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## Media and Emotions

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## Table of Contents

### Media and Emotions

1. Introduction . . . . .	3
2. The nature of emotions: Theoretical approaches and methodological applications . . . . .	4
A. Emotion theories . . . . .	4
B. Genesis of emotions . . . . .	5
C. Types of emotions . . . . .	6
D. Methods of emotion research . . . . .	6
3. Emotions as effects of media exposure . . . . .	8
A. Dimensions of media emotions . . . . .	8
B. Empathy . . . . .	8
C. Mood regulation . . . . .	9
D. Arousal/Excitation . . . . .	10
E. Suspense . . . . .	10
F. Fear/Anxiety . . . . .	12
G. Affective involvement . . . . .	13
H. Entertainment . . . . .	14
4. Effects of emotions in media content . . . . .	15
A. Emotions and information/news . . . . .	15
B. Emotions and texts/literature . . . . .	16
C. Emotions and films/other television genres . .	17
D. Emotions and music (in radio) . . . . .	18
5. Emotions as determinants of non-emotional effects of media exposure . . . . .	20
A. Emotions and memory . . . . .	20
B. Emotion and persuasion . . . . .	22
6. Perspectives and suggestions for further research . . . . .	25
Editor's Afterword . . . . .	25
References . . . . .	26
Book Reviews . . . . .	39

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# Media and Emotions

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## 1. Introduction

If emotion is conceptualized as a psychological construct, the (media-)psychological origins of our discipline offer a good starting-point for this review about “media and emotions” (cf. the review by Trepte, 2004).

By 1916, in the context of his psychological studies on films, Münsterberg realized the need to distinguish empathic sympathy for protagonists as well as the projection of personal feelings on the protagonists from reactions to the protagonists’ emotions. Psychological research on radio broadcasting emerged in 1930, with researchers such as Allport, Cantril, Gaudet, Herzog, and Lazarsfeld. Beyond audience ratings and coverage, they extended their studies to emotional aspects of reception, emotional gratifications, and the impact of radio usage (see, especially, Cantril & Allport, 1935). Arnheim’s (1944) famous study, too, showed that emotional aspects (like identification with radio-soap characters) are central gratifications in radio usage and contribute to the success of radio programs.

From about 1950 on, research on TV became more important than psychological research on films; here, the research questions changed fundamentally. The first experimental studies in the laboratory had been conducted in the 1930s (Cantril & Allport, 1935; Herzog, 1933), but they gained particular political relevance in the work of the Yale group, led by Hovland (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). On basis of stimulus-response logic, the group investigated the effects of fear appeals on attitudes towards war.

Inspired by the cognitive shift in psychology during the 1960s and 1970s, communication research increasingly focused on the psychological processes during media reception. The emotion-psychological theories underlying this approach, however, differed fundamentally from each other. Zillmann (1978, 1983, 2003, 2004a), for example, developed his own Three-Factor Theory of Emotion (in a review: Bryant & Miron, 2003) on the basis of Schachter’s and Singer’s Two-Factor Models of Emotion (Singer, 1962; Schachter, 1964). Zillmann’s theory laid out the foundation for his more specific theories, such as the Excitation-Transfer Theory (Zillmann, 1971, 1982,

1983, 1996b) or the Mood-Management Theory (Zillmann, 1988a, 1988b, 2000b). Zillmann, his work, and his theories had a central and sustainable impact on emotion-psychological communication research throughout the past 30 years (Bryant, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Cantor, 2003). In the 1970s, Zillmann and other media psychologists began to professionalize research on “media and emotions.” Thus, the research groups around Sturm and Vitouch (Sturm, Vitouch, Bauer, & Grewe-Partsch, 1982) developed psychophysiological measures such as the amplitude of the pulse volume or the heart rate as indicators of emotional aspects of media reception. In this context, the discovery of the “missing half-second” (Sturm, 1984) became legendary: In media reception, people miss about half a second in order to process information as they do outside the media. The cognitive processing of media content is impaired and emotional aspects predominate more and more.

From the 1970s on, the first special editions of journals (e.g., contributions by Huth, 1978; Kanungo, 1978; Sturm, 1978; Tannenbaum, 1978; Vitouch, 1978, in “Fernsehen und Bildung” [“TV and Education”]) as well as monographs emerged which explicitly included words such as “emotion” and “entertainment” in the title (e.g., Bosshart, 1979; Dehm, 1984; Tannenbaum, 1971, 1980; but also Mendelsohn, 1966). In the 1980s, one could observe an increasing institutionalization of media psychology (Trepte, 2004). This tendency fostered psychological research questions and in this way questions concerning the topic of “media and emotions.”

Research in the 1980s and 1990s continually drew on fundamental research on the psychology of emotion. Thus, many communication researchers with a background in media psychology (Mangold, 1998, 2000a, 2000b; Mangold, Unz, & Winterhoff-Spurk, 2001; Schwab, 2001; Scudder, 1999; Unz & Schwab, 2003; Unz, Schwab, & Winterhoff-Spurk, 2002; Wirth, Schramm, & Böcking, 2004) refer to Scherer’s Cognitive-Appraisal Theory (1984, 2001; even applied to media reception: Scherer, 1998). Recent communication research has developed some theoretical propos-

als about the role of emotions in media consumption (e.g., Nabi, 1999, 2002; Schramm & Wirth, in press; Wirth, Schramm, & Böcking, 2004).

The peak of engagement with this topic, however, has not yet been reached. And so, it makes sense now to review the status quo and also offer some perspectives for future research in this field. In the next section we will describe the foundations of emotions as far as theory and measurement are concerned, since this underlies all work examining emotions and the

media. In section 3 we will concentrate on particular emotions as effects of media usage and will focus on their respective concepts and theories of reception. In section 4 we will consider these media emotions under media-specific or genre-specific conditions and provide a short review of the relevant research. Section 5 will cover emotions as determinants of non-emotional effects of media exposure, such as persuasion or memory. Finally, in section 6, we will offer some perspectives for further research.

## 2. The nature of emotions: Theoretical approaches and methodological implications

### A. Emotion theories

What exactly are emotions? The answer strongly depends on the theoretical approach being applied. Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) specify four components mentioned by many emotion theories in one way or another. Emotions can be considered complex interactive entities encompassing subjective and objective factors consisting of *affective*, *cognitive*, *conative*, and *physiological* components. The *affective* component includes the subjective experience of situations, which is connected to feelings of arousal, pleasure, or dissatisfaction. The *cognitive* component refers to how situations relevant to emotions are perceived and evaluated. The *conative* component is related to expressive behavior. This includes facial expression, vocal expression, gestures as well as the bearing of head and body. In a broader sense, one can consider the preparatory function of emotions for actions as a conative component, too. Emotions ascribe priority to one or several actions and prepare the individual accordingly (e.g., escape when anxious or attack when angry, cf. Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). Scherer (1990) separates these two aspects and distinguishes between a motivational (preparation for action) and an expressive component. Finally, the *physiological* component encompasses peripheral reactions of the body, which are mediated by the autonomous nervous system (physiological arousal). These include phenomena such as blushing, changes in heart rate, changes in respiration, and sweaty hands (cf. Meyer, Schützwohl, & Reisenzein, 2003).

Depending on the theoretical model, these components are weighted differently. One group of theories assumes that physical reactions (in particular mimic and/or physiological) are the basis of emotional process-

es (e.g., James, 1884, 1890; Izard, 1971, 1990; Tomkins, 1962). In this tradition, Schachter and Singer's (1962) approach stood at the center of interest for a long time. The authors assumed that unspecific, physiological arousal is the origin of emotional experience. Arousal yields its specific emotional meaning by subsequent interpretations and cognitive appraisals. Current neurobiological approaches continue studying in this tradition. The aim of these studies is to identify the regions of the brain that are activated or deactivated by specific emotions (cf. Merten, 2003). A second group of theories attributes great importance to physiological factors, too, but focuses more strongly on the subjective experience of emotions. Thus, Mandler (1975, 1984) assumes that the perception of changes in the environment leads to physiological arousal and that a semantic analysis of this situation is what determines the subjectively experienced emotion. Even more decidedly, Weiner describes in his attribution theory how specific emotions develop as a result of a multi-step process. In the course of this process, negatively evaluated, unexpected, or subjectively meaningful events are interpreted and analyzed concerning their (alleged) causes. In a third group of theories (similar to Weiner who sometimes is considered to belong to this group, too), cognitive judgments or appraisals of situations play a central role in the emergence of emotions (cf. Arnold, 1960, 1970; Lazarus, 1968, 1991; Scherer, 1990; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988). Evolutionary-biological approaches form a fourth group of emotion theories (cf. Darwin, 1872; McDougall, 1960; Ekman, 1972, 1973; Ekman & Friesen, 1971). These approaches emphasize the phylogenetic importance of emotions. According to this perspective, emotions have developed as mechanisms for an adequate adaptation to environmental conditions in

the history of the human species. In this context, the motivational as well as the expressive component of emotions is of particular importance (Schwab, 2004).

### B. Genesis of emotions

We can see the genesis of emotions from three different perspectives. From a *phylogenetic* perspective the question becomes why emotions, in an evolutionary sense, could survive at all (see the evolutionary biological approaches already mentioned). *Ontogenetically*, we are dealing with the impact of personality on the development of emotions. Because both of these aspects are more relevant for psychology than for communication research, we will not elaborate on them here. Finally, *actual genesis* describes the development of the concrete feeling in a given situation and in interactions with personality traits and situational influences (cf. Ulich & Mayring, 1992, p. 73). Immediate, internal *processes*, individual *behavioral tendencies* as well as concrete, context-dependent *factors* of situations are involved in the genesis of the emotion on a concrete level (p. 74). Again, the factors behind the individual behavioral tendencies are the ontogenetic and—this is a step further—the phylogenetic influences on the genesis of emotions. The actual genesis itself emerges as an internal process because here all influences converge and are selected, processed, and weighted. As a result, we have a concrete feeling, e.g., anxiety or joy (cf. Ulich & Mayring, 1992, p. 74). The actual internal processes we have described, however, are not directly evoked by actual and dispositional influence factors, but instead rest on the background of situationally activated *representations* of earlier influences, stored experiences, and perceptions of events.

Various theories offer different explanations about how these processes occur exactly. Because cognitive appraisal theories are regarded today as the central paradigm of the psychology of emotions, we will subsequently focus on two influential theories from this group: the cognitive-transactional stress theory and its extension to a general theory of emotions by Lazarus (1966, 1991), and the structural theory by Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988).

Lazarus distinguishes between several appraisal processes. The *primary* appraisal process is determined by the person's actual situation appraisal, i.e., the situation is appraised by the person either as irrelevant for the motive (not according to one's own wishes, neither good nor bad), as favorable-positive (congruent to the wishes, thus positive), as damage or loss (incongruent to the wishes, thus negative), or as challenge (master-

ing a difficult task, demonstrating personal capacities, additional learning; cf. Reizenzein, Meyer, & Schützwohl, 2003, p. 67). The *secondary* appraisal process encompasses considering coping strategies for mastering a situation. Here, the person's conviction whether s/he has appropriate strategies at her/his disposal, for example, to cope with a threatening situation is of central importance for the genesis of emotions. During *reappraisal*, the aforementioned appraisal processes are reevaluated because the framing conditions such as the situation or the possibilities of coping have changed (cf. Mandl & Reiserer, 2000, p. 98). The kind and the intensity of the existing emotions are determined by the complex interaction of primary and secondary appraisal processes. Because the processes depend on cognitive structures, and therefore on individual experiences, imagination, and on the wishes of the person concerned, the genesis of emotion is strongly subjective in nature and does not reflect objectively existing facts (cf. Mandl & Reiserer, 2000, p. 99). Lazarus (1966, 1991) postulates six dimensions of appraisal. As far as primary appraisal processes are concerned, he distinguishes between situation evaluations concerning *goal relevance*, *goal congruence*, and *kind of ego-involvement*; and as far as secondary appraisal processes are concerned, between *responsibility*, *coping potential*, and *expectation for the future*. According to Lazarus, 15 emotions can be derived; among these are four positive emotions (including pride, satisfaction, and love); nine negative emotions (such as anger, anxiety, and fear); as well as specific patterns of evaluation for hope and sympathy.

The cognitive emotion theory (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988) attempts to specify emotions on the basis of different evaluative dimensions. Broader than Lazarus's approach, this theory discriminates between 22 emotions; it is more detailed because it can be specified according to degrees of intensity, objects, or associated actions (cf. Reizenzein, 2000, p. 123). Ortony, Clore, and Collins distinguish between emotions based on events, actions, and objects and which are specified by the following central dimensions of appraisal: "A person's appraisal of an emotion-inducing situation is based on three central variables in the theory: *desirability*, *praiseworthiness*, and *appealingness*, which apply to event-based emotions, agent-based emotions and object-based emotions, respectively" (1988, p. 58). Furthermore, it includes non-evaluative appraisals by which events are mainly appraised according to their *probability*, *contradiction to expectations*, *focus* (own

or of another person), and *responsibility* (own or of another person).

In their formulations about the genesis of emotions, Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988) do not insist on a fixed order of cognitive appraisals because these may occur in various orders or even in conjunction with one another. They describe the typical case of actual genesis as follows (cf. Reisenzein, Meyer, & Schützwohl, 2003, p. 141):

(1) First of all, there is a cognitive representation of an event (e.g., the conviction that one has passed an examination), of an action (e.g., believing that one has been betrayed by a friend), or of an object (e.g., seeing a spider).

