AN ANALYSIS OF MARITAL, SEX
AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF
DRAMATIC CHARACTERS
ON COMMERCIAL
TELEVISION

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The purpose of this pilot study was to examine the characters portrayed on "prime-time" television drama in an attempt to determine how they compared with the distribution represented in U. S. Census Bureau data for sex, marital status and occupational status. In pursuing this objective, it was also concerned with the development of a method of content analysis that would not require use of a videotape recorder.

The sample drawn consisted of 228 television characters from twenty-four hours of evening television dramatic presentations, during the month of October, 1972. The selection of programs was based upon a constructed calendar method. A pretest consisting of a panel of six qualified judges, using the content analysis method defined in this study, was conducted prior to the actual analysis in order to test the suitability of the method. Results of this pretest indicated that the method was reliable. Data gathered from the television analysis were compared to the census data by use of descriptive percentages and the Index of Dissimilarity.

The report is divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents background information relevant to the

study of television and its impact in society. In Chapter II, the pretest is explained. Variables used in the study are defined and their relationship to the thesis is discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the selection of the sample and explaining the exclusion of certain types of programs, the television networks involved, and the time period for the analysis. In Chapter III, the findings are presented and discussed. Television data are compared with census data in terms of marital status, sex and occupational status. The index of dissimilarity between television and census data is described and the indices reported.

Chapter IV includes a summary of the findings, a discussion of the limitations, and suggestions for future study. For the categories of sex, marital status and occupational status, the discrepancies between television data and census data were demonstrated to be significant. The findings of the study indicate that television night-time drama is characterized to a remarkable degree by single, male, professionals, whereas no such stereotype can be inferred from census data, with the possible exception of describing the adult population as typically married.

It is suggested that a more extensive replication of the present study, including the variables of age and race, would reveal additional differences and relationships, and probably would lend validity to the findings of this pilot study. The

audience of television might also be surveyed in order to determine attitudes and patterns of awareness concerning findings in the present study.

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THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Impact of Television

The impact of television on society is probably unmatched by any other medium. In 1967, one study showed that the average American preferred his television set two to one over radios, magazines, movies, newspapers, etc. (5, p. 1). Americans spent an average of 2.41 hours per day in 1967 viewing television (5, p. 4). Simonson says that "television has moved in to fill the vacuum of leisure time. The average person gives more than 50 per cent of this leisure time to television " (6, p. 29). In terms of socialization

> A child normally begins to watch television long before he can either read or attend school. Through his school years the average student spends far more time per year (about 1,200 hours) with television than in classes. The situation is even more pronounced in preschool and post school years. So it would be strange if television's influence were not one of the most powerful forces, educational or antieducational, which shapes young lives. (7, p. 157).

Concerning television's role in socialization,

> Television is simultaneously the result of and the instrument for producing the character needed to live in much of the current American world, to be responsive to and dependent on television, well trained in this, is to be able to live much more easily in our society (2, p. 180).

According to a report of a Congressional Committee, "television viewing alone occupies nearly one-fourth of the waking hours of the average American (Report 572, p. 11, of the 9th Congress) " (4, p. 5.).

Considering the time spent in front of the television set and its possible effects, it must be said that TV's didactic function has by no means been fully realized. This is mainly due to the commercial structure of three of the four major television networks.

> If television can be said to have any values at all, it is those of the salesmen, big businessmen, manufacturers, and showmen who control it--essentially materialistic values. And like those who control it, television shuns everything which does not fit with these values (7, p. 151).

The above quotation is an indication of how television conforms to capitalistic values. Skornia goes on to say that television is hampered in almost all educational attempts by its sponsors. This does not mean that television is an empty force. In fact, radio and television not only can and do teach, they cannot avoid it. "There is no longer any question of <u>whether</u> they teach. It is only a question of <u>what</u> they teach, whether intentionally or unintentionally " (7, p. 143).

It is the purpose of this paper to analyze certain unintentional aspects of what television teaches, in terms of the distribution of occupations, sex, and marital statuses represented by the major characters depicted in the medium's dramatic offerings.

The Study of Television

Television and its content are two different entities that work both together and separately to produce varying effects. Television is the most advanced tool for transmitting messages to masses of people. It presents both audio and visual signals, separately and together, to the largest audience possible. "In television there occurs an extension of the sense of active, exploratory touch which involves all the senses simultaneously . . . and it demands participation and involvement in the depth of the whole being. It engages you." (3, p. 125).

Television is also the only medium whose content presents every type of communications program. It provides news, musical entertainment, comedy, drama, sports, adventure, documentary, live events, advertisements, and the weather, to name a few. From such a great variety of program types, the problem of designing a method of analysis presents a long and tedious task. However, the difficulties posed in analyzing television as a whole should not discourage any attempt to study its parts. For it is through an understanding of the parts of any system or structure that an understanding of the whole can be achieved.

Television has been studied and analyzed extensively in terms of its effects and its importance. Many studies concern the impact of television as a communication medium. However, most "content" studies have been based on audience

surveys, with emphasis upon such considerations as the reaction of the audience to TV content and to their favorite programs, as well as to determine what they watch. In fact, the program content of television relies in part upon the results of audience surveys that are continuously conducted by the commercial polling and rating agencies. Such programming controls are based upon what the audience selects to watch from the existing programs, and can give little information about what an audience might really like to see. It would therefore seem that television programming based upon audience surveys represents one more version of the self-fulfilling prophecy. American television for the most part is a commercial venture, and it is the commercial nature that governs its content. Programs are presented to the public; the public is then surveyed to find which ones are watched (not how well they are liked as a rule), or what unprogrammed alternatives they might prefer.

The actual subject matter of television has for the most part been neglected in scientific study. Most content analysis has been done by the popular critics, who center their investigations upon such things a thematic and actor analysis. The quality of a program is judged in terms of its dramatic success. The problem with the popular critic is that he centers his investigation upon personal value orientations that preclude scientific replication.

Herbert Gans points out in an article in the American Journal of Sociology (1) that there is a current famine of

research in the field of mass communications, especially research using the technique of content analysis. Gans states that "mass media research should . . . be part of the study of American society and culture as a whole, but this large subject has, perhaps because of its vastness, not been popular with sociologists, or with anthropologists" (1, p. 700). Review of the literature by the present author corroborates his point, and it applies with special intensity to television. So it would certainly seem that fresh efforts in the content analysis of television would be valuable in helping to remedy the present gap.

Before proceeding it should be noted that Gans contends that "content analysis off the television screen is almost impossible, except for the researcher who has the funds to obtain videotape machines" (1, p. 698). He suggests that the analyst misses too much in a single viewing. He must review programs with the help of a recorder. Small units of observation, such as words or symbols, do require videotaping, thus assuring that all available information in a program will be reliably recorded. However, as will be discussed later, the study of larger units of observation, such as the variables that surround a character, can indeed be investigated without mechanical recording assistance.

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The Pretest

As noted, the present researcher attempted to forgo use of a videotape recorder. To test the reliability of the non-videotape method, and to insure the adequacy of the primary analyst for the study to follow, a pretest was arranged.

