

THE SHADOWLAND OF TELEVISION: The Shadow Images of
Unreality as Found in American Corporate Television Production
and the Emphasis on Social Reality in Foreign Broadcast Programming.

by

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Abstract:

This thesis is not an analytical or theoretical study of television. It doesn't attempt to directly measure an audience's response to television programming, nor does it present any significant statistical proof of viewer reaction to television content. Instead this thesis attempts to frame a symbolic relationship between Plato's allegory of the cave and the dichotomy of global television. The earth's television landscape is divided between the corporate-capitalist networks of America and the state-owned or independent broadcasters of the remaining countries. America has always tried to dominate global broadcasting and doggedly attempts to maintain its position of media superiority.

Plato's cave allegory is a classic tale of prisoners held captive below the ground and exposed only to shadow images of an artificial reality. Chained to face the back wall of the cave they can but stare at an endless array of images coming from a parapet screen placed behind them. Even when one of their own kind escapes to the world above and returns to tell of its wonders, he is killed. This thesis will examine four areas of television in order to suggest that America has isolated itself in a cave of artificial televised shadow images and refuses to recognize the reality of circumstances outside this realm. Only during periods of economic recession or social strife has American television escaped its unrealistic mode of thought and become critical of its own society. Otherwise America seems to be overly concerned with programming that portrays families continuously consuming goods, patriotic military actions abroad and a controllable domestic crime problem. The American audience does not want to watch television of a critical nature and seems to prefer programming that is enveloped by traditional American myths.

Outside the confines of America's corporate cave exists a type of television broadcasting that is radically different in its approach to programming. Foreign television uses its own particular cultural experiences as the material basis for creating television content. Despite forty years of massive television exports from America to all parts of the world, the local production of socially relevant programming is still a viable activity. American culture has tried to assert its stance of cultural superiority through the broadcasting system as its programming continually glorifies the "American way of life".

Despite this assault on the senses, foreign audiences respond most favourably to their own cultural experiences on television. This type of programming differs from its American counterpart in that depictions of social classes, urban poverty, the human struggle to survive and similar issues are simply more prevalent. Such realistic media content when broadcast on American television is either of a short duration or evokes a sudden panic reaction and subsequent rejection. The social perspective of the United States is unique and is not a universally shared outlook, although if one were to watch enough American television this conclusion would not be possible. This thesis, above all else, tries to cast doubt on the dominant position of American television and thus portrays it as being held captive by a corporate cave mentality. The Baudrillardian fatalism of the "American model" is not yet a *fait accompli* as global television broadcasting has failed to succumb to this shadowland of commercial culture.

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Table of Contents:

-Abstract	pp.i-ii
-Acknowledgements	p.iii
-Table of Contents	pp.iv-vi
<u>-Introduction</u>	pp1-18
i.The Allegory	p.1
ii.Reality, unreality and the Platonic shadows of American television culture . .	p.2
iii.Media, capitalism and the social nature of mass images	p.9
iv.The myth-driven culture of America	p.11
v.Four areas of television	p.13
<u>-Chapter 1: 'Home and Hearth on Television: Family Life on Television from the 1950's to the 1980's.'</u>	pp19-65
i.American media realism in the 1930's	p.19
ii.Television and the suburban family reality of the 1950's	p.23
iii.Television and domestic stagnation in the 1960's	p.34
iv.The politicized portrayal of family life in the 1970's	p.41
v.The uncritical nature of family drama in the 1980's	p.47
vi.Family realism in the age of postmodernism	p.53
vii.Conclusion	p.55
<u>-Chapter 2: 'All Quiet on the Domestic Front: War and Crime's Depiction on Television from the 1950's to the 1960's.'</u>	pp.66-123
I. War:	
i.Patriotism and war	p.67
ii.Police actions abroad and fear of communism at home	p.68
iii.The Vietnam war early media coverage	p.71
iv.The Tet offensive and stalemate war	p.73
v.Bad press at home and abroad	p.76
vi.Television's influence on the Vietnam war	p.79
vii.The retreat from realism back to censorship	p.81
viii.The limitations of media activism and the Persian Gulf war	p.82
II. Crime:	
i.The necessity of crime and punishment	p.84
ii.Televised American crime drama in the 1950's	p.85
iii.Social violence in the 1960's and the creation of a scary world	p.88
iv.Televised American crime drama in the 1960's	p.91
v.Britain's restrained view of crime in the 1960's	p.95

vi. Televised American crime drama in the 1970's	p.96
vii. Deceptive images of crime enforcement in Britain and Japan	p.99
viii. Televised American crime drama in the 1980's	p.100
ix. The emphasis on social realism in the crime dramas of Britain and Australia	p.103
x. Desperate measures in America	p.106
xi. America's over reliance on video enforcement tactics	p.108

III. Conclusion	p.111
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-Chapter 3: 'Into the Shadows: The Decline of Documentaries and News Specials as Critical Sources of Information.' pp.124-173

i. Edward R. Murrow and the rise of American documentary television	p.125
ii. Documentary programs as a part of American network television	p.129
iii. The social mandate of American documentary television in the 1960's	p.133
iv. The institutionalization of documentary programming in Britain and Japan	p.137
v. Experimentation and conservatism: Documentary television in the 1960's	p.141
vi. The effect of the news magazine on American documentary television in the 1970's	p.143
vii. The problem of docudrama	p.146
viii. British documentaries in the 1970's and the role of America's PBS	p.149
ix. Docudrama excess and trash television in the 1980's	p.151
x. America, Japan and Britain: Documentary output in the 1980's	p.156
xi. The example of Channel Four	p.161
xii. Conclusion	p.163

-Chapter 4: 'Dwelling in the Shadows: Soap Operas as Either the Reflections of Repressive Cultural Myths or the Portraits of Social Reality.' pp.174-226

I. American soap operas	p.176
i. Soap opera realism in the 1930's	p.177
ii. Economic prosperity in the 1940's and the transition to television in the 1950's	p.178
iii. American soap opera mythology from the 1950's to the 1980's	p.181
iv. Analysis of American soap operas	p.185

II. Europe:

i. British social realism in "Coronation Street"	p.189
ii. British realism updated: "Brookside" and "East Enders"	p.192
iii. Ireland's rural soap operas	p.198
iv. France and the assault of "Dallas"	p.198
v. German soap opera 'Kultur'	p.200
vi. Italian domestic drama	p.202
vii. European resistance	p.203

III.Australia	p.204
IV.Asia:	
i.Innovation in Communist China	p.205
ii.Japanese heroines and fashion dramas	p.206
iii.Nationalism in Indian soap operas	p.208
V.Brazil and the case of the 'Telenovela'	p.209
VI.Conclusion	p.215
<u>-Conclusion: 'Moving from the Shadows of the Cave into the Light.'</u>	pp227-
252	
i.Returning to the cave	p.227
ii.The relationship to Kellner and Baudrillard	p.230
iii.What the thesis demonstrated	p.236
iv.Escaping the cave mentality	p.248
<u>-Bibliography</u>	pp253-
263	
I.Books	p.253
II.Articles	p.259
<u>-Appendices:</u>	pp264-
266	
I.Global television network identification chart	p.264
II.Letter from reporter Valerie Boser in Beijing, China	p.266

INTRODUCTION: 'The Allegory of the Cave: Reality and Unreality in Television Images.'

i. The allegory:

In The Republic of Plato can be found a passage called 'The Allegory of the Cave'.¹ Plato, in the guise of Socrates, discusses a parable with an unspecified companion. Socrates tells his acquaintance to listen to this parable of men living in a "cavernous chamber underground". They have been held in this manner since childhood, chains have been placed on their legs and necks in such a manner as to allow them to see only what is in front of them. They cannot turn their heads, for behind them is a fire burning ever bright and in front of it a parapet, like the screen in a puppet show. Between the fire and the parapet screen "persons" carry "artificial objects", which include "figures of men" and "animals in wood or stone". These figures project shadows that are created by the parapet screen and thrown against the cave's back wall. "It is a strange picture", Socrates' companion replies to the description, and "a strange sort of prisoner".² The prisoners see only vague images of what exists and "would recognize as reality nothing but the shadows of those artificial objects".³ The men in the cave keep themselves amused by "honouring and commending one another" on their ability to memorize the order of the passing shadows being cast from the parapet screen.

4

Suppose, speculates Socrates, that one of the prisoners were released from his chains, allowed to leave the cave and find the natural light at the other end of the cave. He is told that what he has always known is "meaningless illusion" and this is how reality actually appears. Socrates conjectures that the freed prisoner would be "perplexed" and morally panicked by the new world of sensations. Eventually he would adjust to the "visible world" and draw conclusions about its workings. Socrates then asks

his companion to imagine if the liberated prisoner were to return to the cave and confront his former comrades with the truth of the upper world of light. Rather than admiring him, they would laugh at his blindness in the dark and reason "it was worth no one's while even to attempt the ascent". In fact Socrates warns that: "If they could lay hands on the man who was trying to set them free and lead them up, they would kill him".⁵ Socrates' companion replies: "Yes, they would". This ends the parable.

ii. Reality, unreality and the Platonic shadows of American television culture:

Plato's cave allegory is linked to his theory of knowledge in Book VI of The Republic. The struggle for an objective understanding of the world, or truth, was Plato's ultimate goal. "Knowledge" is part of the intelligible world, while "opinion" can be found in the visible world and is subject to manipulation. These images provide what philosophical historian T.Z. Lavine has called a "mere shadow knowledge" of the world.⁶ The ascent of the mind to a higher level of consciousness proceeds along a line from "imagining or conjecture" to "belief", then "understanding" and finally "reason". "Imagining or conjecture" produces little awareness of actual objects or reality as it is most closely associated with the type of shadow images viewed by the cave prisoners. To see the world through highly manipulated images yields only rudimentary knowledge of that realm which Plato calls "false opinion". "Belief" allows individuals to perceive images as objects, as well as assign them to specific categories as human organisms collectively form mankind and fall into specific racial groupings according to their physical/social characteristics. However, "belief" is true only as opinion and not real knowledge as it leaves behind the world of concrete objects and moves into the abstract thinking of the "intelligible world". The journey to the highest level of understanding or "reason" is a struggle and represents the "upward journey of the soul into the region of

the intelligible". 7 Later in Plato's application of the myth to society this process is achieved by compulsion and is anything but voluntary.

True knowledge to Plato was the ultimate reality and that is a difficult quality to achieve. It was a lesson that had been impressed on Plato's mind since the death of his mentor, Socrates, whose free expression of ideas, disbelief "in the gods of Athens and demoralizing young men" had led directly to his public suicide. 8 Ordinary minds were dominated by imagination, conjecture and mere belief as found in the visible world. They feared the truth or reality and like the cave prisoners turned with vengeance upon its bearers. In Plato's 'Application of the Cave Allegory' he prescribed a process to reform the cave and its prisoners. He advised the selection of a few prisoners to be forced to the surface world where they would experience the "vision of Goodness" found in knowledge. However, they were not to remain in the upper world but rather be forced back to the cave and in that place of shadows govern over the prisoners. These rulers "will recognize every image for what it is and what it represents". 9 Through a type of education the leaders of the cave and its populace would gradually move from the shadows of the visible to the knowledge of the intelligible world. In Plato's well-governed society or commonwealth the attainment of knowledge and dispelling of shadow images is the only means to attain social harmony.

What has Plato's allegory to do with modern television? One of the first connections between the allegory and media was made by Plato's definitive translator at Oxford University, Francis MacDonald Cornford. He noted in a footnote to the allegory that the cave environment is not unlike "an underground cinema" with the audience sitting in the dark watching shadows dance across the screen. 10 In 1941 television was not a widely used communication device and perhaps his comparison would have been

different a decade later. In her 1984 survey of western philosophy T.Z. Lavine speculates that the allegory could be used to critique science, politics and the media. Comparing the cave and its prisoners to contemporary urban society, it could be used as a "devastating criticism" of everyday life which is held captive to superficialities. Lavine states: "Our lives are dominated by the shadow-play on the walls of our cave made by newspaper headlines, by radio broadcasts, by the endlessly moving shadows on the television screen".¹¹ Using Lavine's suggestion one could speculate that television, and media generally, must be transmitting the banality of conjecture or belief as found in the visible world. In fact she states that the public's "first step is to recognize current illusions for what they are, the current flickering shadows on the wall of our cave".¹² In a rather unfocused use of the allegory, Donna Woolfolk Cross' 1983 book Mediaspeak: How Television Makes Up Your Mind openly accused the American media of being a propaganda machine. Woolfolk Cross views the profit-driven nature of the United States' private broadcasting system as contributing to the entrapment of the American public in an information ghetto. Speaking of her fellow American citizens she comments: "Our picture of the world is formed in great part from television's flickering shadows".¹³ However, Woolfolk Cross fails to point out that this world picture is not necessarily shared by the entire population of the earth.

The central lesson of the myth is the difference between the superficial realism of shadows fostered by belief and conjecture in "opinion" as opposed to the reason and understanding created by "knowledge". In dealing with the unreality of shadows and reality of knowledge one could proceed upon an endless debate. British social critic Raymond Williams states that the very concept of realism, "reality" or the "real" is problematic "because of the intricacy of the disputes in art and philosophy to

which its predominant uses refer". Thomas Hobbes specifically juxtaposed in the Leviathan (1651) an imaginary or a false political doctrine to one based on the wisdom of God or the real, as he stated: "not Imaginary, but Reall". 14 The Platonic concept of reality was that an immutable truth lay behind the world of appearances and struggle was involved in the attainment of this realization. To Plato the ultimate truth was a universal fact as held in knowledge and to depend on conjecture or belief was to merely hold opinion. Considering the diverse nature of television programming as complex electronic products that embody social, cultural and political values, this thesis intends to use Plato's cave allegory for what it is, a value judgement. Plato believed in an unchanging truth or reality that should always be aspired to and disparaged the opinion fostered by images or unreality. Paul Ricoeur stated that "it is one thing to receive the presence of things - another to determine their meaning". 15 The arbitrary designation I have made concerning reality as the struggle for truth, and unreality being the product of belief or conjecture as held in opinion, closely follows the classical Platonic ideal. The concept of artificial television images as a form of transmitted reality is not an original concept. In their 1967 book The Social Construction of Reality P.L. Berger and T. Luckmann suggested that media, as well as other public forms of discourse, are involved in "reality maintenance". Recently media sociologists Robert Kubey and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi emphasized the reassuring quality of television programming because it was both "familiar and predictable". However, in a casual remark about the formulaic nature of television content that does not challenge social norms, but rather provides "amusement" as well as "escape", Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi note that this phenomenon occurs "especially in the United States". 16 That observation is central to this thesis.

Television production is treated by many writers as an experience of

"escape, distraction and relaxation". The act of watching television becomes a universal experience of escapism or a flight from the mundane rhythm of life and this is a globally applicable assertion that is not likely to change. Yet in the same instance Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi state that through culture "people have struggled to give meaning to their experiences".¹⁷ This suggests that television programming is ultimately a function of culture and that its meaning will vary widely. The American television story machine has dominated the globe since its initial formation in the 1950's. It sells the capitalist culture of America to the world and expects this ideological vision of life to be shared by the globe's entire population. The type of television watched by other cultures is decidedly different and this thesis will assert that it is generally more representative of the Platonic struggle towards achieving reality or truth in creating culturally relevant programming. American television is trapped by the shadows of unreality as found in mere opinion in that its media products seem to lack the critical insights of many foreign broadcasts. This thesis will characterize America as a cave society mired in the media shadows of a conservative culture dominated by an arbitrary nationalism. The diversity and more relevant nature of many global television productions has been largely ignored by media theorists who take the supremacy of American popular media as an unalterable fact. American television is not a medium of critical communication at all but a shadowland of images that indulge in the unrealistic portrayals of everything from family life to crime enforcement. Foreign broadcasters do not necessarily present a definitive portrait of social reality but their programming tends to engage the audience in a kind of Platonic struggle to seek reality through the truth of knowledge. It is thus not surprising that social criticism or political satire and working-class character portrayals are far more prevalent in foreign television than American.

It was Plato who prescribed the forceful education of the cave masses by an enlightened leadership. Foreign television still seems to hold sacred the mandate to educate viewers on subjects of importance through documentaries, a programming commodity that has almost vanished from American television screens. My assertion that foreign television production is, to a greater extent, situated within the cultural reality that produces it, as opposed to the commoditized unreality of American television, could be problematic to some readers. However, this is a conclusion that may be realized by readers when reviewing the examples chosen for this thesis. American television has had bouts of realistic programming, but I will argue that these instances were short-lived. The shadows of American cave culture as based in a prosperous middle-class way of life, international military supremacy and domestic lawfulness have formed the dominant televisual ideology of the American shadowland. Horace Newcomb has claimed in the past that American television is a "cultural forum" of social debate that introduces issues to viewers and fosters social dialogue. In fact American television creates an avoidance strategy that circumvents meaningful debate and introduces a series of familiar cultural cliches based in its national mythological structure. The extent of this "myth-driven" American ethos will be elaborated upon shortly. Truth or reality causes a panic in the complacent population of America's shadowland, much as sociologist Stanley Cohen noted in the British public's reaction to youthful rebellion in the early 1960's. He emphasizes that contemporary media does in fact "devote a great deal of space to deviance" such as crime, scandal and strange occurrences. ¹⁸ Under the guise of what he terms a "panic sociology", Cohen believes it may be a fruitful endeavour to research these periodic eras of moral dislocation and show how the media creates societal panic over the "folk devils" of deviancy. ¹⁹ In many ways the American media attempts to cast

the problems of its disintegrating industrial society, such as rampant crime, as folk devils that can be exorcised on television.

American television has at specific times attempted to convey reality, as during the Vietnam War and in the turbulent Watergate era political comedies of Norman Lear, but these instances are but brief interludes. The American public seem to recoil at realistic war coverage or social satire and prefer to withdraw back into the familiar escapist shadows of their cave society. Adopting this premise, I will continue to assert that American television media is dominated by the shadows of unreality as it fosters mere opinion and belief. In the process of comparing this situation to foreign broadcasting the solution becomes obvious. American media leaders should value the knowledge present in foreign broadcasting and alter the focus of commercial network television in the United States accordingly. Plato was a believer in ultimate knowledge as truth and this truth being the basis of reality. All situations that encouraged inferior intellectual faculties through opinion and belief constituted a shadowland of unreality. In the emerging global economy of television the cultural imperialism displayed by private American broadcasters with their false notions of nationalistic superiority only serves to create animosity. In foreign television a different approach to television broadcasting is prevalent, one that is driven by political, cultural and educational concerns openly displayed in programming content. This thesis intends to outline the motivations behind the shadowland of corporately-based American television and its unrealistic premises, as compared to the culturally dynamic nature of foreign broadcasting that has remained viable despite severe economic pressures. It is becoming apparent that Amero-centrism is an unworkable logic around which to construct television productions as the global media marketplace with its varied cultural experiences continues to expand. Many

audiences around the world seem to desire programming that captures their particular cultural situations and provides a sense of their own social reality as opposed to the unreality presented by the media products of American consumerist society. The somewhat naive Platonic ideal of truth or reality displacing shadow logic has not entirely been lost.

iii. Media, capitalism and the social nature of mass images:

In the mass capitalist societies of this and the last century, images of material wealth have provided a focal point not for rebellion but for consensus building. Raymond Williams has argued that people's values and belief systems became appropriated by the mass media which then attempted to directly shape public opinion and taste. Williams used the term "cultural incorporation" to describe this process. 20 Before the technology of television and photography, a pattern of domination was established by the chromolithograph. These printed colour images were produced on a mass scale in the form of advertisements, reproductions of paintings, billboards, and domestic illustrations. They could be found both in America and Europe by the late 1800's. The scenes were not the stuff of reality, but rather of fantasy as they concentrated on patriotic values, material goods, and visual allegories of moral behaviour. Their subjects were the likenesses of presidents and royalty, middle-class domestic scenes, desirable material goods such as high fashion, and other graven images of early twentieth century industrial culture. These images of the good life and the established political order demanded a type of literacy that all immigrants to America could readily achieve, namely a visual one. In 1905 a social worker named Elsa G. Herzfeld noted in her survey of New York's tenement houses the abundance of chromolithographs on the walls. 21 Product packaging was extremely colourful and often

coupons with pictures of presidents were inserted in the product itself. Specific ideological messages were to be found in the chromos, namely political patriotism, the values of hard work, and the rewards of material goods. They acted to defuse social opposition by cultivating an artificial sense of reality. The underpinnings of an entire consumer culture could be seen in these chromos. Stuart and Elizabeth Ewen conclude that in a period of working-class unrest and "wide-spread hostility to the social conditions of capitalist America, chromos could help achieve a harmonious peace".²² Photographs, and later moving pictures, were not reality at all. They became, like the chromos, a "designed representation of the world" as authoritarian social forces conceived it. The populace became governed by the demands of a dominant consumer culture.