(2) In a second step, there is an evaluation of events, actions, or objects by relating them to the valid evaluation criteria, that is, to personal wishes, internalized norms. According to this, an examination passed will be evaluated as desirable, the action of a friend as to be blamed, and the spider as disgusting.

(3) The non-evaluative cognitions formed in the first step and the evaluation from step 2 now generate a specific emotion from one of the three main groups, such as joy at passing an examination, indignation at the friend's action, and disgust at the spider. Consistent with Lazarus, Ortony, Clore, and Collins are convinced that appraisal processes mostly occur unconsciously and automatically. Therefore, an evaluation underlying a feeling may only become conscious afterwards or may even be inferred from the existence of a feeling experienced (cf. Reisenzein, Meyer, & Schützwohl, 2003b, p. 141).

Scherer (1998) has made a first attempt in analyzing the actual genesis of emotions during media reception. According to this, emotions usually arise as reactions to the content in films and television through vicarious "sympathy" with the depicted emotions on the screen. This is possible because the perceived emotions normally are embedded in an action context, which makes it possible for the spectator to perceive the emotion-evoking event and to sympathize with the underlying appraisal processes of the media actors (see Section 3B on empathy).

### C. Types of emotions

There have been different attempts to order and classify the obvious diversity of emotions. Various researchers believe that some emotions have a particular, fundamental status. From an evolutionary perspective, certain emotions are often regarded as specific, evolutionarily "old" emotions that cannot be dissected any

further. Other emotions are mixed (or secondary, complex) emotions, consisting of two or more basic emotions or deriving from them and thus being "younger," from an evolutionary point of view. McDougall, for example, attributes a primary or basic emotion to each specific, innate instinct. The secondary emotion *contempt* develops from a combination of the two primary emotions of *disgust* and *anger*. Overall, however, there is very little consensus between the various systems (Ortony & Turner, 1990, p. 315; cf. Schmidt-Atzert, 2000, p. 30-32). Even anger, anxiety, sadness, and joy, which are mentioned as basic emotions most often, do not appear in all lists. One problem seems to be that little consensus exists on which aspects of experience should be termed emotions. Thus, interest is an emotion for Izard (1977), but not for other researchers.

Another approach starts from the empirical study of similarities and dissimilarities between various emotions. When comparing studies about the similarity of emotions systematically, four categories (anger, anxiety, sadness, joy) could be found in all studies, and another five categories (aversion/disgust, restlessness, shame, liking, surprise) appeared in three of five studies (Schmidt-Atzert, 2000). In his analytical linguistic approach, Mees (1991) wanted to extract the implicitly given, psychological meaning from everyday designations for words of feeling and found 12 categories. In order to gain some clarity, Ulich and Mayring grossly grouped 24 emotions into four groups: feelings of liking, disliking, well-being, and uneasiness (1992, p. 137-138). Starting with various emotions, numerous researchers tried to elaborate central dimensions. Russell (1980) could show that emotions can be grouped two-dimensionally in a nearly circular way. The first dimension of his circumplex model (pleasure/dissatisfaction) expresses how pleasant or unpleasant the experienced emotions are. The second dimension expresses the degree of arousal and distinguishes emotions along an axis between the extremes of calmness and activation. Galati, Sini, Ferrer, Vilageliu, and Garcia (1998), however, found another dimension, which can be seen as an expression for involvement with the environment. On one extreme, one can find emotions of strength, superiority, and control over a situation. On the other extreme are emotions of weakness, inferiority, and *lack* of control over a situation.

### D. Methods of emotion research

Emotions can be investigated using various methods and research designs. It seems advantageous

to induce the emotional states required by the experimental setting. A corresponding emotion induction can be accomplished in such a way that the experimenter creates the emotion-evoking condition (for example, by feedback of success or failure in a fictitious test). Subjects could also be asked to imagine themselves in an emotion-evoking situation or to remember a particular experience. Finally, the subjects can be confronted with an emotion-evoking stimulus through media. The latter form of induction is of particular interest for communication research. In order to validly induce emotions via films, Gross and Levenson (1995) have proposed a tool consisting of a set of 16 films; every film reliably induces a concrete emotion. The induced emotions can then be assessed empirically. There are further induction methods besides the ones described above. Izard (1990) tried to bring all procedures of induction into a systematic order according to the emotion components manipulated by the induction. He distinguished between the neuronal (e.g., injection of neurotransmitters), the sensumotor (e.g., asking to act out emotional facial expressions), the motivational (e.g., the presentation of objects which are relevant for a phobia), and the cognitive (e.g., photos, films, imagination, Velten method).

Measuring the emotion itself depends on the emotional component of central focus in the research. When assessing the subjective and cognitive components of experiencing a feeling, one usually relies on the descriptive propositions of the person interviewed. Various well-validated instruments exist for this purpose (e.g., Abele-Brehm & Brehm, 1986; Merten & Krause, 1993; Schmidt-Atzert & Hüppe, 1996; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). One example would be the Differential Emotions Scale (DES) by Izard, Dougherty, Bloxom, and Kotch (1974) through which one can assess Izard's 10 basic emotions; for each emotion various adjectives can be used. Curran and Cattell (1976) proposed the Eight State Questionnaire (8SQ) through which one can measure eight emotions. Other instruments measure momentary, subjective states or moods. The Activation-Deactivation Adjective Check List (AD ACL) by Thayer (1989, 1996) measures the two main dimensions of pleasure/dislike and arousal, which according to the dimensional model underlie most emotions. The Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) measures the valence of subjective states, moods, and emotions.

Finally, a number of instruments assess a specific emotion in a very detailed way. Here, the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) by Laux, Glanzmann, Schaffner, and Spielberg (1981) should be mentioned as an example; it measures situational fear and transsituational anxiety. In order to gain insight into the cognitive component of emotions, one can use instruments that check certain appraisal aspects. For example, Scherer's (1988) Stimulus Evaluation Check (SEC) measures the novelty, the pleasantness, the goal-need-relation, the copability as well as the compatibility of the emotion-evoking situation to norms. As always, when dealing with questionnaires one should consider that one is actually measuring subjects' appraisals about a state of feeling as opposed to the state of feeling itself.

The expression component is assessed by recording aspects of the mimic and gesticulatory behavior and subsequently coding those aspects with coding systems like FACS (Ekman & Friesen, 1978) and EMFACS (Friesen & Ekman, 1984). The motivational component can be inferred by observing and coding the behavior during an experimental emotion induction. The physiological component can be measured by a number of different procedures. Usually, peripheral physical reactions (heart rate, galvanic skin response, finger temperature, systolic and diastolic blood pressure) are recorded. These techniques, too, have disadvantages (Stemmler, 1992, 1996; Merten, 2003) and do not lead to homogeneous results at all as they are susceptible to interfering influences. Emotion-specific peripheral physiological reactions, for example, are not unambiguously detectable. Oatley and Jenkins (1996) consider heart rate to be most appropriate for differentiating emotions and show that emotions such as anger and joy can be discriminated by using heart rate. Another technique involves studying the localization of emotions in the brain, i.e., the emotion-specific activation or deactivation of certain brain regions. Methods from neuroscience through which these central nervous activities can be measured are Positron-Emission Tomography (PET), Electroencephalography (EEG), or the traditional and functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI, fMRI). In recent years, fMRI has provided an abundance of insights into the localization of emotional brain activities (e.g., Phan, Wager, Taylor, & Liberzon, 2002).

### 3. Emotions as effects of media exposure

#### A. Dimensions of media emotions

The emotions that develop during media reception do not differ fundamentally from everyday situations *not* influenced by media (cf. Scherer, 1998). According to cognitive emotion theories, we conceptualize media emotions as a result of a (normally unconscious) appraisal process. During this so-called appraisal process, we test perceived media objects, events, and situations with respect to their novelty, pleasantness, goal attainability, copability, and compatibility with norms. The result of this multi-step appraisal process produces specific response patterns (physiological responses, motor expression, action tendencies, feelings) or specific media emotions. If one knows the result of every single appraisal step, one can predict the specific media emotion which finally results—even before reception (cf. Mangold, Unz, & Winterhoff-Spurk, 2001).

Depending on whether the appraisal steps refer primarily to the person him/herself or to the *media* person, “ego-emotions” or “co-emotions” result (also called “socio-emotions,” cf. Bente & Vorderer, 1997). A politician’s proposition does not itself have to be articulated angrily but can nevertheless evoke or induce anger on the basis of the evaluation by the recipient according to his/her own goals and values. In this kind of emotional processes we are talking of *emotion induction*. A second prototypical class of emotional processes during media reception is *emotional contagion*: Here, the recipient only perceives the emotional expressive behavior of a media person and imitates it without understanding in detail how the emotional expression of the media person may have developed. The processes underlying this motor imitation of emotional expressive behavior (e.g., automatic laughter as a response to the laughter of a media person) are not yet fully explained (cf. Scherer, 1998).

A third category is *empathy* or *empathic sympathy* with the media person. Here, the recipient him/herself is not affected by the event that evokes the media person’s emotion. However, s/he tries to follow the alleged appraisals or appraisal steps leading to the emotion experienced by the media person. “It is important that the emotional expressions [of the media person] do not even have to be accessible to observation—it is sufficient if the [recipient] can imagine the appraisal of the

event [by the media person]” (Scherer, 1998, p. 282). If an individual has a positive feeling towards the media person, mainly symmetric co-emotions (e.g., compassion) will arise; if the person has a negative feeling for the media person, mainly asymmetric co-emotions (e.g., gloating) will arise. Zillmann (1991a, 1996a) has modeled this mechanism within his Affective Disposition Theory, which will be described in the next section.

As mentioned above, the three categories of emotional processes described here happen in a similar manner during everyday confrontations with non-media persons and situations. In the case of media reception, however, there are additional appraisal levels such as evaluations of formal attributes of the program or its genre, or considerations about the potential co-audience who may themselves produce their own emotions and—in combination with the emotions described by Scherer—contribute to the overall experience of what the media have to offer (cf. Wirth, Schramm, & Böcking, 2004).

#### B. Empathy

Empathy has become an important construct in mass communication research. It has been used to explain both children’s and adults’ reactions to films and characters (Wilson & Cantor, 1985; Wilson, Cantor, Gordon, & Zillmann, 1986; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977), enjoyment of films (de Wied, Zillmann, & Ordman, 1994), responses to coviewing others (Tamborini, Salomonson, & Bahk, 1993), and attraction to programs (Cantor, 1998). (Nathanson, 2003, p. 107)

Empathy is a complex concept with affective as well as cognitive components (Wallbott, 2000; Zillmann, 1991a). *Cognitive* empathy is the understanding of other persons and the rational reconstruction of another person’s feelings in the sense of taking over that person’s perspective. *Affective* empathy, in contrast, is a relatively “primitive” process of sympathizing with other individuals. Affective empathy occurs when, for example, the recipients sense more or less the same emotions they have observed in a media figure. “Empathy need not involve an exact match in emotions between the observer and the observed, so long as the valence of the emotions does match”



(Nathanson, 2003, p. 109). Therefore one uses the word empathy, too, when a recipient senses compassion with a media person who is sad: Sadness and compassion are not identical emotions, but they have the same valence. Although empathy has cognitive components, it can be classified as primarily affective because many researchers have accepted and validated Davis's (1980, 1983) conceptualization of empathy as a four-dimensional concept with *three* affective components. Zillmann, too, defines empathy against the background of his Three-Factor Theory of emotions; according to this theory, empathy can be attributed to "dispositional," "excitatory," and "experiential" components.

In his Affective Disposition Theory, which was developed for narrative plots, Zillmann (1991a, 1996a) assumes that empathic emotions have their origin in the observation of protagonists by the recipients (step 1). During this observation, the protagonists' actions in the film are subject to the spectators' moral judgment and subsequently either approved or disapproved (step 2). An approval leads to positive affective dispositions towards the protagonist, i.e., the recipients find him likeable and are subsequently concerned with his well-being. A disapproval, in contrast, leads to negative affective dispositions towards the protagonist; this goes along with the refusal and condemnation of his action and his person (step 3). Zillmann's assumption that the spectators would either sympathize empathically with the protagonist because of these evaluations or—in case of refusal—sense counter-empathy towards the protagonist (step 5), is of particular interest for psychology. According to Zillmann, the recipient is a witness or observer of the media event. If the observation of this event leads to empathic feelings towards the (likable) protagonists whose actions are approved or to gloating over the antagonists whose actions are disapproved, the spectator anticipates a very specific continuation or ending of the film. The spectator hopes for a particular kind of continuation or ending in which the protagonist can gain a victory and the antagonist will fail. The spectator fears a course of events resulting in damage for the hero of the film and in triumph for the antagonist (step 4). Reception experiences, like the experience of excitation (cf. section 3F, below), can be explained by this model as can disappointment or relief experienced at the end of a film if hopes and anxieties are fulfilled or disillusioned, respectively (step 6).

### C. Mood Regulation

Moods are more or less desired/pleasant and are therefore constantly regulated. In his Mood Manage-

ment Theory (MMT), Zillmann (1988a, 1988b) explains why entertaining media programs can particularly help mood regulation. The theory is based on the fundamental premise that humans are hedonistic beings who strive to optimize their mood state. And so, they design their environment in such a way that positive moods are maintained or intensified and bad moods are avoided or reduced. Spectators normally turn their attention to those media programs with which they have had positive experiences in the past, thus, which had a positive effect on their moods. By experiencing this positive effect again and again, humans unconsciously learn to choose the same media programs in comparable situations.

Empirically well-founded, the theory's fundamental core propositions are established not only by experiments in Zillmann's tradition, but also by quasi-experimental and correlative designs (Oliver, 2003; Schramm, 2005). Three of these studies will be discussed as examples.