As with previous content analysis of television dramas, such as those by Head (7) and DeFleur (5), the pretest used a panel of college student judges. It was an effort to appraise the utility of the actual test that followed. The panel consisted of six judges, including the primary analyst. Two of the judges were college seniors and four were college graduate students. The task posed by the research design was to identify the major characters appearing in three hours of prime time television drama. On a mimeographed form the judges were asked to categorize the characters according to their occupation, sex, and marital status. Written instructions were given to each judge for study prior to the test (see Appendix A). The primary analyst explained the instruction sheet to each judge. The programs to be tested were selected to give a variety, including

both comedy and non-comedy. The programs selected were presented during prime time (7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.) on Friday, September 22, 1972. This included two hours of comedy and one hour of drama. All judges were in attendance, but each viewed the programs independently in his own home.

In earlier studies, the methods of tabulation for pretests varied as did the results. In Head's "Content Analysis of Television Drama Programs,"

> the data of the study are based on the observations of a single coder. Reliability of his decisions was estimated by checking eight typical content categories against the decisions of an independent observer in a special sample of 20 programs. . . . The agreement between the observers varied from 100 per cent in identification of the protagonist to 62 per cent in identification of the emotional intensity with which acts of crime and violence were depicted. On the less subjective categories, agreement was 90 per cent or better (7, p. 180).

In DeFleur's "Occupational Roles as Portrayed on Television,"

> a subsample of 5 per cent of the programs was viewed by an independent observer trained in the [evaluation] techniques. The reliability of the procedure was estimated by comparing the records of specific occupational portrayals obtained from these analysts working independently. On a preselected list of characteristics, the judgements of the analysts were uniform in more than 90 per cent of the cases (5, p. 62).

In the above two studies, 90 per cent agreement between the pretest analysts was considered sufficient to warrant use of the procedure. It was decided that this 90 per cent level of agreement should be the determining factor in

warranting application of the pretest technique in the present study.

It was further decided that since the primary analyst in the present study might not be as accurate in the technique of content analysis as those in previous studies, a method of tabulation of the pretest results should be such as to show not only the reliability of the method, but also the reliability of the primary analyst. The series of steps that determined the merits of both the method and the primary analyst is outlined below in the discussion of Table I.

TABLE I

RESULTS OF RELIABILITY TEST FOR TELEVISION CONTENT ANALYSIS

Panel Member	Characters (1)	Occupations (2)	Marital status (3)	Total mean (4)
1	86.3	76.2	85.0	82.5
2	86.3	95.2	95.0	92.2
3	86.9	100.0	100.0	95.6
4	92.7	100.0	95.0	95.0
5	84.6	85.7	75.0	82.3
6*	97.8	100.0	100.0	99.3
Total Mean	89.1	92.9	91.6	91.2

*Primary analyst.

Once again, four content variables were counted by all of the panel members: the major characters, their occupations, their marital status, and their sex. Since sex determination poses no problem, it was not included in the table.

Column 1 was determined by tabulating the average number of characters that were counted by all of the panel members. Then the number of characters recorded by each panel member was compared to the average recorded by all the panel members. The results of this comparison are expressed in percentages. For example, panel member number one agreed 86.3 per cent of the time (column 1, row 1) with all the other panel members on the number of characters that could be classified as "major".

To determine column two and three, a different procedure was followed since not all major characters necessarily had a decernable occupation and/or a marital status. It was then decided that the best method of tabulation should be based only upon those characters that could be described as having an identifiable occupation or marital status. A majority agreement (a majority of four) on the part of the six panel members in terms of the type of occupation and/or marital status for a character was necessary for that character to be included in the tabulation of columns three and four. Therefore, not all major characters qualified, although most of them did (21 out of a possible 37).

Next, each panel member was checked to determine the number of times he or she agreed or disagreed with the majority on the marriage and occupational variables for each of the qualifying major characters. This agreement/disagreement differential was then computed into a percentage. The percentages were listed in the appropriate column. After all the rows and columns were completed, the total averages for each was computed. Then a grand total average (column 4, row 7) was computed. The average of 91.2 per cent exceeds the 90 per cent level used in previous studies and qualified the method for use in the actual test of the present study.

Information concerning the merits of the primary analyst as a researcher in content analysis is found in column four, row six. It can be seen that the primary analyst scored higher than the other participants, his judgements in accord with the majority 99.3 per cent of the time.

Definitions of Variables

A key objective of this study is to determine the degree to which characters presented in television dramas reflect the actual sex, occupational, and marital status distribution of people in society. "Society" is defined as that distribution presented in the United States Census Bureau Statistics, for sex, occupations, and marital status. These three variables represent three basic status

considerations. It seems safe to assume that marriage and occupational status reflect social and personal characteristics that are highly rated in the American population for both males and females. In relation to the total population for 1972, only 9.4 per cent of the men over eighteen years of age and 7.4 per cent of the women are not married, or have never been married (16, p. 37). In terms of occupation, only 5.8 per cent of the total population (16, p. 230) are presently unemployed, as of April, 1972, not to mention those unemployed who have at one time been previously employed.

One might expect that the content of popular television dramas would reflect the marriage and occupational proness of the society at large. However, given the commercial nature of television, and the historical role of drama in society, the present thesis is that the correlation between television drama and the societal content will be weak, and that television drama portrays an idealized image of the various roles in society. This is partly due to a long-standing function of drama, which has traditionally presented the "kings and queens" of society. It is also due to the commercial programming and to the stress that is generally placed upon being beautiful and rich. The implication is that these dramas hold out goals to the members of our society which the majority would like to, but in most cases cannot, reach.

The dilemma is similar to one introduced in Robert K. Merton's study of "Social Structure and Anomie." (11, pp. 125-149). Contemporary American culture approximates an extreme type in which great emphasis upon success goals occurs without equivalent emphasis upon the institutional means of achieving these goals. This means-end anomaly that Merton hypothesizes applies only to the occupation variable in the present analysis of course, not to the marriage variable. It is hypothesized that television presents the more prestigious and adventure type occupations rather than the less prestigious, non-glamorous ones.

For marital status, it is hypothesized that marriage on television is deemphasized.

> Romance appears to be principally a premarital phenomenon, or one experienced with someone else's husband or wife. The pleasures and joys of married life itself are rarely shown. In fact marriage appears to dampen romantic and love interests considerably (12, p. 155).

From the above quotation, one could also hypothesize a high incidence of divorced characters on television.

The variables used for analysis in this project can be operationally defined to insure consistency and reliability, and such definitions will be used. By way of introduction, however, the following discussion of the thesis variables suggest broader relevance than operational definitions make possible.

Barnet and others, in A Dictionary of Literary Terms, define drama as "A presentation wherein actors imitate for

spectators a deed ('drama' is derived from Greek dran,'to do') by gestures and/or words " (1, p. 31). They go on to list two chief dramatic divisions of drama, tragedy and comedy, which they also define. Tragedy "is generally a play ending with death, or . . . ending with the hero alive but spiritually crushed " (1, p. 87). Comedy is defined as "anything amusing" or as "a kind of drama wherein the audience is amused " (1, p. 18). Also, different types of comedies and tragedies are listed, such as romantic comedies, critical comedies, rogue comedies, comedies of humors, situational comedies, the farce, slapstick, high and low comedy, restoration comedy, comedies of manners and wit, heroic tragedy, bourgeois tragedy, pantomine, miracle plays, mystery plays, morality plays, the masque and the anti-masque, melodrama, the problem play, and the closet drama. There is even the special case of tragicomedy.

