected by negative aspects of communication (e.g., conversational dilemmas, social predicaments, and deception). Part IV, "Fetching Good Out of Evil," seeks to debunk myths about conversation patterns within the family and between relational partners, hoping that illuminating these myths will improve communication between these interactors.

The Dark Side does not demand that researchers abandon studying the positive aspects of interpersonal communication, but its authors do ask that the study of the darker aspects be given symmetry with the positive

and solution-oriented facets of interpersonal communication. -- BWB

Cutlip, Scott M. *Public Relations: The Unseen Power*. Hillsdale, NJ/Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Pp. ix, 807. ISBN 0 8058 1464 7 (hb.) \$125.00; ISBN 0 8058 1465 5 (pb.) \$39.95.

Since its inception, public relations has influenced policy making, but its power has grown to affect both national and international policy. Public relations is able to shape economic and political trends as well as influence public behavior, though much of its work and influence are hidden from public scrutiny. This work chronicles the people who have created and expanded public relations.

The study represents over 40 years of research conducted by the author to provide a history of the impact of public relations upon American society. This work is unique because it gives empirical evidence of the power of public relations while also making available excerpts from the personal and company papers of some of the major players in the field. By including both types of analysis, the author establishes a base of empirical research to aid education and further research and provides a historical context to humanize and more deeply develop his analysis.

Cutlip's work gives the reader a broad survey of the leaders who have shaped public relations and the tactics they have employed to influence the American public and government. It can serve as a comprehensive guide for those interested in the history and influence of public relations in American society. -- BWB

Dahlgren, Peter, and Colin Sparks (Eds.). *Journalism and Popular Culture*. London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage, 1992. Pp. vi, 210. ISBN 0 8039 8670 X (hb.) \$55.00; ISBN 0 8039 8671 8 (pb.) \$19.95.

These papers represent some of the contributions to a colloquium held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in May 1990, sponsored by the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication of Stockholm University. The authors concentrate on non-fictional journalism in popular culture, to remedy a previous bias in popular culture studies which have emphasized fiction.

In another departure from many discussions of popular culture, several of the writers develop serious theoretical approaches which go beyond the mere description of

examples from popular journalism. For the most part, their theory reflects that of the cultural studies orientation, as it has developed from the Birmingham scholars of the 1970s. There consequently is a certain stress on ideology, which often is, in any event, clearly evident in some of the examples described. -- WEB

Devereaux, Leslie, and Roger Hillman (Eds.). *Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology, and Photography*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1995. Pp. xiv, 362. ISBN 0 520 08522 1 (hb) \$45.00; ISBN 0 520 08524 8 (pb.) \$16.00.

Devereaux's "An Introductory Essay" raises the key question of the papers, sponsored by the Humanities Research Centre of the Australian National University, Canberra, and assembled in this book: "Pictures don't lie; ..or do they?" The photographic image, whether still or moving, has an existence and power of its own, distinct from the context in which it was made. Furthermore, the ability of modern technology to manipulate or create visual images with little or no relation to any imaged reality puts a whole new perspective on this important dimension of communication.

The authors are from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines, and they discuss the representational practices used by those disciplines to assist in their pursuit of scientific, historical and literary truth. Three, more general "theme-setting papers" set the stage for the more particular case-studies. Paul Willemsen deals with the tension between national and international orientations. George E. Marcus discusses the role of the cinematic imagination in contemporary ethnographic film and writing. Leslie Devereaux wonders at the deep context of ethnographic data, which the spectator can ever only partially comprehend, appreciate or explain, whether on film or in text.

The case studies explore some of these themes in relation to still photography, fictional films, and the subjective element in ethnographic and documentary film. -- WEB

Edwards, Mark U., Jr. *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 225. ISBN 0 520 08462 4 (hb.) \$40.00.

Luther was not only the first person in Europe to use printed mass media in a sustained campaign "to shape

and channel a mass movement," but Edwards regards him as having dominated that campaign to a degree no one has ever equalled in any similar propaganda effort (pp. 1 and xii).