In their well-known *experiment* on Mood Management, Bryant and Zillmann (1984) showed that bored persons consumed exciting programs longer than did stressed persons. Similarly, stressed subjects consumed relaxing programs longer than did bored persons. Additionally, heart rate measurements (as indicators of arousal) showed that bored persons could regulate their arousal level through exciting programs and stressed persons could regulate their arousal level down to a pleasant, neutral level by quiet, relaxing programs. In contrast, bored persons who saw primarily relaxing programs did not succeed in doing this.

Corresponding to the *correlative* MMT study, Anderson, Collins, Schmitt, and Jacobvitz (1996) investigated the correlation between the mode of TV usage and stressful everyday events via diaries and telemetric observation data. According to the predictions of MMT, the more stressful the normal course of life was, women as well as men watched more comedy and less news and documentaries.

A further example of a *correlative* study is quite famous (Meadowcroft & Zillmann, 1987). Female students had to imagine that they watched TV for three hours on a free evening and that they could choose between comedy, game shows, and drama from a number of program descriptions. After that they were asked in which phase of the menstrual cycle they were. Consistent with MMT, the preference for comedy was highest at the end of the menstrual cycle or during menstruation and in the phase immediately before

(when mood is worst) while the preference for game shows and drama was independent of the position within the menstrual cycle.

However, not all empirical results confirm MMT. Studies have shown that people do not always strive for mood amelioration by media reception and that they therefore intentionally choose “negative” stressful media programs (Oliver, 1993; Schramm, 2005; Schubert, 1996). Schmitz and Lewandrowski (1993) found evidence that TV often goes along with an exacerbation of the mood state—especially because the recipients sometimes have a bad conscience while TV watching and believe that they should use their spare time “in a better way” (cf. Donsbach & Tasche, 1999). Moreover, mood amelioration is highly dependent on specific personality traits (cf. Mares & Cantor, 1992; Schramm, 2005; Wunsch, 2001). Besides, Schramm and Wirth (in press) emphasize that one has to distinguish between the regulation of moods and of emotions. In contrast to the unconscious processes during mood regulation modeled by Zillmann, it can be assumed that emotions find their way into the consciousness of the recipient because of their intensity and are subsequently regulated in a more conscious manner, too (Lambie & Marcel, 2002; Oehman, 1999). Additionally, not only mechanisms of selection, but also cognitive strategies are particularly important during regulation of media emotions (Mitmansgruber, 2003; Morris & Reilly, 1987). If, for example, a horror film arouses anxiety, the recipients can regulate their anxiety by recalling more strongly that they are “only” dealing with a film and not with reality. Besides the hedonistic motive, one should take into particular consideration the instrumental motive (Erber, Wegner, & Therriault, 1996; Knobloch, 2003; Mares & Cantor, 1992; O’Neal & Taylor, 1989) or eudaimonic incentives for action (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993; for an overview see Schramm & Wirth, in press).

#### *D. Arousal/Excitation*

Another strand of research studies emotions during media reception by the continuous registration of various physiological measures of arousal (cf. e.g., Bente, Stephan, Jain, & Mutz, 1992; Lang, 1994; Lang, Dhillon, & Dong, 1995; Mangold, 1998). Using this technique, physiological arousal serves as an indicator of certain emotions and is therefore assumed to be a component of emotions.

The Excitation Transfer Theory relates emotional experience of media programs to arousal (Zillmann, 1971, 1982, 1983, 1991c, 1996b; in a review: Bryant &

Miron, 2003). Ultimately, the theory postulates that recipients transfer their residual arousal from previous sequences to later sequences because physiological arousal recedes relatively slowly. Cognitions, on the other hand, do not have to recede but can be changed from sequence to sequence. Consequently, the cognition of a later sequence is not only associated with the arousal from that particular sequence but with the residual arousal from the previous sequence, too. Cognition and cumulative arousal result in an affect that will be stronger the greater the arousal that was transferred from the previous sequences. The idea that cognition and arousal are the two fundamental components of affects can be traced back to the Two-Factor Model of Emotion by Schachter and Singer (1962; Schachter, 1964). According to this model, persons attribute unspecific arousal to stimuli in their immediate environment and experience a certain kind of affect afterwards. This affect may be considered a function of a physiological state of arousal and a cognition appropriate to that state of arousal. The intensity of affects will be interpreted in accordance with the degree of arousal.

The Excitation Transfer Model has interesting implications for experiencing exciting and arousing films. According to Zillmann’s theory, arousal is reduced only slowly. The evaluation, in contrast, can change suddenly. It is possible, for instance, that the cognitive registration of a sudden “happy ending” is attributed to the residual arousal built up in prior sequences of the film, and it appears as a strongly positive emotion or euphoric feeling. For many recipients, this phenomenon should be well-known from their own experience with typical Hollywood films.

In horror films (Tamborini, 1991), these positive endings do not usually exist; this leads to the question of why individuals get involved with this kind of media program. A possible explanation could be that individuals who prefer exciting and strongly arousing experiences and seek them actively experience an arousal level sensed as very pleasant when watching horror films (Zuckerman, 1979). Another explanation is that recipients want to reduce their anxieties in real life by consciously seeking contact with even more anxiety-arousing horror films or want to learn how to cope with these anxieties (Boyanowsky, Newton, & Walster, 1974).

#### *E. Suspense*

Recipients usually feel suspense because they do not know what is going to happen next in media fare (Borringer, 1980; Wulff, 1996). For example, they experience fear because they do not know the fate of the hero

(cf. section 3B or Zillmann, 1996a) and are more excited the less probable the happy ending seems to be for the protagonist. The media user goes through an inner conflict connected with a strong negative arousal until the conflict is resolved. But feelings of conflict and insecurity are not positive emotions per se. In daily life, insecurity is sometimes even connected to feelings of anxiety. Why do media recipients experience suspense positively during reception? Why do they consciously turn their attention to suspenseful media programs?

Here, empirical communication research cannot offer clear-cut answers (cf. for a review, Vorderer, Wulff, & Friedrichsen, 1996). The reception phenomenon of suspense has primarily been dealt with in the context of semiotics-oriented film studies and in hermeneutically-oriented cultural studies and popular culture research (Vorderer, 1994). Taken together across all disciplines, one can distinguish between psychological and text-oriented approaches to the explanation of suspense. While psychological approaches assume that suspense is determined by an interplay of various cognitive and affective constructs within an individual, the text-oriented approaches to suspense have their starting point at the narrative structure of texts and stories. Thus, the former approaches engage the feeling of insecurity experienced by the individual while the latter approaches engage the insecurity of the text/story. At this point it already becomes apparent that the “truth” has to be somewhere in between: Recipients cannot feel insecure if the plot does not provoke insecurity (cf. Ohler & Nieding, 1996). Brewer (1980, 1985) and the working group around Brewer (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981, 1982; Brewer & Ohtsuka, 1988; Jose & Brewer, 1984) proposed a primarily hermeneutical/composition-oriented approach. Brewer distinguishes the event structure from the discourse structure of a plot; the relation between event structure and discourse structure determines the forms of experience during reception. In terms of forms of experience, he differentiates between surprise structure, curiosity structure, and suspense structure (this has already been applied to the reception of news: Knobloch, Patzig, Mende, & Hastall, 2004). So-called initiating events play a central role in all three forms. This initiating event is missing in the discourse of the surprise structure and it only comes into play at the resolution of the story (example: A murder was committed but the murderer was not shown; surprise develops through the resolution of the question who the murderer is). In suspenseful texts the initiating event occurs in the beginning (example: A child has been kidnapped; sus-

pense develops by continuously asking whether the police will find the kidnappers). Subsequently, the media story (discourse-structure) will be told in the temporal logic of the series of events (event-structure). Indeed, the discourse-structure is stretched by intervening information or accelerated by cuts. Suspense primarily arises through the anticipation of how the story will go on or by the hope for a happy ending.

Brewer’s approach has been especially criticized because it does not distinguish between the local level (single sequences) and the global level (whole plot). A film might have different structures on the local level than on the global level. And a film could be suspenseful, and generate curiosity and surprise all at the same time. In this context, the connections between these constructs would be of particular interest.

In his philosophically-oriented suspense concept (taking psychological constructs into consideration, though), Carroll (1984, 1996) distinguishes between local and global levels, but suspense can be generated on both narrative levels. A plot is conceptualized as a question-answer relation for various scenes and events, and raises questions on the microlevel (single scenes) as well as questions on the macrolevel (the whole plot). Then, suspense is the state of anticipation of contradictory answers to these questions on the microlevel and macrolevel and develops on, first, the desirability of courses of events (answers) as consequence of the observation of (a)moral protagonists, and, second, the insecurity/probability of the course of events. The plot would be sensed as suspenseful if the desired course of events seems improbable or if the undesired course of events seems probable.

In his Affective Disposition Theory, Zillmann (1991a, 1996a) modeled a similar, but much more differentiated and psychologically well-founded reception mechanism (cf. section 3B). Zillmann explains why suspense increases the more likeable the spectators find the protagonist and the more they sympathize with him empathically (cf. Comisky & Bryant, 1982; Dunn, 1988; Tan, 1995; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). Thus, the fundamental prerequisite for experiencing suspense is an affective sympathy for the fate of the hero. Here, Zillmann simply regards spectators as witnesses of media events who actually cannot interfere with what happens, which is exactly why they are excited—because of this powerlessness. He rules out identification processes in the sense of taking over roles (Hoffner, 1996; Walton, 1990) or simulation in the recipient’s mind (Oatley, 1994, 1999).

These approaches primarily explain the formation of suspense but not so much why the recipients engage in these suspenseful media programs. What makes this suspense experience so attractive? On the basis of Zillmann's (1991c, 1996b) Excitation Transfer Theory it is plausible that the relief and the euphoria of a happy ending is more positive the more suspenseful and "stressing" the film was. But how can the fascination for suspenseful plots that are not resolved by a happy ending be explained? Vorderer (1994) describes suspense as the experience of anxiety under playful conditions (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983; Vorderer, 1992, 2001, 2003). Anxiety during the reception of fictional content occurs under conditions controlled by the medium; that is why one can talk about an "as-if anxiety." The recipients know about the mediality and the fictionality and thus are aware that, on the one hand, they can exit from the reception situation any time they want and that, on the other hand, the content is not real and therefore not really threatening. The experience of "as-if anxiety," however, presents valuable life experience that may, in the end, help in coping with comparable real-life situations. Personality traits like pleasure of anxiety (Balint, 1959) may also partly explain the devotion to suspenseful, "as-if anxiety"-evoking media programs.

#### F. Fear/Anxiety

Media programs do not only evoke "as-if anxiety" emotions in the context of playful media usage, but also cause states of anxiety comparable with those outside media usage. According to Krohne (1996, p. 8), anxiety is an affective state of the organism characterized by increased activity of the autonomic nervous system as well as self-perception of arousal, the feeling of being tense, an experience of being threatened, and increased apprehensiveness. Investigations of anxiety use behavioral observations (e.g., distorted facial expression, defensive motor movements), physiological measures (heart rate, sweating, accelerated respiration), and self-reports (questionnaires) (Stöber & Schwarzer, 2000). Normally, despite the bias towards the subjects, self-reports are used because one cannot unambiguously infer the type and intensity of the emotion experienced on the basis of the first two measurement procedures (Laux & Glanzmann, 1996).

In communication research, one does not really talk of anxiety but rather of fear and fright reactions (e.g., Leventhal, 1970) because the menace coming from a media program usually cannot be determined unequivocally. In their cultivation studies, Gerbner and

colleagues have shown that the reception of media programs can lead to fear and anxiety: Frequent TV viewers, for example, have exaggerated ideas about how many persons are involved in cases of violence per week and correspondingly have inappropriately high levels of anxiety (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan, & Jackson-Beeck, 1979; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980). In particular, those groups of persons depicted in the media relatively more often as victims overestimate violence; this goes along with an increased sense of anxiety (Morgan, 1983).

Winterhoff-Spurk (1989) differentiated Gerbner's concept (TV has a cultivating effect on a unitary long-term memory: one-storage concept) by distinguishing between the personal-real, medial-real, and medial-fictional knowledge storage (three-storages concept). According to this, TV does not have the same cultivating effect on all knowledge storages. On the basis of the reality presented in television, the medial-real storage is involved in the first place because the spectators receive ideas about aspects of the world that they cannot immediately experience themselves. In contrast, effects on the judgment of one's own, personal-real world can only rarely be observed. If one considers how terrorist attacks in Israel or the United States are described in the media, it is possible to explain why many persons have a very critical judgment about the security situation in those countries without drawing conclusions about their own security. On this background, Gerbner's result that increased TV reception would have an effect of increasing anxiety has to be reconsidered critically: Anxiety should only arise if the presented TV content can be stored directly in the personal-real storage, or anxiety-arousing knowledge can be transferred from the medial-real or even from the medial-fictional storage to the personal-real storage.

Nevertheless, the hypothesis is maintained that sensing anxiety is cultivated by TV in a certain way. This cultivation has positive effects, too, because individuals are sensitized for states of anxiety through contact with anxiety-evoking media content and are prepared for coping with states of anxiety in the real world (Vitouch & Kernbeiss, 1998). The strategies for coping with anxiety "sensitization" and "repressing" can be traced back to Byrne (1964). According to him, "sensitizers" develop a chronically increased activation level which excludes a sudden and unexpected increase of activation on the basis of further anxiety stimuli. In contrast, *repressers* try to turn away their attention from threatening situations as much as possible in order to

avoid anxiety. According to Vitouch & Kernbeiss (1998), repressors have preferences with respect to media consumption and with respect to program preferences such that they turn their attention primarily to information content compatible with their anxiety. Correspondingly, they like to consume so-called “ideal-world” programs (cf. in this context, Vitouch, 1993, 1995; Sparks, Pellechia, & Irvine, 1999).