As can be seen, the definition of drama is a problem in its own right. When drama is placed in the realm of television, it becomes even more problematic. However, by taking the Barnet definition of drama at face value ("A presentation wherein actors imitate for spectators a deed . . . by gestures and/or words"), many of the various television presentations would seem to fall comfortably within the broad confines of this definition. In fact, any presentation where an actor is playing a part could be included. Nonetheless, considering all the different types

of comedy and tragedy that fall under the heading of drama, it would be hard to justify all television presentations using actors as dramatic. Moreover, there are probably many critics who would flinch at the idea of any television presentation being dramatic. So, for the present analysis, an operational definition of drama is needed--one that is loose enough to include a diverse sample of television programs.

Definitions of marital status differ not only from culture to culture, or from country to country, but in some instances from town to town, family to family, and individual to individual. For example,

> In examining the relationship of the couple in the kibbutz who share a common marriage, and whose sexual union is socially sanctioned, it is discovered that only one of these two criteria--the sexual--applies. [(The two criteria for marriage as discussed by Spiro are the sexual and the economic.)] Their relationship does not entail economic cooperation. If this be so . . . there is no marriage in the kibbutz, if by "marriage" is meant a relationship between adults of opposite sex, characterized by sexual and economic activities. Hence, the generalization that, "marriage, thus defined, exists in every known society," has found an exception (13, p. 502).

The same may also apply in the case of divorce. However, for single and widowed persons the definitions are more universal.

The definition of occupation poses the problem: "What is an occupation?" Occupation could be merely what a person happens to be doing at a given time, such as playing golf,

eating, or even watching television. More conventionally, occupation refers to a person's job, work, or "living".

Operational Definition of Variables

The problem of defining variables is such that focused understanding requires operational definitions. Bernard Berelson's definition of content analysis as "a research technique for objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" gives the basic guideline for the present study (2, p. 18). Objectivity suggests that all important variables in the investigation be defined to insure reliability. Systematic suggests that all content that is relevant to the hypothesis be analyzed. This necessitates a certain amount of qualification. The limitations used in the present analysis are intended to insure not only brevity and relevance, but also ease of quantification. Quantification is the element of content analysis that insures scientific objectivity and replication. Following then, are the operational definitions of the variables under analysis. These variables represent the units that are to be used for quantitative evaluation of the hypothesis being tested.

In the present study, the "character unit" of analysis is most appropriate for the variables to be tested, since it is a salient unit and easily recognized in a single viewing. This concept was developed by Bernard Berelson (2).

It refers to the specific characterizations in an entire story, movie, or television program.

In accordance with the Reliability Test Instruction Sheet for Television Content Analysis (see appendix A), the operational definitions of major characters and of sex, occupation, and marital status variables, proved to be the same in the pretest as the actual test in most cases. A major character was defined as any identifiable character appearing throughout the play for more than three minutes; he must be easily recognized, usually have a speaking part, and be eighteen years old or over. Some of the panel members in the pretest suggested that the three minute minimum time limit was too long. At times, all the variables were revealed for a character who did not participate enough to meet the three minute test. Taking this into consideration, the actual requirement was altered to include all those characters who were easily identified according to sex, occupation, and marital status, plus those on camera for three minutes or more, regardless of the other variables, as major characters. The age requirement remained the same due to the eighteen year old limit set by census figures on occupational and marital status. It is worth noting that the panel had no problem in determining age.

Sex is simply defined as male or female gender.

Occupation is defined as the job function of any character. Certain qualifications were necessary for classification purposes. If there was any problem identifying an occupation, it was left blank. If a character was involved in more than one job, each was marked full time or part time in the pretest. Only the full time jobs, however, were considered in the tabulation of the pretest and the actual test. Previous occupations that the character might have held were ignored, but changes in occupations were recorded. (References to earlier occupations sometimes occurred in the dialogue.) Both tests were concerned mainly with the present primary occupation of the character.

Criminal occupations posed special problems. They were counted in the pretest but not in the actual test. They were excluded from the latter due to the lack of census statistics on professional criminals. The Census Bureau only prepares tabular information for occupations that are considered legitimate. Other sources of statistics could be useful in the present study, but their reliability can be questioned. For example, Sutherland and Cressey note that the "general statistics of crime and criminals are probably the most unreliable and most difficult of all social statistics." They say, "It is impossible to determine with accuracy the amount of crime in any given jurisdiction at any particular time " (14, p. 27). Gibbons states

> Estimates of the extent of illegal behavior must be made from data on those offenses known to the authorities. This is but a small and perhaps biased sample of total crime, and it is exceedingly difficult to gauge the relationship between the two (6, p. 91).

Also, "if statistical data are to be useful in measurement or in testing of hypotheses, the basic unit employed must have the same meaning to all concerned. Criminal statistics generally lack such homogeneity " (8, p. 22). Questionable as crime statistics may seem from these quotations, they do have some value as indicators or indices of criminal behavior, and they are of course the best we have. However, in view of the operational definition of society set forth in this paper (see page 11) current criminal statistics were excluded.

Though they were not considered in tabulating results of the pretest, criminal occupations were included in its application. The panel was asked to list a criminal occupation only if it could be considered as the character's sole occupation, and only if there was no legitimate occupation. It was thought that this would lessen the confusion that might occur when no legitimate occupation was discernable and a criminal occupation was obvious. Although there were only two criminal occupations counted in the three hour pretest, their presence demonstrated the possibility for future analysis of the incidence of criminal occupations on television.

Seven categories were used for classifying marital status. In the pretest the panel members were instructed to make special note of any variations or ambiguities. There were no special cases. In fact, not all of the seven categories were represented in the pretest count. These categories were married, single, engaged, divorced, separated, widowed, and murdered. (The last category was included because of the seemingly high incidence of spousal homicide on television.) Of these seven, murder, separated, and engaged were eliminated in the actual test. Census data for comparative purposes are lacking, nor did either category appear in the pretest. The operational definitions for the remaining marital status categories were as follows:

1. Married-- It was assumed that couples living together were married unless otherwise specified in the play. The opposite assumption was made for groups; group marriages had to be specified as such.
2. Single --A single person was defined as an unattached individual. There may have been a love relationship, but unless a couple were living together the individual was classified as single.
3. Divorced --The divorced status must have been identified in some manner.

4. Widowed --The character had to have been married to a partner who dies during the play or whose earlier death is clearly implied.

5. Not Classified --If there was no observable marital status, then the marital status was marked as "not classified" for the character.

Category identifications for each of the variables in this study were determined by either verbal or symbolic cues. The divorced category was subjected to a definition that relied heavily on the dialogue of the play, while the remaining three--married, single, and widowed--relied mainly upon the action and the situation of the play. Nonetheless, as the pretest revealed, trouble in identifying any of the categories only rarely occurred.