The presses of German-speaking lands produced substantially more vernacular works by Luther in the crucial early years (1518-1525) than the seventeen other major Evangelical publicists combined. During Luther's lifetime these presses produced nearly five times as many German works by Luther as by all the Catholic controversialists put together (pg. 1).

The author's aim is to study the effect of Luther on his reading public, rather than through preaching or other direct contacts. Therefore he picked the then third-ranking printing center in Germany, Strasbourg, as the site where this effect could most easily and effectively be studied (pg. 10).

Typically, the medium took the form of eight-page, sixteen-page or thirty two-page pamphlets. An estimated 10,000 pamphlet editions were printed by German-language presses between 1500 and 1530, of which "almost three-quarters appeared between 1520 and 1526, and most were due to the Reformation movement. Martin Luther alone was responsible for approximately 20 percent of the overall total" (pg. 17).

Like modern writers and other producers of mass media, Luther was able to exercise little or no control over the ways in which his audience used his work. Edwards feels that few, at least in the early period, "understood the full implications of justification by faith alone." But his appeal to Scripture alone "was the one issue all the supporting publicists agreed upon, and it was the most discussed single issue in all the pamphlet literature, both Evangelical and Catholic" (pg. 170).

Catholics were at a disadvantage in refuting Luther, because even using the new medium -- and in the vernacular, at that -- moved theological discussion into the public arena, where prevailing interpretations of ecclesiastical authority said it had no right to be. In even entering into printed vernacular debate, the defenders of Church authority conceded a large part to the Reformers' central argument (pg. 80). Furthermore, the "Evangelical emphasis on the word...lent itself to written argument. Catholicism, in contrast, was more 'visually' and 'ritually' oriented" (pg. 81).

In short, much of Luther's message was conveyed by his chosen medium itself.

The crisis of authority that was the Reformation

owed a great deal to print. Not only did the printing press broadcast the attack on traditional authorities to a broader audience and with greater rapidity than had ever been possible before, it itself embodied the subversive message it conveyed (pp. 171-172).

--WEB

Englis, Basil G. (Ed.). *Global and Multinational Advertising*. Hillsdale, NJ/Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Pp.xii, 266. ISBN: 0 8058 1137 0 (hb.) \$59.95; ISBN 0 8058 1395 0 (pb.) \$29.95.

International advertising is big business. U.S. advertisers spend "more than \$130 billion annually in non-U.S. markets," accounting for nearly half the total global advertising expenditures, by 1990 (pg. vii). This business, totalling more than a quarter of a trillion dollars per year, attracted the attention of the Ninth Annual Advertising and Consumer Psychology Conference, in May 1990. One of the major themes of that Conference, reported on in this book, "was the need for consumer researchers to consider the extent to which their theories and empirical findings are culture-bound" (pg. vii).

Papers explore the interactions between values and culture in international marketing, sub-cultures including those said to be defined by gender as well as by more standard characteristics such as ethnicity, cross-culture strategy and tactics in advertising, and methodologies for analyzing language use differences and the processing of brand information in different markets and market segments.

Particular cases dealt with in separate chapters include comparisons of British and American advertising approaches, and of the difficulty of standardizing international television advertising in Japan, Korea, and the United States. Another chapter explores the "unique traits of the Chinese economy" which can mean success or failure in advertising a foreign product in mainland China. A study of differences between Japanese and American automobile advertising reveals that

..the Japanese seem quite bent on an ambivalent relationship with the West, which is reflected in their advertising, at once embracing the use of Western products, models, ambience, and music, and yet at the same time, reaching for traditional appeals or themes that reaffirm their own identity and also confirm their increasing power on the world stage (pg. 203). -- WEB

Hemrick, Eugene F. and James J. Walsh. *Seminarians in the Nineties: A National Study of Seminarians in Theology*. National Catholic Educational Association Seminary Department, 1993. Pp. v, 86. ISBN 1 55833 125 1 (pb.) n.p.

The Seminary Department of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) conducted this study with financial support from a grant by the Lilly Endowment. Its intent is to chart the changing profile of seminarians by collecting and interpreting data about the demographic and personal aspects of current seminary students. It is designed to help seminary faculty and students understand the changing world and the seminary's role in it.