It was Marshall McLuhan who argued that television was perceived as real by viewers in an almost tactile sense. The children raised on television's mosaic image were taught, in effect, to reject the linear and "fragmented repetition" of print. Thus, to McLuhan, the "mosaic form of the TV image demands participation and involvement" which must be experienced in the very "depth of the whole being" of the viewer.²³ Literacy-based information systems, such as print, make the reader too analytical and less responsive to the emotional impact of images. As with icons, television has the power to create an emotional involvement within the viewer, a sense of participating in the reality of the image itself. To show this involving presence McLuhan drew upon the example of the television images provided by the assassination and funeral of John F. Kennedy. Television could take its audience beyond the "typographic" and "photographic" nature of such events and reach a level of "synesthesia" through a truly tactile media experience. Television's images caused viewers to have a "depth

experience" of the event but they failed to excite or arouse emotions. 24 The viewers thought they were involved in reality, but did not experience the same intense emotions as if they actually were. McLuhan pointed out television's contradictory nature of seeming real but being, in fact, unreal. We identify and feel a part of television, but in the end it fails to move us into action. Thus, we are seduced into believing we are actually having an impact on the world.

iv. The myth-driven culture of America:

Myths, wrote Roland Barthes, are a "pure ideographic" system. They act to transform history into nature and to "myth consumers" the intention behind the myth becomes a "naturalized" conclusion. However, over time this relationship decays and thus the "worn-out state of a myth can be recognized by the arbitrariness of its signification". 25 When popular myths become worn-out they are too readily accepted as truth and to one noted theorist the very notion of popular myth in modern culture was a problem in itself. Carl Gustav Jung abandoned Freudianism to explore the relationship between symbols, myth and the psyche of man. One of Jung's most firmly held beliefs was that modern man was psychologically ill because he had abandoned the type of myths "that will give meaning to his life and enable him to find a place for himself in the universe". 26 These myths are not "invented consciously" as they appear to provide a direct emotional link between the forces of the cosmos or nature and man. Cultural symbols and rationalism have replaced such natural myths. However, the mythologies derived from civilization possess certain tendencies that "form an ever-present and potentially destructive "shadow" to our conscious mind". 27 To Jung the abandonment of natural myth and the pursuit of rationalism directly leads to cultural symbols which cause moral decay. Nazi Germany "disgorged" its "terrible primitivity" through its own

myth-driven 'Kultur'.

In America, noted Mircea Elaide, the 'phenomenon' of collective behaviour patterns is governed by mythical structures emanating from the mass media. 28 However, this behaviour is controlled by the worn-out myth structure of American nationalism and its agenda of cultural superiority. According to Eric J. Hobsbawm, the 18th century concept of "popular proto-nationalism" made it possible for a nation to be invented despite the fact it was not a natural culture area. The proto-nationalism of America, one of the largest invented nations, was based not on a natural unity of religious affiliation, but a feeling of "collective belonging" among the thirteen colonies against British colonial policy. 29 The United States evolved a proto-nationalistic myth complex from this original union, but this was necessary according to Hobsbawm, as the "imagined community" of proto-nationalism seems to need a mythopoeia to fill the "emotional void" of its existence. The concept that nationalism has created artificial "imagined communities" of people who are not naturally bound together by a common language or ethnic background originated with another historian, Benedict R. O'G. Anderson. 30 Today a "new supranational restructuring of the globe" is occurring that is incompatible with the proto-nationalism of the 18th century. Nations are being linked together as never before in history, although that does not necessarily imply a loss of ethnic identity. 31 America's national myths are insular and opposed to the unrestricted movement of world culture. The television marketplace has become a contentious forum in which the proto-nationalism of America continues to exert a dominant influence over global culture. America increasingly finds itself being opposed by those nations in Europe, Asia and South America which have the technical capacity to create their own television productions. The myth-driven culture of America is dominated by shadow

images and this, I feel, can be deduced by examining television production in a few specific areas. America's national myths have become enshrined in its television production and are very resistant to innovation, thus becoming in a true Barthesian sense worn-out or highly arbitrary.

v. Four areas of television:

In the examination of television which follows these introductory comments, four subject areas are considered in order to establish what exactly constitutes this Platonic shadowland of television. The corporate nature of American broadcasting with its over-dependence on advertising revenue to create programming and direct integration into the national capitalist economy are taken as the main factors behind the creation of these shadow images. Each chapter will show through four specific types of television programming how this shadow mentality is maintained, despite minor instances of retrenchment within the American media. It is the intention of this thesis not to merely make extrapolations about television content but to directly deal with the actual programs involved.

One should consider the fact that Raymond Williams was not a strict media theorist who arrived at his conclusions from a distanced perspective. He also wrote reviews of televised programming for BBC's The Listener and was an avid television viewer. The literary critic, Terry Eagleton, describes Williams' approach to the material institutions of culture as "historicist humanism", which ran counter to the prevailing trend of the 1960's and 1970's to embrace "structuralist Marxism". 32 In keeping with Williams' perspective, it is only through a historical examination of television content that any conclusions can be formulated about the societies which created those televisual products. However, it is necessary to look not only at American television but also adopt

an international perspective, whenever that is feasible. Thus, the content of European, Australian, Asian and South American television will be cited in the course of this thesis. The overall purpose of this analysis is to create a clear picture of America's insular attitude of cultural superiority and lack of critical self awareness. Foreign television has largely followed a very different broadcasting logic and has reacted quite negatively to America's aggressive attempts at cultural colonization.

The first chapter looks at the portrayal of family life on television from the 1950's to the present day. Joshua Meyrowitz points out the communal nature of value sharing that occurred during television watching as early suburban families tended to "gather around the television set as families of an earlier era gathered around the hearth".³³ American family programs have been a powerful force in cultivating conformist attitudes amongst its viewers except in a few rare instances, whereas British television depicts a rancorous portrait of domestic life. The second chapter is concerned with how war and crime have been seen on television in America. In the case of war an established pro-interventionist sympathy for overseas military involvement was placed in doubt by Vietnam and television's activist war coverage. The Pentagon only re-established this attitude by disguising severe press censorship within a nationalist fervour that treats the viewing public like children a lesson not lost on other countries during wartime. Crime is seen on American television as a manageable problem and increasingly the media has been used as a control device for an epidemic of criminal activity. Other countries lack such social violence and their crime dramas deal more realistically with the mundane nature of police work, or even create fictitious violence for the public to consume.

In the third chapter, documentary television is dealt with in order to

demonstrate that the American networks are no longer concerned with the making of such programming. Documentaries are a means of looking at the real world and their effect can sometimes be extremely disturbing. Americans prefer to avoid such exercises of self-examination in favour of non-critical shadow images of its own culture, such as celebrity gossip or lavish docudrama productions. The audience share for foreign as well as domestically produced documentaries broadcast on America's Public Broadcasting System (PBS), while respectable, is far exceeded by the ratings of private networks. However, elsewhere in global television documentaries are regular occurrences on largely state-owned broadcasting systems and they are responsible for focusing national attention on urgent social concerns, as well as satisfying the still-felt need to educate the public. The fourth chapter looks at soap operas. Within this universal drama form a distinct delineation can be drawn between America's mythical national values and the tendency in foreign television to embody domestic cultural concerns in their drama productions. America's soap operas are overly concerned with the myths of a dominant national culture which discount all notions of social class and sectarianism. Many foreign soap operas depict the class divisions of the culture within which they exist through the inclusion of historical, religious, economic and political elements in their storylines. American soaps are the products of social conjecture and formulaic plot conventions which becomes very apparent when one realizes what constitutes soap operas in the rest of world culture. From these four areas of television certain insights are now possible into the nature of these shadow images as a form of unreality that stands in marked contrast to the realistic emphasis found in many types of foreign broadcasting.

John Berger has written that "Capitalism survives by forcing the majority, whom it exploits, to define their own interests as narrowly as possible". 34 When

considering the basis of what constitutes reality and unreality in television content, it is apparent that the unreal produces exactly the kind of social logic which supports capitalism. It stresses the middle-class family way-of-life, controls the ugly realities of international war as well as internal class-based crime, discourages thoughtful examinations of social problems while substituting trivia and glorifies superficial drama such as soap operas that deal in social fantasy. Through "imposing a false standard of what is and what is not desirable" this kind of television constructs a type of Platonic cave and in effect creates a shadowland of televised images. 35 The following discussion will locate the source of these shadow images and demonstrate, to varying degrees, how they have been propagated within this dark realm.

NOTES:

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6. T.Z. Lavine, From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest, (New York: Bantam Books Press, 1984), p. 33
7. Francis MacDonald Cornford (Translator), The Republic of Plato, p. 231
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31. Ibid., p. 182
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33. Joshua Meyrowitz, No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 252
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CHAPTER 1: 'Home and Hearth on Television: Family Life on Television From the 1950's to the 1980's.'

i. American media realism in the 1930's:

In the shadowland of television, reality and unreality are solely dependent upon the presence or absence of myths operating in the larger society. Myths seem to flourish in times of social prosperity when people believe that society is progressing and personal aspirations are being achieved. However, this is not the case when people are consumed with the struggle to stay alive. In periods of economic depression social myths seem to be perceived in a cynical manner, as a comforting form of fantasy that, while reassuring, cannot solve the real problems at hand. The Great Depression was a period when the old myths of the 1920's prosperity were at first cherished and then discarded in frustration. The New Deal emphasized labour organization, massive public works, government social benefits and the reality of poverty. President Roosevelt had claimed that one third of America was "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished". Historian John A. Garraty speculates that in 1937 two thirds of American families with four members had incomes below \$4,000. ¹ The entertainment media of the 1930's cultivated a humorous albeit realistic outlook on the times by allowing people to laugh at the Depression but not forget its presence.

The movies and radio were filled with an urban-based comedy that portrayed the Depression through seemingly ordinary people coping with life. Ginger Rogers sang "We're in the Money" despite the lack of it, and Joan Blondell sang of the army of unemployed who had served their nation in World War I but were now typified by her "Forgotten Man". ² The Busby Berkley musicals such as "The Gold Diggers of 1933" (1933) were escapist with their complex dance routines but at the same time did not

deny the conditions of the Depression. In fact Cy Caldwell, writing for New Outlook in 1933, complained of the oppressive reality of "Gold Diggers", specifically its portrayal of the "forgotten man" who was now a bum after defending America in the Great War. Caldwell thought the film exuded "downright offensiveness and bad taste".³ In an essay on the Warner Brothers' musicals of the period Mark Roth denies the frivolous or escapist nature of the films as he states: "in any sense it seems to me that the great Warner musicals are essentially political".⁴ Berkley, like Roosevelt, was helping the public to find a new spirit that would allow them to pull together in the Depression. In "My Man Godfrey" (1936) carefree socialite Carole Lombard rented an unemployed bum, William Powell, from a hobo's jungle while on a scavenger hunt and later made him the household butler. Godfrey put the family's lives in order thus proving wealthy people were incompetent, however the joke was on the audience as Powell revealed himself at the film's end to be an igcognito millionaire.⁵ James Cagney attempted in his films to accurately portray the struggling man in the Depression who turns to crime. In "Doorway to Hell" (1930) Cagney played the underground henchman of a Chicago mobster, while in "The Public Enemy" (1931) he showed the devolution of an ex-hero/soldier into a life of crime. In "Enemy" it was the stark reality of a soldier who fought for his country being reduced to a criminal life as a way out of poverty. With "Hard to Handle" (1933) Cagney organizes a dance marathon as a publicity stunt, only to become a participant in the futile contest. Like the Depression it was a contest that nobody could actually win.⁶ The Depression permeated the plots of musicals, comedies, and crime dramas as it simply could not be ignored.

Some films of the period were extremely silly, such as Shirley Temple's "Stand Up and Cheer" (1934) which had her curing the Depression by helping the new

"U.S. Secretary of Amusements" to throw off the nation's blues with a gigantic musical revue. 7 However, the reality of living as a child in the Depression was not ignored in such popular serials as Hal Roach's "Our Gang" (1922-1944) whose comedy was centered around a group of street children. The "Our Gang" kids lived with Depression poverty and they often embarrassed people with material wealth, for example, by frightening society ladies at a garden party. In the opinion of Kathy Merlock Jackson "'Our Gang' put forward the idea that the poor are happy and able to have fun, while the rich, with their stuffiness and material concerns, cannot". 8 An even tougher view of Depression life for children was presented in "Dead End" (1937) that starred the Bronx, New York slum dwellers, the Dead End Kids. Conceived by Lillian Hellman, the film was to show how close children were to a criminal way of life in the urban slums of the Depression. These children were street-smart urban youth and audiences responded so positively to them a series of feature films was made. 9

In radio the content of programming in the Depression appeared escapist, but in fact did not ignore the reality of the economic down turn. NBC introduced "The Goldbergs" in 1929 which centered around the life of a struggling Jewish family in a New York ghetto. J. Fred MacDonald states that the "deprived - but -undaunted Goldbergs presented a relevant picture of the search for meaning in the midst of adversity". 10 Also in 1929 NBC premiered "The Rudy Vallee Show" which opened with the anthem of the Depression, "Brother Can You Spare a Dime?". Roosevelt used radio for his fire-side chats in which he would explain the hard choices of political policies in a highly personalized manner to individual listeners at home. 11 By 1932 vaudeville theatre entertainment had "collapsed", according to MacDonald, and comedy moved to radio. Fred Allen, the Marx Brothers, George Burns & Gracie Allen, Jack Benny and other great

comedians blossomed on radio. However, within their comedy were highly satirical criticisms of America's socio-political environment, as Jack Benny's parody of strident cheapness was a product of Depression necessity and Fred Allen's weekly chats with the fictitious Senator Claghorn explored the narrow-mindedness of Washington's Congressional politicians. The Marx Brothers continuously made fun of rich, pretentious socialites in their movies, as well as on radio, showing audiences how out of touch with reality these people actually were.

Audiences responded enthusiastically to the serialized soap operas of radio such as "Ma Perkins" (1933), "Today's Children" (1933), and "Painted Dreams" (1931). They dealt with life's hardships and the struggle of mostly single mothers to survive. Lacking the overt political content as in the Warner musicals or the Cagney movies, they did provide people with believable or realistic models of struggle in adverse times. Ma Perkins was an ever-resourceful widow, looking out for her family with very little money. MacDonald makes the point that the Depression broke families apart as a result of fathers seeking work away from their homes, thus leaving women to cope alone. Women listeners responded to soap operas as they provided a comforting distraction that was, in one sense, unreal yet relevant to their existence. Soaps manufacturers, or sponsors, just wanted to sell soap powder but advertising agencies knew this could not be done in the Depression unless the shows had some relation to the lives of the listeners. MacDonald concludes "Radio...mirrored the realities of the depression".¹² In such devastating economic circumstances the media of the Depression era had to incorporate that reality in some form or another. However, if media shows the naked reality of life it also tends to produce the opposite effect in audiences, revulsion. When The Grapes of Wrath (1939) was filmed in 1940 by John Ford, its ending had to be

changed. In the movie Henry Fonda, as the lanky Tom Joad, gave a heroic speech, while in the novel Tom's sister used breast milk brought on by her stillborn baby to feed a starving man.¹³ People might ignore popular entertainment if it trivialized the obvious crisis in society, but images of extreme poverty would be too devastating to accept.

The 1930's was a period when social reality was married to popular media. Film and radio used the Depression to create believable vehicles of entertainment that were relevant to the general public. Radio tried to sell goods, make people laugh, and indulge in frivolity but was at the same time critical in its outlook. Both film and radio did not try to deny reality in a propagandist form, but framed their criticism within entertainment itself. In doing so they produced a media culture dominated not by a shadowland of artificial images based upon popular opinion or conjecture but by a type of tempered reality that strove towards an understanding of larger truths. American television has rarely been of the same calibre for it has only produced an idealized picture of life as centered on consumerism. This consumerist model has been difficult for the American networks to discard, even in such periods of severe economic uncertainty as the early 1970's, 1980's and the present recession of the 1990's.

ii. Television and the suburban family reality of the 1950's:

The end of World War II left Europe in ruins. As in the First World War, the United States alone had its economy not only left intact but considerably expanded. With the return of soldiers to civilian life, the government embarked on specific measures that shaped postwar society. The G.I. Bill of Rights allowed soldiers to take out loans for education or businesses. Unionization was encouraged under the Wagner Act of the 1930's and wages rose. In 1948 Truman passed federal housing legislation and government support of housing construction continued through the 1950's. Despite the

Korean War in 1950 the American economy had become the most robust in the world. Its population was more educated, more unionized, more highly paid, and better housed than any other nation. What had begun in the 1920's as a flawed experiment to create a suburban economy through faulty credit buying was to emerge as a firmly established system in the 1950's. Historian D.M. Potter wrote People of Plenty in 1954 and he put forward the thesis that "economic abundance" has had a persuasive influence in shaping the American character. The United States had "more" of everything, including telephones, radios, automobiles, supermarkets, hospitals, vacuum cleaners and movie palaces, than any other nation. The statistics proved "that in every aspect of material plenty America possesses unprecedented riches and [that] these are very widely distributed among one hundred and fifty million American people".¹⁴ What had taken hold was consumerism or an ideology of consumption that was attempted in the 1920's through national product advertising but failed due to a flawed banking and financial system. Stuart Ewen makes the point that this new era of consumption was just as flawed as it was in the 1920's because "vast sectors" of the population were left out of the postwar prosperity.¹⁵ The south remained poor and blacks still formed an underclass, along with some immigrant groups in the cities. A new reality was being created for the American public. The urban-based factory economy was being transformed from the previous model of workers/owners and industrial towns to the suburban concept of a classless society. Such economists as John Kenneth Galbraith heralded this great change in The Affluent Society (1958) but it still puzzled the Harvard intellectual that poverty continued to be a "minority problem".¹⁶

What emerged was a "suburban vision", according to Ernest R. Mowrer, that came to dominate the American consciousness. The affluent upper class had

always regarded the country as a retreat away from the crowded city. In the post-World War II era country living was for the masses and the suburban housing tract became a practical way to make that possible. In the suburbs you could do things that were not possible in city apartments, such as keep a pet, grow a garden, have room for children to play, wear casual clothes, cook/eat outdoors and socialize with friends. The larger houses encouraged people to fill them with the new mechanical contrivances that could not fit into an apartment. 17 The new interstate highway and commuter rail systems made it possible for husbands to work downtown, while their families rarely came to the city, except for shopping trips. Eventually retail stores moved to the suburbs in the form of shopping malls and discouraged any retail journeys by the family to downtown. The suburban culture was a car culture, whereas the city utilized mass transit. Cars went to the supermarket, to the cleaners, to the drive-in burger joint, and the drive-in movie. Teenagers matured with a driver's licence and the mobility of the car gave them a means by which to experience this suburban landscape. Many received allowance money from their parents while some had part-time jobs for additional income, which was largely spent on consumer goods. But what culturally mediated forces guided these suburbanites in learning how to act appropriately in their new roles? The behavioural model or agenda was communicated via such entertainment media as film, music recordings and, most importantly, television. The suburban way of family life was a product of a growing popular culture within the industrial structure which sold not only consumer goods to people, but also a type of prescribed lifestyle. In the 1950's television went beyond a mere "esoteric invention", as Stuart Ewen believes it was at the time of its inception, and was deliberately engineered to be a purveyor of commodities. Situated as it was "in the midst of the American household" the role of television in people's daily lives became

more pronounced. 18 Television regulated meal times, filled the evenings with habitual viewing, initially eroded attendance at movie palaces, discouraged the reading of novels and in a myriad of ways organized new modes of family behaviour. The broadcasting service was extended and the kind of programming offered changed. Gradually the old radio show carry-overs of the Depression were dropped from the television schedule, along with arts programs and original drama. What replaced them were the suburban family situation comedies that could attract a young audience and high ratings. These shows defined "the normalcy of consumerism (which was) writ large in the living rooms of the American populace". 19 This type of family television, with its hidden agenda of consumerism, fostered the conjecture and "false opinions" of the popular imagination resulting in the social unreality which continues to dominate until the present day, with only the occasional retreat back into realism. The family-oriented television vehicles were remodelled as needed to suit the times but they remained basically the same, conformist, apolitical and filled with live or dubbed-in laugh tracks.

During the 1950's television entered the American home. It came to dominate the living rooms of suburbia by competing with more traditional family gathering places, such as the kitchen table and fireplace/hearth. Ewen called television a "futuristic analogue to the hearth". 20 So important to family life was television that writer Jack Gould advised the consumer in The New York Times Magazine of August 1st, 1948, that:

Upon installation of the television receiver the fireplace must be sealed off. The heart-warming glow of hickory logs can only prove distracting. One flicker in a home is enough. 21

The major purchasers of television receivers were the young families, with one or more children, who lived in the suburbs. In a survey conducted by Newsweek, published September 14th, 1953, it was found that those "who do not have sets...are generally low

in children, in numbers, in youth, and in money". Watching television was a youthful activity on which new families spent an average of four hours and fifteen minutes each night. 22 In fact as Lynn Spigel points out, magazines such as House Beautiful campaigned to promote television as an actual member of the family. In the September, 1951, issue an article declared "Television has become a family member" as it can be a "newborn baby", a "family friend", a "teacher", and a "family pet". However, others disagreed as The Ladies Home Journal in April, 1950, described a despondent little girl who was a victim of "telegeyed" disease. 23 By 1954 fully two thirds of all American families had a television set and what those people were watching was a steady diet of laugh tracks about the trivial pursuits of suburban families supposedly just like themselves. 24 The reality of urban comedy was left behind for the suburban dilemmas of shopping, drive-ins, dating, going to high school, and other larger-than-life issues. In the family comedies a set of artificial values was emphasized which bore only a superficial resemblance to the realities of American society and a shadowland of idealized images gradually formed. To Ewen the message was very clear in that "TV became a vehicle for a consumerist mentality". 25 Teenagers were encouraged to be overly concerned with clothes and music styles, while parents were taught to be rather distant, domestic arbitrators of disputes. The settings for the family shows were appliance-laden, middle-class homes with broad green lawns on shady streets. It was the suburban ideal that people were seeking and television made this goal tangibly real through an almost living translucent screen.