Anxiety-evoking media programs could have long-term negative effects, especially for children (for overviews see Cantor, 1994, 1998, 2002; Harrison, & Cantor, 1999). As early as 1933, Blumer reported that 93% of the children in his study were frightened or horrified by media pictures (similar results in Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958; Lyle & Hoffman, 1972; Palmer, Hockett, & Dean, 1983; Wilson, Hoffner, & Cantor, 1987; Zill, 1977). Cantor and Reilly (1982) found that long-lasting states of anxiety after media reception are not rare even among juveniles. And even “in a study with college students (Sparks, Spirek, & Hodgson, 1993), significant percentages of the respondents reported being nervous after viewing scary films (44%), experiencing sleep trouble (42%), avoiding exposure to other scary films (40%), and being afraid to go into certain rooms of one’s own house (50%). The extent to which adults experience these lingering fears after media exposure suggests that something other than the willing suspension of disbelief occurs when audiences view horror films” (Sparks & Sparks, 2000, p. 85).

With this background, it is remarkable that parents are not aware of these effects on their own children or at least they downplay it (Preston, 1941; Cantor & Reilly, 1982). Parents significantly underestimate how much time their children spend with anxiety-evoking media programs (Cantor & Reilly, 1982). However, children gradually develop a set of regulation strategies to deal with anxiety-evoking media content (Allerton, 1995; Hoffner, 1993). Blunting is applied most frequently—followed by monitoring, and seeking support (Hoffner, 1993; concerning regulation strategies in general, cf. Miller, 1987). Effective coping may also enable viewers’ enjoyment (see section 3H) of scary media programs (Hoffner, 1995; Sparks, 1991; Zillmann & Weaver, 1996; Zillmann, Weaver, Mundorf, & Aust, 1986).

### G. *Affective involvement*

Involvement, as a metaconcept, encompasses a family of related though distinct concepts which inform us on how users are occupied with the media

and its content and how they engage with them in a cognitive, affective, conative, and motivational way (Salmon, 1986, p. 244; Donnerstag, 1996; in a review: Wirth, in press). The distinction between cognitive, affective (or emotional), and conative components can be traced back to Rothschild and Ray (1974). The *cognitive component* can be found in the literature on involvement most frequently (e.g., Bryant & Comisky, 1978; Flora & Maibach, 1990; Lo, 1994; Perse, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1990d; Rubin & Perse, 1988). *Affective involvement*, defined as the sensation of intense feelings or affective statements, is studied slightly less often. Researchers studying affective involvement usually make a theoretical and/or empirical distinction between cognitive and affective involvement (e.g., Hoffman & Batra, 1991; Park & McClung, 1986; Zaichkowsky, 1987). Park and McClung (1986) consider emotional involvement to mean the subjective experience of media usage (e.g., of a commercial spot), while cognitive involvement means the processing of issue-oriented information. Some researchers subsume parasocial interaction under affective involvement (Levy & Windahl, 1985); however, other scholars argue that parasocial interaction itself encompasses affective, cognitive, and conative components (Hartmann, Schramm, & Klimmt, 2004; Sood, 2002; see also Klimmt, Hartmann, & Schramm, in press).

Chaudhuri’s and Buck’s approach (e.g., Buck, Chaudhuri, Georgson, & Kowta, 1995; Chaudhuri & Buck, 1995a, 1995b) locates affective involvement in the frame of the Cognitive Response Approach (similarly, MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). According to this approach, affective responses are post-communicative self-statements about the felt intensity of selected emotions. Perse (1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1990d) and Step (1998) conceptualize emotional involvement as intensity of felt emotions. In reference to social judgment research, Shoemaker, Schooler, and Danielson (1989) use attitude extremity as a criterion for affective involvement; Chaffee and Roser (1986), perceived risk (see also Roser, 1990).

In general, affective involvement is seen as a positive action, i.e., as an action directed towards an object or a person. According to the Cognitive Response Theory (Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981) and to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981b, 1986), the valence of affective involvement is not determined. During affective involvement, feelings or emotions against protagonists or against the media message may emerge (Perse, 1990c, 1998). Hartmann,

Schramm, and Klimmt (2004) explicitly consider negative parasocial interaction with the media actors, too.

Affective involvement appears in the use of a wide variety of informational content, such as health campaigns (Chaffee & Roser, 1986), news (Perloff, 1989; Perse, 1990d), or the search for information on the Internet (Patwardhan, 2004). Chaudhuri and Buck (1995b) conducted comparative studies on affective involvement in TV and print commercials. Perse (1990c) found that emotional and cognitive involvement are correlated: Feeling angry and feeling sad were linked to elaboration on crime and government-related news. Moreover, persons who use news for entertainment indicated that they felt happy and satisfied. Therefore, positive emotional involvement can be seen as closely connected to entertainment motives.

We know that cognitive involvement has positive effects on knowledge acquisition (e.g., Cameron, 1993). It sounds fascinating that learning and knowledge acquisition should also benefit from affective involvement (Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004). Could it be true? The results are not very encouraging. Shoemaker, Schooler, and Danielson (1989) did not find any correlations between affective involvement and recall or recognition for individuals who rely on newspapers or television. Chaffee and Roser (1986) did not find any correlations between perceived risk of heart disease as an indicator for affective involvement and the consistency between attitude, knowledge, and behavior in the case of a long-term health intervention campaign. Lo (1994) did not find a correlation between attitude extremity as an indicator for affective involvement and knowledge about the (first) Gulf war. In the latter two studies, the authors assumed that the indicators were not good enough to measure affective involvement. One can have a moderate attitude towards the Gulf war and yet be highly touched affectively (Lo, 1994, p. 51). Conversely, one can subjectively perceive a high risk of heart disease without *feeling* touched affectively on a very deep level (Chaffee & Roser, 1986, p. 391). Shoemaker et al. (1989) came to similar results. They studied recall and recognition of election information and again used attitude extremity as an indicator of affective involvement. As an indicator of emotional involvement, Perse (1990d) used 15 emotional reaction items from which three emotional factors (happiness, anger, sadness) could be extracted. But again, none of the factors correlated with knowledge about news.

The heterogeneity of the indicators for affective involvement suggests that the connection between

affective involvement and entertainment (cf., section 3H) should be examined more closely. There are some relevant results in the context of consumer research. In explorative studies, Norris and colleagues (Norris & Colman, 1994; Norris, Colman, & Aleixo, 2001) have shown that involvement and entertainment/enjoyment share only a small portion of variance and, moreover, lead to different advertising effects (see also Furnham, Gunter, & Walsh, 1998). Affective involvement seems to be related to enjoyment but the two concepts are not identical (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004).

#### H. Entertainment

Though the scientific community still debates whether entertainment is an emotion, there is a consensus that entertainment is fostered by emotions and has emotional components (Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000). It is widely believed that entertainment is a non-professional leisure activity that is not subject to any form of constraint, does not provide material or extrinsic incentives, and has the main function that the person *feels good*. In this way, the layperson's understanding is not too far away from what our science has found out about the phenomenon of "entertainment" so far. If one asks recipients what entertainment means for them the following empirical dimensions of meaning unfold (Bosshart & Macconi, 1998, p. 4):

- psychological relaxation—it is restful, refreshing, light, distracting
- change and diversion—it offers variety and diversity
- stimulation—it is dynamic, interesting, exciting, thrilling
- fun—it is merry, amusing, funny
- atmosphere—it is beautiful, good, pleasant, comfortable
- joy—it is happy, cheerful

Note that only emotional aspects or aspects with emotional implications are mentioned. Nobody will deny that entertainment has something to do with emotions. Are we dealing with a specific emotion or rather with mixed emotions? According to Vorderer (2003, 2004), entertainment is a multidimensional reception phenomenon with motivational, emotional, and effect-relevant aspects. Bosshart and Macconi (1998, p. 5) argue this way, too, in that they see parallels between "entertainment" and "pleasure." According to Hausmanninger (1993), pleasure is a multidimensional construct, too:

- pleasure of the senses, as in the use of physical abilities, or in the experience of motor and sensory activity

- pleasure of the (ego-)emotions, as in evoking and experiencing emotions, or in mood-management
- pleasure of personal wit and knowledge, as in the use of cognitive or intellectual powers or competence in being able to use one's wit
- and pleasures of the (socio-)emotions, such as the ability to feel an emotion with and for others, to identify with others

According to Bosshart and Macconi (1998), these dimensions could be easily transferred to the entertainment experience. Apart from the fact that pleasure per se is already an emotional category, it is obvious that two categories are prominently mentioned (ego- and socio-emotions) which have been central to section 3 of this review.

Vorderer, Klimmt, and Ritterfeld (2004) regard "enjoyment" as the core of a multidimensional construct "entertainment" and thus assume that it is a crucial point or a center in the semantic spectrum of the reception phenomenon. In contrast, Früh (2002, 2003) considers entertainment to be a state of experience on a

superordinate level (cf. Mayer & Gaschke, 1988; Mayer & Stevens, 1994: "meta-emotions"): Entertainment results as a macro-emotion and contains different components of the respective underlying specific micro-emotions. These micro-emotions could be, for example, the aspects that have been mentioned by Bosshart and Macconi such as joy, fun, or relaxation. But micro-emotions could be "negative" emotions, too, such as anger, distrust, or grief. On the background of control processes, all micro-emotions are transformed into a macro-emotion for the sake of suitability, of independence, and of situational appropriateness (is a media program fitting my momentary needs?). Thus, an emotion like anger can also be sensed as entertainment on the macrolevel if the recipient can describe it as situationally appropriate to his/her needs, if s/he can control anger, and if s/he maintains sovereignty. The core of entertainment experience, thus, is not a single micro-emotion such as enjoyment, but a semantic core characterized by independence and controllability (Früh & Wirth, 1997).

## 4. Effects of emotions in media content

### A. *Emotions and information/news*

A number of empirical studies describe the effect of emotions in the news and other information programs. Here, quite different definitions of emotion are used. Often, because a content-analytic measurement of verbal and pictorial emotions is difficult to accomplish (Wegener, 1999), formal attributes are used which reflect an entertainment orientation and thus rather indirectly an emotionalization (cf. Bruns & Marcinkowski, 1997; Wegener, 1999; Grabe, Zhou, & Barnett, 1999). A computer-aided analysis of the language in reports about terrorist attacks on 9/11 showed that TV more strongly than newspapers made use of emotional domains such as blame, praise, satisfaction, tenacity, and motion. Aggression appeared in TV and newspaper coverage about equally frequently (Cho et al., 2003). The word "fear" was used in newspaper reports and in headlines in 1996 one third more often than in 1987 (Altheide & Michalowski, 1999; see also: Romer, Hall Jamieson, & Aday, 2003).

News contains a considerable number of reports about violent events. The *National Television Violence Study* reports that in 1998 visual violence could be seen

in 39% of the American reality programs, and in 79% of the tabloid news. In Germany, acts of violence can be found in 11-15% of the important news programs (Unz, Schwab, & Winterhoff-Spurk, 2002).

In general, Bruns and Marcinkowski (1997) describe an increasing entertainment orientation in the important news programs on German TV (cf. also Paus-Haase, Schnatmeyer, & Wegener, 2000). However, emotions are not specifically mentioned in their content analysis. For various non-fiction programs on German TV, Krüger (1996) found more negative than positive fundamental moods. Wegener (1999) summarizes that the different emphases of information-oriented programs can be interpreted as an expression of different pretension levels aiming at different audiences. In her own study, she compares strategies for improving the attractiveness of non-fictional content and finds an increase in emotion for the years 1985 to 1997 (Wegener, 1999). There is another study about magazines in Switzerland that proves that emotional communication is one of the main strategies used by journalists for pictures and texts (Saxer & Märki-Koepp, 1992).

In general, it can be said that emotional pictures in the news evoke more feelings in spectators (e.g., Bucy, 2003; Wirth & Böcking, 2003). Scenes of violence evoke emotional reactions in spectators that may range from anxiety and grief in natural disasters to anger and disgust to contempt in scenes with deliberate violence as in the violation of human rights. Felt emotions are expressed by the spectator through facial expressions, too (Mangold, Unz, & Winterhoff-Spurk, 2001; Unz, Schwab, & Winterhoff-Spurk, 2002).

Negative pictures in the news lead to increased attention. The capacity required to process the message improves the ability to retrieve the story and facilitates recognition of information presented during a negative video (Lang, Newhagen, & Reeves, 1996). Brosius and Kayser (1991) found that spectators evaluated the quality of information of news with emotional pictures as being better than news without such pictures. On the other hand, the spectators tended to overestimate concrete numbers mentioned for damage. From this, one can derive that the focus of attention shifts in direction to the emotional part of the news because emotions are described as part of the news. This effect of emotional pictures can be related to the Vividness Approach posited by Nisbett and Ross (1980). According to this, vivid information should influence the formation of judgment in individuals to a stronger degree than non-vivid, pallid information. However, the evidence is contradictory. Indeed, a unitary effect of vivid information on the formation of judgment could not be shown (Collins, Taylor, Wood, & Thompson, 1988). For emotions, Wirth and Böcking (2003) could show, however, that a news story about cases of revocation of child custody seemed to be more relevant to the spectators the more emotional it was. The effect could be seen in persons, too, who disapproved of the emotional preparation of a news story. The authors explain the effects using the Elaboration Likelihood Model. According to this model, emotional content can be utilized as a cue for the formation of judgment (Petty, Priester, & Briñol, 2002).