The study surveyed 901 seminary students with questions pertaining to six areas: a demographic sketch of who the seminarians are, education profile, perceptions of peers, perceptions on church related issues, prayer life and challenges facing the Church's future. Five appendices are added to present and explain the data obtained from the study. The first appendix gives the raw data and the last four either interpret the data or compare it to previous studies. -- BWB

Generalitat de Catalunya. *Bibliografia sobre Comunicació Social: Vint anys de recerca a la Facultat de Ciències de la Comunicació de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (Bibliography on Social Communication: Twenty Years of Research at the Faculty of Sciences of Communication of the Autonomous University of Barcelona). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1993 (in Catalan). Pp. 249. ISBN 84 393 2484 7 (pb.). (n.p.)

This bibliography lists works published by faculty members of the Faculty of Communication at the Autonomous University of Barcelona during the first twenty years of the Faculty's existence. Works in all original languages are included. -- MRA

Generalitat de Catalunya. *Comunicación, cultura y sociedad: Aportaciones desde Cataluña a la investigación contemporánea de los medios* (Monografies i Documents, 4) (Communication, Culture and Society: Contributions of Catalonia to Contemporary Study of the Media). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992 (in Spanish). Pp. 143. ISBN 84 393 2124 4 (pb.) n.p.

This Catalanian government publication, in Spanish,

contains brief synopses of research reports, bibliographies, and other writing by Catalonian communications scholars, notes on the mass media in Catalonia, abstracts of prize-winning communication research projects, and other information pertaining to communication studies in a region which has been remarkably productive of such research in recent years.

-- MRA

Generalitat de Catalunya. *Els intellectuals i els mitjans de comunicació: I Converses a La Pedrera* (Intellectuals and the Media of Communication: The Conversations in La Pedrera). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992 (in Catalan). Pp. 91. ISBN 84 393 2223 2 (pb.). n.p.

A conference held in May, 1991, in "La Pedrera," a building with important Catalonian cultural associations, brought together many of the leading intellectuals of the region to discuss the interaction between the intellectual life and the mass media. Topics covered include the distance of intellectuals from ordinary society, the functions of the intellectual, the meaning of "intellectual," and the intellectual as "opinion leader." -- MRA

Gifreu, Josep, and Maria Corominas (Eds.). *Construir l'Espai Català de Comunicació* (To Build a Catalan Space for Communication). Col·lecció: Estudis i Recerques, 5. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació, 1991 (in Catalan). Pp. 295. ISBN 84 393 1770 0 (pb.). n.p.

The participants in this joint study sponsored by the Center for Communication Research of the Government of Catalonia focus on the possibility for the creation of media in Catalan which would unite the various Catalan-speaking regions of the Western Mediterranean. They review the current state of the media in those areas and laws and regulations governing the growth of Catalan media. They conclude that the viability of a distinct Catalan communication area, like that of many smaller language areas in Europe, depends on the way in which the structure of a united Europe develops. -- MRA

Greenberg, Karen Joy (Ed.). *Conversations on Communication Ethics*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1991. Pp. xii, 188. ISBN 0 89391 656 0 (hb.) \$32.50.

The nine contributors to this book write from various

perspectives, not necessarily always agreeing with each other.

What holds it together is the premise that indeed the subject of ethics in communication is extremely important and needs to be studied and discussed. (pg. x)

Kenneth E. Anderson sets the stage, historically, by reviewing the history of communication ethics, stressing the classical period. Ronald C. Arnett details more modern developments in his review of ethics scholarship in speech communication journals from 1915 to 1985.

Vernon E. Cronen discusses the "management of theory and ethics" from the point of view of coordinated management of meaning (CMM) theory. Frederick J. Antczak deals with "discursive community and the problem of perspective in ethical criticism"; while Editor Greenberg's contribution stresses the need to use systems of moral criticism "to achieve tolerance, understanding, and unity." Josina M. Makau focusses on fidelity and veracity as "guidelines for ethical communication." J. Michael Sproule is concerned with the ethics of institutional persuasion; while Robert A. White describes the roles of normative theory and sociopolitical process in the democratization of communication. Finally, Samuel M. Edelman applies Situational Ethics to the symbol of the "refugee" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

-- WEB

Guilamet, Jaume. *La Circulació de la Premsa Catalunya-Espanya: Difusió Interterritorial* (The Circulation of the Press in Catalonia and Spain: Interterritorial Diffusion). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre de Investigació de la Comunicació, 1990 (in Catalan). Pp. 107. ISBN 84 393 1309 8 (pb.). n.p.