However, television was not like this when it began in the late 1940's. As David Marc points out, the "networks did not instantly embrace the suburb as the promised land" and felt secure in directly importing Depression-created radio shows to

television. 26 "The Goldbergs" (CBS 1949-1951/NBC 1952-1953/DUM 1954) was transferred from radio to television with no alterations in January, 1949, by CBS. The opening sequence was identical to the radio show with Molly Goldberg (Gertrude Berg) leaning out of her window shouting "Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Bloom" to her neighbour upstairs. The setting was apartment 3B at 1030 East Tremont Avenue in the Bronx, as it had been in the radio show. The show had a difficult time with the character of Mr. Goldberg (Philip Loeb), particularly after he was labelled a communist and forced to resign. NBC picked the show up in 1952, but by 1954 Dumont took the show for one year, providing the Bronx setting was changed to the suburban town of Haverville. 27 The program died a slow death and in 1955 it was finally cancelled. "The Goldbergs", along with other such shows, was largely an urban-based ethnic comedy that was transplanted to television from Depression radio. In the new suburban vision the Depression was a bad dream that never happened. The same fate awaited "Life with Luigi" (CBS 1952), which ran for only a half season on CBS from September to December 1952, despite a long radio presence.

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However, many other series seemed to last longer, such as the popular "The Life of Riley" (NBC 1949-1958) which began on radio in 1943 with William Bendix and moved to NBC television in 1949, where it remained until 1958. It was cancelled for two years because audiences refused to accept Jackie Gleason in the role of Riley but was revived when Bendix returned in 1953. Chester A. Riley was a working-stiff, a hard hat, who assembled planes in a California aviation plant and confused his children when trying to help them with their homework. 29 Riley would always use the phrase "What a revoltin' development this is!" in reaction to any difficult situations that arose. This show's longevity was unusual considering the anti-working-class mood of the 1950's. "I

Remember Mama" or "Mama" (CBS 1949-1956) was taken from the novel by Kathryn Forbes about a turn-of-the-century Norwegian immigrant family, the Hansens, in San Francisco and their struggle to survive, and lasted on CBS from 1949-1956 with a few episodes in 1957. "Mama" was cancelled due to its old-fashioned setting, despite a great outcry from fans. 30 The most highly regarded working-class character on television was the loud-mouth Ralph Kramden (Jackie Gleason) on "The Honeymooners" (CBS 1955-1956). Ralph, a bus driver, constantly fought with Alice, his long suffering wife, over their bad luck and poverty. Alice still had an ice box, while neighbours Ed and Trixie Norton had a frost-free refrigerator! The show lasted two seasons on CBS when Jackie Gleason moved to a variety show. 31 "Amos n' Andy" (CBS 1951-1953) was brought from radio to television in 1951, using black actors and retaining the Harlem setting. One of radio's most popular shows, it lasted two years on television until 1953 and later in reruns, despite protests from the NAACP, the black civil rights group. 32 "Beulah" (ABC 1950-1953) was another radio series that had as its lead character a smart black maid who looked after an incompetent white family. Ethel Waters began as Beulah in 1950 on ABC and was replaced by Louise Beavers in 1952 until the show's end in 1953. 33

With the exception of Chester Riley, working-stiff/ethnic family comedies had, by the mid-1950's, disappeared from American television. In their place suburban comedies arose stressing the values of a consumerist lifestyle. The Bronx tenement apartment of the Goldbergs, the rather barren apartment of Ralph Kramden, the plain living room of Chester Riley, the Harlem clubs of "Amos n' Andy" and the domestic servants hall of "Beulah" were not conducive to the suburban vision. What Alice Kramden really needed was a care-package from the suburbs. Mary Beth Haralovich, in writing of the two family situations, urban working class-ethnic versus suburban, sees

a clear agenda for one being favoured over another. She writes that the "suburban family sitcom illustrated what the working-class family sitcom could not: the easy and unproblematic achievement of quality family life promised by the state and the post-war economy".³⁴ The images of family life presented by the television heirs of domestic radio comedy were based in the city. They opposed the unreality being put forward by suburban commercial advocates because such shows as "The Goldbergs" and "The Honeymooners" highlighted the fact that poverty, as well as social classes, still existed. Immigrant families, bus drivers, factory workers, servants, ethnic minorities and other like subjects were simply considered uncouth.

What did a perfect family look like on the television of the 1950's? It had a father who wore sweaters, smoked a pipe, and mowed the lawn. The mother was entirely domestic, and did not work outside the home but volunteered for charity. The children began young and evolved into teenagers through a variety of innocent dilemmas that made the audience laugh. As teenagers they listened to music and dated, but they always went to Dad when a real difficulty was at hand. The father seemed to work for a living, but that was always far away in a mysterious city office. None of these fathers were labourers and the most manual work they did was to mow the lawn. Each family had at least one car, or possibly two or three, for teenage drivers. Their homes had the newest appliances such as frost-free refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, mixmasters, deluxe electric ranges, and, of course, a television set. However, their family values were supposedly very traditional and filled the moral vacuum that accompanied the nation's new suburban lifestyle. Materially they were modern, but behaviourally they acted like a 19th century Victorian household. Ella Taylor states that "these shows proposed family life as a charming excursion into modernity, but resting on the unshakeable stability of

tradition". 35

The "Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" (ABC 1952-1966) was first broadcast by CBS in October, 1952, and ran continuously until 1966. It used an actual family, the Nelsons, to provide a light-hearted look at what suburban home life should be. Former band leader Ozzie Nelson, wife Harriet, and sons David and Ricky were the core cast. Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh called the show "real" as it was an accurate look at the Nelson family. 36 Similarly, James Joslyn and John Pendleton concluded that the show offered "a feeling of family and social stability." 37 Such uncritical readings of Ozzie and Harriet failed to see its fallacious basis. Its unreality centered around the stilted way in which the family functioned: Ozzie never worked, Harriet simply cooked or cleaned, and the kids were never bad but merely naughty at times. The boys eventually became teen singers, then went on to college and got married. The family had no problems in life as all seemed to proceed along a predictable course. Reality is anything but predictable, yet in the suburban certainty of the era divisive family problems were not allowable. The Nelson household had few complications. Another household with a lack of serious complications was that of night club comedian Danny Thomas in "Make Room for Daddy" or "The Danny Thomas Show" (ABC 1953-1957/CBS 1957-1965). As head of the Williams family, Thomas had three children (Rusty, Terry, Linda) and a wife, Margaret (Jean Hagen), later Kathy (Marjorie Lord). Thomas was a loud father and his children were smart-alecky, but the father's parental authority prevailed as it had with Ozzie Nelson. Thomas admitted to an interviewer that the show was really "one cliché after another", but wasn't that the way a family was really like? 38 The great popularity of the show led to its brief resurrection in the 1970's as "Make Room for Granddaddy" (ABC 1970-1971). It was television itself that was riddled with clichés, the reality of family life in the 1950's

had little to do with it.

The most successful show of the 1950's was undoubtedly "Father Knows Best" (CBS 1954-1955/NBC 1955-1958/CBS 1958-1962/ABC 1962-1963) which was first shown by CBS in October, 1954. It took place in a midwestern town called Springfield and centered around the Anderson household. Jim Anderson (Robert Young) was the father who worked as an insurance agent, his wife Margaret (Jane Wyatt) took care of the house and looked after the three children: Betty (Princess), James Jr. (Bud) and Kathy (Kitten). The show's plots were trivial and usually ended with Jim Anderson sitting in his large arm chair settling a family dispute or dilemma, while smoking his pipe and wearing a cardigan sweater. The success of the show was attributed to the ordinary nature of the characters and their credibility. 39 The image of domestic bliss was so convincing that in 1955 Robert Young and Jane Wyatt accepted an award on behalf of the show for providing a "Constructive Portrayal of American Family Life". 40 People wanted to believe in this unrealistic view of the family as it seemed comforting in the face of a suburban reality that did not completely live up to the stated ideals. Even the show's producer was shocked to hear a friend's wife say to her husband after a particular week's episode had aired, "Why can't you be more like Jim Anderson?". 41 David Marc claims that in the McCarthy era it fit nicely into the "suburbo-pastoral sitcom gestalt" that was to sustain family shows until the 1970's. The social logic of suburbia was brought alive each week via television and audiences in their tract houses learned to love their caves through these shadows of unreality. Unfortunately for the loyal viewing public, the show was cancelled in 1963 when Young abruptly left.

A later and popular rival to "Father Knows Best" was "Leave It to Beaver" (CBS 1957-1958/ABC 1958-1963) which ran from October, 1957, and finally ended in 1963.

It was constructed around a very memorable youngster, Theodore "Beaver" Cleaver (Jerry Mathers). He had an older brother Wally (Tony Dow), a father (Hugh Beaumont), mother (Barbara Billingsley), and assorted teenage oddities or friends of Wally, as Eddie Haskell, Whitey Whitney and Clarence "Lumpy" Rutherford. Family life for the Cleavers in the small suburban town of Mayfield was very idyllic and uneventful. Moral lessons abounded in the plotlines, although with two boys it was most strange that the physical aspect of sexual maturation seemed to be down played to the point of being entirely ignored. The comedy was captivating and the characters were not as stilted as in "Father Knows Best", which may account for the nostalgia craze for Beaver as in the show's 1980's revival, "The New Leave It to Beaver".⁴² Many other family dramas evolved in the "Father Knows Best" vein, such as "The Donna Reed Show" (ABC 1958-1966) which profiled the lives of the Stone family.⁴³ "My Three Sons" (ABC 1960-1965/CBS 1965-1972) concerned a single-parent family headed by Fred McMurray who presided over the all-male Douglas household.⁴⁴ In both cases the families were headed by middle-class professionals, physician Dr. Stone and engineer Steve Douglas. The acting and comedy of these family shows had matured by the 1960's but the message was still the same, that being the achievable promise of a stable suburban life.

Television had a corporate mission to perform in the 1950's and this would continue into the 1960's. It had to create a sense of family reality in a period of rapid change and thus constructed a shadowland vision of suburbia. Without these images the rapid and potentially disconcerting social change then occurring would lack a direction as well as purpose. This change has been called by Marxist critic, Frederic Jameson, "the emergence of postmodernism".⁴⁵ Following World War II a different kind

of society began to form characterized by:

New types of consumption; planned obsolescence; an ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes; the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society; the replacement of the old tension between city and country, center and province, by the suburb and by universal standardization; the growth of the great network of superhighways and the arrival of automobile culture ---. 46

In the disconcerting change from the prewar, largely European concept of modernism as a tool of liberation for the labouring classes, to the postwar era of postmodernism with its emphasis on consumer capitalism and social conformity, media was a driving force. It had to sell goods, discourage ethnic ties, break all allegiances to social class and essentially persuade people to forget their past. Television sold goods, eliminated ethnic as well as working-class content, and made the suburban family audience forget the Depression past. Reality was still brutal in America as poverty had not disappeared, but in the climate of consumerism or emerging postmodernism an unreality had been created in which such concerns were not valid. The majority of the population were content to indulge themselves in the conjecture of consumerism and thus seemed to accept the "false opinions" offered by the highly manipulated images they received from their television screens.

iii. Television and domestic stagnation in the 1960's:

In the 1960's, television's family drama did not reflect a growing national concern in America for social issues as poverty, but continued to perpetuate the suburban shadowland. With this new and unrealistic vision of American society the poor became, in the words of Michael Harrington, "less visible". Suburbanization and media images had, in effect, created the perception among the middle class that poverty did not

exist at all. David Marc points to Harrington's opening lines in The Other America: Poverty in the United States (1962) as they implied that the media of the era communicated a false impression of the nation's wealthy status. The public only knew a familiar America "celebrated in speeches and advertised on television and in the magazines" that had "the highest mass standard of living the world has ever known". 47 Statistics show that in 1960 between one fifth and one fourth of all American families, estimated at about forty million, lived on less than \$4,000 a year. 48 Harrington's book exposed the worst pockets of poverty by describing poor whites in the Appalachians and blacks in the deep south. Planned in the Kennedy era but executed by Lyndon B. Johnson, the War on Poverty at least tried to address this national problem. How did television show this reality in its shadowland? It denied the poor existed and instead used time-honoured storylines such as rags to riches or rural quaintness. The suburban ideal held firm in the 1960's.

In the early 1960's family shows continued in the same vein as they had in the 1950's. "The Donna Reed Show", "My Three Sons", and a few newcomers to the suburban landscape dominated prime time American television. "The Patty Duke Show" (ABC 1963-1966), which ran during the early to mid-1960's, starred Patty Duke as Patty/Cathy Lane. The show centered around an American teenager and her look-alike Scottish cousin. It was principally a teenage vehicle and often included singing idols like Frankie Avalon, as well as Chad and Jeremy. 49 However, the new family shows were more elaborately constructed than their 1950's ancestors and did attempt to use traditional American myths as the basis for their plots, rather than simply showing suburbia. The rural family shows comprised the largest grouping and consisted of "The Andy Griffith Show" (CBS 1960-1968), "The Beverly Hillbillies" (CBS 1962-1971), "Petticoat

Junction" (CBS 1960-1970) and "Green Acres" (CBS 1965-1971). Rural honesty and virtue first made an appearance with "The Andy Griffith Show" which was concerned with a widower/sheriff, Andy Taylor (Andy Griffith), his son Opie (Ron Howard) and their Aunt Bee (Frances Bavier) who cares for the first two. These central characters interacted with a host of small town familiars, such as Deputy Barney Fife (Don Knotts), gas station attendant Gomer Pyle (Jim Nabors), and a variety of rural oddities.⁵⁰ The small town setting of Mayberry was more traditional than the suburb as its values or morality was already established in the public's consciousness. It was Thornton Wilder's Our Town (1938) reincarnated for television and audiences found it even more reassuring than "Father Knows Best". "The Andy Griffith Show" was the most popular show of the 1960's and still survives today in reruns.

Paul Henning's first rural comedy was "The Beverly Hillbillies" and it used the classic American myth of striking it rich. A group of Ozark hillbillies discovered oil on their land and moved to Beverly Hills as millionaires but insisted on living as they had before. Jed Clampett (Buddy Ebsen) is the clan leader, Granny (Irene Ryan) is second in authority, Elly May (Donna Douglas) is Jed's daughter and cousin Jethro (Max Baer, Jr.), completes the family. The show continually made fun of rich Beverly Hills society and emphasized positive rural virtues.⁵¹ Later Henning cloned "Petticoat Junction" which focused on a rural hotel, The Shadyrest, in Hooterville. It was run by Kate Bradley (Bea Benaderet), her scheming Uncle Joe Carson (Edgar Buchanan), and three daughters, Billie Jo, Bobbie Jo and Betty Jo Bradley. Paul Henning's daughter, Linda Kaye, played Bettie Jo.⁵² The hotel was connected to the outside world by an ancient steam engine, the Cannonball. The plot was rife with rural cliches at their best with Uncle Joe as a flim-flam man, three beautiful farmer's daughters, and a matriarch as clan

head. This show came across as a collection of country bumpkins constantly at war with the outside urban world, represented by the vice-president of the C.F. & W. Railroad, Homer Bedloe (Charles Lane) who was trying to mothball the Cannonball. Rural quaintness was to be preserved from the urban onslaught. The last spinoff was "Green Acres" which had corporate lawyer Oliver Wendell Douglas (Eddie Albert) leaving Manhattan, taking his socialite wife Lisa (Eva Gabor) and moving to a Hooterville farm. The farm was less than desirable as it needed major repairs. Oliver had been taken in by the crafty Mr. Haney (Pat Buttram) but the rural pioneers grew to love their farm and its animals. The favourite of the animals was a neighbour's pig, Arnold, who liked to watch television. 53 Thus what Henning gave television was a romanticized view of country life in the time-honoured tradition of American rural nobility. Rural people were happy although poor, distrusted city folks, didn't need government help and were extremely honest. Henning, when challenged about his programs, stated: "Why go into deep analysis about it? My shows are pure fun, just escape." Before writing for radio in the 1930's, Henning had lived on a farm as a child and visited the Ozarks. 54 He was just a country boy at heart. However, in the climate of a consumerist society he gave the mass audience a false picture of rural America as charming and wholesome. Harrington's book included a chapter called 'Pastures of Plenty' which documented the terrible rate of poverty in the rural south, Appalachians, and among Mexican migrants in California. 55 Infant mortality in the Ozarks was abysmal, but America remembered only Uncle Jed Clampett fetching buckets of water from the swimming pool because he was unaware that houses had interior plumbing.

In an attempt to disguise the suburban lifestyle of family dramas, television turned to monsters, magic, creepiness, supernatural forces and even a barn-dwelling

quadruped. "Bewitched" (ABC 1964-1972) had a middle-class couple, Samantha (Elizabeth Montgomery) and Darrin Stephens (Dick York 1964-1969/Dick Sargeant 1969-1972) in the suburbs trying to hide the fact that Samantha was a witch. Samantha's mother, Endora (Agnes Moorehead) continually tells her to dump "Durwood" and leave the household drudgery to be a free spirit again. But being a good middle-class citizen, Samantha always refuses and even her look-alike hippie cousin, Serena, can't trick Darrin into leaving. 56 The witch relatives are always seen as eccentric, like the entire counter-culture of the 1960's, while practical middle-class mortal values triumphed in each episode. The message was very conservative. "The Munsters" (CBS 1964-1966) was made up of a normal family at 1313 Mockingbird Lane. They just wanted to be like everyone else but a Frankenstein father named Herman (Fred Gwynne); a bride-of-Dracula mother, Lily (Yvonne DeCarlo); a Dracula uncle, Grandpa (Al Lewis); a wolf-like child, Eddie (Butch Patrick) and a normal-looking cousin, Marilyn (Pat Priest) seemed to ensure that this acceptance would never be achieved. 57 Herman tries to be one of the boys at work in the funeral parlor by being on the bowling team, but even that proves too difficult. Lily tries to be friendly at the local stores, but that doesn't work. Eddie wants friends at school, but the kids shun him. Despite being monsters, they all try very hard to be normal middle-class suburbanites. "The Addams Family" (ABC 1964-1966) was taken from the New Yorker Magazine characters created by Charles Addams. It was meant to be a pun on the lifestyle of an eccentric and rich family of weirdos. The show's bizarre cast consisted of clan head Gomez (John Astin), his wife Morticia (Carolyn Jones), Uncle Fester (Jackie Coogan), along with Grandmama (Blossom Rock) who cared for the two children, Pugsley (son) and Wednesday Thursday (daughter). In turn Lurch, the butler, looked after them all, along with "Thing", a helpful hand that emerges

from black boxes strategically placed on tables around the house. Cousin Itt, a very hairy, but short person with glasses, appeared occasionally. 58 The Addams did not try to be understood by others as they were too rich to bother. They didn't aspire to be middle class as they were part of the upper class and had the right to act as they wished. Gomez used one hundred dollar bills to light his cigars, after all. "Mr. Ed" (CBS 1961-1965) used a talking horse as its chief character. He was found by Wilbur Post, (Alan Young), a young architect who moved from the city to a country farm. 59 Mr. Ed proved to be smarter than the humans around him, but then that was not a surprise on television. The audience was getting bored by the cuteness of suburban family shows, thus the solution devised by television networks was to add magic, monsters, wealthy weirdos and talkative horses.

Perhaps one could remake the entire suburban family and mold them into what, according to David Marc, was the perfect 1960's couple, John and Jackie Kennedy. "The Dick Van Dyke Show" (CBS 1961-1966) was a sophisticated family drama for the modern urban couple with one or more children. Rob Petrie (Dick Van Dyke) was head writer for the Alan Brady show in New York. He lived in suburban New Rochelle with his wife, Laura (Mary Tyler Moore) and had one son, Ritchie (Larry Mathews). His co-workers Buddy (Morey Amsterdam) and Sally (Rose Marie) provided Rob's urban experience, as the show was designed to show the modern dilemma of a suburban parent and city worker. 60 Laura was domestic but still beautiful and trendy, just what a suburban housewife should be. Buddy was Jewish from the Bronx, while Sally was single, living in a westside apartment. In other words they were typical urban dwellers, ethnic and single. Rob was liberal and together with Laura strove for social as well as racial equality. For instance, in one episode while attending a dinner for Alan Brady to

receive an award from the "Committee on Interracial Unity", they admitted they had accidentally dyed their hands black while making a costume for Ritchie. A speech on racial unity and understanding followed. In another episode when Ritchie was born, Rob thought they had been given a baby called Ritchie Peters by mistake, until he met the baby's black parents. 61 Rob and Laura were liberal Kennedyites of the 1960's who both had a college education, and thus they represented a more progressive view of the suburban family. Millie, Laura's friend next door, was married to Jerry Helper, a dentist. The Helpers were frumpy in appearance and common in manner, thus serving as dramatic foils for the more sophisticated Petries. 62 The show advocated a liberal but cautious policy to life's issues, much as Kennedy did in trying to reform America in the early 1960's. Today Rob and Laura might be called yuppies (young urban professionals), as Laura would also have a career. Marc stresses the show's sophisticated, liberal sensibility which used fresh and unconventional styles "to package familiar morals in what evolves as an upbeat saga of a bright, fast-track couple playing by the rules and making it". 63 Ella Taylor points to the fact the message was still the same, that youth "energy, hard work, and a solid family life still provided the ingredients for the smooth progress of upward mobility". 64 The show, like the era it portrayed, came to an end in 1966. It probably could not have survived the difficult years ahead.