A number of studies about emotions and news specifically investigate communication in crises. Bucy (2003) was interested in how spectators reacted to different emotional reports about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center as well as to interviews with politicians. Bucy's (2003) basic consideration was that, particularly in crisis situations, news is regarded as a type of survival-relevant information. Here, the reactions of the politicians in interviews are of special importance: If the broadcast pictures are too strongly emotionalized, high-

potency politicians' displays result in spectators having the feeling that the situation is under control. In contrast, the spectators reacted in less differentiated ways to low-potency politicians' displays. Moreover, the spectators reacted much more emotionally to strongly emotional reports about a terrorist attack than to more cautious, less emotional reports. They reported to have sensed more anger, arousal, and anxiety on the one hand, but more sympathy and compassion on the other hand. Early on, the question was asked which function emotional news reporting could have in crises. Obviously, emotional news reporting illustrates that shock and despair are widespread and the spectator is not alone in his feelings. This knowledge seems to have a pacifying effect (Mindak & Hursh, 1965). During the Yom-Kippur war, as many as a third of the Israeli population expected that the TV would foster tenseness and solidarity (Peled & Katz, 1974). The strongly emotional news reporting about the tsunami disaster in 2004 could be an important cause for the worldwide wave of solidarity and for the readiness to give donations. We do not yet have studies about this phenomenon, of course.

### *B. Emotions and texts/literature*

The study of emotions in fictional literature allows an easy separation of hermeneutical and empirical research in literature (Cupchik, Leonard, Axelrad, & Kalin, 1998; Groeben, 1981; Groeben & Schreier, 1998; Schmidt, 1981; Steen, 2003). Hermeneutical research in literature regards emotions in texts as "coded"—emotions are inherent in the text and do not develop during reception. Their thematization and presentation are culture-specific. In this way, culture is created and passed on simultaneously (Winko, 2003). However, in the empirical study of literature—as in empirical communication research and in media psychology—emotions are mainly investigated from the reception perspective; here, features of the text are considered as influencing factors. Oatley (1994) asked readers of short stories by James Joyce, Alice Munro, and Carson McCullers to mark the passages where they sensed emotions. Most readers noticed emotions of medium intensities. Here, Oatley found internal and external emotions. Internal emotions arise when readers enter and immerse themselves in the world of the text. In this involved mode of reception (Vorderer, 1993), readers can develop feelings towards the actors (e.g., sympathize with them). Other researchers have also identified such emotions: Tan (1996) calls them "fiction emotions," Miall and Kuiken (2002), "narrative emotions." According to Oatley (1994), these



emotions arise through identification with the media figure and by simulation of its actions and goals.

External emotions, in contrast, refer to the constructed nature of the media message (“artifact emotions” in Tan, 1996, and “aesthetic emotions” in Miall & Kuiken, 2002). In external emotions, Oatley (1994) identifies assimilative processes and accommodative processes. In assimilation, readers simply apply an existing cognitive schema to a story. But this schema can only be applied to the text in incomplete form. Readers are curious about the further course of the story and fill in the gaps successively. In contrast, in accommodation readers have no appropriate schema to apply to the story. Readers must actively engage with their expectations and reading habits. Here, the tension and the arousal of the readers develop from the discrepancy between expectation and the actual narration (Oatley, 1994). Van Holt (2003) found further differentiations in literature: momentary versus remembered emotions, empathic co-experience versus non-empathic self-experience as well as emotions which refer to the figures of a story versus emotions which refer to persons in the real environment of the readers. While reading short stories, readers should either identify with the actors or read the text from the observer’s perspective (van Holt, 2003). Moreover, the texts used in the experiment were written either in an estranged or in an alienated version. Empathic compassion (fiction emotions) particularly occurred while reading alienated texts whereas artifact emotions (especially disapproving ones) were more frequent if the texts were estranged and the reader had to identify with the actors (van Holt, 2003). Feelings during literary reading often occur in connection with narrative structures (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981, 1982; Hoeken & van Vliet, 2000). According to this, different affective responses such as suspense, curiosity, or surprise are activated dependent on the narrative structure of a story. Knobloch and colleagues showed that news stories and novels with a linear-type structure indeed evoke more excitement whereas texts with a reversal-type structure evoke more curiosity (Knobloch, Patzig, Mende, & Hastall, 2004).

Andringa (1996) studied the impact of narrative structures on various forms of involvement. Specifically, he investigated the effect of open narrative commentary on involvement. Open narrative commentary is background information which is brought into play by the narrator and which gives the readers a narrative distance from the text. Like Tan (1996), Andringa studied artifact emotions (those emotions relating to the

text as an artifact, or “A-emotions”) and fictional emotions (those emotions rooted in the fictional world of the text, or “F-emotions”) and found that A-emotions correlated positively with some F-emotions. Narrative distance, however, only had a small influence on F-emotions (emotional involvement).

Cupchik, Oatley, and Vorderer (1998) were interested in whether the emotions experienced during reading are fresh emotions or emotionally loaded memories of personal experiences. Forty-eight students read either an emotionally loaded text or a descriptively oriented text from James Joyce’s *Dubliners*. Readers were instructed to be either spectators and feel sympathy for the protagonist (spectator group) or to imagine what it was like to be a protagonist (identification group). In general, the subjects experienced far fewer remembered emotions than fresh emotions; here, emotional texts activated more emotional memories than descriptive texts (see also Oatley & Kerr, 1999). However, remembered emotions were more intense than fresh emotions. Additionally, the readers evaluated the texts focusing on the protagonists’ experiences as more involving and richer in meaning than action texts (Vorderer, Cupchik, & Oatley, 1997).

### *C. Emotions and films/other television genres*

Films belong to the class of media programs by which emotional effects are achieved (Gross & Levenson, 1995; Tan, 1996)—a fact reflected in the naming of many subgenres of films such as romances/erotica (Dubino, 1993; Harrington & Bielby, 1991; Perse, 1994; Steinem, 1980; Weaver, 1991), thriller/horror films (Carroll, 1990; Derry, 1988; Tamborini, 1991; Weaver & Tamborini, 1996), tear-jerkers/tragedies/drama (Feagin, 1983; Vorderer & Knobloch, 2000), and comedies (Zillmann, 2000a; Zillmann & Cantor, 1976; Zillmann & Bryant, 1991). But other subgenres, too, like adventures (Tasker, 1993; Taves, 1993), war films (Gutmacher, 1996; Karpf, 1989), science fiction/fantasy (Frank, 1982; Hardy, 1986; Tulloch, 1995), pornography (Brosius, 1992; Zillmann, 2004b; Zillmann & Bryant, 1989), mystery (Grossvogel, 1979; Krasner, 1983; Zillmann, 1991b), and action films (Janschek, Vitouch, & Tinchon, 1997; Mikos, 1995) can evoke strong emotions during reception because the stories are conceptualized according to the psychological affect structures of the recipients (Tan, 1996). This narrative structure greatly predetermines the emotional effect of a film (Bal, 1985; Onega & Landa Garcia, 1996)—an indication of the complementary connection between psychology and film theo-

ry (e.g., Bordwell, 1985, 1989; Carroll, 1988; Hochberg, 1986). Although only an accessory to films, music can also effectively influence the meaning of the narration. Not only are single sequences of the film interpreted differently depending on the background music (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1991); the whole subsequent plot of the film can be anticipated in a different manner (Vitouch, 2001). Thus, music serves the film and fulfills different functions: One can distinguish between *dramatic*, *epic*, *structural*, and *persuasive* functions (Bullerjahn, 2001). The dramatic function includes the projection of moods and the enhancement of a figure's facial expression. The epic function refers to music's supporting or taking over the course and speed of the narration. Music serves a structural function if it covers or emphasizes cuts, single scenes, and movements. Finally, persuasive functions take place if the pictures are emotionally loaded with music independent of the other elements in order to foster the spectator's identification process with the protagonists.

The emotional reception phenomena which occur during film viewing encompass a wide range of emotions (Plantinga & Smith, 1999; Tan, 1996): sympathy and empathy (section 3B), arousal/excitation transfer (section 3C), suspense (section 3E), fear (section 3F), affective involvement (section 3G), as well as joy and entertainment (section 3H). Tan (1995) proposes interest as the central emotion in film viewing.

Interest is the urge to watch and actively anticipate further developments in the expectation of a reward. The film's control of the viewers' perceptions of events imposes on them special attitudes towards those events and characters. The events themselves together with the attitudes coloring them determine the viewers' emotions. (Tan, 1995, p. 7)

Additionally, Tan (1996, pp. 65-66) distinguishes emotions that arise from concerns related to the film as *artifact* (A-emotions) from those emotions rooted in the *fictional* world and the concerns addressed by that world (F-emotions). Moreover, scholars distinguish whether the viewers only witness the events in the film (Tan, 1995; Zillmann, 1991a) from whether they can partly or completely identify with the heroes of the film (Hoffner, 1996; Oatley 1994, 1999). The extent to which one's own identity is given up during viewing has an important influence on the spectrum of possible emotions (Tan, 1995; Zillmann, 1991a).

Besides films, other TV content, too, is capable of evoking intense emotions. Because we cannot cover all

TV genres here, we will highlight only one further domain, which has seen strong development and differentiation during the last 20 years: *affect TV* or reality TV (Bente & Fromm, 1997, 1998; Bente & Feist, 2000). Bente and Feist (2000, p. 114) defined affect TV as "offerings that present the most private stories of non-prominent people to a mass audience, crossing traditional borders of privacy and intimacy." Formats like talk shows and confrontation talk shows (Holly & Schwitalla, 1995; Hutchby, 1996), reality TV (Wegener, 1994), game shows, or wedding shows (Berghaus & Staab, 1995) fall under the heading of affect TV. In the United States, the term *trash TV* was used to describe the most extreme forms of affect TV. Four characteristics are typical for the different programs of affect TV (Bente & Fromm, 1998, p. 614; Bente & Feist, 2000, p. 114):

- Personalization: The presentation focuses on the fate of one individual. The general is less important than the individual. The moderator provides possibilities for emotional attachment to the media person.
- Authenticity: The stories of non-prominent persons are often told by the persons themselves.
- Intimacy: Private and personal matters and aspects of interpersonal relations are becoming a public topic.
- Emotionality: Production and communication styles of the shows are set up to produce emotional reactions and to reveal personal attitudes of the studio guests and of the audience.

The reception of these formats goes along with various emotional aspects like indignation, embarrassment, excitement, but also interest and the desire to become well-informed, too (cf., e.g. Wirth & Früh, 1996). The success of these formats is based on the satisfaction of fundamental human needs to compare oneself to other persons, to fix a limit, and to define oneself as well as to test the appropriateness of one's own way of living and of one's own interpersonal behavior (Bente & Fromm, 1998).

#### D. Emotions and music (in radio)

Music can evoke intense reactions (Behne, 1995; Gabrielsson, 2001; Rösing, 1993) that are based on the emotional characteristic or expression of music (Gabrielsson & Lindström, 2001). That is why music is often described as the language of feelings. Although a number of semantic and information levels interact in music, the emotional expression of music in the narrower sense (e.g., without a text), which emerges from a specific order and particular way of playing the sounds, seems to be of primary relevance for the over-

all effect of a musical composition. When asked about information and impressions that a piece of music has had on them, listeners rarely mention details of the composition structure or of the content of the text. They refer much more to the music's mood and emotion. Many people cannot say what the title of their favorite tune is about or what the topic of the lyrics of the song is (cf. Hansen & Hansen, 2000). However, they *can* indicate whether it is a melancholic or a joyful song.

Music has—depending on the medium and what the medium has to offer—a more or less high relevance: Music is the most important content in music cassettes and CDs, music video clips, and most radio programs; in films, series, game shows, or TV spots, music is usually utilized functionally in the background (cf. for a review: Schramm, 2004). So, the emotional expression of the music can emphasize or even counteract the emotional effect of the pictures in the film (Bullerjahn, 2001; Cohen, 2001; Vitouch, 2001).

The emotional expressions of music cannot be considered independently from the particular society and cultural system in which they are heard (Heister, 1993; Rösing & Oerter, 1993). For instance, the occidental music culture in the middle of Europe is quite different from the music culture of the Near East or of East Asia. Not only do different cultures use different scales, rhythms, and measures, but the parameters of music also differ in importance (for example in Africa, rhythm often has the highest priority). The functions of music are strongly influenced by the general behaviors and attitudes of a society (Brandl & Rösing, 1993; Heister, 1993).

This leads us to the assumption that there are no culture-free constants in the perception and identification of qualities of musical expression. According the current state of research, this assumption cannot be made: Independent of the “mediation” of emotions via music, Ekman (1982) found evidence for an intercultur-

al “language” in studies on the emotional qualities of *facial expression*. On the basis of many studies, Scherer (1982) identified components of *linguistic* expression or *vocal* indicators of emotions (see Table 1). Scherer and Oshinsky (1982) found similar parameter constellations in the perception of synthesized sound sequences.

Although musical expression (as well as verbal expression) in the perception of the recipients result from the interplay of more parameters than those mentioned (cf. e.g., Bullerjahn, 2001), specific parameter constellations for emotional expression of language as well as of music could be generated in intercultural comparisons again and again (cf. e.g., Gabrielsson & Lindström, 2001; Terwogt & Grinsven, 1991).