Magazine and newspaper circulation in Spain, in general, and in Catalonia, in particular, are compared for the years 1972, before the end of the Franco dictatorship, and 1987, under the democratic government. Distribution changes in Spain and Catalonia between those two years are analyzed and discussed. -- MRA

Izard, Natàlia. *La traducció cinematogràfica* (Cinematographic Translation). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992 (Col·lecció Monografies i Documents, 3 - in Catalan). Pp. 126. ISBN 84 393 1992 4 (pb.). n.p.

The author discusses problems in translation of cinema titles and dialogue into languages other than the original. She starts at the beginning, with silent films, and proceeds past such mileposts as the translation of the audible voices of the first "talkie," *The Jazz Singer* into French subtitles. Special questions are noted with reference to multilingual productions, such as those with original versions in both English and French. Some concern is expressed about North American dominance in European film distribution. Contemporary trends in film translation are described. -- MRA

Jones, Daniel E., and Joan M. Corbella (Eds.). *La Indústria Àudio-Visual de Ficció a Catalunya: Producció i Comercialització* (The Audio-Visual Fiction Industry in Catalonia: Production and Marketing). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'investigació de la Comunicació, 1989 (in Catalan). Pp. 87. ISBN 84 393 1181 8 (pb.). n.p.

The papers in this volume deal with the production and marketing of dramatic fiction for cinema and television in Catalonia, including the support and control functions of public administrators and the expected effect of technological developments. The production of fiction for both TVE-Catalunya (the central Spanish government channel which broadcasts both in Spanish and Catalan) and TV3 (the all-Catalan channel) is discussed. -- MRA

MacArthur, John R. *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War*. Berkeley/New York/ Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1993. Pp. xx, 274. ISBN 0 520 08398 9 (pb.) \$10.00.

This work seeks to uncover military tactics used to discourage negative reporting of the Gulf War. MacArthur details the strategies used by the government and the military to start the war and promote it while it was occurring; these include: hiring one of the best public relations firms to promote support for the war effort, allegedly spreading false propaganda of atrocities committed by Iraq on the Kuwaiti people, and suppressing negative news about the war.

MacArthur places the blame on both the military and the press. The military took obvious steps to promote only the positive aspects of the war and to ensure that nearly all negative aspects of the war were hidden from the press until the war was won. The book places more blame; however, on the media for accepting government

propaganda without verifying its credibility or demanding more independent access to the war front. Since the media had discovered the amount of governmental suppression of information during the Grenada and Panama invasions, MacArthur expected the press to be more skeptical of government information about military operations than it proved to be.

The foreword by Ben Bagdikian claims that the governmental and military suppression of information during the Gulf War is simply another instance of deception used to make the American people follow policies with which they would not otherwise agree. This work generates some skepticism about the media's ability to accurately report and comprehensively check government and military action. -- BWB

Marín, Enric, and Joan Manuel Tresseras. *Cultura de masses i postmodernitat (Elogi i crítica de la comunicació contemporània)*. (Mass Culture and Postmodernity: Praise and Criticism of Contemporary Communication). Valencia: Eliseu Climent, Editor, 1994 (in Catalan). Pp. 267. ISBN 84 7502 426 X (pb.), n.p.

Since the days of the early Frankfurt School, in the 1930s, European intellectuals have tended to react negatively to mass culture, and especially to its manifestations in the mass media. Marín and Tresseras wish to counteract that tendency by demonstrating that mass culture has a good side as well as less praiseworthy aspects.