Selection of the Sample

The sample for the present analysis was chosen from television programs of the dramatic type made especially for television. This necessarily required the elimination of several other kinds of television presentations, but an examination of all the possibilities would call for research strategies beyond present resources. As in previous studies, "films made originally for theatrical exibition" were eliminated (7, p. 176). In the case of television movies, an announcement is invariably made prior to the

especially for television. These announcements are sometimes also listed in TV Guide magazine, and such productions were easily identified for the analysis.

Programs that were not scheduled on a regular weekly basis, or "specials", as they are commonly called, were eliminated. As with movies, these special programs were identified either in the TV Guide or by the network as a special.

Programs that were not of the dramatic type were eliminated, such as sports events, news shows, quiz and panel shows, and variety shows. Some dramatic performances were not included because of their temporal setting. These were the historical and futuristic shows like westerns and dramas about outer space. If a dramatic performance was surrealistic or bizarre, it was also eliminated, except those taking place in a modern or present day setting. (A contemporary setting for this study is defined as a five-year period between 1967 and 1972.) In the pretest a program called "Ghost Story" had a present day situation, but references to the past and to the future occasionally occurred for story line purposes. In cases such as this, only the present was analyzed. There were usually no actual dates presented, but the time period could be determined from verbal references made by the actors from the visual setting, or by automobile models, clothing styles, hair styles, architecture, or even the theme of the play. For these

reasons it was necessary to watch all the shows scheduled during the time period set for the analysis to determine which programs were of the dramatic type, and which depicted a modern setting.

Two other types of programs were eliminated from the study, though they could be classified as dramatic presentations. These were programs designed for local consumption and ones that were not complete in each episode--serial dramas, or soap operas. Programs such as these did not pose a problem since none were scheduled during the time alloted for the actual test. Moreover, local stations seldom originated dramatic shows, and soap operas are usually presented in the daytime.

Thus the program in the universe to be sampled is defined as a network-distributed drama series whose story line is complete in each episode, prepared specifically for television, on a weekly schedule, reflecting present-day marital situations and occupations.

There are four major television networks: The American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), the Columbia Broadcasting Company (CBS), and the Public Broadcasting System (PBS). The latter includes National Educational Television (NET). In the Dallas-Fort Worth viewing area, where the present study took place, there were seven local broadcasting stations, represented by their call letters and their channel numbers:

for Dallas these included KDFW-TV, Channel 4, CBS; WFAA-TV, Channel 8, ABC; KERA-TV, Channel 13, PBS; KBFI-TV, Channel 33, an independent station; and KDTV, Channel 39, another independent station. Fort Worth stations included WBAP-TV, Channel 5, NBC, and KTVT-TV, Channel 11, an independent station. Of these seven, only three, WBAP, WFAA, and KDFW, scheduled programs that were current and made for national consumption. With the help of TV Guide magazine and previous knowledge, it was noted that the independent stations carried programs that were usually old reruns of previous national network series, or shows produced mainly for local consumption. The PBS station, KERA, had only one dramatic type program, "Masterpiece Theater," a serial. So, PBS was eliminated. Three major national networks were finally chosen for the analysis, NBC, CBS, and ABC.

Besides limiting the type of program to be analyzed, it was also necessary to limit the time for the programs to be analyzed. The optimum sample for this study includes, at the most, three hours of viewing per viewing session. In the pretest, all the panel members agreed that it would be difficult for an analyst to give his complete attention for longer than three consecutive hours. The problem was to select a three hour time period that would have the largest audience. In DeFleur's study, the "programs for analysis were selected from those broadcast during the hours when children were most likely to be viewing" (5, p. 60).

Since the present study is interested in the larger "family" audience, the time chosen for analysis was designed to maximize the likelihood of such an audience.

In television, "prime-time" refers to the block of time when there is the largest viewing audience. This occurs in the evening when most of the working people are at home and before all the children are put to bed. "In the winter months, during the three prime-time hours, more than three-fifths of all the homes in America will be watching television " (10, p. 6). Also, "more than 90 per cent of those watching television--in winter, well over 50 per cent of all American homes--will watch network programs during the prime-time hours." (10, p. 7) For the Dallas-Fort Worth area and the three networks involved, prime-time falls conveniently between the evening and late news broadcasts. Channel 8 presents its local and national news for an hour, between 6:00 and 7:00 P.M. In order to give equal time to all the networks, plus standardizing the analysis time for all, the hours between 7:00 and 10:00 P.M. were chosen for study.

The national networks schedule programs on a week to week basis. It was decided that a week of programs for each network would include almost every dramatic presentation broadcast by each of the three networks. However, one limiting factor in the analysis of an entire week of broadcasting must be considered. It was assumed that the average

American family, as a whole, does most of its television viewing at night and on weekdays. This preserves the weekends for "extra-television" activities, such as going to the movies, to church, to parties, and entertaining friends. This assumption implies that the weekend, though it may have approximately the same number of viewers, has different kinds of viewers. Thus to insure homogeniety in the sample's audience, it was decided to limit the analysis to weekdays--Monday through Friday.

Television is, of course, a timely media. Like most of the others, it is concerned with what is popular, what is current, and what will attract the largest audience. As tastes change, programming changes. Again, ratings contribute to this pattern. In the past, most program changes were on a year to year basis. The arrival of new programs became a special event, usually taking place in the Fall. For example, in the selection of the programs to be viewed for the present study, the September 9-15, 1972, TV Guide magazine was used. This issue of TV Guide (15) was a special one listing and explaining the new programs scheduled for what was described as "a better than average season." The new shows were to make their debut during the week of September 9-15, but the present analysis did not take place during this first week of the "new season." It was thought that the first programs might not be representative of what each program would be like when it "settled down" to its most

typical weekly activity. Also, being a preview of what was to come, new programs would try to put their "best foot forward" in order to attract viewers for the rest of the season, thus presenting a non-typical situation.*

One reason for picking the Fall season for analysis was that the percentage of television viewers during prime-time hours is nearly twice as high in the fall and winter months as in the spring and summer months, based upon statistics collected by the A.C. Nielson Corporation (3, p. 71). The present study was arranged to begin on the third week of the season, Monday, October 2, 1972, and to end on Friday, October 20, 1972. However, after scheduling the programs to be monitored, it was discovered that on Friday, October 20, the last day of analysis, NBC was presenting three one-hour "specials" in place of its regular features. So, instead of rescheduling all of the other networks and dates, and to standardize the monitoring times, the analysis began on Friday, September 20, 1972, and ended on Thursday, October 19, 1972. (see diagram, p. 30)

The strategy for selecting the programs to be analyzed was based on a method developed by Jones and Carter (9). Past studies have used a table of random numbers to select

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*While this paper is being written, television programming is changing. Many of the so-called "new shows" that were presented at the time of the analysis have been canceled. It seems that the concept of a second season in television is being introduced with the replacement of unpopular programs. New shows are now presented sometimes to substitute for other new shows that did not attract a large enough audience. This is due mainly to the competition for viewers among the networks.

programs from a prepared list. DeFleur (5) selected half-hour segments and Head (7) listed entire programs. Thus, the research design used by both men called for relatively large samples. DeFleur had 250 half-hour segments in his analysis, and Head studied a total 209 hours of drama. Although the present study was limited to an optimum of forty-five hours of programming, the Jones-Carter method nevertheless enabled an analysis of every dramatic presentation offered by the three major networks.