At end of the 1960's television had grown out of touch with the turbulent social and political character of America. The shadowland created first in the 1950's and continuing into the 1960's ultimately could not survive. By the mid-1960's it was producing such saccharine efforts as "Family Affair" (CBS 1966-1971) about the disruption of a bachelor's life by his deceased brother's three children. 65 Some progress was made with the appearance of "Julia" (NBC 1968-1971) which portrayed the life of a black/female

single parent trying to raise her son after his father was killed in Vietnam. However, far from showing a real black family in a low income situation, Julia (Diahann Carroll) and her son Corey (Marc Copage) lived "in a plush, middle-class, suburban apartment" that was far removed from the ghetto. 66 Updating and modernizing the myth of suburbia could only be taken so far, although in 1969 "The Brady Bunch" (ABC 1969-1974) pushed the concept beyond the limits of believability. The storyline revolved around the union of two medium-sized families to create a large populous family. Three boys and three girls battled for bathroom space in a Southern California house. Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh state: "The Brady Bunch was one of the last of the old-style fun-around-the-house situation comedies". 67 At the same time "The Courtship of Eddie's Father" (ABC 1969-1972) premiered with Bill Bixby as a widower and Brandon Cruz as his son, Eddie. It was very predictable and stale. 68 It was thus entirely logical that a new kind of political and socially relevant family drama would emerge in the 1970's. However, the format of this drama would be borrowed from abroad and not invented in America.

iv. The politicized portrayal of family life in the 1970's:

The 1970's was the era of social realism in television although for only a limited period. Critics like David Marc and Ella Taylor see the 1970's as a golden age in which social reality was finally seen in television content. Marc calls it a "literate peak", while Taylor sees the period as one of "prime time relevance". Neither Marc nor Taylor explain that the creator of this television realism movement, Norman Lear, purchased the U.S. rights to a British program "Till Death Us Do Part" (BBC 1966-1968/1972-1974) and from it created an American clone "All in the Family". Lear was a very good judge of comedy and what he saw in the highly successful BBC comedy about a bigoted ultra-conservative cockney father, Alf Garnett (Warren Mitchell), and his turbulent relationship

to his wife (Dandy Nichols), daughter (Una Stubbs) and Marxist son-in-law (Anthony Booth) was a winning formula. Britain had a tradition of political humour on radio and television. It also had a cadre of talented television writers who had emerged from "Hancock's Half-Hour" (BBC 1956-1961). Two of these, Alan Galton and Ray Simpson, created "Steptoe and Son" (BBC 1962-1973) which was concerned with the relationship of a father (Wilfred Brambell) and son (Harry H. Corbett), who jointly operated a rag-and-bone business. The son was continuously referring to his father as a "dirty old man" and wished to escape his father's junk-laden house. 69 Lear bought this show also and turned it into a clone called "Sanford and Son" (NBC 1972-1977), with a black father and son as the junk dealers. However, it was with the bigoted Alf Garnett that Lear knew he had a new kind of television father and a more realistic family situation. "Till Death Us Do Part" was the brainchild of a socialist screen writer, Johnny Speight, who conceived Garnett as a satire on racists and conservatives. Speight stated: "I personally despised, hated, loathed him for a long, long time" however when "Warren performed him we grew to love him...". 70 Garnett would sit in his chair smoking his pipe and call East Indians "pakies", blacks "darkies", and the French "frogies". If his wife objected, he retorted "You silly old mo", or if his son-in-law did, it was "Scouse git". 71 In Britain the first year of the show was chaotic as Speight stayed just one step ahead of the BBC controllers and the "clean up TV" lady, Mary Whitehouse. Eventually in 1968 the BBC's Lord Hill forced the show to cut its budget and Speight quit, but in four years he and the show were back. 72 What Lear bought with the rights to "Till Death Us Do Part" was the concept of political satire embedded within family drama which had been relatively unknown in America. Until this time the American broadcast media was dominated by the shadows of a conservative McCarthyism which confined political satire to stand-up comedians who

rarely appeared on television. Lear's success encouraged a type of social maturation in American society itself.

"All in the Family" (CBS 1971-1983) was a late arrival to American television, as Lear had intended it to premiere in 1969 on ABC and he made a pilot. ABC was horrified with the result, but Robert Wood of CBS saw that it had potential and aired a new pilot on January 12th, 1971. The expected backlash of negative comments did not occur and the ratings were only fair but the show continued. It took a year for America to love Archie Bunker, the lead character and Yankee twin of Alf Garnett. The cast consisted of Archie Bunker (Carroll O'Connor), a Queens, New York, working-stiff; his wife, Edith (Jean Stapleton), an old-fashioned homemaker; daughter, Gloria (Sally Struthers), a young liberated woman; and son-in-law, Michael Stivic, or "Meathead", (Rob Reiner), the family's newest member.⁷³ As with "Till Death Us Do Part", the show was designed to set up a social/political conflict between Archie's conservative views on all issues, Mike and Gloria's liberal views, and Edith's non-views. Unlike earlier American working-class sitcoms, such as "The Life of Riley" and "The Honeymooners", the comedy of "All in the Family" was overtly political. Archie's racial prejudices and political conservatism were constantly up front, rather than buried. In the show viewers could see for the first time a real family that was not suburban, argued a great deal, was struggling constantly to survive, and expressed themselves in an open manner. Unlike pipe-smoking Jim Anderson, when Archie sat in his arm chair he had Edith bring a beer so he could belch. Archie was everybody's blue-collar father, as Carroll O'Connor stated: "Archie is not a difficult part for me, I've known him all my life".⁷⁴ Most of America had known Archie, or some form of him, as their parent and not the sage fathers of the 1950's, or the urban commuter fathers of the 1960's. The show became a form of "Greek

theatre", according to David Marc, where critical national and social issues were tackled each week. Gay rights, women's equality, sexual liberation, economic recession, Watergate, and other topical issues confirmed Archie as a figure of the conservative past, awash in a liberal world. 75 Marc concludes that "the show had redefined the sitcom's existing order...--in ways that have made the substance and style of all subsequent sitcoms directly or indirectly traceable to those revisions". 76 What had taken hold with "All in the Family" was an attempt to encourage reason, as well as understanding, among viewers through the use of controversial television content and in effect foster a sense of social reality. The longstanding concept of creating an idealized picture of life as it should be, or a kind of unreality based upon the conjecture of "false opinions" created by the logic of consumerism, had been temporarily replaced by a headlong addressing of social issues. Ella Taylor states that "relevance had established a firm hold on the character of the episodic series", at least for the moment. 77 If any one person was responsible for this process it was Lear's loud-mouth Archie, yelling about those lesbians, coloureds, and hebs.

After "All in the Family" Lear created the American clone of "Steptoe and Son", calling it "Sanford and Son". The main characters were a crusty junk dealer, Fred Sanford (Red Foxx), and his son, Lamont (Demond Wilson). Fred was a bigot like Archie except the target of Fred's prejudice were white "honkies". Cousin Maude on "All in the Family" became "Maude" (CBS 1972-1978), the liberated feminist of suburban Tuckahoe, New York. Bea Arthur was Maude; Bill Macy, her husband Walter; Adrienne Barbeau portrayed her strident daughter Carol; Rue McClanahan was Maude's best friend Vivian, while Conrad Bain played Vivian's husband, Dr. Arthur Harmon. 78 The liberal Maude was pitted against her conservative neighbour, Dr. Harmon, over many

issues, as Archie Bunker was juxtaposed to Mike Stivic. Even Maude occasionally had her liberalness tested, as when she decided to have an abortion. Maude also had a face lift and went through "the change" on air. Walter had to come to terms with his alcoholism and faced bankruptcy during a recession. From "Maude" came "Good Times" (CBS 1974-1979) with Maude's maid, Florida Evans (Esther Rolle), and her family living in their south side Chicago ghetto "project" home. 79 "Good Times" was a visually depressing drama as it did show the gritty reality of slum living, but it also had a strong influence on black youth through Jimmie Walker's character, James Jr. or "JJ". Lear's last success of the 1970's was "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" (syndicated 1976-1977), a soap opera parody centered around chief character Mary Hartman (Louise Lasser) and her struggles with life. Once again Lear tried to sell it to the networks, but all rejected it as too risky. The television audience reacted positively to Mary's preoccupation with "waxy yellow build-up" and her impotent husband Tom. The show collapsed after Lasser left due to a rumoured drug problem. 80 Family drama on television had been transformed by the mid-1970's but as with many revolutions, a reaction occurs of equal strength, yet opposite in character.

In 1974 a show was premiered which was meant to be a spin-off of the movie "American Graffiti" (1973). However, "Happy Days" (ABC 1974-1984) proved to be the antithesis to Lear's reality movement in family drama. Ron Howard, as lead character Ritchie Cunningham, had been the child star, Opie, on "The Andy Griffith Show". His parents were a nondescript 1950's couple. The father, Howard Cunningham, ran a hardware store and the mother, Marion, stayed at home cooking. A local motorcycle hood Arthur Fonzarelli, known as "Fonzie" (Henry Winkler) was the most popular star in the series. When the story was originally conceived it rode the crest of

a nostalgic wave that Robert Sklar feels was created by an escapism born of the mid-1970's recession. When the suburban myth appeared to be falling apart, nostalgia shows became very common as they recalled a time when such myths worked. 81 The show contained little sensational content as in Lear's comedies, but merely revolved around high school, Arnold's Drive-in, a basketball hoop affixed to the garage and the family living room. Minor characters who appeared in the early episodes ended up with their own successful shows through the creation of spin-offs. Arnold (Pat Morita) became Mr. T. in the short-lived series, "Mr. T. and Tina" (ABC 1976). Laverne and Shirley, two single working-class girls, had appeared as minor characters in a 1975 'dating' episode. They got their own show in 1976 as two single roommates working at the Shotz Brewery. "Laverne & Shirley" (ABC 1976-1983) was an enormous success, despite its simple-minded message of finding contentment in an economically marginal way of life. Scott Baio appeared in 1977 as Fonzie's cousin Charles "Chachi" Arcola, which launched Baio's teen film career. The "Happy Days" phenomenon seemed to grow in the middle 1970's, despite the continued but waning popularity of the Lear series. The unreality of the 1950's was resurrected for television in a disturbing way. David Marc blatantly states: "Happy Days...fossilized the explicit political obsessions of 'All in the Family' by coolly dismissing the importance of overt political consciousness to personal happiness". 82 A return to the blissful days of Ozzie and Harriet or Jim Anderson could supposedly produce a happier state of mind. An escape to a simpler time was also found in "The Waltons" (CBS 1972-1981) but at least in this series John Boy Walton's family did face the reality of the Great Depression and its poverty.

The trend toward what would become family drama by 1980 had begun in the mid-1970's when sincere domestic realism was replaced by the vicious infighting of

the rich. "Family" (ABC 1976-1980) was a prime time soap opera about a very troubled Pasadena, California, family called the Lawrences. It had adultery, unwed mothers, terminal illness, run-away teens, and a host of other soapy plot devices. The show was an attempt to chronicle the lives of individual family members as they encountered "divorce, single parenthood, death and other 'relevant' issues".⁸³ Another portrait of family sincerity was "Eight is Enough" (ABC 1977-1981) about the over-populated Braden clan of Sacramento, California. In contrast to these sincere family dramas the success of such miniseries as "Captains and the Kings" (NBC 1976-1977) and "Rich Man, Poor Man" (ABC 1976-1977) suggested that a family-in-conflict soap opera on an epic scale could be attempted as a regular prime time series if its themes were powerful enough to interest an audience. The result was "Dallas" (CBS 1978-1991) which concerned the feud between the Ewing clan and the Barnes family over Texas oil rights and wealth. The soap opera themes of money, sex, power and murder were put to good use. The late 1970's had given television family drama a soft edge in domestic portraits that were relevant but overly sincere. In the 1980's this would be altered into a kind of ethical parable in prime time soap operas, particularly "Dallas". It actually critiqued many of the real flaws in American society by posing the ethical dilemma of good versus evil in the corporate world.

v. The uncritical nature of family drama in the 1980's:

The 1980's was a period of political conservatism. With the defeat of Jimmy Carter and the election of Ronald Reagan America seemed to be fascinated by wealth. Despite a recession in the early 1980's, the Reagan era was one of a public acceptance of wealthy people as social leaders and their personal lives became subjects of national interest. In "Dallas", the public found a ready-made scandal drama which revolved

around good brother Bobby Ewing's (Patrick Duffy) attempts to thwart evil brother J.R. Ewing's (Larry Hagman) schemes to control the family's oil fortune. Both brothers were ever mindful of the aggressive Cliff Barnes (Ken Kercheval) who wanted to regain his family's oil rights which had been usurped by the Ewings. Bobby married a Barnes, Pamela (Victoria Principal), which angered J.R. whose own wife Sue Ellen (Linda Gray) became an alcoholic as a result of his philandering behaviour. The head of the family clan, Miss Ellie (Barbara Bel Geddes), watched her sons' actions with dismay, while her husband Jock (Jim Davis) usually had to control the family's excesses. 84 The first impression of the series by critics was to pronounce it totally unbelievable, but viewers responded differently. They felt they knew the characters and either sympathized with or despised them. The public grew to love J.R.'s evilness and when he was shot in the spring finale of 1980, wagers were placed on the fall show as to "Who Shot J.R.?". 85 He was all that was good about capitalism and, at the same time, all that was wrong with it. It was a cynical reality that people bought into, rather than a political one as in the early 1970's.

Ilen Ang examined the fan mail of "Dallas" and found that people believed it was "taken from life". The realism of "Dallas" was not at a cognitive level but was "situated at an emotional level: what is recognized as real is not knowledge of the world, but a subjective experience of the world: a 'structure of feeling'". 86 A psychological climate was created by the show that lay somewhere between "reality and fiction". "Dallas" in the 1980's was the imagined reality of America in the Reagan era, ruthless, conservative, wealthy and highly seductive. "Dallas" was political in its depiction of the wealthy as petty and competitive, even within the same family. Viewers commonly reacted by accepting the social supremacy of wealthy people, as Elihu Katz and Tamrar

Liebes found in their Israeli immigrant study. One person states: "Who doesn't want to be rich? The whole world does". Another replies: "Wealth also makes an easy life".⁸⁷ Despite all the excesses of J.R., he was wealthy and that meant, even given his underhanded behaviour, he was a social success. The Dallas formula spawned many other rivals, as the sumptuously furnished costume clone "Dynasty" (ABC 1981-1988) about the Carringtons of Denver, Colorado. "Falcon Crest" (CBS 1981-1989) was concerned with the evil matriarch Angela Channing (Jane Wyman), a power broker in the California wine industry. From "Dallas" itself came "Knots Landing" (CBS 1979-present) about Gary Ewing and his life in a California suburb.⁸⁸ None had the impact of "Dallas", as each week it posed a parable on the ethics of power in corporate America.

Other than these wealthy warring families, the 1980's produced two family dramas that were complete contrasts. "Family Ties" (NBC 1982-1989) was conceived as an anti-Reagan comedy about a yuppie family experiencing the trauma of a generation gap. The parents were former hippie types from the 1960's with a radical past and the children were contrasts in the making. Elyse Keaton (Meredith Baxter-Birney) and her husband Steve (Michael Gross) lived in Columbus, Ohio. She was an architect, while he worked for public television. Their children were prototypes of the 1980's as Alex (Michael J. Fox) was an avid Reaganite conservative, Mallory (Justine Bateman) was an airhead whose only interests in life were clothes and boys. The youngest daughter Jennifer (Tina Yothers) was only a child and wished to remain one.⁸⁹ Eventually Alex became the symbol of yuppie conservatism as he dressed in business suits and espoused Republican politics on all issues. Mallory became more interested in art and seemed to be turning into a liberal. The concept of the series was to show how polarized politically the two generations were. Alex's loss of his virginity to a girl friend

over an evening of reading Milton Friedman was a high point in the series. Writer Michael Weithorn stated:

We always presented Alex's political views with tongue in cheek. The irony is that this irony was lost on Alex Keaton fans, and we inadvertently ended up creating a role model for the young buttoned down organization man. 90

President Reagan offered to appear on the show as he considered Alex a fine model for youth but disputes among the producers prevented this from happening.

The most successful family drama of the 1980's was so mundane that it brought "Father Knows Best" out of retirement, namely "The Cosby Show" (NBC 1984 to present). Bill Cosby as Dr. Cliff Huxtable provides a charming portrait of the middle American father, along with his beautiful television wife, Clair (Phylicia Rashad), an attorney. Their children, Denise (Lisa Bonet), Theodore (Malcolm-Jamal Warner), as well as youngsters Vanessa and Rudy, together make for an adorable family. 91 Totally apolitical like the 1950's family dramas, the show is extremely retrogressive but having the parents black and professional are qualities that supposedly redeem the series. Cosby is very moralizing both on and off the show as an establishment father who knows how to raise children. He is the black Jim Anderson of the 1980's. Mark Crispin Miller states Cosby is merely a huckster selling Jello pudding in his cute kid commercials and a material lifestyle on his show. Miller dislikes the simplistic logic of the scripts combined with the material image of wealthy blacks. He states "Each Huxtable...is hardly more than a mobile display case for his/her monetary possessions". 92 Cosby acts like a buffoon with big cigars but he does a hard sell in his Jello commercials and is also an excellent propogandist for a materialistic family lifestyle each week in his comedy show. Cosby is for the 1980's what Jim Anderson could not be in the 1950's, a consumerist

advocate giving lessons in how to tutor your family in the ways of a more abundant life. Miller states it is a "desperate look" that Cosby eschews to reassure white America and it is only minimally effective. 93 "Family Ties" was almost as successful as "Cosby" and that is in itself very surprising. "Family Ties" was an attempt to laugh at a disturbing generational phenomenon in a critical manner, while "The Cosby Show" is a recycled fifties sitcom that seems jaded by the lead star's own sense of self importance. Thus when "Family Ties" ended it did so gracefully, while Bill Cosby's show hangs on with the same message and falling ratings.

Many other family shows emerged in the late 1980's, such as "Growing Pains" (ABC 1985-present) with a psychiatrist father (Alan Thicke) dispensing advice freely to his family. It should have been called "Freud Knows Best". Nostalgia again surfaced with "The Wonder Years" (ABC 1988-present) concerning the youthful reminiscences of an adult about his life as a child in the 1960's. Steven Reddcliffe calls it a realistic drama as it is " 'Leave it to Beaver' with hormones", but in the end the show is simply another piece of suburban memorabilia. 94 Only two shows emerged in the 1980's as family dramas that rivalled Lear's comedies in the 1970's. One is "Roseanne" (ABC 1988-present) and the other is "Married with Children" (Fox 1987-present). "Roseanne" is the creation of series star Roseanne Barr, who is married in the show to Dan (John Goodman) and has three children. They live in Illinois and are a "working-class blue collar" family, barely managing to survive. Dan is a construction worker, while Roseanne has been employed at several jobs, including a plastics factory worker, selling goods by phone from home and a beauty parlour assistant. Dan and Roseanne are "hefty", their home is untidy, their kids are not high achievers and they never seem to get ahead. They constantly fight in a loud manner but not as bitterly as the Bunkers.