Part I of the book gives a basic introduction to the debate and some of its central concepts and definitions. Part II sketches aspects of the recent history of mass culture. Part III, "La Crítica," criticizes not so much mass culture as some of the criticisms of mass culture--e.g., that it is vulgar, conservative, confused, commercial, mediocre, passive, immoral, etc. -- MRA

McQuail, Dennis and Sven Windahl. *Communication Models: For the Study of Mass Communication (second edition)*. London/New York: Longman, 1993. Pp. 229. ISBN 0-582-03650-X (pb.) \$19.95.

McQuail and Windahl have compiled and explained the communication models for mass communication as an introductory text for undergraduates or those who desire to understand the models involved in the discipline. The categories of models included are: basic models; personal influence, diffusion and short-term effects on individuals;

effects on culture and society; audience-centered; media organization, selection and production; planned communication; new media and the information society; and international communication models. The discussion of each model is accompanied by graphs or charts and is explained and examined by the authors.

The second edition has been expanded to adjust to changes in the field of mass communication. The models on planned communication, new media and information society and international communication are new, and all of the other categories of models have been updated and expanded. The text is intended for an introductory communication theory class or for anyone who wants greater understanding of the models of mass communication. -- BWB

Meyer, Manfred. *Educational Programmes on Television: Deficiencies, Support, Chances* (Contributions to an International Symposium). Munich/London/New York/Paris: K G Saur München, 1993. Pp. 283. ISBN 3 598 20210 5 (pb.) DM 38,00.

This study was developed from the contributions to an International Symposium that took place in July 1992, on the occasion of MediaNet '92. The conference was organized jointly by the 'Internationales Zentralinstitut für das Jugend- und Bildungsfernsehen [International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Broadcasting (IZI)] and the 'Bayerische Landeszentrale für neue Medien' [Bayern State Center for New Media (BLM)]. Most of the speakers at the conference focused on criticism of, developing support for, or predicting opportunities for educational media for children and adults.

The conference sought to ask specific questions about the performance of the educational media in Europe and to create specific objectives to improve that performance. The questions from the conference focused on how targeting specific cultures affects educational programming and how those programs will compete in a dual media system. The authors of chapters I and II outline the problems and propose solutions in this area. Chapters III through V offer suggestions to increase financial, professional and governmental support for educational programming in Europe. Part II gives background information about educational programming organizations throughout Europe and the NHK in Japan. --BWB

Mkhondo, Rich. *Reporting South Africa*. London/Portsmouth, NH: James Currey/Heinemann, 1993. Pp. xii, 194. ISBN 0 85255 369 2 (James Currey hb.), £25.00; ISBN 0 85255 364 1 (James Currey pb.) £9.95.

As a Reuters correspondent in South Africa and himself a South African black, Rich Mkhondo was well situated to write this first-hand account of life in the country as it struggled through the final years of apartheid towards free elections.

Mkhondo's discussion begins with President de Klerk's liberalization moves, in 1990, when the first signs appeared that the democratization movement might succeed, after all. The accounts he gives are episodic and journalistic in style, designed to give the "feel" of living among conflicting forces which frequently resorted to violence. The author interviewed, at various times, the leaders of South Africa's political parties, and he witnessed many instances of violence. Although his sympathies clearly were with the African National Congress (ANC), he respects the complexity of the situation as the different ethnic forces jockeyed for positions which would protect their own groups from the seemingly genocidal instincts of other groups.

An appendix provides a chronology of "the rise and fall of apartheid," from 1652, when the first Dutch East India Company post was established, to the draft of the post-apartheid constitution, in mid-1993. -- WEB

Moles, Abraham A. *Finestres Tancades sobre el Món: Les Comunicacions?* (Windows Closed on the World: Communications?). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació, 1992 (in Catalan). Pp. 37. ISBN 84 393 2067 1 (pb.) n.p.

This lecture was delivered, in Catalan, by Abraham A. Moles on the occasion of the fourth annual award ceremony for research on mass communication, sponsored by the Catalanian government. Topics include the nature of communication, proxemics, the ecology of communication and taxonomy of the ecology of communication. -- MRA

de Moragas Spà, Miguel. *Cultura, símbols i Jocs Olímpics: La mediació de la comunicació* (Culture, Symbols and Olympic Games: The Mediation of Communication). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació, 1992 (in Catalan). Pp. 73. ISBN 84 393 2080 9 (pb.) n.p.