This method is discussed briefly by Richard W. Budd and others in Content Analysis of Communications (4). In Chapter Four, on sampling, the authors discuss special problems concerning the selection of "issues" or dates of titles for study. Since television programs can be considered "issues" presented on certain dates throughout the calendar year, it was decided that the method described below by Budd would, with slight modifications, serve adequately for the selection of the television programs analyzed in the present study.

> In the case of daily newspapers or daily radio broadcasts, a common sampling unit is the calendar date. One approach to sampling dates, which has been tested for validity, is the constructed time period. This method of sampling was devised by Carter and Jones in a study devoted to procedures for determining the size of a newspaper's news hole. [(News hole is a term that describes the ratio of editorial content and advertising in newspapers and magazines.)] They created an artificial week consisting of six days, Monday through Saturday, by drawing calendar dates randomly from a three-week period

> (the defined universe). To ensure an equitable distribution over the three-week period, the authors stipulated that not more than two days could be drawn from any one calendar week. In other words, the universe was stratified by both days and weeks to ensure an equal distribution of both (4, p. 27).

The present analysis used this Jones-Carter method, with some adjustments to fit the sample. The hypothetical week consisted of five days. There were three metworks to be analyzed. To ensure an equitable distribution and to ensure that all programs series of the dramatic type were included, three hypothetical week periods, consisting of five days each, Monday through Friday, were formulated or "constructed." One of the stipulations of the method is that "not more than two days could be drawn from one calendar week" (4, p. 27). In accordance with this rule, the present study stipulates that not more than two days can be drawn in any week for any one television network. However, all three networks were included in each week of the time period, but only one network was studied for each date selected. In other words, for each evening of analysis, one network was analyzed. This made it possible to include in the three week sample all of the dramatic presentations aired by the three networks (See Appendix C). The following diagram may clarify the method of selection. For each date, a network was chosen for analysis.

Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Sept. 29 NBC	Oct. 2 ABC	3 CBS	4 NBC	5 ABC
Oct. 6 CBS	9 NBC	10* NBC	11 CBS	12 NBC
Oct. 13 ABC	16 CBS	17* ABC	18 ABC	12 CBS

*The networks studied on the tenth and the seventeenth were switched due to the world series baseball game presented on the seventeenth by NBC.

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CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

The following discussion will proceed from general to more specific analysis of the data. Findings from the television content analysis will be compared with census data for the American population at large. United States data are taken primarily from the 1970 Census of the Population in various publications of the U. S. Census Bureau. For brevity, data derived from the television analysis will be termed simply "television data" and that from the U. S. Census will be termed "census data".

The discussion of thesis variables will note the relationships or discrepancies between census and television data primarily through the use of descriptive percentages.

Since this method of analysis does not provide a summarizing measure, an index of dissimilarity, as discussed in Urban Society, by Gist and Fava (2, pp. 140-142), was calculated. (See Appendix B, Table IX) The index is defined as

> a measure of the extent to which two distributions are nonoverlapping, that is, dissimilar. It is defined as one-half the sum of the absolute values, expressed in percentages of the differences between the respective distributions. . . . The index may range from zero, meaning the distributions of the population are identical, to 1.00 (100 per cent), meaning the distributions are completely dissimilar, totally segregated (2, p. 140).

The following example demonstrates the method of tabulation involved for marital status.

Marital Status	Television	Census	Difference
Single	55.5%	16.8%	38.7%
Married	34.8	70.9	36.1
Divorced	6.8	8.8	2.0
Widowed	3.2	3.5	.3
	100.0%	100.0%	77.1%

The index of dissimilarity for marital status, then, is one-half of 77.1 per cent, or 38.6 per cent. In other words 38.6 per cent of the characters in television drama would have to be reclassified to be identical to the census distribution for marital status. The index for each variable follows in the discussion.

Sex

All of the characters in the television data were classified according to their sex. The total number of major characters was 228. Of this 228, sixty-five per cent were male and thirty-five per cent female. For the census data 47.4 per cent were male and 52.6 per cent female (5, p. 24). The index of dissimilarity between television and census data for sex was 17.6 per cent. Television represents the males at a ratio of two to one over females, whereas the census ratio is about one to one. This certainly suggests that night-time television drama is a male-dominated medium. It would seem likely that more males than females

watch television during the evening, leaving daytime television to the prevailing interests of women. In fact, Leo Bogart corroborates this point:

> During the daytime women viewers predominated. Children tend to take over the sets in the late afternoon. The evening audience is a general family audience. In the late evening hours, men assume a small majority among the viewers (1, p. 38).

Marital Status

The Bureau of the Census divides marital status into four categories: single, married, divorced, and widowed. The people of the United States may be considered marriage-prone, since 70.9 per cent of the population is classified as married and 83.2 per cent as having been married at least once. This leaves only 16.8 per cent of the eligible population classified as single, as shown in table II below.

TABLE II

MARITAL STATUS FOR TELEVISION AND CENSUS DATA*

	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
Television**	55.5	34.8	6.4	3.2
Census	16.8	70.9	8.8	3.5

*Source: For television, the content analysis of prime-time television dramas. For Census, U. S. Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of United States, 1972, (Washington, 1972) p. 37.

**Not classified excluded from television data.

Although married-life prevails off the screen, single-life is the prevailing pattern on television. Over half, 55.5 per cent, of the television population was single. More than twice as many singles were depicted on television than found in society at large. The category "engaged" represented eight per cent of those that were classified on television, but since the census data does not identify the engaged, they were combined with the single category in the television data. Whereas only 44.5 per cent of the television characters were married or had been married, the figure was almost twice as high for the census data. Percentagewise, the status of television characters and their audience are at opposite poles in terms of marital status.

However, this anomaly is less pronounced for the divorced and the widowed. Television and the census are about equal in the widowed category, while the ratio is approximately three for television to four for the census in the divorced category. The percentages in Table II exclude those television characterizations that displayed no marital status. A total of thirty-one per cent could not be accurately classified in terms of marital status. Again, the index of dissimilarity for marital status was 38.6 per cent.

Occupational Status

The occupations of the major characters on television were classified according to the U. S. Census categories

developed by Alba Edwards in 1943 (3, p. 90). Obviously, specific occupations included in these categories have been subject to change throughout the years. However, the categories themselves, as used by the Census Bureau, have remained constant for the most part, making historical comparisons possible.

Perhaps the most critical flaw affecting their use concerns the occupational grouping for women. In the professional categories, for example, nurses and high school teachers--who are mostly female--share the same position as medical doctors and college professors, who are mostly male. In the service category, policemen, detectives, and private investigators are included, though some observers would prefer to place them, or some of them, in a higher class ranking. Nonetheless, these categories are the only ones readily available when census data are used. This does not resolve all the problems inherent in their shortcomings, but for the sake of consistency and in view of the lack of resources available to the present researcher for constructing new categories, the 1972 census occupational categories have been used in the present study.