However, the show offers little political insight into why the family occupies such a place in society. Roseanne is a typical housewife dreamer who quotes from The National Inquirer but she never alludes to how the socio-political structure of society keeps the family down, as Archie Bunker did. The model for the program is a 1950's favourite as the show's star states: " 'Hey, it's real, real revolutionary, huh?' sneers Barr, who fondly remembers a series called 'The Honeymooners'." 95

"Married with Children" (Fox 1987-present) was meant to be the antithesis of "Cosby". It is about a suburban Chicago family of losers who are everything the Huxtables are not. Al Bundy (Ed O'Neill) is a shoe salesman, while Peggy (Katey Sagal) is his lazy wife with a bee-hive hairdo. Kelly (Christina Applegate) is their sexually loose daughter and Bud (David Faustino) is their sexually frustrated son. The family enjoys all the wholesome activities of life as Al likes his "dumps" (defecations) in peace, Peggy loves to shop at the mall, Kelly "dresses like a tramp" for her older dates, and Bud is continually frustrated by a lack of sex. This is a dysfunctional family and they are proud of it. Head writer Michael G. Moye states:

We're not going to raise anybody's consciousness. It's basically for the man and woman that comes home beat to shit every day and wants to turn on the TV and laugh. 96

Co-creator Ron Leavitt adds that a "real" family was simply not seen on television until their show was broadcast due to the fact it dared to ask:

"Is every family happy?"..."Do they all dress well? Do both Mom and Dad have great jobs in every house in the world? We didn't when we were growing up." 97

The answer is, of course, no, and the largest portion of the show's audience are working-class or lower middle-class families. The crude humour of "Married with Children" is perhaps the real humour of ordinary families. Archie made bathroom jokes as Alf

Garnett did in Britain, thus Al Bundy is really not an exception to a tradition of realistic domestic humour. In the ratings wars "Roseanne" is still popular, but "Cosby" has faded and "Married with Children" has become a strong ratings contender. The 1980's began with the soap opera parable of the feuding rich in "Dallas" and ended with Al Bundy's trips to the bathroom. In some ways realistic family drama has continued to thrive on American television, however the newer examples of this genre seem to be lacking something. What they lost was their critical edge or political agenda that Lear had specifically given his shows in the 1970's. In the 1980's only "Family Ties" seemed to capture a sense of its own political agenda, while shows such as "Roseanne" and "Married with Children" are usually devoid of such considerations. In the Cosby family living room the 'realpolitik' of daily life was not an appropriate topic of conversation.

vi. Family realism in the age of postmodernism:

Barely had the 1990's begun when an apparently new type of family drama appeared. The show was "The Simpsons" (Fox 1990-present) and although it looked on the surface to be new, this was not the case. The harbinger of "The Simpsons" was an older prime time television cartoon, namely "The Flintstones" (ABC 1960-1963). The two shows were very similar as they focused on the lives of a working-stiff who tried to do the best he could for his family. In the pre-historic "Flintstones" Fred was a quarry pit worker who left his job as rapidly as possible at "quittin time" to return to wife Wilma, daughter Pebbles and pet dinosaur Dino.⁹⁸ Although Fred had his difficulties, he never lost faith in the middle-class way of life and its material values albeit in the Stone Age. In the current postmodernist era with its emphasis on social conformity disguised as dissent, "The Simpsons" seems all too familiar. "The Simpsons" family head, Homer, works at a nuclear power plant, while his wife, Marge, is an Edith Bunker type who has

a good heart and their children are utter contrasts. Bart is the oldest brat of his family, while his younger sister, Lisa, is a serious child and baby sister, Maggie, merely sucks on a pacifier. However, despite very well-written scripts that seem to critique many aspects of contemporary life, the show remains essentially apolitical. "The Simpsons" generally avoids taking any critical stances on social issues and seems to prefer to blandly satirize the more mundane aspects of middle-class life in America. The show appears to function on shock value, for example, Bart calling himself "an underachiever and proud of it" and telling his sister she's a "sniveling toad, egg-sucker and butt-kisser". Like "The Flintstones" the drama seems to be a clever satire on a blue-collar family, but it does not critique the family's social standing in relation to the society at large. It is postmodernist in the sense that it appears on the surface to criticize, but it actually communicates the type of conformist message first found in such sitcoms as "Father Knows Best", that traditional family values can be preserved, even in the midst of suburban turmoil. As Ella Taylor comments: "The family is fractured, but solidarity ultimately reigns" in the Simpson household. 99

Recently an incident arose that highlighted the accommodating attitude of "The Simpsons" to anything that resembles political controversy. The U.S. Council for Energy Awareness wrote to the show's producers on behalf of the nuclear power industry to complain about the unsafe practices shown at Homer's fictitious workplace, the Springfield Nuclear Plant. The show's only ongoing political/environmental statement was about how a greedy electrical utility owner used underpaid fools like Homer to run a potentially deadly nuclear power plant. The executive producer, Sam Simon, wrote back to the group: "I am sorry the Simpsons has offended a lot of people in the energy industry". The Fox network even agreed to have the show's staff tour a real nuclear

plant at San Clemente near the studio facilities. Simon stated that the show would be "more responsible" next season by having Homer avert a meltdown. Also Homer is to say dinner grace with this statement: "Thank you for nuclear power, which has yet to cause a single fatality...at least in this country". 100 Archie Bunker, through Norman Lear, never apologized to any racial, political, or industrial group that he offended. If Lear had come under similar pressure tactics he would have made Archie even more inflammatory about the offending aspects of the issue at hand. Homer Simpson displays the postmodernist flexibility that Archie could never have adopted. "The Simpsons" began as a segment of "The Tracey Ullman Show" (FOX 1987-1989) and was created by Life in Hell cartoonist Matt Groening. The appeal of the show, states Jack Nachbar of Bowling Green State University, is in the characters, they are "closer to the real norm than anything we've ever seen". 101 Homer is crass and common but he is a family man and even Bart the brat has moral scruples. Ultimately the Simpsons may be regarded as working-class, but they aspire to be petite bourgeoisie.

vii. Conclusion:

The history of family drama on American television since the 1950's has been governed by a specific agenda, to promote a suburban/consumerist life style and to de-emphasize the harsh realities faced by those who are not able to share in this utopia. The realism of Depression radio drama was deemed unsuitable for television in the postwar economic boom of the 1950's as its messages were completely inappropriate for a consumerist society. Suburban unreality was created in the 1950's to specifically overcome the 1930's Depression mentality that emphasized thrift and domestic economy. Thus a kind of television unreality emerged in which the concepts of hard labour, racial prejudice and poverty simply did not exist. During the first several

years of American television the old radio dramas with their urban ethnic working-class families were directly transplanted to the new video medium, but they were systematically eradicated in favour of shows that depicted the suburban life style. The dominance of these family sitcoms was extended into the 1960's through the use of hillbillies, witches and other excursions into grotesqueness. When a grotty portrayal of family life was finally resurrected on American television it was at a time of socio-political disillusionment with Watergate and an economic recession, the likes of which had not been seen since the Great Depression. Audiences could no longer believe all was perfect in suburbia, no matter how that unreality was disguised.

For a brief time the shadow images of the suburban pastoral ideal retreated with Norman Lear's "All in the Family" in which social class, racial bigotry and the ordinary traumas of life became fashionable. Lear borrowed his ideas from the British Marxist writer, Johnny Speight, whose own BBC series "Till Death Us Do Part" served as the model for the American show. However, despite some well-developed spin-off shows such as "Maude", the Lear family dramas were eclipsed by 1976 when the saccharine nostalgia of "Happy Days" and "Laverne and Shirley" effectively depoliticized American television. This trend became steadily worse in the 1980's with the black version of "Father Knows Best", "The Cosby Show". Dr. Huxtable, Cosby's character, was the epitome of conservative blandness and his sermonizing on the joys of family life, both on as well as off television, did eventually produce a backlash. At first it was intelligent satirization of Reaganism and the generation gap in "Family Ties". However, this soon devolved into the crude bathroom/sex humour of "Married with Children" and the obnoxious frumpiness of "Roseanne". The political realism that Lear brought from Britain and used in his family dramas of the 1970's has never been fully resurrected.

The shadowland of American family television is still dominated by clever parodies that do not reflect life in a critical mirror. "The Simpsons" are the final postmodernist achievement of this devolution of American family drama. Bart and his family are both parody and product as T-shirts in addition to other paraphernalia from the show generate huge profits. Far from being a subversive form of drama, shows such as "The Simpsons" contribute to the prevailing process of consensus building through "false opinions" which is essential to the proper functioning of modern consumer culture. In supposedly lampooning suburban consumerism, "The Simpsons" has created its own product line that is designed specifically for a middle-class clientele. There are now more than seventy Simpson products from posters, key chains, bed linens and even a Bart talking doll. 102 Norman Lear would have never approved of such officially licensed products as a talking Archie doll saying "stifle". One hopeful development is that Norman Lear has decided to return to the production of situation comedies, although it is too soon to make any judgements about his comeback. 103

The progressively uncritical stance of family drama since the 1950's has led to such postmodernist programming efforts as "The Simpsons". The suburban family television model of the 1950's was an uniquely American creation and served the purpose of re-orienting the populace towards the consumerist logic of a corporate society. It is entirely necessary, according to Fredric Jameson, to gradually detach signs from their historical referent. This, he believes, is one of the chief characteristics of postmodernist video culture in the age of late capitalism. Modern art detached itself from the "real" to arrive at a new "critical power", but "postmodernist video offers no such possibility of critique of a cultural order with which it seems banally identical." 104 Jameson's insight is flawed, as Steven Connor states, because he cannot decide

whether to focus upon avant-garde or commercial television to prove his point. In terms of family drama the ultimate objective of American corporate television has been to detach domestic signs from their historical referents in order to create a consumerist mentality. The Depression dramas with their historical referents tied to ethnicity, social classes and economic frugality had to be replaced. The public habits and tastes had to be altered from the relative self-sufficiency of the Depression era that emphasized monetary caution to the rampant consumerism of post-Second World War materialism. It was only during those times when the logic of late capitalism floundered, as in the 1970's recession with Lear's "All in the Family", that realism could make a return to American family drama. In the late 1980's the dramas that appear critical on the surface, such as "The Simpsons", in effect blend identity with the overall goals of a consumerist society by remaining depoliticized. The family portrayals on British television do not serve such an agenda and remain highly realistic in their political sensibility. One of the most recent examples of this is Roy Clarke's "Keeping Up Appearances" (BBC 1991-present) which contrasts the family circumstances of four sisters. Hyacinth Bucket (Patricia Routledge) is married to Richard (Clive Swift), a town official and is over-zealous in her pursuit of maintaining proper standards in an age of declining decorum. Hyacinth's terrible secret is her two sisters, Daisy (Judy Cornwall) and Rose (Mary Miller), who live in a council estate in squalor. Rose is a sexually-liberated free spirit, while Daisy is married to Onslow (Geoffery Hughes), a perpetually unemployed member of the working class, who spends his day drinking beer in front of the "tellie". Hyacinth constantly refers to her unseen fourth sister, Violet, the wife of a wealthy husband named Bruce who has a Mercedes and swimming pool. Each show concerns Hyacinth's attempts to preserve her own snobby appearance in the face of her uncouth relations. The series is an astute

comment on the complacent attitude of post-Thatcherite Britain which exists as two distinct social dualities. 105 American network television audiences continue to absorb the highly opinionated, unrealistic shadow images of an idealized domestic/commercial culture being projected from their television screens, while foreign viewers, such as the British, are challenged in a satirical manner about the imperfect reality of their social circumstances.

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CHAPTER 2: 'All Quiet on the Domestic Front: War, Crime and the Depiction of Social Violence on Television From the 1950's to the 1980's.'

War and crime have been subjected to a great deal of censorship due to their potentially harmful social as well as political implications. War is seen as a patriotic adventure that does not need its bloody reality broadcast to a national audience. When live coverage of the combat zone was shown on American television during the 1960's it indirectly undermined the entire war effort in Vietnam. War has always been a controlled activity that almost requires its reporting to be propagandistic in nature. Crime is another sensitive area that people react to immediately if it is broadcast live on television. Riots, lootings and shootings are examples of naked social violence that tend to alarm the viewing public. When the American public saw their cities being destroyed in the race riots of the 1960's it was only logical that they perceived the social structure to be falling apart. The disturbing televisual images of actual warfare and crime enforcement encourage viewers to employ reason in order to reach an understanding of such issues, thus gaining some sense of the complex realities involved. It is much safer or indeed simply prudent to encourage conjecture around these sensitive topics and cultivate "false opinions" in order to manage their effects. The 1960's and early 1970's demonstrated the volatile influence on public opinion if the reality of bloody warfare was directly transmitted over television. It is not surprising that in the 1980's a new form of managed conflict was introduced. The still high and ever-increasing amount of crime is dealt with in an equally deceptive manner. Race and class conflicts are involved in crime, but American television learned rather quickly to defuse these controversial issues by presenting a portrait of a problem being managed. If crime is not actually under control, it at least appears so on television. The purpose of blunting the television

coverage of war, and avoiding any depiction of the crime problem as it actually exists, is to bring a sense of quietness to the domestic front. If overly disturbed by reality we are not as patriotic as we should be in war, and we begin to question a society's internal stability when so much crime exists. In both cases a highly censored or theatrical shadowland assures us that our country is putting up a brave fight in war and the nation's law forces are successfully battling the criminal segments of society. War relies upon viewer ignorance about actual battle conditions, while crime requires a theatrical charade to assure television viewers that law and order are winning the war on crime. Both are video battlegrounds which have been created to deny the reality of circumstances by encouraging the conjecture of "false opinion" or a sense of unreality among viewers.

I. War

i. Patriotism and war:

War is a very public exercise as it mobilizes the forces of one nation to oppose another nation in battle. The image of a strong, invincible nation destined to triumph over adversity must be created through the home front media in order to win the conflict. To maintain morale it is necessary to control all negative news from the battlefield that may alarm the public. This was not easily accomplished even in the era before satellite transmissions due to such inventions as Morse's telegraph (1837) and Marconi's radio (1895). News could be relayed instantaneously to the home front and this prompted governments to develop censorship procedures. In the Crimean War (1854-1856) the first use of the telegraph was made by the Franco-British military alliance to direct the conflict at a distance from their respective war ministries in London and Paris. However, this proved difficult and the telegraph link "was put to more

significant use by British war correspondents", whose descriptions of supply mismanagement as well as the suffering of allied troops "aroused public opinion and led to a demand for large-scale reforms in the military system".¹ With the advent of World War I it was obvious to all governments involved that steps had to be taken to manage the news coming from the battlefield. As the conflict worsened reporters were given access to the front, but they gradually learned that they could not reveal anything judged to be a "military secret". The press became a valuable tool in the influencing of the public war effort. In the Second World War reporters were considered an "essential service" and part of the wider war effort.² The reporters travelled with the troops and went into battle to die as soldiers did. In the Korean War correspondents were specifically warned against making "any derogatory comments" about the UN troop offensive against communist North Korea.³ The autocratic power of a state to impose war on its people would be defeated if the conflict's full dimensions were made public. Sigmund Freud wrote in his essay 'Thoughts on War and Death' (1915), that the "state exacts the utmost degree of obedience and sacrifice from its citizens, but at the same time treats them as children by maintaining an excess of secrecy, and a censorship of news and expressions of opinion that renders the spirit of those intellectually oppressed defenceless" against the rumours that surround actual events.⁴ Patriotism is unworkable when the individual no longer believes that his side is righteous and begins to doubt the probability of eventual victory. When wars are uncensored the public's reaction to naked violence is unpredictable and could cause a negative backlash against the conflict.

ii. Police actions abroad and fear of communism at home:

The first televised war in history was the Vietnam police action of the United

States to halt communism. It was initiated by President John F. Kennedy in the early 1960's who sent military advisers to South Vietnam but this involvement soon escalated into a full-scale war under President Lyndon Johnson. The American public had been prepared in the 1950's for such police actions against communism through a conservative witch hunt in the media against so-called communist sympathizers. Fred J. MacDonald believes that American television audiences had been conditioned to accept the wisdom of such foreign interventions through the instilling of a belief that a communist conspiracy existed both at home and abroad to take over the world. The media in the United States had been selectively house cleaned since 1950 by a publication called Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television that identified media subversives. The Korean War occurred before it was technologically feasible to transmit live television pictures by satellite, forcing the networks to utilize military newsreel footage. The "film presented what the military wanted Americans to see" and no more.

5 The television news media became a willing servant of the military effort and broadcast in effect "cold war propaganda", according to MacDonald. If it didn't cooperate with the military's censorship, film footage shoots would not be approved. Reporters such as Edward R. Murrow tried to film at the battle front but were hampered by their bulky film equipment. Murrow did manage to make the war personal through his "See It Now" (CBS 1951-1955) series for CBS which premiered with a segment on a day in the lives of the men in Fox Company, Second Platoon, 19th Infantry. 6 This was followed by a series of intermittent but balanced reports about the Korean conflict. In 1952 Murrow's "Christmas in Korea" captured the nation's attention with its non-military approach to the war by simply focusing on how soldiers felt about being in a war during the Christmas season and how the cause of freedom was being served. Most expressed a standard

cold war view that communism had to be stopped. 7 Before he went on television Murrow had speculated in an August 14th, 1950, radio broadcast about the fate of the populace of Korea in the war and the responsibility of the American military in dealing with the local peasant population. 8 This was censored by CBS and never aired for public examination.

It was ironic that Murrow would finally destroy the social censorship of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy's witch hunt against communism through the media. Murrow successfully attacked the anti-communist rhetoric of the cold war political climate in a historic broadcast of "See It Now" on March 9th, 1954. Using only film footage of the Senator's public appearances Murrow showed the inherent contradictions in McCarthy's logic. As MacDonald points out, Murrow turned the zealousness of McCarthy's anti-communism back on the nation in the line, "Cassius was right: 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves.'" 9 However, the true fault lay in a very passive media that expounded the military's view of a communist threat and did not stimulate social debate on the response of democratic nations to communism. Murrow's broadcast was an attempt to finally interject a critical perspective into what had been a very uncritical media role. McCarthy's anti-communist conspiracy had been made legitimate by flattering television coverage before Murrow's broadcast. The televised hearings that Senator McCarthy conducted in the spring of 1953 on communist penetration into the American army finally ended his career. 10 When McCarthy was supporting overseas police actions, such as Korea, with his fear of communism at home campaign, the media tacitly supported him. When he attacked national institutions and threatened to expose them as communist fronts he was not supported. Despite Murrow's wide ranging criticism of America's cold war mentality, the East-West struggle remained one of

patriotic vigilance for the populace. MacDonald states: "Anti communism continued to thrive in politics and video".¹¹ Fostering a realistic perspective was impossible in this environment of black and white responses to an ideological issue.

iii. The Vietnam War and early media coverage:

America's heroic war on communism achieved full fruition in Vietnam during the 1960's. The success of the Korean police action, and a supportive media at home, had assured Americans that foreign involvement was both prudent and correct. The "domino theory" was a 1960's creation of the Eisenhower/Kennedy presidencies to explain the apparent spread of communism. Active intervention by American advisors in the support of an openly corrupt regime was acceptable as long as the dictator opposed communism. In the case of Vietnam the dictator was Ngo Dinh Diem, who had proved troublesome to American "containment policy" since the onset of his regime in the late 1950's. An ardent Catholic, Diem controlled South Vietnam through the appointment of a Catholic oligarchy to the civil service and army. In May of 1963 Buddhists assembled in the ancient capital of Hue to celebrate the 2527th birthday of Buddha but Diem forbade the assembly. Troops were sent to the city square where they fired on the Buddhists. In press reports Diem blamed the communist Vietcong but the Buddhists continued to protest and influenced the western press. On June 11th, 1963, an elder monk, Quang Duc, burned himself alive in a busy street of Saigon. The world press had been alerted and took pictures of the priest's immolation and later printed the Buddhists' demands for religious tolerance. Diem's reaction was to blame it on the communist Vietcong, while his wife, Madame Nhu, described it as a ridiculous "barbecue".¹² Through such visual images as the burning Buddhist priest, the American public began to sense that the Diem regime was oppressive. However, Diem's repression was short-

lived as he was assassinated on November 2nd, 1963, to the delight of American Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge. In a strange twist of fate President Kennedy was also assassinated three weeks later. In the period leading up to 1968 and the massive uprising in the lunar new year of Tet, the television media paid little attention to the internal politics of Vietnam. All political opposition to the pro-American regimes of the South were portrayed as communist fronts. The political factions were considered a hindrance to the struggle against the North. Army and Buddhist protests in 1966 against the successor Thieu/Ky government were reported in a superficial way that did not seem to appreciate how unstable the anti-communist forces in the South actually were. Daniel C. Hallin writes that "television was hostile to the political opposition in South Vietnam, portraying it like the antiwar movement at home, as a threat to law and order".¹³ The main coverage seemed to concentrate on the war in the countryside and the build up of American troops.

Several technological innovations had affected television news reporting after the Korean War. Satellites such as Telstar provided the means to transmit sound and images around the globe in an almost instantaneous fashion. Light-weight film cameras first appeared in 1963 and they allowed reporters to achieve real mobility. Also, the newscasts on American television had been doubled in length from fifteen to thirty minutes so that issues could be covered in depth. Americans had come to trust their newscasters as father figures from whom all wisdom flowed. In the early period of the war the media was very supportive of military involvement, but gradually reporters began to notice the side effects of war on the general population of South Vietnam and expressed those concerns. How the GI's amused themselves when off duty, the latest USO tour by Bob Hope, and a typical day in the life of a patrol, were characteristic of the

early television war reports. As the conflict became more intense so did the televised images.