In short, at least within one cultural field, expressive moods or the emotional expressive qualities of music are remarkably constant in the perception of humans. The ability to assess emotional expression—similar to language—is already developed in the early years of life (Sloboda, 1989, 1991; Trainor & Trehub, 1992). The emotional expression of music traces back to a complex interaction of rather different musical parameters and varies slightly from one kind of music to another with respect to specific parameter constellations. One can assume, too, that even within one cultural field the emotional expression of music is perceived differently both on the interindividual level (e.g., on the basis of different biographical references) and intraindividually (e.g., on the basis of momentary moods)—just as emotional information of verbal expression is decoded differently on the interindividual and intraindividual levels. Finally, the text of a musical piece can support or even enhance the emotional expression of music. At the same time, however, it can counteract or superimpose the emotional expression of music, too, when it comes into the consciousness of the audience (Gfeller, Asmus, & Eckert, 1991).

As far as the impact of music is concerned, we see a general tendency of music to elicit positive effects

Emotions	Level of basic frequency	Range of basic frequency	Variability of basic frequency	Loudness	Speed of speaking
Joy	High	?	High	Loud	Fast
Anger	High	Wide	High	Loud	Fast
Fear	High	Wide	High	?	Fast
Indifference	Low	Narrow	Low	?	Fast
Contempt	Low	Wide	?	Loud	Slow
Boredom	Low	Narrow	?	Low	Slow
Sadness	Low	Narrow	Low	Low	Slow

**Table 1:** Vocal indicators of emotional arousal (Scherer, 1982, p. 300)

when the musical complexity matches the habits and the processing capacity of the audience, i.e., the audience is not challenged too much and the challenge is not below the level of the audience. Referring to Berlyne's (1974) theory from the '60s, Motte-Haber expresses the same opinion:

maximal well-being is sensed in medium arousal and thus in medium complexity; if activation increases during a too complicated perceptual performance well-being decreases. If something is so boring, however, that the person is not activated well-being is equal to zero. (1996, p. 166-167)

These individual differences make it difficult to develop mass-compatible radio programs (Münch, 1994). Thus, the degree of complexity of radio programs usually is kept low (Rösing & Münch, 1993) and music research by radio broadcasting companies is kept rather simple (Schramm, Petersen, Rütter, & Vorderer, 2002). The decision to design music programs at the least common complexity level shows that broadcasting stations prefer boring the audience to challenging it too much. Because activation decreases when listening to multiple titles with a similar degree of complexity, programmers take into consideration at least certain sound-related structural contrasts between the titles or change between fast (activating) and slow (pacifying) titles (MacFarland, 1997).

Numerous studies show mood amelioration by listening (cf. for a review: Schramm, 2005). Wunsch (2001), for example, reported that emotionally unstable, introverted persons are particularly successful in ameliorating negative moods by listening to music and, for this reason, listen to music longer than other groups of persons. The psychology of music has produced most of the studies on the effect of music on moods (e.g., DeNora, 2000; North & Hargreaves, 2000; Rigg, 1983; Sloboda, 1992; Sloboda & O'Neill, 2001; Sloboda, O'Neill, & Ivaldi, 2001; Stratton & Zalanowski, 1989, 1991). In one of the first big systematic studies about the effect of music on moods, Schoen and Gatewood (1927) reported that the result of the study with the enormous number of 20,000 "mood reports" was that in

most cases music has a positive effect on mood. And the same music could yield the same effect on different persons in different places and at different times of the day. Because we cannot report all of the studies which investigated the effect of music on moods or emotions here, we would like to sketch two recent studies which aimed at assessing music usage naturalistically: In surveys and observations of women, DeNora (1999) identified mood-management as well as mood-adjustment processes in daily life, as they had been investigated experimentally by Knobloch and Zillmann (2002) and by Knobloch (2003). The women described in detail how they successfully maintained or ameliorated their moods and positive energies in daily life (this was confirmed experimentally by North & Hargreaves, 2000, too) and how they optimally adapted their moods to corresponding activities and occasions like house-keeping and meetings with other people.

Using the experience-sampling method, Sloboda, O'Neill, and Ivaldi (2001) collected data about the usage and the effect of music in episodes of daily life. Along the dimension of "valence," the subjects reported, for example, changes from "sad" to "happy," from "insecure" to "secure" or from "tense" to "relaxed"; along the dimension "devotion to life," changes from "bored" to "interested," from "being alone" to "integrated," or from "nostalgic" to "oriented towards the present"; along the dimension "arousal," changes from "tired/slack" to "energetic/active" or from "sleepy" to "wide-awake." Moreover, Sloboda, O'Neill, and Ivaldi (2001) showed that the positive changes of moods increase the more the subjects could freely determine what music they heard.

Thus, there is no doubt that music can influence and change moods. This is particularly the case if the original mood has a negative valence or at least is experienced negatively on the metalevel; if the music listener is introverted, neurotic, or emotionally unstable; and if s/he can select the music him/herself. Depending on the context, moods can be adjusted via music to a potentially optimal level appropriate for the social situation and the activity, which must not have, however, the highest valence scores.

## 5. Emotions as determinants of non-emotional effects of media exposure

### A. *Emotion and memory*

Studies about the relation between emotion and memory can be classified grossly into four domains of

research: firstly, the recall of one's own emotional (media-mediated) experiences; secondly, the recall of emotional media content; thirdly, the effect of emo-

tional content on the recall of the program context (It is remarkable that in general only the arousal aspect of emotions is focused on in these studies.) and, fourthly, the recall effects of *specific* emotions, which only recently have been investigated.

**Recall of emotional, media-mediated events.** Studies in the psychology of emotions have shown that strongly emotional events are recalled better than neutral events (Klauer, 2004). A specific category includes traumatic events of national importance, which are often mediated, for example, the murder of John F. Kennedy in 1963, the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986, and, of course, the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001. The phenomenon is called “flashbulb memories” (Brown & Kulik, 1977; Christianson, 1992). Many persons could recall the exact circumstances even years after they heard about the events and could still report many details of the event. Experiments indicate, however, that people often do not remember peripheral details correctly, but that only the central aspects of an event stay in memory (Christianson & Safer, 1996). The reason for this could be that people remember the central aspects better because persons engage in the circumstances, causes, thoughts, reactions, and feelings of the traumatic episode more intensely, that is, they are more involved cognitively and affectively (Christianson, 1992; see also Wirth, in press). But even memories of traumatic events become fuzzy in the course of time, errors intrude into memory, and the events are slowly forgotten, but more slowly than more mundane events (Levine & Pizarro, 2004).

Do persons remember at least their own emotions correctly? Even this is not unconditionally true. In the case of an earlier event, the memories of experienced emotions adjust to the appraisal of the experience that the interviewed person had at the time of the interview (Levine, 1997). According to this, emotions are reconstructed rather than actually remembered.

**Recall of emotional media content.** According to the Limited Capacity Model (Lang, 2000), emotional arousal results in automatic allocation of processing resources for encoding and storage; if the arousal is too strong it can result, however, in cognitive overload, too. In the first case, emotions in the media should foster recognition (indicator for encoding) and recall (indicator for storage). In the second case, however, recognition and recall should be impeded. Some studies verify these assumptions (Lang, Bolls, Potter, & Kawahara, 1999).

In news reports, people remember the reporter’s text about a negatively emotional news message poorly, but this is not the case for non-semantic aural information such as screams or crashing noises (Newhagen, 1992). People remember strongly emotionalized stories (Burke, Heuer, & Reisberg, 1992) or photos (Safer, Christianson, Autry, & Österlund, 1998) better than neutral stories or photos. However, they remember background information of the emotionalized story poorly, forgetting the peripheral details around the emotionalized area of the photo (a close-up of a dead woman).

**Effect of emotional media content on the memory of the program context.** Emotional media content also influences the capacity to remember program context. News messages broadcasted within a time of up to three minutes after an upsetting and arousing message are not remembered as well as news messages without a preceding arousing message (Lang, Newhagen, & Reeves, 1996; Mundorf, Drew, Zillmann, & Weaver 1990; Scott & Goff, 1988). TV commercials seen within a time of up to three minutes after an erotic spot are also not remembered as well as commercials without an erotic spot appearing before (Wirth & Lübke, 2004). A study about emotional pictures in news programs found that the information immediately before negatively emotional pictures is remembered poorly (Newhagen, 1992). On the other hand, the author found a supporting effect for visual material presented after a negatively affective picture. The findings mentioned can be explained through retroactive inhibition and proactive facilitation of memory (Newhagen, 1992).

**Effects of the valence of emotion and of a specific emotion on remembering.** The studies presented so far all investigate emotions from an *arousal* perspective (Levine & Pizarro, 2004). The basic idea behind this is: Independent of valence and specificity, intense emotions evoke an arousal which is itself responsible for remembering effects. Specific emotions have only been investigated in a few studies of remembering.

Are positive or negative emotions remembered better? Bolls, Lang, and Potter (2001) found that listeners were more aroused during positively emotionally loaded radio commercials than during negatively loaded commercials and could remember the positive commercials better than the negative ones. If, in a news message, shocking pictures with violent content are used, however, this seems to have a rather inhibiting or distorting influence on information acquisition. The reason for this could be that the picture turns the attention to specific aspects of the news message (Brosius & Kayser, 1991;

Brosius, 1993). In contrast, Newhagen and Reeves (1991) found that political commercials that induced mixed negative emotions ranging from anxiety, disgust, and anger were recognized better and more precisely than were commercials that induced positive emotions.

One's own mood matters, too: A positive mood improves memory for all TV news, but in particular for negative TV news, while a negative mood partially functions as an obstacle for memory (Staab, 1996).

Only a small number of communications studies focused on specific emotions such as anxiety, fear, joy, or anger. Newhagen (1998), one of the few exceptions, compared the recognition of news that evoked anger, fear, disgust, or no emotion. Memory was best in the case of anger, an emotion connected to approach, followed by fear, an emotion signaling an avoidance tendency. The memory for disgust—a very negative emotion, which obviously proactively inhibits the encoding of information—was worst.

Nabi (2003) induced either fear or anger in the participants of the study. After that, the subjects watched a short film about “drunken driving.” Participants were then asked to suggest solutions to the problem. Those in the fear group often particularly mentioned protective measures. However, those in the anger group mainly suggested punitive measures. The author's explanation was similar to Newhagen's (1998) and his functional emotion theories (e.g., Lazarus, 1991). According to this, fear is connected to the action tendencies of escape and seeking protection, while anger is connected to the action tendencies of approach and attack. In fact, the participants suggested solutions that corresponded to their emotional state (Nabi, 2003).

### *B. Emotion and persuasion*

How do emotions and moods influence beliefs, judgments, and attitudes? In the context of media effects, one can see two main research traditions. The first, older tradition can be traced back to Hovland's work (the Yale studies) and specifically deals with the influence of fear-arousing appeals to attitude. The mass media and advertising, in particular, utilize this tool of fear-arousing appeals in information campaigns (AIDS, alcohol, smoking, taxes, etc.) as well as in political communication (e.g., fear of immigration, fear of war and terror). The second, more recent tradition can be traced back to the Dual-Process Models of Persuasion and their extensions. The first experimental lab studies were part of a research program called the “Yale Communication and Attitude Program” started by Carl I. Hovland after the end of the Second World War (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). The

study of the efficiency of appeals to fear was part of a bigger research program focusing on the attributes of the persuasive message; it also studied the attributes of recipients and communicators. The Hovland studies were in the tradition of extended stimulus-response logic in which attributes of persons were postulated as moderator variables of the media effect during the time between the media program and the reaction (S-O-R). Hovland and his colleagues used motivation theories to explain the effect of fear-arousing appeals (cf. Miller's drive-reduction hypothesis; Miller, 1951). The source of communication illustrates the unfavorable consequences to the recipient; these consequences will occur if s/he does not change either his/her behavior or his/her attitude. According to the theory, fear-arousing appeals put the recipient into a tense state (anxiety). This tense state then provides the “drive” to improve the state that is perceived as unpleasant and to reduce tension. The reduction occurs via the propositions in the communication that provide the particulars of how to overcome the tension. Every behavior that facilitates a reduction is reinforced.

And the recipient *is* prepared to follow the behavioral appeals or to change his/her attitudes. The empirical findings show: If fear is used too strongly, it has a very low effect or is counterproductive (cf. Petty & Cacioppo, 1981a). In such a situation, the recipients would exhibit a very low preparedness for information acquisition and ward off all threatening stimuli. To explain this behavior, the research group cites the recipient's belief that s/he is not able to change anything in the situation (cf. Floyd, Prentice-Dunn, & Rogers, 2000). Appeals with low doses of fear are relatively inefficient because they only result in a low interest and a low preparedness for information acquisition. The strongest effect in the recipient, however, evokes an appropriate dose of fear (cf. Janis, 1967; similarly McGuire, 1978). The attention increases and the created fear leads to a strong susceptibility of the behavior as well as to an attitude change. A reason seems to be the appraisal that one can still change something in the unpleasant situation. Recently, researchers have tried to see the effect of fear-arousing appeals more strongly from the perspective of cognitive emotion theories (cf. Dillard, 1994). Roskos-Ewoldson and his colleagues suggest using Attitude Accessibility as an explanation for the effect of fear-arousing appeals. The more the persuasive message favors the availability of a stored attitude, the more relevant for action this attitude becomes. Fear appeals can

function to make corresponding attitudes accessible (cf. Roskos-Ewoldson, Yu, & Rodes, 2004).