The categories are shown in Table III. In order to determine the appropriate category for the occupation of each television character, the Classified Index of Occupations and Industries (4) was used. This publication enabled a categorization of all the occupations subject to observation

in the analysis, with the exception of housewife. In the television data, housewives had to be added to the "not classified" category for comparative purposes, because the Census Bureau ignores the housewife as an occupation. For illustrative purposes, however, a total of eight characters were classified as housewives in the television data, or five per cent. Though census data for housewives are lacking, common sense suggests a much larger percentage. The percentage of characters on television having no discernable occupation, or "not classified," was twenty-five.

TABLE III

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS FOR TELEVISION AND CENSUS DATA*

	1**	2	3	4	5	6	7
Television***	45.4	15.7	9.9	1.2	3.0	23.6	1.2
Census	14.3	9.7	24.2	13.1	16.4	13.7	7.6

*Source: For television, the content analysis of prime-time television dramas. For Census, U. S. Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of United States, 1972, (Washington, 1972), table 366, p. 230.

**1, Professional; 2, Managerial; 3, Clerical; 4, Crafts; 5, Operatives; 6, Service; 7, Labor.

***Not classified excluded for television data.

As seen in Table III, almost half, 45.4 per cent, of the total number of occupations that were classified fell into the professional category for the televisions data. Professionals in the census data make up only about one-third of the working population. The largest category in the census data is clerical (still only 24.2 per cent), but it ranks only fourth on television. The lowest ranking categories for the television data are labor and crafts (each 1.2 per cent). Labor is also the least frequently represented category in the census, while crafts rank third from the bottom. The index of dissimilarity for occupational status demonstrates that 46.5 per cent of the characters in television drama would have to be reclassified to match the census distribution.

Television tends to overrepresent the so-called white-collar occupations, especially the professions. Seventy-one per cent of television's population fits into the white-collar occupations--professional, managerial, and clerical. Of the remaining twenty-nine per cent, the service category is well in the majority, composing 23.6 per cent of the total. Interestingly enough, the service category is made up largely of white-collar service occupations, such as police, detectives, and private investigators, thus again making television almost entirely a white-collar medium. Even if the same service occupations could actually be called white-collar in the census data, the white-collar population

for the census would still fall far short of the television data in percentage representation. By presenting such a lopsided majority of white-collar types, television neglects a large range of occupational types found in the communities where its dramas are viewed.

From the forgoing discussion, it can be seen that television characterization is primarily made up of males, single people, and professionals. Whereas, society consists of a majority of married people, the distribution for sex and occupations are more evenly dispersed. So, it could be hypothesized with safety that television bears a very weak if not a negative correlation to the "real" composition of society in terms of the three thesis variables. Dramatically, television does not represent the society of which it is a part. The remaining discussion raises further questions concerning the nature of this incongruity between television portrayals and census statistics, through use of combinations of the basic variables at issue.

Sex and Marital Status

Table IV shows that the males on television are predominantly single (62.5 per cent) while in the census data they are predominantly married (74.1 per cent). The females on television are for the most part equally matched for single (44.1 per cent) and married status (45.8 per cent), but in the census data the married females, not surprisingly, are as numerous as their male counterparts.

TABLE IV

SEX AND MARITAL STATUS
FOR TELEVISION AND
CENSUS DATA*

Marital Status	Television** Male	Female	Census Male	Female
Single	62.5	44.1	19.9	14.1
Married	28.1	45.8	74.1	68.1
Divorced	5.2	8.5	2.9	4.0
Widowed	3.2	1.7	3.1	2.1
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source: For television, the content analysis of prime-time television dramas. For Census, U. S. Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of United States, 1972 (Washington, 1972) p. 37, table 45.

**Not classified excluded for marital status.

As noted earlier, the widowed category for television more closely approximates the percentage found in census data. The ratio between male and female divorcees is also more equitable between television and the census. There remains, however, a much higher percentage of divorced people on television than represented in the census data. In fact, there are more divorced women portrayed on television than for both sexes combined in the census data. Overall, the ratios found in society and on television for marital status and sex are shown to be two different entities. According to any functional analysis of society, one would have to presume that they were drawn from very dissimilar social milieux.

It should be noted that single males dominate on television in overwhelming fashion. (See Appendix B, Table VII.) Married males and both single and married females are rather equally represented. On the other hand, the census data show dominance for neither sex in any category except for divorced women.

Sex and Occupation

The highest percentage of female occupations is found in the professions on television (47.9 per cent), whereas the highest percentage of women are found in the clerical category in census data (42.2 per cent). See Table V. Clerical females do in fact draw a fairly high representation on television (31.3 per cent), but females linked to crafts, to operatives, and to labor are almost non-existent. Females in the service category also rank high both in the census data and on television.

TABLE V

SEX AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS FOR TELEVISION AND CENSUS DATA*

Occupational Status	Television**		Census	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Professional	44.4	47.9	14.0	15.0
Managerial	20.5	4.2	13.3	4.2
Clerical	.9	31.3	13.2	42.0
Crafts	1.7	0.0	20.5	1.2

TABLE V--Continued

Occupational Status	Television** Males	Females	Census Males	Females
Operatives	4.3	0.0	18.5	12.9
Service	26.5	16.7	8.4	22.3
Labor	1.7	0.0	12.3	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source: For television, the content analysis of prime-time television dramas. For Census, U. S. Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of United States, 1972, (Washington, 1972) p. 230, table 366.

**Excludes not classified for occupational status.

Males also rank high in the professions (44.4 per cent) on television. In fact, they are represented roughly the same as females in this category. Nonetheless, the crafts on television, along with clerical workers, operatives, and labor are grossly under represented for the males. The most equitable category for males is the managerial class, which is also true for females. Males, however, are over represented on television in this category when compared to their census enumeration.

Again, the service category is biased by the many police detectives and officers found on television, and these are overwhelmingly male. On the other hand, the census service category has a higher percentage of females than males. In the census data the percentage of

workers in each category is quite similar for males except in the service category where their percentage drops to only 8.4. Females are strongly over represented in census data in the clerical category. Thus, females are represented more accurately on television than males. For the latter, the only category approaching equitability is again the managerial one. Overall, one is struck by the weak relationship between television and census data for sex and occupational status.

For the total population, (Appendix B, Table VIII), the percentages of males are highest in the professions, followed by the service category, and then the managerial category. Female professionals rank fourth, followed by clerical workers, and then service occupations. From this ranking it can be seen that television is not only made up primarily of single males, but also single professional males. Moreover, men for the most part dominate the world of occupational identity on television, with 70.9 per cent of their total population subject to occupational classification, compared to only 29.1 per cent for females.

Sex, Marital Status and Occupational Status

The combination of all three thesis variables results in the loss of approximately half of the total television population due to the increased influence of unclassified categories. However, the dominance of certain categories

mentioned earlier is not altered. From Table VI, it can be seen that the single, male, professional characterizes 24.3 per cent of the television population. He is followed by the single, male service worker (15.5 per cent)--again, mostly in protective services. Two categories rank third:

TABLE VI

SEX, MARITAL STATUS AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS FOR TELEVISION AND CENSUS DATA*

(Table percentages)

Occupational Status	Television**							
	Single		Married		Divorced		Widowed	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professional	24.3	9.7	3.9	3.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Managerial	9.7	1.9	4.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Clerical	0.0	5.8	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Crafts	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Operatives	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Service	15.5	3.9	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Labor	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sub-Total	51.5	22.4	13.4	5.8	1.0	0.0	2.9	2.9
Total	73.9		19.2		1.0		5.8	

*Source: For television, the content analysis of television prime-time dramas. For Census, U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970, Marital Status, (Washington, 1972) Table 5, p. 142.