In August, 1965, Morley Safer, broadcasting from the village of Cam Ne for CBS, found that no active combat was taking place. Instead he filmed a soldier igniting a village hut and the entire village aflame with a cigarette lighter. The public's reaction was to condemn CBS for being disloyal to the war effort. Few people seemed to be shocked at how the war was actually being fought by American soldiers. Douglas Kinnard states the war "was no longer a glorious distant thing; it was American boys burning down villages while you watched in your own living room".¹⁴ Lyndon Johnson was incensed by the report and phoned the CBS network president. It was to be the first of many phone calls President Johnson would make. However, news reporting was not censored either by the government or the networks themselves, unlike entertainment programming such as the politically provocative "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" (CBS 1967-1969) which was cancelled at the height of its popularity. The anti-war jokes of Tom and Dick, as well as Pete Seeger's songs, were expendable but press freedom remained sacrosanct.

iv. The Tet offensive and stalemate war:

The reality of war was driven home by the Tet offensive of 1968 which was broadcast live on television. Historians of the Vietnam War agree that as a military operation the attempt by the Viet Cong to overthrow the government of South Vietnam was a failure. What it did succeed in doing was to convince the American public that the war in itself was wrong and totally unlike World War II or Korea. In January, 1968, the Viet Cong began a dual campaign of guerilla warfare in the cities of Saigon and Hue, as well as in the jungle border regions. By February American troops were engaged in

difficult street fighting in the cities and besieged at the highland outpost of Khe Sanh. The television cameras took the home viewer directly into the troubled streets and gave the impression the struggle itself was indeed futile. A February 20th NBC news broadcast on Hue showed combat footage and commented:

American marines are so bogged down in Hue that nobody will even predict when the battle will end...More than 500 marines have been wounded and 100 killed since the fighting in Hue began...The price has been high and it gained the marines about 50 yards a day or less in a heavily populated part of the citadel. Still, nothing is really secure...Most of the city is now in rubble. 15

Eventually the scenes of destruction grew so pervasive that an absurd logic took hold. A small hamlet called Ben Tre was destroyed by the military on February 7th, 1968, and the Major in charge commented: "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it". 16 To save South Vietnam the country itself had to be destroyed. Images of constant gun fire, shell fire, destroyed buildings, wounded soldiers, and American troops pinned down by the enemy began to visually show the futility of the entire exercise. According to Michael X. Delli Carpini, it was the images of physical and human destruction in the Tet offensive that would have an effect on the course of the war. One of the most dramatic pieces of film footage occurred early in the Tet campaign and showed the street execution of a young Viet Cong fighter by Colonel Nguyen Ngoc Lam, Chief of Police for South Vietnam. The Colonel asked him if he were a communist, then put a gun to the man's head and fired. The blood spurted from the victim's skull and he collapsed to the ground. This image incensed television viewers and contributed to a growing anti-war sentiment. The price of the war and its moral goals began to be questioned in earnest.

The most critical media event of the war was the visit by Walter J. Cronkite of CBS News to the battlefield of Tet. Broadcast on February 27th, 1968, the report was

a condemnation of the war from a father-like broadcast figure who, up until this point, had supported the war. President Johnson watched the report and was said to have stated after his resignation that "Cronkite was it". With Cronkite's condemnation of the war the public began to think defeat with honour was an acceptable option. Cronkite had been a media advocate of the domino theory and the anti-communist stance of the Kennedy administration, but as the war continued it was obvious to him that a stalemate was inevitable. The CBS network had allowed him to report directly from the battlefield, clad in a steel helmet. His February special was the completion of his Vietnam reports on Tet and, in a devastating summation, Cronkite said that "we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, yet satisfactory, conclusion".¹⁷ Thus, he continued, "The only rational way out will be to negotiate, and not as victors". Johnson knew that with this statement the war effort was in jeopardy because, as his own press secretary Bill Moyers pointed out, polls revealed Cronkite was trusted by 70% of those questioned in a national survey designed to rate people in the "public eye".¹⁸ The idea of a military victory over communism had been effectively vanquished from the minds of the American public.

Cronkite had previously been the champion of the unrealistic "containment policy", but he forcefully presented the reality of a stalemated war. Also he had been a war correspondent with Murrow in World War II and had worked for United Press. His news director at CBS was Les Midgeley, who had entered Paris with the liberating troops. Richard Slant, then president of CBS, said the news operation at first approached Vietnam as an extension of World War II, where "right and wrong were easily distinguished" from one another.¹⁹ As the war's moral goals became less clear, and the bloody violence was increasingly more prominent, the lines between what was taken as right or wrong began to blur. Cronkite and his fellow war veterans no longer

saw this as a patriotic war, but one of endurance. No one incident showed this better than the Viet Cong siege of Khe Sanh, a U.S. border outpost inland from Hue. Surrounded by Viet Cong during the first half of the Tet offensive, it became a symbolic defence point for the Pentagon which insisted its fall would signal the success of the enemy's military campaign. Strategically it was not significant and in fact would have been better abandoned. During the initial defence the news reports supported the military, but as the images of wounded youth and risky landings by supply helicopters increased, reporters were noticeably more cynical. Despite the large use of bombardment from the air, the Viet Cong seemed invincible and reports from Khe Sanh, as this one from CBS, echoed the futility. The commentary reads:

So there is no end in sight. The North Vietnamese out there beyond the fog show no inclination to pull back or attack. [...] So for the marines...there is nothing to do but sit and take it, just to wait, and hope they'll rotate out, leave before they join the roster of the wounded and dead here. 20

According to Delli Carpini the siege ended only two weeks after this report was broadcast on March 29th, 1968. The media images of civilian dead, urban violence and battlefield casualties were three times more common during the Tet offensive than before or after.

21

v. Bad press at home and abroad:

One of the most memorable pieces of film footage to emerge from the war was the 1972 burning of a young Vietnamese girl by the flammable defoliant, Napalm, which regularly bombarded civilian targets as opposed to dense jungle. When broadcast on television the image of a young naked girl running down a road, crying in agony due to burned flesh, with South Vietnamese soldiers walking behind her, was highly dramatic and was also featured as a stark photograph in Life magazine. 22 This image of

individual suffering brought home the atrocities of the war. However, such tragic incidents commonly occurred, and quite early on in the war. In 1965 Junichi Ushiyama presented the three part documentary "Actions of a Vietnamese Marine Battalion" on Japan's NTV commercial channel. One part showed the entrance of South Vietnamese troops into a village to interrogate spies. A seven year old boy was shot, his stomach cut open to discover "secret documents", and his severed head was presented to the camera. The other two parts were banned as obscene. ²³ Foreign documentaries about the shocking and brutal nature of the Vietnam conflict were produced in Canada, Sweden, France, Syria, Great Britain and a number in Japan. Few, if any, of these films made it to American television. ²⁴ It was during the Tet offensive that American troops were sent to the village of Som My, between March 16th and 19th, on a tactical operation to destroy a Viet Cong guerilla unit. The result was a massacre of the civilian village population that did not come to light until 1969, when one of the soldiers, Ron Ridenhour, wrote to the Secretary of Defence about the incident. The My Lai massacre investigation was a condemnation of US military policy, more than a prosecution of the guilty soldiers. ²⁵ It told the public that the war had been out of control in the Tet offensive and this had led to such horrific ends. Brutal images compounded upon brutal images. Report after televised report stressed military stalemate. Was it any wonder that Lyndon Johnson stated that he would not run for president in 1969 and blamed television's war coverage as the main cause for his downfall? Hubert Humphrey squared off with Richard Nixon to see who could end the war as quickly as possible, while maintaining America's sense of honour.

The finale to the television war was the evacuation in 1975 of the US embassy in Saigon, when the South Vietnamese capital was finally overrun by the North

Vietnamese army. The sight of people crowding around the gates, helicopters taking off from the embassy roof, and Vietnamese aircraft being scuttled from American aircraft carriers offshore, conveyed the last desperate hours of the war. It had been the best show on television. However, was the realism of the war images since the 1968 Tet offensive responsible for the war's unpopularity and ultimate end? Certainly if such reporting had not taken place, the public sense of the conflict would have been very different and restricted, as in the Korean War. The realism of stalemated warfare penetrated deep into the domestic tranquillity of suburban America and in the end made the abandonment of the entire futile effort a logical conclusion. The lesson of Vietnam as the first televised war, was that the realism of television coverage brought forward specific issues about war conduct that otherwise might have remained hidden, but this is still very much debated. Michael Mendelbaum believes the "feeling" or "sense" of the conflict that television provided to the viewer was not a very critical factor. There was little empirical evidence gathered at the time to show specifically how stark war images affected the public. ²⁶ It might have made them apathetic about a distant conflict, more patriotic, or extremely hostile to the war itself. The Tet offensive report by Walter Cronkite was the only time that an overtly critical commentary was offered to the American public. Instead the television networks simply flooded their viewers with "so many images of so many different things as to make it impossible for Americans to respond with feeling to any of them". ²⁷ According to Mendelbaum, the televising of the war did aid in the creation of a strong and very outspoken anti-war movement, whose influence on domestic politics was critical. The Americans had fought many unpopular wars in the past but at no other time had such a vehement domestic opposition emerged on the national scene.

vi. Television's influence on the Vietnam war:

In the end what television really did was to show the waste of soldiers, money and American global prestige. The war created a barrage of negative publicity that was shown as a turgid soap opera each night on the six o'clock news and produced an ever-rising inflationary drain on the economy. Mendelbaum believes that it was simply a "bad" war that would have been opposed even without massive television coverage.

28 News producer Edward Fouhy doubts that Cronkite's editorial or television itself had much of an effect upon the war. Fouhy states that television "is not capable...of changing the course of history". 29 Michael X. Delli Carpini also does not give television the ultimate role as a decisive change agent during the Tet offensive, but he states that "many of the messages received during 1968 and some of them received after that year, undoubtedly challenged some long-held beliefs and added to a sense of alienation and powerlessness". 30 Daniel C. Hallin sees the television media's negative reports as only a part of a larger feeling in the American public's mind that the war had become too long and too costly. Much the same had happened as the Korean War became a protracted conflict instead of a short police action. Thus the Vietnam War's end "resulted from a political process of which the media were only one part". 31 However, in the mind of J. Fred MacDonald, the war changed American television from a position of uncritical support for government policy to an agency of critical investigation. The viewing public was to benefit from not only the analytical nature of television news, but the political comedy of shows like "The Smothers Brothers", until its untimely cancellation by CBS. By the mid-1960's television news became the chief source of the public's global information and "most reliable" of all information outlets available. In MacDonald's opinion the importance of television was to bring a critical sense of realism to the war

through a form of investigative journalism that had been confined to radio and newspapers. He states "network television acted as it had not in the past, to present a balance of opinion and willingness to investigate without bias".³² Television matured in the wake of the civil rights movement, political assassinations, and the Vietnam War.

It is hard to consider that television was as peripheral as many writers, except MacDonald, state. Most of the war was presented via television to an audience which was conditioned to support "our brave boys" fighting the forces of communist domination. As the coverage became less contrived to support a cold war containment policy and more realistic showing the brutality of a futile conflict, the public's perceptions shifted. The Korean conflict had been a stalemated war that was unpopular at home in America, but it did not produce a peace movement, a peace candidate for president (Eugene McCarthy), and radical youth violence. The questioning of the war by such influential establishment figures as Walter Cronkite focused political opposition to the conflict and created doubts among many war supporters about the viability of the entire endeavour. Television emerged from the shadowland of the parapet screen in the Vietnam War and provided a critical perspective on a contentious national issue as it did with the civil rights movement, McCarthyism, poverty in America and other issues in the 1960's. It set a dangerous precedent that did not escape the attention of military leaders around the world. After Vietnam the news media became more critical of anti-communist propaganda and reporters were able to cover events as they happened, using the instantaneous transmission capabilities of satellites. Alarmed by this new media activism, controls were placed on how war could be covered. In the Pentagon's mind television had supposedly won the war for the communists, as it became their willing partner.

vii. The retreat from realism back to censorship:

In 1983 the small Caribbean island of Grenada was invaded by American forces on the specific orders of President Ronald Reagan. The press was completely excluded from directly covering the invasion and all video footage was supplied by the defence department. Wild claims were made that Cuban arms were seized, Cuban volunteer workers arrested and American students rescued from a private medical college. At the time "no journalists were allowed to land with the American forces to offer an independent assessment".³³ Due to the fact that the media, such as television reporters, were actually turned away from covering the conflict by a naval blockade of the island, it became very convenient for the American military to make exaggerated claims. Manchester Guardian reporter, Jonathan Steele, stated the American military "over-reported the amount of Cuban resistance, under-reported the Grenadian resistance and exaggerated its own military prowess".³⁴ Other governments were not adverse to using this tactic as it was extensively employed by the British military to suppress news reports during the Falkland Islands conflict of 1982. Once again the "American experience in Vietnam did as much as anything to shape the way in which the British Government handled television" and the press.³⁵ The lack of film footage led television to create computerized simulations of the battles to show the conflict. When the destroyer HMS Sheffield was hit by an Argentinian Exorcet missile, the press was prevented from reporting that most of the crew had survived and the ship was afloat, although on fire. Michael Nicholson of ITN was not allowed to interview the Sheffield's captain on the rescue ship. All television networks were forbidden from filming the wreck itself as this would be in "bad taste". A navy spokesman told ITN's Nicholson: "You knew when you came you were expected to do a 1940 propaganda job".³⁶ Nicholson's

response was to broadcast an editorial highly critical of the censorship policy which he charged was politically motivated, rather than born out of military necessity. Robert Harris writes that such controls acted to "clean up" the image of war and make it less jarring to the home audience. This strategy was effective in halting any panic reactions that viewers could experience when exposed to the uncensored depiction of war violence.

viii. The limitations of media activism and the Persian Gulf conflict:

The only data gathered on the television audience during the Vietnam War was a 1967 Newsweek survey showing that 64% of viewers felt more like supporting the war, while only 26% decided to oppose the war due to what they saw. A 1972 follow-up by Newsweek showed that exposing people to constant war coverage made them indifferent to the conflict. 37 However, such statistics do not show the maturation of television journalism and the ways in which it began to critically deal with the issues in an active manner that engaged its audience. In 1971 the CBS documentary "The Selling of the Pentagon" looked at, among other things, how the military shaped battlefield coverage in Vietnam by pre-selecting all soldiers to be interviewed and targeting "hostile" reporters. 38 The dramatic events of the 1970's, with the Watergate hearings and Nixon's resignation, made the public cynical about government policy. Television was the chief agent in openly exposing the corruption and inept actions of the Nixon administration. The public certainly responded positively to the hearing coverage, and very negatively to Nixon's video taped self-defence speeches. Perhaps the cold war/containment psychology of America was broken by the televised Watergate hearings. Media activism has not fared very well in the post-Vietnam period of increasing press censorship and bland cable news coverage. The most significant feature of news

reporting in the Vietnam era was television's presentation of the real face of war and the human costs that ensued. The fact that the audience may have acted indifferently, or even turned with fury on the American networks for transmitting such images, did not alter the activist stance of the news media. The most important factor to note was that the overall level of war reporting became more critical of official war policy and refused to blindly support the entire military effort.

The recent Persian Gulf conflict has shown the extent to which the critical realism of American television war coverage has deteriorated. The military censorship has not been opposed and criticized, as it was by ITN's Michael Nicholson in the Falklands War, but instead blatantly supported. Edward Said, a noted American literature scholar and Palestinian nationalist, states quite openly that "the media hooked on to the war policy" and supported the military operation by focusing on the demoniac character of Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein. Said believes that other than giving air time to those opposed to the war, television utilized "a lot of retired military men...and what I call the scholar-combatants" whose on-air conduct was "virtually indistinguishable from policy makers".³⁹ Any anti-war activism taking place on college campuses, or in the intellectual community during the Gulf War, was deemed so inconsequential by the news media it was virtually ignored. Instead, network television interviewed so-called military experts/consultants to explain battle tactics, as well as intellectuals sympathetic to American military involvement in the Middle East. Said believes the selection of scholars such as Fouad Ajami, Daniel Pipes and Bernard Lewis, along with journalists like Tom Friedman, was not an accidental process but a deliberate attempt to sanction the war in both an academic as well as journalistic manner. Thus the conflict became an old-fashioned patriotic war. Yellow ribbons appeared on everything from trees to gas

pumps to support "our brave boys in the Gulf". The press, as well as television, became mere sounding boards for the technological superiority of American military hardware. It is very doubtful that television can transmit the essence of war when it is so highly censored and removed from the battle zone. However, what is more startling is the lack of outrage in the media itself that the military would try to use it in the promotion of patriotism. The Falklands War was very similar, but the media's opposition to the government's war policy on press restrictions was quite strident. The legacy of the first televised war was to disturb the calm of the home front by introducing a substantial degree of critical reality into the living rooms of the American middle class. In the recent Gulf conflict little of the television media's Vietnam era activism appears to have survived and the shadowland of war images has been resurrected. The American public were offered war analyses at the level of mere conjecture and this encouraged the "false opinion" of blind patriotism which served the Pentagon's goal of portraying the conflict as a police action. Framed within these patriotic shadows the Gulf War and its overall aims received little public scrutiny.

II. Crime

i. The necessity of crime and punishment:

Television's depiction of crime is dealt with in the second part of this chapter. Unlike war, crime is not of a limited duration, as it is continually occurs within society and has always done so. Laws are instituted to deal with crime and legal authorities apprehend, judge, pronounce punishment, as well as confine individuals found guilty of criminal offences. It is a logical and equitable system of keeping order in society. But the concept of crime and punishment does depend upon the guilt felt by the criminal over what he has done in a classical Dostoyevskyan sense. In Feodor

Dostoyevsky's novel Crime and Punishment (1866) a poor student, Raskolnikov, kills for a small sum of money, believing he is master of his own will and can feel no remorse. He is driven to madness, only to confess his guilt and seek redemption by surrender to God. Thus the "tortured conscience of Raskolnikov is a witness not only to his transgression but also to his weakness".⁴⁰ When guilt is no longer felt over the committing of a crime because the perpetrator of the crime no longer feels a part of the social order and its morality, the legal system breaks down. The depiction of criminal activity on American television began as a simplistic narrative which demonstrated that the only result of crime was punishment. As the social complexity of crime grew and moral restraints on such behaviour collapsed, television's crime dramas attempted to portray this ethical system as still viable. They utilized violent enforcers of justice as the character models best able to deal with the exploding crime problem. Currently documentary tactics are employed showing actual crimes being solved by police, thus presenting the illusion of a crime epidemic under control. The problem with crime's depiction on American television is that it continues to rely on the concept of crime and punishment, while failing to probe the social causes of this strife. Such dramas act to reinforce capitalist values such as private property and social inequality. Social stability depends upon viewers accepting this notion of crime as immoral and thus fearing punishment for wrong doing. The shadowland of television crime shows prevents the audience from penetrating into the ideological issues that are an integral part of the crime problem itself.

ii. Televised American crime drama in the 1950's:

When crime serials began on American television they used a very black and white depiction of morally dutiful law authorities going about their tireless task of

protecting society from criminal activity. Such shows as "Dragnet" (NBC 1952-1970), with Sergeant Joe Friday (Jack Webb) and his changing array of police partners, brought a realism to the depiction of crime on television. It emerged from NBC radio's "Gangbusters" series, which was itself different from mystery shows such as "The Shadow" or "The Green Hornet". "Dragnet" used actual case files from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and employed a narrative, documentary style, using Webb's voice. The shows always began the same with "My name's Friday - I'm a cop" working the day shift in the LAPD when a call comes in about a possible crime. Friday always wanted "Just the facts, ma'am" from the public and by the end of the show the criminal was always "booked". The audience had a sense of realism about the show, as the opening line was always "The case you about to hear is true, only the names have been changed to protect the innocent". This continued until the show's end when the criminal was displayed in a mug shot profile and viewers heard his sentence. Law enforcement was swift and direct within a criminal justice system that seemed infallible. 41 An earlier program had been "Man Against Crime" (CBS/Dumont/NBC 1949-1956), with private detective Mike Barnett (Ralph Bellamy) as a brainy crime sleuth. With its New York location shots and frequent fist fights, it was presented as a realistic portrayal of investigative urban crime solving. 42 When the contemporary law forces were not catching criminals, the forces of the old west were doing so.