The Olympics held in Barcelona in 1992 were the occasion for this study of the symbolism of the games, in general, and the ways they interacted with the mass media. The Olympics are treated as a cultural phenomenon of massive scale, with many ramifications especially in popular culture and nationalism. Press and television coverage of the games -- both domestic and international -- is discussed. Special attention is paid to the opening and closing ceremonies and their symbolic ritual. -- MRA

Mytton, Graham (Ed.). *Global Audiences: Research for Worldwide Broadcasting 1993*. London/Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1993, Pp. 234. ISBN 0 86196 400 4 (pb.) £24.00 (\$38.00).

This study compiles research concerning the BBC's worldwide listening audience, paralleling the BBC's research on domestic audiences, in the *BBC Broadcasting Research Annual Review*. Research of this nature is intended to help the BBC stay accountable to its audiences worldwide and ensure that the best possible programming is reaching the largest possible audience.

Many unique features characterize this work. First, it contains national media audience research in several countries (Senegal, Ghana, Fiji, Nepal and Indonesia) where such research had not been previously available. The report also contains the first audience research data obtained from Mozambique and Angola, and gives both statistics of and feedback from Middle Eastern listeners during the Gulf conflict.

The report surveys audience opinions about the BBC and other international radio broadcasters and provides empirical research data in a field where such research is often sparse. -- BWB

Pinto, Manuel, and António Santos. *Utilizar Criticamente a Imprensa na Escola: Fichas de Trabalho: Guia do Professor* (Using the Press Critically in School: Workbook: Guide for Teachers). Cadernos Público na Escola/4. Porto, Portugal: Público, Comunicação Social, SA, 1994. Pp. 95. No. ISBN, n.p.

This workbook, designed for teachers in Portuguese schools, is intended to make newspapers and other periodical into useful teaching aids, while at the same time giving students an insight into the press as a means of communication.

Part I, "To Know the World of the Press," is a general

introduction to journalism in its many manifestations, starting with its history and covering its many genres and kinds of content. Part II, views the "Press as a Learning System," pointing out ways in which periodicals -- even comics and sports section -- can be used in the classroom, for language study, teaching about meteorology, social problems, and other subjects. Part III, discusses ways students can experience producing their own mass media, posters, school papers, clipping files as "data bases," etc.

Appendices contain the texts of the resolutions on mass media and education of Unesco, in 1982, and the Council of Europe, in 1989. -- MRA

Rosteck, Thomas. *See It Now Confronts McCarthyism: Television Documentary and the Politics of Representation*. Tuscaloosa/London: University of Alabama Press, 1994. Pp. 247. ISBN 0 8173 0705 2 (hb.) \$29.00.

The McCarthy era represents one of the greatest challenges to freedom of speech and expression in American history, yet it also represents a new era in which television was able to stop and reverse the hysteria McCarthy created. In this work, Thomas Rosteck analyzes the historical significance of *See It Now*, a television documentary which challenged and counteracted McCarthy's campaign. Rosteck explains *See It Now's* significance as a cultural object and then seeks to explain its effects in thwarting McCarthyism.

Rosteck's analysis is divided into two parts, historical explanation and rhetorical criticism. Part one contains three chapters, which explain the cultural and political significance of three aspects of these documentaries (their historical context, the genre of television news documentaries and the form and ideology of the programs). Part two contains four chapters, which separately analyze the four individual programs in the *See It Now* documentary series. The book concludes with a summary, explaining the effects of the *See It Now* series on the McCarthy era.

The author states that, "This book is, then, both cultural history and media analysis." The book's documentation of the cultural history informs the reader about the meaning the McCarthy era held for all aspects of American life. Its media analysis, containing descriptions of the media's "symbolic form" and "aesthetic construction", broadens the style of contemporary American media studies. -- BWB

Rowlands, Arvil. *The Television PA's Handbook* (2nd Edition). Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford/London, 1993. Pp. xiii, 244. ISBN 0 240 51353 3 (pb.) £16.95.

This handbook lists the duties and expectations of a production assistant ("PA") for television in Great Britain and gives instruction in the various technical aspects of a production assistant's responsibilities.