**Excludes not classified for occupational status and marital status. N for television equals 101.

TABLE VI--Continued

Occupational Status	U.S. Census							
	Single		Married		Divorced		Widowed	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professional	1.4	1.5	7.3	3.7	.2	.4	.1	.4
Managerial	.4	.2	6.3	.8	.2	.1	.1	.2
Clerical	2.1	4.3	6.8	9.4	.2	1.1	1.1	1.1
Crafts	1.4	.1	11.3	.4	.3	.1	.3	.1
Operatives	2.2	.8	9.4	3.5	.3	.4	.1	.5
Service	1.6	1.5	3.2	3.5	.3	.4	.1	.7
Labor	2.2	.6	4.6	1.0	.2	.3	.1	.4
Sub-Total	11.4	9.0	48.8	22.3	1.8	2.8	1.0	3.4
Total	20.4		71.1		4.6		4.4	

the single female professionals, (made up mostly of nurses and school teachers, joined by two medical doctors and one university professor) and the married male managers.

In the census data in Table VI, married, male craftsmen and operatives along with female married clerical workers made up the largest categories. Thus, while the married, male blue-collar worker is amply represented in census data, he attracts little representation on television. Single professional men dominate that scene. However, single female clerical workers on television and in the census are relatively close in their total percentage, but their married co-workers are not so close in these two settings.

Single female professionals also rank high on television (9.7 per cent), whereas they have a meager representation in the census data (1.5 per cent). Of the divorced and widowed categories, one can see that our television sample pays no attention to the female divorcee, but the census data show that females are more numerous than males in both divorced and widowed categories. Fifteen and one-half per cent of the television population consists of single, male, service workers, an enormous over representation when compared to these same census categories (1.6 per cent). Table VI leads to the conclusion, met before, that television characterizations and the actual American society bear very little relation when compared in terms of sex, marital status, and occupational status.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Summary

One can only assume that television does, in some way, influence its viewers. "How much socializing influence television has is by no means clear--but what is clear . . . is that there is most certainly room for television to have an influence " (6, p. 29). Upon this assumption the present study was undertaken. The general issue raised is this: What relationship does the content of television have with the society of which it is a part? Through the method of content analysis, three basic variables were used to identify the major characterizations used in prime-time television dramas. These variables--sex, occupation, and marital status--are of basic significance in sociological analysis, and the problems of identifying them on television did not prove to be insurmountable.

The method used in the present study was a content analysis modeled after previous analyses conducted by Sidney Head (4) and Melvin DeFleur (2). Only slight modifications were required. The basic element for analysis, as defined by Bernard Berelson (1), was the "character unit." Marital status, sex, and occupations were determined for

each of the major characters appearing in the dramas analyzed. These variables were then compared to the data gathered in 1970 by the United States Bureau of the Census in order to ascertain the degree of congruence between television role representations and those of society at large. The variables were analyzed both separately and in selected combinations.

Before proceeding with the actual content analysis, a pretest was conducted using a panel of five judges. This pretest was designed to test the suitability of the proposed method, and to assess the accuracy of content judgments made by the primary analyst. Findings of the pretest offered support for the reliability of the research strategy. Over ninety per cent agreement among the panel members concerning the observed variables was recorded.

Given the commercial nature of television, a hypothesis was adopted asserting that television drama characterizations would not accurately reflect social structure. Within the context of the variables under analysis, our findings support this thesis in almost every respect.

In terms of sex, the ratio of males to females in the census data is approximately one to one, but on television, the data revealed approximately two males for every female. For marital status, single people were well in the majority on television, whereas in society married people predominate. For occupational status, television is primarily made up

of professionals, especially doctors, nurses, teachers, and lawyers, while society has no truly dominant category. The range is far too great to correspond to the intense "occupational concentrations" found on television.

The typical television dramatic personality could be classified as a single, male, professional person. This pattern is somewhat similar for females, except their representation more closely parallels actual female distributions in the census data. For example, high percentages of female clerical workers and low percentages of female managers were found in both television and census data. It would be impractical to classify a typical person in society from census data--except for marital status where the majority is married--because sex and occupational status are fairly evenly distributed in each category.

Findings in most cases supported the "distortion" thesis--that television does not hold a mirror up to life. One must always bear in mind that the objective of commercial television is to attract as many viewers as possible and to expose this audience to a constant bombardment of advertising. It would almost seem that programmers do not believe their audience wants to see itself dramatized; they prefer to view "kings and queens". Some of the new shows, such as "Sanford and Son" and "All in the Family" of the National Broadcasting Company, may presage a change in television programming, but these shows as yet provide only

token representations of non-glamorous social roles. Thus, if this researcher may include a quotation reflecting personal judgment,

> The greatest single feature depressing quality in television . . . is how many viewers per dollar will determine what will stay on the air. We are prisoners of our commerce-dominated system. Television is getting worse and worse and worse, and . . . it's got to get even worse before it gets better (5, p. 187).

Limitations

The original impetus for conducting a content analysis of television came from an article in the American Journal of Sociology (3) concerning the current famine in communications research. Because of limited previous research, and therefore poorly developed methodology in this area, the present investigation was designed as a pilot study. The enormity of television materials available for analysis in itself imposed a number of limitations on the present study.

Since this was a pilot study of a complex medium with a mass audience, analysis was restricted to the most popular programs the medium has to offer. It was limited to prime-time, or evening programs; dramatic presentations; regularly scheduled programs or series; programs made especially for television; programs dealing with present day situations and settings; and programs presented on the national networks (The American Broadcasting Company, The National Broadcasting

Company, and the Columbia Broadcasting System). As a consequence of these parameters, the analysis does not include daytime programs; news, sports, panel, variety, musical, and special programs; westerns, futuristic and surealistic presentations; movies made for theatrical presentation; and programs designed for local consumption. It also eliminated the local independent television stations and the Public Broadcasting System (educational television). One must recognize that the size of the sample was thus considerably circumscribed.

The unit of analysis-the character unit--limited the number of variables that could be drawn from the programs under investigation. The three variables associated with the major characters were sex, occupation, and marital status. There are numerous other variables that could have been tested, such as age, race, criminal occupations, and even social setting, but the larger the number of variables involved in the observation, the lower the level of reliability involved in recording them. This suggests the utility of a videotape recorder for the content analysis of television. Nonetheless, the present study demonstrated that a content analysis could be conducted without the use of a videotape recorder if the unit of analysis is salient enough, and the variables qualifying the unit are limited.

As it stands, the total number of program hours analyzed was twenty-four, which enabled coverage of each

of the dramatic programs presented by the three major television networks during prime-time weekdays. Weekends were eliminated from the study on the assumption that the weekend television audience varies significantly from weekday viewer patterns, especially due to the added recreational opportunities usually accompanying weekend activity.