The western crime shows of the 1950's were violent due to the overt use of fire arms, as seen in a gun fight in the street climax, when good usually triumphed over evil. In "Gunsmoke" (CBS 1955-1975), "Have Gun Will Travel" (CBS 1957-1963), "Cheyenne" (ABC 1955-1963), "The Rifleman" (ABC 1958-1963), "Wanted Dead or Alive" (CBS 1958-1961), "Rawhide" (CBS 1959-1966), "Maverick" (ABC 1957-1962), and "The Life

and Legend of Wyatt Earp" (ABC 1955-1961) a final duel pitted the forces of good against evil. 43 These western crime shows were essentially cold war morality plays in that good was clearly delineated from evil and the punishment, death, fit the crime. In "Wanted Dead or Alive" the use of a bounty hunter/anti-hero played by Steve McQueen did not follow this pattern. He chose no sides and occasionally hunted his wanted men to death, but his quarry were convicted criminals. The western morality plays seemed to end in the early 1960's, except for the long-lived "Gunsmoke" which had actually started on radio, and its more family-oriented counterpart, "Bonanza" (NBC 1959-1973). 44 The Cartwrights of the Ponderosa Ranch were less apt to use gunfights to settle disputes and did not routinely capture criminals. The western dramas on television paralleled the Westerns of the cinema, such as "The Gunfighter" (1950), "Shane" (1953) and "Gunfight at the OK Corral" (1957). 45 In the 1960's televised crime dramas moved into the familiar and more violent urban realm, where circumstances were extremely complex. American television was forced to respond to a violent social climate in which riots, protests, poverty and urban slums became national concerns. The simple standards of good punishing evil had to be modified for new circumstances. The 1950's American crime drama, whether as a western or a police show ("Dragnet"/"Man Against Crime"), instilled a sense of security in suburbanites that the full force of the law was at work to protect society. In Britain somewhat the same concept prevailed when the BBC ran "Dixon of Dock Green" (BBC 1955-1976), about the working life of Constable George Dixon, the stereotypical British Bobby. Helpful to children, kind to old ladies, watchdog against neighbourhood crime, and part time marital counsellor, Dixon was more social worker than policeman. 46 Violent crime was never encountered by the amiable Dixon but that would change in the 1960's, as British television writers depicted crime in a less genteel

manner.

iii. Social violence in the 1960's and the creation of a scary world:

The shadowland of crime dramas in the 1960's was a reactive medium. When American television viewers saw riots in black ghettos, Mafia criminal trials and angry youths battling policemen at demonstrations, they began to perceive that society was becoming lawless. Willard D. Rowland, Jr. believes that the preoccupation Americans had with violence on television and in society was the product of disbelief that their society could change so quickly from the peaceful 1950's. The wholesome family of the 1950's was upstaged on television by the freedom marches of southern blacks and police brutality towards the civil rights marchers. President Kennedy's assassination in 1963, three summers of ghetto riots, the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., the murder of Senator Robert Kennedy, and even the shooting of George Wallace brought about a "concentrated examination of the issue of violence in contemporary society".⁴⁷ In 1968 President Lyndon Johnson created the NCCPV or National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence to look into the causes of violence, including a possible link to watching violent television. A sub-committee was specifically mandated to examine the "effects" of media practices in possibly creating violent behaviour among viewers. The impression that the short-lived commission left was that "something", such as television, had to be creating this increase in criminal behaviour. The NCCPV was mandated to find concrete reasons for the growing "disrespect for law and order" and "violent disruption of public order", instead of calling for further study of the issue.⁴⁸ The NCCPV launched the whole "media effects" debate of the next two decades, but its premise that watching violent crime created criminals was based in the social psychology of the early 1960's.

The research of Alfred Bandura on "modelling behaviours" in young boys exhibiting aggressive acts due to viewing violence on film and television monitors led directly to Leonard Berkowitz's vicarious reinforcement model for media. 49 Berkowitz's earlier work found that overt violence reduced subsequent hostility, but he later concluded such devices as viewer plot identification, violence justification cues in the plot and perceived realism increased aggressive response results dramatically. This simple behaviourist model saw vulnerable children and equally indiscriminating adults as purely "reactive" to clever plot lines in that viewing realistic violence led to acceptance and imitation. The subjects were placed on a very unsophisticated level with males being especially prone to exhibit violent behaviours due to supposedly physiological reasons. Many psychologists found a similar increase in violent behaviour and linked this to the perceived realism of the plot. At first Seymour Feshbach discounted the violence reinforcement theory but in a 1971 experiment he replicated Berkowitz's results. 50 Dolf Zillmann explained this process of the apparent behavioural reinforcement of those subjects who watched violence and pornography/sexual erotica through an "excitation transfer". 51 Zillman's conclusions concerning the "media effects" of exposure to sex and violence were extreme, as he credited people with little self control or free will over their emotions. The experimental research of the 1960's was highly problematic in that it was completely divorced from changing economic, political and social patterns at work in society, which television was trying to cope with or even obscure.

However, the most powerful argument of the "media effects" theorists did not emerge until the next decade. It is essential to realize that both the research and conclusions reached were very much products of the social violence that occurred in the 1960's. George Gerbner and Larry Gross began to develop their intermittent "violence

profiles" at the Annenberg School of Communication in the early 1970's. The goal, although unclear in the beginning, was to find a social reality or purpose for the depiction of crime and violence on television. In 1976 Gerbner and Gross put forward their "cultivation hypothesis" that such television created an exaggerated fear in the audience about their safety in society. In "heavy viewers" the phenomenon produced a measurable "television bias", while "light viewers" had a much less biased response. Heavy viewers believed that crime was all pervasive and would affect them personally. Light viewers had a more "real" sense of whether they would be personally touched by crime. The questionnaires for the initial study had their responses scored on the basis of being either "television answers" or "real world answers". 52

Challenges to the "cultivation" concept appeared in 1980 when Michael Hughes and Paul Hirsch re-examined Gerbner's data and tried to replicate his results. Gerbner's later studies of televised violence expanded upon the viewer fear theme and employed a "Mean World Index" to show how fear was generated among viewers. Hughes, in his 1980 re-assessment, found Gerbner had omitted critical variables such as race, hours worked and church attendance. Some of the original 1976 'NORC (National Opinion Research Centre) General Social Survey' data was not reported and a re-working of the "heavy viewing" data showed that as a group they were no more prone to support or execute violent activities than "light viewers". 53 Also in 1980, Hirsch directly challenged Gerbner's work by adding two new categories of viewers, "non-viewers" and "extreme viewers". He found that some people who watched no television still had a high fear of crime and some extreme viewers clearly understood that television crime drama was fantasy. Extreme viewers were poor and uneducated, which should have made them very "television biased" in responses. 54 Gerbner replied by presenting

research to show how "subtle" the process was through "mainstreaming" and "resonance". In the end Gerbner still adhered to a view that crime and violence on television created a "scary world" impression among the audience. The social function of televised crime depiction remains highly elusive.

iv. Televised American crime drama in the 1960's:

In a minor essay by M.A. Bortner on crime's media image, it is proposed that Todd Gitlin's concept of "cultural hegemony" be used to look at this type of television. Bortner writes that the media's role as a hegemonic/socializing agent "has not been used extensively to explicate media images of crime and justice" and is thus worth considering.⁵⁵ The trend of crime dramas after the 1950's was highly reactive to volatile social circumstances. If they did cultivate a "scary world" impression, it was because a shadowland of law and order was preferred to the harsh realities of crime documentaries, live news broadcasts of riots, serial murder terror, drive-by shootings and other daily news horror stories. The hegemonic order was best served by showing a shadow play of real life crime. When the 1960's began a new form of American crime drama emerged that was not genteel like "Dragnet" or "Man Against Crime". It still contained the morality of the western, with good battling evil, but its violence was extreme. The "Untouchables" (ABC 1959-1963) starred Robert Stack as Special Agent Eliot Ness, a 1930's Treasury officer assigned to curb the power of the Chicago mobsters in the last days of Prohibition. It was an immediate success because of its violence, including a guaranteed blood bath at the show's finale. The series was ahead of its time and, in fact, anticipated the brutal assassination of Kennedy. It depicted a city where violence was a common occurrence, firearms the choice of weapons and violence as being justified if used for law enforcement. When the show debuted it was an accurate portrayal of how the real Eliot

Ness broke the power of Al Capone. It soon became more violent and inventive with numerous mobsters appearing. Stack stated: "You don't realize how lousy strict documentaries are".⁵⁶ At the same time "77 Sunset Strip" (ABC 1958-1964) appeared with a private detective team that fought crime in the glamorous setting of Hollywood. Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. was Stuart Bailey the hard-nosed private-eye and it also marked the first appearance of a suave television detective with a fast sports car, who continually encountered sexy women, as well as criminals.⁵⁷ "Perry Mason" (CBS 1957-1966) was the most predictable of crime dramas, as lawyer Perry Mason (Raymond Burr) always solved his cases by finding the murderer before the show's end to save his client.⁵⁸ Four prominent formats had appeared in American crime drama: the violent police law enforcer; the cool, handsome PI (private investigator); the classic amateur or police detective sleuths; and the court room crime fighter or professional lawyer.

Yet despite this, urban reality was making its way on to American television with crime dramas such as "Naked City" (ABC 1958-1963) which had "eight million" stories of hard luck and each week presented one. It revolved around two policemen, Detective Dan Muldoon (John McIntire) and Detective Jim Halloran (James Franciscus), who encountered human tragedy each week. It had a "feeling of gritty reality" in its seamy city settings.⁵⁹ The most prominent of the professional shows that tried to convey the feeling of dealing with criminals, as well as controversial topics, was "The Defenders" (CBS 1961-1965) with E.G. Marshall and Robert Reed as Lawrence and Keith Preston, a father/son/New York law firm. It dealt with several taboo topics as abortion, mercy killing and blacklisting, for which it won an Emmy award.⁶⁰ It was created by playwright Reginald Rose and the producer, Herbert Brodtkin, said it changed television because of its "reality of life" and "real point of view". Unfortunately, the series ended its run in 1965,

as the audience preferred to "retreat from the dangerous reality of the Defenders" into a world of silly situation comedies and violent crime shows. 61 By the mid-1960's American society seemed to be disintegrating due to divisions over the Vietnam War, class-based economic inequality and racial oppression which threatened the stability of the nation's social order. Beginning in the summer of 1965, the Watts riots of Los Angeles exploded on television for the next three summers until 1967. Detroit also ignited at the same time, as well as Newark, New Jersey. Watts was a night-time occurrence that suited prime time television, while Detroit and Newark's violence occurred in the day time. 62 Youth protests culminated in the Chicago riot of summer, 1968, at the Democratic national convention. The protesters chanted on camera as the police arrested them, "the whole world is watching", and indeed it was. 63 Not that other parts of the world were immune from such violence, as France in May, 1968, nearly succumbed to a national revolt.

However, in the United States televised social violence reached such a stage that the public perceived the country was in immediate peril. The public approved of police using "law and order" tactics, as a New York Times poll found in a cross-segment population survey conducted after the Chicago riot. The majority of the people interviewed "overwhelmingly supported police behavior". CBS received massive viewer support for Chicago police, in that viewer mail was divided eleven to one between favourable/unfavourable opinions about police actions. 64 In the Detroit riot of 1967 a survey of 499 black male participants in the event revealed 48.9% did not believe television coverage was desirable as it might increase prejudice towards blacks. 65 In the face of open social violence, Americans turned to the shadowland of television in order to be reassured that society was dealing with such criminal behaviour. Even black

rioters felt uncomfortable with their own lawlessness being televised. The public was given a steady diet of hard-nosed police dramas with assorted investigators who relentlessly pursued criminals. The "FBI" (ABC 1965-1974), with Inspector Lewis Erskine (Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.), went after communist agents, heinous criminals, counterfeiters, organized crime and radical student bombers. It was the late J. Edgar Hoover's favourite television show as it acted to reinforce traditional American values and create an atmosphere of lawfulness. He allowed series producer Quinn Martin to film in FBI headquarters and in April, 1968, Hoover persuaded Martin to place pictures of criminals on the "Most Wanted List" at the show's end, with an audience call-in number for any information. This was an early forerunner of today's turn-in-a-criminal series, "America's Most Wanted" (FOX, syndicated).⁶⁶ "Hawaii Five-O" (CBS 1968-1980), with Detective Steve McGarrett (Jack Lord) as the head of the Hawaiian State Police, updated the "Untouchables" theme of a violent crime crusader, only it was set in contemporary Hawaii. Noted for its violence and exotic locations in the Hawaiian Islands, it lasted for twelve years and was the longest-running crime show on television.⁶⁷ It also dealt firmly but fairly with wayward youth, Red Chinese communist agents, mass murderers, drug dealers and other assorted criminal types. "The Mod Squad" (ABC 1968-1973) was the only attempt to understand youth culture/social violence and reach a compromise with their rebelliousness. The concept of the show originated with a real policeman, Bud Ruskin, and was meant to focus on adult criminals using youth and minorities for criminal purposes. Pete, a disaffected Beverly Hills child; Julie, a prostitute's daughter; and Linc, the ghetto black, were the "Squad", with Captain Adam Greer as their police captain.⁶⁸ Despite all its cliches, it at least tried to understand the volatile social circumstances of the era rather than simply reinforcing obedience to the law.

The 1960's on American television was at first an attempt to show some degree of realism and present controversial issues. However, as the social violence of the decade increased, crime drama began to retreat to the morality of law and order through the depiction of crime and punishment. The violent law enforcer was the favourite model as first found in the "Untouchables", and later, the "FBI"/"Hawaii Five-O". Enforcers dispensed swift justice to all criminal acts and tended to reinforce a sense of social order. Cool, handsome male PI's were still seen in series like "Mannix" (CBS 1967-1975), starring Mike Connors as Joe Mannix, but even it used violence to excess when apprehending criminals. 69 When "Dragnet" no longer seemed relevant, star Jack Webb merely created a similar drama with a younger cast and the result was squad car series "Adam 12" (NBC 1968-1975). 70 Raymond Burr of "Perry Mason" was transformed into "Ironside" (NBC 1967-1975), a wheelchair-bound police captain who managed, with the occasional push from some young assistants, to control San Francisco's crime problem. 71 Master sleuths stagnated in the mid-1960's as their deliberative mental style did not suit the goal of controlling violent crime.

v. Britain's restrained view of crime in the 1960's:

In Britain realism was the new mandate for televised crime but it was tempered by the need to communicate social morality. "Z-Cars" (BBC 1960-1978) concerned the exploits of a mobile police unit patrolling the Merseyside docks and suburban areas of Liverpool. Inspector Barlow (Stratford Johns) and Sergeant Watt (Frank Windsor) were the main characters that creator Troy Kennedy Martin intended to portray a more realistic view of police life. Complaints from BBC controllers after the first episodes caused Martin to leave the series, as he wanted to show that crime was at times successful. This lack of criminal apprehension "was...against the code at the time"

as in each episode "the criminal had to be arrested". 72 Eventually a spin-off series called "Softly, Softly" (BBC 1966-1976) was created, using the characters of Barlow and Watt relocated in the Manchester Regional Crime Squad of the Midlands. It also refused to use realistic circumstances, as when script writer G. F. Newan proposed a storyline about police bribery, he was dismissed. 73 Britain preferred to modernize the 1950's police melodramas and preserve their morality in a kind of cursory realism. The repressive reaction to social disorder found in American crime dramas did not appear in Britain.

vi. Televised American crime drama in the 1970's:

In the 1970's crime drama took a distinctly brutal turn in America, while in Britain and Japan violence was shown for the first time. However, in the British and Japanese instances the appearance of televised violence occurred for very different reasons. It was during this decade that Gerbner's "scary world" of crime fear emerges, however what is not considered is that television's depiction of violent crime suppression may have been a simple reaction to rising crime rates. The apparent logic of American television in the 1970's was that in order to meet a perceived social crisis, extreme depictions of legal authority were needed. "Kojak" (CBS 1973-1978) was the first of the violent American police series of the 1970's, with Telly Savalas as Lieutenant Theo Kojak, a bald-headed New York policeman. Kojak's bald head, lollipop sucking, and terse one liner "Who loves you baby" were his trademarks. He was a hard cop who had a dirty job to do, but despite his manner viewers could be assured of his sincere honesty. Benjamin Stein wrote in 1974 that despite all the violence, Kojak's plot lines typically had a "rich lawbreaker being beaten by lower-middle-class but scrupulously honest cop". The "real essence" of crime, states Stein, are poverty-stricken individuals who kill or rob out

of frustration and they are not seen on television. 74 Such crime dramas appeased the public's desire to see crime being stemmed, the more violently it was punished, the better. In the case of "Kojak" it was life imitates television, as a Florida teenager named Ronald Zomor pleaded temporary insanity while killing an old man due to a fixation he had for the bald-headed detective. 75

More sedate than "Kojak" was "The Streets of San Francisco" (ABC 1972-1977), with Detective Lieutenant Mike Stone (Karl Malden) and his assistant Inspector Steve Keller (Michael Douglas) combatting the crime problem in the Bay Area of San Francisco. The series dealt with everything from organized crime to youthful drug abuse in a supposedly hard-edged depiction of police work that relied too heavily on car chases, pursuits and shoot outs. "Police Story" (NBC 1975-1977) was created by policeman turned author, Joseph Wambaugh, to show the pressures on police in their work and daily lives. It had two spin-offs, "The Blue Knight" (CBS 1975-1976) and "Police Woman" (NBC 1974-1978). All the Wambaugh series were realistic and noted for the restrained use of violence. 76 Far different was "Baretta" (ABC 1975-1978) with Robert Blake as a hard and lonely policeman living in a city slum. The show was extremely violent, despite Blake's protests that he opposed "wanton violence" on television. 77 "SWAT" (ABC 1975-1976) brought the para-military police units formed after the urban violence of the 1960's to the television screen. The plot consisted of setting up a conflict, surrounding the offenders, and then blast away. 78 "Starsky and Hutch" (ABC 1975-1979) involved two unconventional youth cops battling crime and drugs in rough Los Angeles neighbourhoods from a very fast 1974 red Ford Torino. Paul Michael Glaser was Dave Starsky and David Soul his partner, Ken "Hutch" Hutchinson. 79 Vehicular violence was the main feature of "Chips" (NBC 1977-1983) which centered around the California

Highway Patrol and its motorcycle patrolmen. Horrendous chase scenes, blazing car crashes, moving shoot outs and dangerous driving were all endured for the sake of justice. Officer Jon Baker (Larry Wilcox) and muscular partner, Officer Frank "Ponch" Poncherello (Erik Estrada), apprehended criminals at any cost. 80

Despite the predominance of the enforcer model, the sleuth or amateur/police crime detective made a comeback. The most famous was "Columbo" (NBC 1971-1977) with Peter Falk as the dishevelled Lieutenant Colombo of the Los Angeles Police Department. Despite his wrinkled raincoat, cigars and old Valiant, Colombo was extremely clever, for at the end of each episode he had always solved the crime. Also on NBC were "McMillan and Wife" (1971-1977) with Rock Hudson as a San Francisco Police Commissioner and "McCloud" (1971-1977) with Dennis Weaver as a Deputy Marshall on loan to the New York Police Department. "Ellery Queen" (1975-1976), the old radio and fictional mystery wonder boy sleuth of the 1940's, was resurrected as the character had been previously televised on Dumont, ABC and NBC in the 1950's. Even the elderly became sleuths in "The Snoop Sisters" (NBC 1973-1974) with Helen Hayes and Mildred Natwick as geriatric Sherlock Holmes types. 81 The PI model made a reappearance with "The Rockford Files" (NBC 1977-1980) in which James Garner played a very laid-back, ex-con turned private detective. This time, however, violence was down played and Garner's skills as an character impersonator utilized. In fact Rockford was frequently beat up during the show. 82 One of the most bizarre crime shows made in the decade was "Charlie's Angels" (ABC 1976-1981). It involved three beautiful female detectives investigating cases assigned by the mysterious Charlie, whom the viewer never sees, but only hears. Time called it "family-style porn" due to its titillation. 83 However, in American crime drama of the 1970's enforcement of the law

through violence predominated. The crime movies of the period were extremely violent, the most notable shows being "The Godfather" (1972), "The French Connection" (1971), and "Dirty Harry" (1971).⁸⁴ They sought, like television, to demonstrate to the public that crime was being punished and harshly at that. A growing crime and drug problem among the underclass was superficially dealt with by televised crime shows, as Stein suggested in his comments about "Kojak". The reality of an ever-increasing tide of violent crime, fueled by poverty, was disguised by a shadowland of macho crime fighters, sleuths and detective types on television, as well as in film.

vii. Deceptive images of crime enforcement in Britain and Japan:

In the 1970's the controls placed on the depiction of violent law enforcement by the BBC television monopoly collapsed. In 1974 a television movie called "Regan" was shown on ITV and caused a sensation. The series that resulted was called "The Sweeney" (Thames/Euston Films 1974-1978) and concerned a London police "flying squad" led by Inspector Jack Regan (John Thaw) along with his partner, Inspector George Carter (Denis Waterman). It was brutally violent and occasionally showed drunken police, the taking of bribes and beating of suspects. "The Sweeney's" violent reputation belied the fact it often saw criminals as the victims of harsh social conditions, unlike American programs with their aggressively simplistic law and order stances.⁸⁵ By the summer of 1978 Gordon F. Newman, the rejected writer from "Z-Cars", finally had his chance to expose police corruption in a four play series on BBC 2 called "Law and Order". Reaction varied from acceptance to outright disbelief that the plays were documentaries and truthful. The British viewers seemed to need the guidance of morality plays like "Z-Cars" and had some difficulty comprehending the realistic corruption of Newman's plays.⁸⁶

In Japan the Ashahi Broadcasting Corporation developed a historical samurai crime series in 1972 called "Underground Executioner". The plot revolves around an incompetent police officer named Mondo Nakamura, who at night avenges evil through ritual samurai killings. The producer, Hisushi Yamauchi, becomes angry when it is called a "murder drama" as he states "on average he (Nakamura) only kills about three people per episode".⁸⁷ The popularity of the show is credited to a release of social frustration and the attraction held by the brave male samurai warrior as a role model. It is possible that the violent ritual revenge of good over evil seen each week is actually a substitute for the absence of lawlessness in Japan. Japanese television seems to have developed "Underground Executioner" not to remedy a crime problem but to enact a morality play for an audience unaccustomed to actual criminal violence in their own society. During the 1970's the crime rate in Britain and Japan was simply not as great a concern as in America which accounts for the remarkably different treatments of crime on British as well as Japanese television.

viii. Televised American crime drama in the 1980's:

In the early 1980's American television embarked on a strange course by seemingly abandoning the enforcer model and truly attempting to penetrate the social contradictions of crime control. Two series that tried to do this were "Hill Street Blues" (NBC 1981-1987) and "Cagney and Lacey" (CBS 1982-1990). "Hill Street Blues" was an innovative series that was part soap opera and part sociological comment. Set in a precinct station house of a ghetto in an unnamed eastern American city, the drama had a vast array of characters like a true soap opera. The usual soapy relationships existed among the characters who had periodic love affairs, became depressed and even tried to commit suicide. It was a skilful mixture of comedy and drama. The important feature

to note is how the criminal types from the area such as youth gangs, prostitutes and purse snatchers were not killed but dealt with judicially, as well as in many cases rehabilitated. It was not an enforcer vision of the crime drama, but through "its rough texture and hard reality gave...a greater sense of honesty". 88 Todd Gitlin believes the show "violated" the conventions of American television crime drama as it "knew race and class tear this society apart". For police working "under these conditions is an everyday trial" and the purpose of the show was "not really a deed done, a criminal caught". 89 These police were not enforcers. Similarly "Cagney & Lacey" broke new ground with the lead characters of two female police officers. Tyne Daly played Detective Mary Beth Lacey, and after 1982 Sharon Gless was her partner, Detective Chris Cagney. They were not submissively feminine at all and were the quintessential hard-nosed cops, but through the show viewers saw how their careers affected their private lives. Cagney had a relationship with a fellow officer, only to discover he was a drug addict, and then suffered the indignity of date rape in a new love affair. In the first season ratings were low and Meg Foster, the original Chris Cagney, was replaced by Gless. A CBS executive told TV Guide that the show failed because management felt the public "perceived them as dykes". 90 Viewer outcry saved the show and its success did much to dismantle the male enforcer model of crime control.