The second big research tradition falls under the group of information processing approaches and is oriented towards the Dual-Process Models and its extensions (cf. Chaiken & Trope, 1999; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Forgas, 1995, Nabi, 1999, 2002). The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) are the best known models. In their Elaboration Likelihood Model, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) distinguish between a central and a peripheral route of processing. The *central route* is characterized by effortful and intensive scrutiny of the communication content. As much content-relevant information as possible is used for judgment formation. The counterpart is the *peripheral route*. Here, the arguments are not elaborated systematically and there is little or virtually no scrutiny of the communication content. Thus, under these conditions the content-related quality and the arguments of the message do not play an important role, but the effect of the so-called peripheral cues such as the speaker's verbal style or his/her attractiveness do. In this case, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) talk of "non-subject-related thinking."

Both modes of processing can be compared conceptually with Eagly's and Chaiken's (1993) distinction between systematic and heuristic processing of persuasive communication in broad terms. In the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) of persuasion, the authors differentiate between a cognitive effortless heuristic and a rather effortful systematic mode of processing. While the central and the systematic modes of processing can be regarded as largely identical (cf. Chaiken & Trope, 1999), the heuristic processing (in contrast to the peripheral route in ELM) is conceptualized in more detail. Heuristic processing encompasses concrete heuristics that function as cognitive rules of thumb in processing the communicative message and have an influence on judgment formation. An example could be the heuristic "experts are always right"; that is why one relies on the judgment of experts and does not oneself evaluate the message content systematically.

But which role do emotions play in these models? There is a tendency in research to interpret emotions as peripheral cues or as heuristics, that is, individuals rely on their emotions and allow themselves to be guided by them in their judgment formation (cf. Schwarz & Clore, 1988). Many researchers could show that persons in a positive mood were less motivated to process centrally, but utilized heuristics more often and evaluated the quality of the arguments more highly than

those in a negative mood. Vice versa, persons in a negative mood tend to process attentively and intensely (Bohner, Crow, Erb, & Schwarz, 1992; Mackie & Worth, 1989; Schwarz, Bless, & Bohner, 1991). The same is true for advertising: A positive mood and subjectively experienced empathy result in positive attitudes towards the presented commercial (Batra & Stayman, 1990; Edson Escalas & Stern, 2003).

There are data from communication research, too, which suggest that emotionalized media messages are processed heuristically. In reality, the felt emotions were obviously utilized as heuristics for the relevance of topics. Young (2003) showed that there is a tendency to appraise fear-arousing news as important and as threatening, too. However, the author presented different, hardly comparable topics and did not use multivariate controls. Wirth and Böcking (2003) composed five versions of a topic that differed only with respect to their degree of emotionalization. The more emotionalized the version and the more the recipients sensed compassion and concern, the more important the topic was appraised with respect to society.

Petty and Cacioppo (1990) as well as Petty, Cacioppo, and Kasmer (1988) have argued, however, that in some cases affects can also function as arguments under high elaboration conditions. It is not yet clear when emotions should function as heuristic (peripheral cue) and when they should serve as an argument. For the purposes of clarity, Forgas (1995) has suggested an extended process model of information processing with four different modes of processing. In his "Affect Infusion Model" (AIM) Forgas (1995) distinguishes between direct activation of stored attitudes and motivated processing. As far as these two modes of processing are concerned, Forgas hypothesizes a weak or non-existent influence of moods and emotions on judgment formation. Moreover, he distinguishes between heuristic and substantive processing. Here, Forgas hypothesizes a strong influence of emotions and moods on judgment formation. Whereas the heuristic processing is largely congruent with the mode of processing under the same label by Eagly and Chaiken (1993), Forgas (1995) postulates another strategy of processing, so far not considered—substantive processing. The distinction becomes possible because Forgas assumes that not only person variables are of particular importance for the selection of a processing strategy, but that attributes of the task are too. The person variables refer to the degree of effort (time and resource) that an individual is willing and capable to invest. The

effort itself depends on factors such as personal involvement, time pressure, intimacy, complexity of the topic, etc. The quality of the process, however, depends on another distinctive variable, the constructivity of the task. On the one hand, the task can be defined as an open, constructive problem that demands a transformation of the given information input into a new, as yet unknown solution. In contrast, the topic can be regarded as a closed, reconstructive problem that has to be justified and defended on the basis of an already fixed or intuitively obvious solution in confrontation with the given information (cf. Fiedler, 2001).

The combination of these two criteria of distinction, degree of effort and open (constructive) versus closed (reconstructive) problem, results in four basic processing strategies: direct strategy (low effort/closed), motivated strategy (high effort/closed), heuristic strategy (low effort/open), and substantive strategy (high effort/open) (cf. Fiedler 2001; Forgas, 1995). Forgas hypothesizes an influence of emotion and mood on information processing, in particular in open processing strategies, that is, in the heuristic and the substantive strategy. In the substantive processing strategy, the person making the judgment has to select, to learn, to interpret and finally to integrate new information material into pre-existing knowledge structures. According to this, we are dealing with a constructive, open process of knowledge extension. This process is possible when the topic of judgment is very complex or atypical. Additionally, the person making the judgment has a medium motivation to scrutinize the information, but nevertheless s/he will proceed very accurately because the situation explicitly or implicitly calls for doing so. For this, sufficient cognitive capacity is available (cf. Forgas, 1995, p. 47).

How can we substantiate that in both open modes of processing, affect infusion is probable? As explanatory mechanisms we have Bower's (1981) Affect-Priming-Model on the one hand and Schwarz's and Clore's (1988) Affect as Information Model on the other. Bower's (1981) Affect-Priming Model assumes that mood states selectively activate information stored in memory. According to Bower's Network Model, affective states are represented in memory as specific nodes. These nodes connect to positions describing episodes from life; these episodes had occurred while this particular emotion was aroused. If an affect node is activated, this arousal spreads within the memory region it is connected to. The consequence is that words, topics, and perceptual categories that are strongly associated with

this emotion are more easily accessible for the emotionally aroused person, and thus the social environment is congruent to the mood or emotion in a top-down mode. In this way, affect can influence the selection, encoding, and recall of information in memory (cf. Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds, 1996, p. 101ff.). As far as the substantive strategy is concerned, this happens the more frequently, the more openly, the more intensively, and the more elaboratedly the information is processed because then corresponding activation effects play a more important role. The momentary mood or emotion has an influence because mood-congruent information is recovered with a higher probability than mood-congruent messages (cf. Forgas, 1995, p. 44).

The Affect as Information Model describes a processing strategy Schwarz and Clore (1988) have called the "What does my feeling tell me?" heuristic. According to this, the momentary mood is used in order to find out about the personal importance of a situation or a media message. This information, however, can lead to "misattributions" if the mood depends on other factors than those that are in the momentary focus of attention (Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds, 1996, p. 105).

Nabi (1999) proposes an extension of the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which specifies the influence of emotion on judgment formation in more detail. In her Cognitive Functional Model, she enters into the particulars of the action-preparing (functional) component of emotions and argues that specific emotions have implications for the motivation and the ability to process a media message. In this way, emotions have an influence on the processing style. Moreover, the theory assumes that messages which induce avoidance-oriented emotions (like fear) are received with rather low attention and consequently are processed more heuristically (peripherally). In contrast, messages that induce approach-oriented emotions (like anger) are received with rather high attention. The theory postulates a central (systematic) processing for these emotions if the message does not seem to yield goal-congruent information. In other words, if a message evokes anger and if it additionally contains information on how the anger-evoking situation can be eliminated or attenuated, the media message will be processed attentively and intensively. If the message does not seem to contain information useful in this sense, it will be processed peripherally. Nabi's (1999) Cognitive Functional Model is the first to have the advantage of connecting persuasion with specific emotions. So far, initial empirical tests have not succeed in confirming the model (Nabi, 2002).



## 6. Perspectives and suggestions for further research

In summarizing research on emotions in the domain of media, one can say that there is obviously an abundance of theoretical approaches, research topics (music, texts, news, films), and findings. This is true whether we are dealing with empathy, mood regulation, arousal and excitation, suspense, affective involvement, entertainment, or discrete emotions like anxiety and fear: Theoretical development from media psychology and communication research as well as empirical studies can be found in all domains. Often, results from neighboring disciplines such as social psychology, emotion psychology, and music psychology are utilized. Clearly, research on media and emotion is making satisfactory progress.

Clear-cut trends have emerged. While earlier research mainly dealt with arousal and simple affect structures (positive versus negative affects), more recent studies consider discrete emotions, too (e.g., Nabi, 1999, 2002, 2003), and plead for a better distinction between moods and emotions in empirical work (e.g., Schramm & Wirth, in press). Older studies either do not refer at all to concrete emotion theories or are oriented towards arousal theories from the 1960s. Newer studies, however, integrate the knowledge from contemporary appraisal theories (e.g., Mangold, Unz, & Winterhoff-Spurk, 2001; Scherer, 1998; Tan, 1996) or evolutionary theories (Schwab, 2001, 2004; Schwender, 2001). Currently, significant progress has been made in entertainment theories, which more often approach their subject from an emotion-psychological perspective (Cupchik, 2001; Früh, 2002; Früh & Stiehler, 2003; Oliver, 1993; Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004).

However, many things still need to be done. The research domains often are isolated; so far, it is the exception that interconnections between them are studied (e.g., Omdahl, 1995). Emotion-psychological theo-

ries and findings are still adapted only hesitantly by theory development in communication research and media psychology. If one takes into account the large number of studies dealing with emotions in and via media, one can see that the distinction between mediated and nonmediated “real” emotions has rarely been investigated theoretically and empirically to date (see e.g., Scherer, 1998; Wirth, Schramm, & Böcking, 2004). Here, the key role probably lies with the empathic co-experience of media emotions (Zillmann, 1991a; Omdahl, 1995). Empathy serves as a catalyst for media emotions, and empathic processes transform media emotions for one’s own use in real life. Further research is needed too, as far as the long-term effects of an increasing emotionalization of media content is concerned. While many findings on perception and processing of emotions in the media are at hand, it is still not really clear how long-term effects emerge from this. Of particular interest is the question of how individuals react to this in the long run: Does, in fact, stupefaction occur as many researchers suspect? Will people in some future not perceive mildly emotional media content as emotional anymore? Or have individuals already learnt sufficiently to understand, to cope with, and to functionally use the diverse media emotions for their own purposes? Finally, emotion psychology clearly refers to the functional aspects of emotions. Emotions inform us quickly and in compact form about the subjective relevance of situations. They tell us what danger results from the situations and what possibilities for coping are available to us. In this view, emotions in the media provide a very acceptable and welcome tool for the reduction of high complexity in the environment of civilized societies. Certainly, another question is how adequate this kind of coping with complexity is. Questions like these encourage further research in the domain of media and emotions.

### Editor’s Afterword

An unsuspecting reader wandering for the first time into a serious consideration of the role of emotions in the mass media is likely to become over-

whelmed by interactions that appear simple on their surface but are found to be almost infinitely complex the deeper one penetrates into their tangled depths. As

communication research developed, the early “stimulus-response” model of media effects quickly was found inadequate and had to be replaced by a “stimulus-organism-response” (S.O.R.) model to take account of the diverse ways in which a given stimulus could be received and responded to. But, as the introduction to this paper by Wirth and Schramm suggests, not only did many factors combine to affect the process, but also diverse psychological theories and methodologies often yielded diverse conclusions, sometimes muddying the waters even more. Awareness of this problem led investigators to restrict their research goals to more manageable questions, more easily targeted by methodologies solidly grounded on already-established research findings.

The importance of studies of the interactions between media and emotions, with their many implications for such concerns as advertising effects and the impact of media on children and other audiences, has drawn the attention of large numbers of media scholars and psychologists. The resultant outpouring of reports, research models, and theories may seem to leave the casual observer in much the same bewildered and confused state as his or her predecessor in earlier times, but the practical urgency of the issues raised serves as incentive to deepen our understanding of their implications for everyday life. The authors have stressed the role emotions play in decision-making, often in decisions one would assume to be the proper domain of rational judgment, rather than emotion. But even the most earth-shaking decisions inevitably are influenced by the emotions of the decision-maker. Examples in recent history of decisions in which emotional motivation has overridden reason are too obvious—and too painful—to mention.

Research into the labyrinthine workings of emotions in media and other human communications therefore is assuming greater and greater importance, not only on the micro-level—such as children's interaction with television or video games—but also on the macro-level—terror bombings or military invasions. Both levels are difficult to study, and even more difficult to communicate to the general public and to the world's movers and shakers, but both have implications of great significance for the future of life on this planet.

—W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.  
General Editor

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## Book Reviews

**Lavender, Tony, Birgitte Tufté, and Dafna Lemish** (Eds.). *Global Trends in Media Education: Policies and Practices*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2003. ISBN 1-57273-491-4 (pb.) \$21.95.

This collection provides a “state-of-the-area” look at the “new media education,” an attempt to show what has changed worldwide in this part of communication studies since the 1990s. Initially (that is, in the 1960s and 1970s) media education emphasized critical awareness, “carried out as a literary analysis using the same goals as literary analysis, namely, to teach children to appreciate the classics, to foster good taste, and to make them aware of the inferiority of the products of popular culture” (p. 1). More recent efforts include cross-curricular and cultural studies approaches to the media. Essays in this volume include both descriptive work (the media education curriculum in Scotland, Denmark, South Africa, and India) and theoretical analyses (the role of the media in society, children’s learning from television, and research approaches).

Those unfamiliar with the media education movement will find the descriptive chapters helpful, since each includes some historical material to situate the more recent developments. At the same time these chapters give a fairly good idea of what its practitioners regard as a good curriculum, including topics and pedagogy at various levels—the chapters cover media education at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Probably because of the limitations of writing an overview, the various authors do not question some basic assumptions: that media function as “languages” subject to the tools of literary analysis; that media have roles in educating for democracy; and that media can fit into the broadly accepted educational paradigms.