The total number of characters observed was 228. However, when the variables were combined and compared, the total population was at times reduced to as low as 101. This was due to the inability to classify some television characters in terms of marital or occupational status. Even so, the data gathered was sufficient to give a reliable indication as to the content of television in terms of the variables tested.

Suggestions for Future Study

Television is one of the most popular forms of home entertainment, very likely the most popular one. However, the amount of scientific research related to this medium is severly limited, extending quite notably to the field of sociology. The method of content analysis is just one of the techniques available for analysis of this medium. Other research methods, such as audience surveys, are available, but have been neglected. As for content analysis, the most current application to television--other than this study--was conducted by Melvin DeFleur in 1964 (2).

It is hoped that the present limited study will give impetus to further investigation into the broad field of television and its programming.

It is suggested that this study be replicated at some future date with the possibility of adding age and race to the test variables. It would also be worthwhile to compare this study to one investigating daytime television. Is the ratio of males to females found in daytime television the same as that for night time television? It would not be surprising to find that daytime TV is oriented toward women to a greater extent. Also, audience reactions to the discrepancies represented in this study constitute another issue to be investigated. The findings represented here should not be too surprising to the avid television viewer, but his attitude toward them is important, especially for future programming decisions. The study of television, then, obviously extends far beyond this analysis; it should eventually encompass every aspect of the medium. The importance of television and its impact upon our society as a socializing agent does not warrant the neglect that it currently receives.

> All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the massage. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments (7, p. 26).

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APPENDIX A

RELIABILITY TEST INSTRUCTION SHEET

FOR TELEVISION CONTENT

ANALYSIS

In the following test, you will be looking for three variables concerning the major characters in television dramas. These three variables are sex, occupation, and marital status.

As the characters appear on the television screen you will fill the appropriate blanks in the analysis sheets provided. The variables in each column may not appear for each character in any particular order. So, the task will be to keep an account going for each character as they appear throughout the play. Some variables may not appear at all and some may change. In the event of a change, make a note below the first entry in the column. In all cases, identify any character that appears throughout the play for more than three minutes and any character that has a major part in the play. Disregard "extras", people with non-speaking, walk-on, or one-line parts, such as army troops, pursuing policemen, and hospital ward patients. The identification of a character may be made through the use of the characters name (no actor's name may be given), a description, or their relation to other characters.

In the event of a flash-back, where events are revealed in a characters past, mark the variables presented as "flash-back" variables if they present a change.

Definitions.

Major character: Any identifiable character that appears throughout the play for more than three (3) minutes that is easily recognized, has a speaking part and is over 18 years old.

Sex: Male or Female (note variations)

Occupations: The work or job function of any character.

1. If there is a problem identifying an occupation, leave it blank.
2. If a character is involved in more than one job, mark it full-time or part-time.
3. Disregard any previous occupations that might be mentioned. You will be interested only in the present occupation of the character and any changes that might occur.
4. Only mark criminal occupations if it is revealed that it is the character's actual occupation, ie, "safe-cracker." Spontaneous crimes will be disregarded. Pay more attention to legitimate occupations.

Marital Status: The following seven categories are to be used for classifying the marital status. Note any variations or ambiguities.

1) Married - If a couple is living together it will be assumed that they are married unless it is specified otherwise in the play. The opposite is true for groups--Group marriages must be specified.

2) Single - An unattached individual. There may be a love situation, but unless a marital relationship is proposed, the individual will be classified as single.

3) Engaged - There must be a proposition for marriage or a verbal identification of engagement.

4) Divorced - It must be identified or signified.

5) Separated - This involves a married person that separated from their spouse pending a divorce or reconciliation.

6) Widowed - This is self explanatory. Sometimes there will be a title given as in "Widow Jones".

7) Murdered Spouse - Here a married person is responsible for the murder of their spouse.

As in the occupation category, a change in marital status should be noted.

Final Note. Do not let previous knowledge of a play or program influence your judgment concerning variables in the play you are viewing. In other words, mark only the variables that appear in the performance you are analyzing. "What you see is what you get."

APPENDIX B

TABLE VII

SEX AND MARITAL STATUS FOR TELEVISION AND CENSUS DATA*

(Table percentages)

Marital Status	Television**		U. S. Census	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Single	38.7	16.8	9.4	7.4
Married	17.4	17.4	35.1	35.8
Divorced	3.2	3.2	1.5	7.3
Widowed	2.6	.6	1.4	2.1
Total	61.9	38.1	47.4	52.6

*Source: For television, a content analysis of prime-time television drama. For census, U. S. Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of United States, 1972 (Washington, 1972) p. 37.

**Excludes not classified marital status.

TABLE VIII

SEX AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS FOR TELEVISION AND CENSUS DATA*

(Table percentages)

Occupational Status	Television** Male	Female	U.S. Census Male	Female
Professional	31.5	13.9	8.6	5.7
Managerial	14.5	1.2	8.1	1.6
Clerical	.7	9.2	8.2	16.0
Crafts	1.2	0.0	12.7	.4
Operatives	3.0	0.0	11.4	5.0
Service	18.8	4.8	5.2	8.5
Labor	1.2	0.0	7.6	.0
Total	70.9	29.1	61.8	38.2

*Source: For television, a content analysis of television prime-time drama. For census, U.S. Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of United States, 1972, (Washington, 1972) p. 230.

**Excludes not classified occupations.

TABLE IX

INDEX OF DISSIMILARITY FOR THESIS VARIABLES*

Sex	17.6%
Marital Status	38.6
Occupational Status	46.5

*The average index of dissimilarity between census and television data was 34.3 per cent. It should be noted that indices in Table IX are subject to the number of categories for each variable. The discrepancy for each variable increases

in relation to the number of categories for each variable. Accordingly, sex has two categories, marital status has six, and occupational status, seven. The index of dissimilarity per category for sex becomes 8.8 (17.6/2), for marital status, 6.7 (38.6/6), and for occupational status, 6.5 (46.5/7).

APPENDIX C

TELEVISION PROGRAMS ANALYZED

Friday, September 29: NBC

7:00 Sanford and Son
7:30 Little People
8:00 Ghost Story

Monday, October 2: ABC

7:00 The Rockies

Tuesday, October 3: CBS

7:00 Maude
7:30 Hawaii Five-O
8:30 The New CBS Tuesday Night Movie

Wednesday, October 4: NBC

7:00 Adam-12
7:30 Madigan

Thursday, October 5: ABC

7:00 Mod Squad
8:00 The Men
9:00 Owen Marshall

Friday, October 6: CBS

None available

Monday, October 9: NBC

None available

Tuesday, October 10: ABC

8:00 Bold Ones

Wednesday, October 11: CBS

8:00 Medical Center
9:00 Cannon

Thursday, October 12: NBC

8:00 Ironside

Friday, October 13: ABC

7:00 Brady Bunch
7:30 Partridge Family
8:00 Room 222
8:30 Odd Couple
9:00 Love, American Style

Monday, October 16: CBS

8:00 Here's Lucy
8:30 Doris Day

Tuesday, October 17: ABC

7:00 Temperatures Rising
9:00 Marcus Welby

Wednesday, October 18: ABC

7:00 Paul Lynde
8:00 ABC Movie

Thursday, October 19: CBS

7:30 Green Acres

Totals: 28 programs
24 hours (appx)

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