The production assistant's job is analyzed and explained in five parts. Part one outlines the general roles, responsibilities and requirements of a production assistant. Parts two through four give a detailed description of various tasks a production assistant will be asked to perform. Part two describes the tasks of a production assistant in setting up for a television program, including such matters as copyright clearances, preparation of scripts, etc. Production of the television program is the focus of part three, giving a description of both the tasks to be performed and an explanation of how to use various pieces of technical equipment. Part four explains the post-production phase, detailing editing, payment and billing procedures. Part five describes the job market for production assistants, enumerating the types of jobs available and explaining how to find them.

This work would be useful for learning or teaching about the roles and responsibilities of a production assistant. Although this handbook is written for production assistants in Great Britain, general terminology is used and American equivalents are used to explain technical terms, making it useful for American students and professors as well. -- BWB

Ruiz-Giménez, Joaquín. *Dialéctica de la Libertad de Comunicación y el Respeto a la Intimidad* (The Dialectic Between Freedom of Communication and Respect for Privacy). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació, 1991 (in Spanish). Pp. 42. ISBN 84 393 1848 0 (pb.). n.p.

This is the text of a lecture given by Ruiz Giménez, in Spanish, on the occasion of the third annual award ceremony for research on mass communication, sponsored by the Catalan Government's Center for Communication Research. -- MRA

Rushton, Dave (Ed.). *Citizen Television: A Local Dimension to Public Service Broadcasting*. London/Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1993. Pp. vii, 232. ISBN 0 8619 433 0 (hb.) £25.00 (US \$50.00).

Since the 1984 Cable and Broadcasting Act, cable franchise holders in Great Britain have been required to provide local public access channels for their subscribers, but although many inquiries have been made to understand how the public can and would use these channels, there has been little interest in the service.

The authors of this book present local case studies of public access use in Great Britain. Part I of the book contains studies of local television in the UK done between 1989 and 1992. Part II is a discussion of the 1988 White Paper commissioned by the British government. Both parts of the book seek to uncover why the interest in locally controlled public access channels has declined. -- BWB

Tonna, Benjamin. *Malta Trends 1993: The Signs of the Times*. Malta: Discern (Institute for Research on the Signs of the Times), 1993. ISBN 99909 2 001 X (pb.) n.p.

This study is sponsored by the Institute for Research on the Signs of the Times, which was founded in 1992 by Archbishop Joseph Mercieca, the Archbishop of Malta. Its purpose is to provide information on the situation of the people of Malta. In so doing, this report isolates 31 trends occurring this century that have greatly influenced the lives of the Maltese people. Benjamin Tonna seeks to provide social and religious insight about these trends.

As the title implies, this work is centered around the trends Tonna outlines. Chapter one of the book outlines the 31 trends and divides them into four groups: demographic, economic, political and social. Chapters two through five chart the specific trends in each of the above mentioned groups. The last five chapters are Tonna's interpretation of these trends, dividing them into three categories: signs from trends, from events and from values. The last chapter summarizes Tonna's findings and gives a seven point agenda for the future of the Maltese people. -- BWB

Treballs de Comunicació (Works of Communication). Journal of the Societat Catalana de Comunicació (Catalonian Society of Communication - Institute of Catalan Studies). No. 5, October 1994. (Societat Catalana de Comunicació, Carrer del Carme, 47, 08001 Barcelona, Spain.) In Catalan. No ISSN.

First published in 1991, this serial publication is the official journal of the Catalan Society of Communica-

tion. Issue No. 5 deals chiefly with ethics and credibility in communication, the general history of journalism and the history of the press in Valencia. -- MRA

Tubella, Imma. *Televisió i identitat cultural: El repte de la televisió pública a Europa* (Television and Cultural Identity: The Challenge of Public Television in Europe). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992 (in Catalan). Pp. 89. ISBN 84 393 1896 0 (pb.).