The more theoretical work included in the volume covers a wide range. Lemish (“The Understanding of Television by Kindergartners: The Early Development of Television Literacy”) reports a direct study of young children based on interviews with 48 children and their parents. The study indicates how children understand various television genres (cartoons, news, commercials, situation comedies), as well as the technology of

television and how shows are made. She notes two themes emerging from the data:

By the age of 6, there is a wide diversity about the understanding of television by children. Although some children were confused, others had some clear and accurate notions of television genres, reality-fantasy dimensions, and the technological aspects. . . . [T]he general conclusion is that children at this age probably already know and understand more than they have been credited for in prior research and media literacy work. . . .

A second theme that emerged from the study was the role of prior direct or indirect instruction from others. From discussion with mothers, as well as direct quotes from the children, it could be hypothesized that the conversations of parents with their children indeed may play an important role in the development of television literacy. (pp. 86-87)

In the context of a larger study “to evaluate Media Education programmes and to discover which approaches were being used” (p. 149), Jose Martinez-de-Toda presents a sophisticated theoretical model to support a “general theory of media education.” In it he examines the role of the subject as both receiver and communicator, offering six dimensions:

The first three dimensions (media literate, aware, and critical) considers [sic] mainly mass media; in this case the subject looks to mass media as a “receiver”; he/she should know how to receive mass media programs. In the last three dimensions (active, social, and creative) the subject takes a protagonist role. He/she uses mass media in order to be active, social, and creative. (p. 151)

Martinez-de-Toda situates this model in the context of research into the active audience, particularly the work developed in English-speaking countries (Hall, Morley, Fiske) and Spanish-speaking countries (Fuenzalida, Hermosilla, Martin-Barbero).

Several chapters raise the issue of new media. Carmen Luke (“Critical Media and Cultural Studies in New Times”) insists that media education take digital media into account, if only because of the amount of time young people spend with it. Manuel Alvarado (“A Media Education for the 21st Century”) extends this view globally, noting how media of all types have become world media.

In a call for more research Keval Kumar indicates both frustration and promise.

More than two and a half decades of Media Education practices around the world have provided scattered experiences of doing Media Education, but little or no systematic theory. Media Education practices are highly personalized and influenced by the specific assumptions of the teacher about the media rather than the actual media habits and interests of media users. . . .

The major reason for this lacuna has been the near absence of research in the field. Media Education research has not gone beyond evaluating pedagogic practices and approaches and examining Media Education in relation to the sociology and psychology of children and youth. (pp. 145-146)

Kumar’s suggestion for research provides a good complement to the histories, curricular descriptions, and theory presented throughout the volume. Despite its importance and wide-spread adoption, there remains much to learn about Media Education.

The book has both a subject and author index. Each chapter contains its own bibliography.

—Paul A. Soukup, S.J.  
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**Pelton, Joseph, Robert Oslund and Peter Marshall** (Eds.) *Communication Satellites: Global Change Agents*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004. Pp. xix, 387. ISBN 0-8058- 4962-9 (pb.) \$39.95.

How much have communication satellites helped create the global system that now defines all of our lives? According to the authors and editors of this compilation, quite a lot. At the beginning of his introductory chapter, lead author and editor, Joseph Pelton, states his case: “Satellites . . . have made our world global, interconnected, and interdependent. Worldwide access to rapid telecommunications networks via satellites and cables now creates widespread Internet links, enables instantaneous news coverage, facilitates global culture and conflict, and stimulates the formation of true planetary markets” (p. 3). The claim is then detailed in an overview by Pelton, someone eminently qualified because of his almost four decades of technical and policy work on the industry’s evolution. After this condensed overview of the changes that satellites have created and will continue to create, the book is divided into six more sections: technology; history and politics; business, media, and economics; impact on society; future trends; and synthesis and conclusions.

The Technology section contains three chapters with the first two giving an overview of the evolution of communication satellites from the very first experiment in



1958 through the current generation of satellites that carry DTH (Direct to Home) TV and satellite radio as well as broadband services for mobile phone users. All of the description of the satellites themselves, the services they provide, and the development of the institutions that controlled this development are provided in such abbreviated form that the reader who is new to the field may have difficulty grasping a solid historical sense of changes over time. Still, with some attention to detail, the reader would have a sufficiently solid basis for following the remainder of the book. The third chapter on launch vehicles is highly technical and may not be useful for most readers.

Robert Oslund, a co-editor and a colleague of Pelton at George Washington University, writes all three chapters in this section. The first treats the geopolitics of satellites as their development got started in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. These two presidents saw communication technology as instruments of foreign policy and were comfortable with having satellite development and operation in governmental, not private hands. This changed subsequently and there has been an increasing privatization of the industry over the years from 1968 through the Clinton administration so that today international communication operates under private ownership even though regulations are imposed nationally. Oslund also tries to show that although satellites are a radically new form of communication technology, they have inherited a century of technical developments and international politics from the first submarine telegraph cable after the Civil War. His third chapter on the role of the military in the development of satellite technology is brief but touches upon important policy debates over the role of television content in international satellite communication as well as work of spy satellites.

The three chapters in the Business section seem less coherent as a whole though they contain useful information. The first on satellites, Internet, and IP networking focuses on the risk and uncertainty of satellites as a business. It makes clear what previous chapters had highlighted, that fiber and submarine cable had taken over much of the high volume traffic among industrialized countries. The failure of the low orbiting satellites in the 1990s is just one indication of risk, but the lesson has made other satellite developments more questionable. The second chapter tries to demonstrate the benefits of satellite investment but the exposition depends on a series of brief tables without enough supporting argument to convince. The third chapter introduces an area where satellites have made major inroads in the provision of television news to broadcast

and cable systems globally. Though the topic is important, the treatment is limited and perhaps out of place in the section on business and economics.

The section on Impact on Society of satellites is uneven. Pelton in the first chapter raises both the promises and the threats of 21st century developments and demonstrates that he has given considerable thought to both benefits and costs of continued innovations in satellite technology. In the second chapter, Pelton tries to outline the specific promises to the fields of education and health on a global basis. Even though he has personally been involved with these efforts, the chapter is based more on promise than on the concrete achievements of satellite communication, and the chapter is more an exhortation to use satellites for education and health than a useful outline for implementation. The third chapter by Mowlana is difficult to understand, and one wonders how it is related to the other two.

The last two chapters try to summarize both the promise and concerns that satellite technology raises for 21st century technology planners. In the Future of Satellite Systems, Pelton and two Japanese engineering colleagues provide a detailed set of designs for future satellite development. The issue is whether the world's private investors will choose to emphasize satellites or fiber optic cable for greater development over the next several decades. The authors do not answer that question but argue strongly for the benefits of the satellite option. In the final summary chapter, Pelton raises both the promises and the threats of satellites for the present century and ends with a question rather than a prediction: "The true question to ask ourselves—and our economic, social, and political leaders—is not about our information technology [satellites or fiber optic cable], but about our long-term and short-term values" (p. 357). He asks how any communication technology can enhance human learning, health, security, and general prosperity. Even though the book ends with questions, most of its content provides some basis for a positive answer for satellites at the beginning of the present century.

—Emile McAnany  
Santa Clara University

**Schultze, Quentin J.** *Christianity and the Mass Media in America*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. 2003. Pp. viii, 440. ISBN 0-87013-696-8 (hb.) \$84.95.

Since the days of Spiro Agnew, conservatives, particularly religious conservatives, have complained bitterly of unfair treatment at the hands of a liberal

media that is hostile to both religion and traditional values. There have been numerous skirmishes in this ongoing war. As I write this, a Supreme Court nomination battle looms that is likely to be fought along familiar lines. Hence this book seems highly relevant. I was hoping that it would analyze the issues and clarify both contending perspectives. Alas! It falls short in most respects. There's some excellent historical material but I found this book frustrating because it is badly organized, hard to read, and lacking a central focus. The reader has to work hard to deduce the major points.

Although the title says this is a book about Christianity and the media, it is actually a book about:

- Christianity and democracy
- Particular types of Christianity and democracy
- The cultural competition of religious and secular media
- The secular media's coverage of Christianity that the author critiques rather harshly.

The author's major belief that somewhat ties together the sub-themes is that "American democracy depends on religion but not on any particular religious institutions" (p. 7). Although Schultze proclaims this repeatedly in various forms throughout the book, he does not prove his point despite a mass of verbiage, scholarly jargon, and 69 pages of footnotes. He demonstrates that religious views have been central to the American mindset since colonial days but this seems quite different from proving that American democracy depends on religion. Maybe I'm quibbling over words.

From the opening chapter on "Conversing about Faith and Media in America"—essentially a scholarly discussion of the rhetoric that religious people and journalists use—to the final chapter on "Praising Democracy," this book reads more like a collection of articles than a book with a start, a middle, and an end. Exacerbating this problem, the chapters seemed to be presented in random order. For example, in my first draft of this review, I started to quote something about the history of radio and Christianity and something about newspapers and Christianity in the 17th century. The radio material was on page 148 while the newspaper material was on page 269.

This inverted sequencing alone deprives the reader of needed historical context to make sense out of the way federal regulators treated religious radio (see discussion below). Worse still, the author never connects the dots for the reader, even later, when presenting good historical material about the cultural conflict between religious and secular newspapers in the 19th

century. He never returns to the radio material. The reader has to recall the earlier chapter and see that these were two battles in the same cultural war.

Despite these presentation flaws, the historical information on both print and broadcast media is enlightening and generally omitted from standard journalism history texts. Schultze notes that in the U.S. "matters of faith have always been part of the ongoing discourse of public as well as private life" (p. 8). He says that the rhetoric of conversion in Protestantism shaped the nation's cultural discourse and notes that in the 17th century, "the public meaning of news was largely indistinguishable from the religious and theological interpretation of news" (p. 269). American democracy reflected the general religious mindset of its people even as it separated church and state and the nation grew increasingly diverse. In the nation's early days when secular newspapers were in their infancy, the religious press was powerful and widely read (p. 271). During the 19th century, secular newspapers became the mainstream media in America in place of religious papers (p. 265). During the early days of the 20th century, secular newspapers prospered and "the religious press began its steady decline, eventually becoming primarily a servant of church or some charismatic leaders rather than a serious contender for a piece of the increasingly naked public square" (p. 275).

When radio broadcasting began after World War I, religious groups often started small stations. Federal regulation of radio in the 1920s that assigned frequencies to the most powerful commercial stations led to the demise of many of these stations. The author accuses the Federal Radio Commission of treating religious interests unfairly. "Evangelical broadcasters, in particular, discovered that their tribal broadcasts were little more than propaganda in the eyes of the FRC; these broadcasters had little recourse other than to accept the FRC's decision to revoke their licenses or to reallocate them to a frequency that they would have to share with other broadcasters" (p. 148). As a result, evangelicals especially created programs that could compete for audiences in the commercial broadcasting system and learned to master the market system (pp. 151-152). In 1927 about half the stations offered religious programming, much of it paid for by the religious groups (pp. 152-154).

As already noted, textbooks in journalism history hardly mention the history of religious media or the particular impact of broadcast regulation on religious stations and programming. This seems to validate one of Schultze's other central points: that the media tend to marginalize religious communication and do a poor job of covering religion.

The chapter “Discerning Professional Journal-ism: Reporters Adopt Fundamentalist Discourse” suggests that there is a form of journalistic fundamentalism that has “contributed to the privatization and secularization of religion in the United States” (p. 264). Journalists usually reject religious assumptions “in favor of a commonsense objectivity” (p. 277) and focus on statistics, scandals, conflicts, and the like. The author refers to this as “informational fundamentalism” that emphasizes human, not divine actions. “In the reporters’ paradigm, the world is essentially a closed system in which people act and react in an endless chain of causes and effects” (p. 278). Reporters report religion in their own terms, not those of the groups they cover, resulting (Schultze believes) in coverage lacking in depth and understanding.

News reporters ignore stories that point to the meaning of and coherence in life because these topics suggest stability and longevity rather than conflict and change. Not surprisingly, even within the journalistic profession reporters see religion news as haphazard, insensitive and inadequate. (p. 279)

There are numerous other points in this book, some of them interesting, such as the comparison of the way *America*, *Commonweal* and *Christian Century* have critiqued the media. The problem is that these discussions seem like lengthy detours from the rest of the book. After plowing through the entire book, I looked at these and several other chapters and questioned why they were included. I also felt that too much of the book was a one-

sided polemic, specifically the critique of mainstream media religious coverage. It isn’t that the author is necessarily wrong, but a reader would benefit from a responsible journalistic response to the criticism. As a former newspaper religion reporter I can identify with some of the criticisms such as the lowly status of the beat (first job for new reporters in many cases). However any veteran of the religion beat knows that religious news sources often are their own worst enemies. Much like the evangelicals were forced to learn to market their radio programs, responsible church officials need to learn to communicate better via media. A discussion of the role that inept religious news sources play in the poor coverage they receive might have been helpful to both sides and to general readers.

Overall, I wish this had been a better book. I wish that a good editor had cut the text by a third, organized the chapters in a chronology that made sense, and insisted on more tightly focused arguments with more examples to prove the points. Even though there are voluminous notes, the book would be strengthened by adding a bibliography—a curious omission in a book published by a university press. I would recommend this book only to someone with either enormous interest in this topic or to people who are so mad at the media that they are willing to plow through a lot of verbiage to get to the attack pages.

—Eileen Wirth  
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### **Kids’ Media – a Cultural Force or a Commercial Cash Cow**

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