Part 1 presents an overview of the "landscape" of television in Europe, with special attention to its influence on cultural identity. Part 2 is a comparative analysis of television programming in West Germany, Italy, Belgium and Spain. Part 3 discusses the challenge of television to Catalonian identity. North American imports are seen as a possible problem. The pressure of commercial competition on public television is seen as possibly forcing the latter to resort to less quality in its programming to retain its audience. -- MRA

Tudela, Xavier. *La informació a les institucions de la Comunitat Europea* (Information About the Institutions of the European Community). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre d'investigació de la Comunicació, 1991 (in Catalan). Pp. 84. ISBN 84 393 1639 9 (pb.).

General information in Catalan about the structure of the European Community and its various institutions. An appendix contains relevant addresses. -- MRA

Vilanilam, J. V. *Science Communication and Development*. Delhi/Newbury Park/London: Sage Publications, 1993. Pp. 203, ISBN 8039-9447-8 (hb.) £27.50.

Can new communication technologies fuel development in the lesser developed countries and liberate them from poverty? To answer this question, Vilanilam studied how communication technologies (like television and VCRs) have been used in India. He begins with a history of the development process in India; then he shows how new communication technologies have been used to continue and enhance the development process. Vilanilam concludes that prior attempts to infuse communication technologies within the development process have failed because many of the poor have no access to the media, no means to implement its instruction or no interest in the process.

Rather than simply critique the current system of development, Vilanilam offers the 'Psychic Perestroika' Model for development. This model seeks a more holistic approach, which is flexible enough to incorporate individual needs, yet maintains the vision of national development. He concludes that, "...unless major decisions affecting the future of the world are taken with a definite orientation towards the plight of the poor, the present spectacle of democracy without citizens, development without distribution, communication without community, and the readiness to use the products of [science and technology]...for mass destruction to prove the superiority of one or another political, economic, social, cultural, or religious point of view will continue." -- BWB

Vocate, Donna R (Ed.). *Intrapersonal Communication: Different Voices, Different Minds*. Hillsdale/Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994. Pp. ix, 225. ISBN 0-8058-1128-1 (hb.) \$49.95.

How important is the study of self-talk or intrapersonal communication to the field of communication research? As A.R. Luria states, "Born in external speech and further developed in egocentric speech, inner speech preserves all the functions of social interaction." Following this line of reasoning, the authors of this text seek to outline the theoretical and practical implications of intrapersonal communication.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I deals with theoretical issues while Part II ferrets out the practical implications and uses of intrapersonal communication, and part III outlines the future directions for research in intrapersonal communication.

Although the study of intrapersonal communication is still not completely accepted within the field of communication, its popularity and research prospects continue to grow. This work should serve as a comprehensive introductory text for those who desire to know the theoretical implications and the practical applications of research findings concerning intrapersonal communication. -- BWB

Walker, John A. *Arts TV: A History of Arts Television in Britain*. London: John Libbey, 1993. Pp. x, 245. ISBN 0 86196 435 7 (pb.) \$28. £17.50.

British television has paid close attention to the arts, producing many imaginative and innovative programs. At

the same time, television has been changing the way the arts are understood. This book is the fourth in a series, sponsored by the Arts Council of Great Britain to document that transformation. It covers the period from 1950 to 1990.

The author charts tendencies in programs about art on both the BBC and Independent television channels through that period. He tends to emphasize the inevitable conflicts of interpretation and controversies which have erupted, from time to time, as artists and producers cross paths, and occasionally cross swords.

Some artists "despise the mass media and see them as

the enemies of art," but television is powerful, and the mass media "threaten to marginalize, absorb or transform the fine arts" (pg. 216). Some critics feel that public service broadcasting does not help the arts but, of its nature, will neutralize and marginalize them, ultimately reducing their appeal. The author suggests, however, that television itself is an art form, possibly entailing a total recon-ceptualization of what constitutes art. It may, as some complain, cannibalize the artistic heritage of the ages for its own purposes; but on the other hand it offers unprecedented possibilities for the exercise of imagination and creative innovation. -- WEB

Mass Media, People and Politics in Nigeria

Luke Uka Uche, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in
Communication, University of Lagos

Dr. Uche outlines the background of the ethnic, religious and political tensions which accompanied the growth of mass media and the laws governing it in the early period of Nigeria's independence. The bibliography is substantial, and appendixes contain the text of legal documents which have influenced the nation's media.

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