However, no sooner had this sociological or humanist view of crime, criminals and law officers taken hold than more familiar patterns began to reappear. "Magnum PI" (CBS 1980-1988) was a typical PI drama series set in Hawaii with hunky Tom Selleck in the title role. It conveniently utilized the facilities built for "Hawaii Five-O" and had little plot, except to show Selleck's various macho activities such as power tanning, driving a Ferrari, seducing women and occasionally shooting a criminal. 91 It

was the physique of Selleck that made the series successful, especially among women viewers. Magnum was the first crime-fashion drama of the 1980's and it was followed by "Miami Vice" (NBC 1984-1989), which was concerned with the narcotic/criminal underworld of Miami Beach. The lead detective, James "Sonny" Crockett (Don Johnson) and his fellow detective Ricardo Tubbs (Philip Michael Thomas) were as preoccupied with crime as their clothes. A stereo/rock background, luxurious sets, and famous guest stars made "Miami Vice" the trendiest show of the 1980's. Its emphasis on style above plot and use of rock music in the background, like MTV, gave it a postmodernist level of assemblage, according to Arthur Kroker. 92 John Fiske states "Miami Vice" actively "shows the traditionally tough bonded, masculine hero pair accommodating the newer, style-conscious...masculinity" of the mid-1980's. 93 What "Miami Vice" actually entailed was a return to the enforcer model of crime control, albeit with the trappings of yuppie designer clothes. It was still a violent show, depicting the police suppression of drug trafficking. However, it was a puzzling phenomenon when these highly styled, macho enforcer dramas simultaneously disappeared from the screen. They seemed to have exhausted their plotlines almost in-synch as their major stars, Don Johnson and Tom Selleck, made the transition to film careers.

What remained was "LA Law" (NBC 1986-present) which was created by Steve Bochco ("Hill Street Blues") and Terry Louise Fisher ("Cagney & Lacey"). Despite its legal-based premise around a law firm and a large urban courtroom, the social realism of the two creator's previous series was not at first apparent. The show became pure soap opera with a heavy emphasis on sex, and a nude girl surprising lawyer Michael Kuzak (Harry Hamlin) in his office in the 1989 spring season provoked great viewer offence. 94 Responding to this negative reaction, the show has returned to courtroom

themes and produced some very clever scripts in which crime has been shown to escape punishment due to legal technicalities. "LA Law's" realism, when not preoccupied with sexual affairs, is to point out the flaws in the criminal justice system itself. Desperate for ideas in the late 1980's, American network television brought back such classics as "Perry Mason" and "Columbo", as well as creating a sleuth drama with Angela Lansbury about a Cape Cod-style Miss Marple called "Murder She Wrote" (CBS 1984-present).⁹⁵ This non-threatening type of crime drama deliberately chose to ignore the reality of a mounting crime problem and preferred to play parlour detective games.

ix. The emphasis on realism in the crime dramas of Britain and Australia:

A different trend seemed to have occurred in Britain as the crime shows of the 1980's were highly realistic, focusing on such innovations as female police officers. Stephanie Turner was Inspector Jean Darby of "Juliet Bravo" (BBC 1980-end date unknown) and her approach to crime was so low key that in a survey of crime drama suitability for younger viewers she gained a 72% approval rating.⁹⁶ "The Gentle Touch" (LWT 1979-end date unknown) with Jill Gascoine looked at the public and private life of a London policewoman in a decidedly more personalized manner than "Juliet Bravo".⁹⁷ When a series was specifically created for export its plot had to be made acceptable to American audiences, as in the case of "Dempsey & Makepeace" (LWT 1985). Its plot was based on the absurd situation of a New York cop (Dempsey) sent to London to work with a beautiful policewoman (Makepeace), who was also a titled lady.⁹⁸ During the mid-1980's British television remained faithful to portraying the realistic side of police work, as in ITV's "The Bill" (Thames 1987-present). The series title was a negative slang term, although the show itself was not a derogatory comment on British law enforcement. The weekly audience in its debut year was fourteen million viewers and they were

attracted by the series' ability to depict police work in both a realistic and sympathetic manner as America's "Hill Street Blues" had done. This was accomplished through the inclusion of male, as well as female (Trudie Goodwin & Barbara Thorn) constables, and minority recruits. In 1988 the series was changed from a once weekly hour long instalment to a twice weekly thirty minute soap opera style broadcast. 99 "The Bill" was not overtly violent, but still received the lowest approval rating for children at 33% because it was "perceived most often to be unsuitable for family viewing". 100 Violent realism could be found in BBC's "Edge of Darkness" (BBC 1985), which concerned a police inspector whose college-aged daughter is executed in front of him by unknown assassins. The limited drama series attempted to show a conspiracy of union, management and politicians to cover up unsafe practices at a nuclear waste disposal plant. 101 The violent methods used by the inspector, a recent widower, to discover the truth about his only child's murder stood in contrast to "The Bill's" mundaneness. However, the most realistic British police series was not a drama program at all but an eleven part documentary entitled "Police" (BBC 1982) that followed the Thames Valley police of Reading for nine months. So shocking was the insensitive investigation of a rape complaint lodged by a female victim that the issue was raised in parliament. Police detectives generally came across as inept, while neighbourhood constables were seen as patient and good-humoured. "Police" was possibly the most realistic portrait of law enforcement ever broadcast because it critically analysed how the police conducted themselves and suggested crime could be the product of social circumstances. This was quite different from the non-judgemental 'cinema verite' style of American documentary serials about police work as "COPS", which will be discussed shortly. 102 A tongue-in-cheek view of criminals as heroines was presented by "Widows" (Thames 1983/1985)

in which the recently widowed wives of three London gangsters executed their deceased husband's plan for a large robbery and escape to Brazil. 103 This violates the basic American premise that crime should not pay and criminals must always be violently apprehended.

One of the most recent examples of realistic crime drama shown on British television was "Prime Suspect" (BBC 1991) which concerned a female Detective Chief Inspector (DI), Jane Tennison (Helen Mirren), who assumes the responsibility for a murder investigation after the previous male DI dies of a heart attack. Tennison not only has to solve a difficult case but also battle her male colleagues in the homicide unit. The mixture of sexism, a serial killer and the graphic descriptions of how several women died made the series a success in Britain as well as America on PBS. Mirren states of the production: "We tried to put it as far into the real world as possible----showing the real procedures, the real tediousness of police work, the real racism and the sexism that exist within the police force". 104 In the 1990's Britain continues to produce crime dramas that attempt to provide the audience with an understanding of the wider issues involved in crime detection and criminal apprehension. However, classical detectives continue to comprise the staple form of crime drama on British television and these teleplays are often made as co-productions with America's PBS or Arts & Entertainment cable network. Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot (Thames) and Miss Marple (BBC); Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes (Granada); Colin Dexter's Inspector Morse (Central); and P.D. James' Inspector Adam Dagleish (Anglia) were very successful in the drama export market. British audiences preferred their police detectives to be realistic and if not, at least literate.

Australian television seemed to alter its dramatization of crime from the

1960's to the 1980's. At first crime was regarded as a social phenomenon that police simply dealt with, but by the 1980's crime was portrayed as a social evil that had to be controlled by enforcers of justice. "Homicide" (Crawford Productions) ran from 1964 to 1976 on the Ten Network and depicted policemen as the solvers of murder mysteries in the urban environs of Sydney. The focus of "Homicide" was on the victims of crime and the motivations behind the irrational behaviour of the criminal who committed the illegal act. Similarly, the rather risque "Matlock Police" (ATV 10 Melbourne/Crawford 1970-1977) used a fictitious Victorian town as the setting for vice and murder but criminals were seen as the products of the prevailing social environment. "Cop Shop" (Seven Network/Crawford 1977-end date unknown) was the 1970's Australian equivalent of "Hill Street Blues" for it promoted a humanistic view of criminals as people in harsh circumstances and dealt with the pressures of police life amongst a group of law enforcement officers. The series largely took place at the Riverside Police Station, showing the staff coping with the frustrations of work, and even followed the off-duty constables to the local pub, the Duke of York. In the 1980's a new view of crime arose with "Bellamy" (Reg Grundy Organization 1981-end date unknown) which followed Inspector Bellamy as he ruthlessly sought out the criminal monsters who displayed no remorse whatever for their actions. 105 Enforcement of the law thus became a priority in the "Bellamy" series, but the violence in the drama was taken from actual police case files and was not exaggerated as on American television.

x. Desperate measures in America:

During the late 1980's and early 1990's crime drama in America devolved from the dramatic depiction of law enforcement to a series of theatrical criminal reenactments that purported to simulate reality but usually focused on the deviant

elements of violent crime. As the 1990's arrived the enforcer model was itself finally eclipsed by two new and menacing forms of televised crime depiction. The shadowy realism of these quasi-documentary depictions of unsolved crimes was soon augmented by another form of crime show that was based on actual police work shown in a 'cinema verite' fashion. These two specific types of criminal dramatizations form the logical conclusion to an enforcer-driven crime ethic on American television that wants to solve crime directly through the media. "America's Most Wanted" (Fox syndicated 1988-present) is derived from the local "Crime Stoppers" shows of the 1970's in which police would dramatize a hard-to-solve crime and solicit telephone tips. In a newsroom-like setting "America's Most Wanted" invites viewers to phone in with tips after a gruesome crime has been re-created for the audience, who become the real law enforcers. The opening theme music states that this is "where good meets evil". "Hard Copy" (FOX syndicated 1989-present) does dramatize simulated crime, but it does not seek to apprehend criminals, only shock viewers. "A Current Affair" (FOX syndicated 1988-present) also depicts heinous crimes, with commentator Murray Povich providing a moralistic accompaniment. Even Europe has adopted the "America's Most Wanted" model. In West Germany "Der Weisse Ring" serves as that country's criminal apprehension television show, while in Britain BBC1's "Crimewatch UK" has reached a peak viewership of fifteen million an episode. Bob Waffinden states: "the public has a voracious appetite for true life crime". He continues that such crime dramas are regarded as "better because it's real".¹⁰⁶ However, European crime rates are not even one half that of the United States and this fact cannot be emphasized enough. In 1981 New York had 1,832 homicides, which was three times more than all of England and Wales.¹⁰⁷ In America the type of shows that apprehend criminals from viewer tips have

been created out of necessity as the police are overwhelmed by the task of controlling crime. In Britain this type of social urgency is not present and "Crimewatch UK" is used for more difficult criminal cases.

The only 'cinema verite' expose of crime thus far is America's "COPS" (FOX syndicated 1989-present), which uses cameras to follow actual policemen doing their duty. The opening song for this series asks "Bad boys, bad boys, what yah gonna do when they come for you?". It seems to profile sting operations, drug raids and routine criminal arrests. In a recent episode of January 12th, 1991, a sting operation in Jersey City, N.J. was shown which involved a trailer truck loaded with video equipment boxes being left open in a ghetto housing project. Thieves were arrested once inside the truck in this entrapment operation. The scene itself was absurd with muscular white police arresting slim black youths for stealing goods in the midst of a decaying ghetto area. 108 The social/economic motivation for crime does not seem as important as the actual punishment for wrong doing. This type of logic is apparent in the newest American crime drama "Law and Order" (NBC 1990-present) which, despite its "Hill Street Blues" appearance is designed "to demonstrate that the justice system may grind slowly, but it does grind exceedingly fine". 109 Punishment must be seen to exist in order to be effective.

xi. America's over reliance on video enforcement tactics:

Simulating or documenting actual police arrests became the necessary extension of the enforcer model, as the public began to lose confidence in the fictional control of crime. Through television the sense of a peaceful community is preserved within a system of Dostoyevskyan morality that controls crime with the depiction of punishment. James M. Carlson writes that: "Television crime shows seem to put forth

a "crime control" point of view that is highly supportive of the status quo and conventional view of proper behaviour, ethics, and morality". 110 The instances in which American crime dramas have shown police corruption, sympathy for criminals, a flawed criminal justice system, the pressures of police life and other realistic considerations have been all too brief. In response to social disorder and escalating violence, American television turned to crime show models first devised in the 1950's and early 1960's. Violent enforcers of the law; PI's; classic amateur/police sleuths; and professional crime fighting attorneys have been employed as the conventional forms of televised crime drama. The enforcer model acts specifically to promote lawfulness and assure viewers that perceived societal lawlessness is being dealt with.

In the 1960's it was clear that shows like the "FBI" and "Hawaii Five-O" seemed to have political/social agendas to portray police actions against communists, rebellious youth and radicalized minorities. In the 1970's increasing rates of violent crime produced such enforcer dramas as "Kojak", "SWAT", "Baretta" and "Chips". In Britain crime drama also became superficially violent with "The Sweeney" but in this instance television drama was not a response to a rising crime rate. At first the 1980's reflected an attempt to regard crime as a social problem in shows like "Hill Street Blues", "Cagney & Lacey" and more recently "LA Law". In Britain female police constables were realistically portrayed in "Juliet Bravo"/"The Gentle Touch", while Australia's long-running "Homicide", "Matlock Police" and "Cop Shop" put forward a sympathetic view of police work which periodically speculated on a rationale for criminal behaviour. However, on American television the enforcer dramas that dispatched criminals quickly and violently, as "Miami Vice", gave little insight into the causes of crime and shows of this type were peculiar to the United States. "The Bill"/"Edge of Darkness" in Britain and "Bellamy" in

Australia were not the televised products of societies experiencing an exploding crime problem. Admittedly "The Bill" was somewhat sociological and "Edge of Darkness"/"Bellamy" generally more violent, but compared to American crime dramas they were both analytical of crime's causes, as well as accurate in their treatment of law enforcement procedures. The "Police" documentary series shown by the BBC in 1982 represented probably the most probing examination ever filmed of how police actually deal with crime. Even a series as frivolous as "Widows" showed that occasionally crime can succeed and be financially beneficial. The most recent example on British television of a realistic police drama, BBC's "Prime Suspect" is cited by its leading actor, Helen Mirren, as a drama that doggedly attempts to capture the "real" conditions faced by a female Detective Chief Inspector trying to solve a murder investigation.

In the 1990's a type of populist crime detection has emerged in America that is highly suspect due to its factual, pseudo-documentary style of presentation. The desperation of "America's Most Wanted" and "Cops" to establish video crime control highlights a need in the public to actually see law enforcement. Even in Britain a similar need was readily met by the popular "Crime Watch U.K.", although not as a panic reaction to a rampant crime problem. When Benjamin Stein talked about "Kojak" he pointed out that American crime dramas do not deal with the real essence of the problem, poverty. We thus must see these crime shows as quasi-hegemonic agents for the American capitalist system, paralleling what M.A. Bortner suggested. This situation does not appear to exist in other capitalist nations. Britain, Australia and Japan have extremely low crime rates compared to the United States. Barrie Gunter, a British media researcher, states that people who want to believe in society as a just place, "watch dramatic content to obtain reinforcement and clarification of their beliefs". 111

Crime dramas serve a purpose in the American social structure, that is to obscure the reality of human social impoverishment and an escalating crime problem. The shadowland of crime dramas is made specifically for American suburban cave prisoners in order to ensure that a semblance of legal/moral order in their society is maintained. Such crime dramas do not seem to produce a cultivated sense of fear in a "scary world", but can make people feel more self-assured about the justice system. George Gerbner believes televised violence makes people support repressive measures against crime out of fear, but as Gunter's research shows, it can cause them to feel satisfied that justice is being done. David P. Phillips and John E. Hensley did a 1984 study that suggested punishment depictions had a short term deterrent effect on homicides. 112 However, in Gunter's study the "social belief dimension" of the audience was examined and found to be of critical importance as it tended to dictate how people would respond to particular crime dramas. If audience members thought society was becoming more lawless then they would respond favourably to crime dramas showing criminal apprehension. In the final analysis it is not what actual statistical effect such crime dramas have that matters, but rather the social beliefs that are cultivated through the televised shadowland of crime and punishment. A society, once reassured by these beliefs, avoids confronting the depressing realities of a crime epidemic induced by such factors as widespread poverty among the lower classes.

III. Conclusion:

American television has taken on the role of social cheerleader in depicting both war and crime. The shadowland of artificial images that the American media creates for its cave dwellers serves but one purpose, to obscure the depressing reality of a declining military prestige abroad and an ever-growing crime epidemic at home.

Alexander Cockburn, in a public lecture at Hampshire College on March 4th, 1986, entitled 'Media, Empire and the New Cold War', suggested that the use of political spectacles expressly linked to the concept of national identity served only to create a type of self-aggrandizing "electronic Nuremberg rally" consciousness. Sut Jhally and Ian H. Angus point to Reagan's Grenada invasion and his Libya bombing raid on a suspected chemical weapons plant as examples of "this 'rally' principle", when rituals of patriotism and nationalism are used to whip up popular sentiment against the "other enemy". 113 It is a clear case of obscuring what has actually transpired by appealing to the American national audience to support the government in a time of desperate conflict. When this is used to examine war, the rally logic of America's most recent military operations abroad was only successful because the news media covertly supported the process. In Grenada and the Persian Gulf operations the initial complaints of press censorship were defused by a government appeal to patriotism, broadcast through the media itself. An article in Time magazine published at the onset of the Gulf conflict in February, 1991, emphasized the need to acknowledge anti-war dissenters as essentially patriotic. The demonstrators were "waving flags, not burning them", as well as "praying for the troops even as they condemn the policies" that sent them to the desert battle front. 114 It was very necessary to remain devoted to America by only attacking the war policy itself, as faith in the duty of the United States to champion the cause of freedom remains sacrosanct. Daniel C. Hallin points out that this "new patriotism" of American idealism originated with Ronald Reagan who supposedly gave the country back the pride it lost during the Vietnam War. Television was a silent partner of Reaganism in the 1980's and helped "to sweep the country along, on a dangerous journey into an idealized past". 115 This came about because television abandoned its

activist stance towards war coverage and supported the concept that America was the pivotal democratic force on the international scene.

The Vietnam conflict was the only instance when television refused to rally around the gospel of a cold war/containment policy and instead began to transmit reports critical of the war's overall goals. Television temporarily emerged from the shadows only to be forcefully returned in the Reagan era by a viewing public that was not overly interested in any criticism of American patriotism. However, the acquiescence of American television to directly challenge the rally mentality and preserve the activist stance it had adopted in the Vietnam war points to its ultimate failure. Mark Crispin Miller believes this is due to an over reliance of modern warfare on "mediating gadgets" that, in turn, causes television coverage to be "no more than a pressing abstraction, charged with suspense but not noticeably bloody".¹¹⁶ Miller thinks it is a "processing problem" in that television over-packages the events of war through an anchor person and glossy coverage. However, it must be noted that when Miller reaches the conclusion that "in a war there are no issues, and only two sides: the bullies and the little guys", he is referring largely to American war coverage.¹¹⁷ A more activist type of war reporting is possible as it occurred during the Vietnam conflict and the decision to tacitly support a patriotic rally mentality is based purely on ratings considerations. In comparison to the furious debate among the media in Britain over restrictions on war coverage in the Falkland Islands, American television has chosen to merely focus on the conjecture of "false opinions" as taken from its military leaders and politicians.

The rally mentality also serves the purpose of presenting a facade of crime control in a society on the edge of open urban warfare. In American cities, parts of which are unpoliceable, the poorer classes have evolved an internal economy and

criminal way of life that exists openly within the established society. The under class of homeless people, drug users, youth gangs and petty criminals is alarmingly apparent in American society. The middle class needs to be continuously reassured that crime's progress is being checked. During the first eight months of 1991 in the city of Chicago, 606 people were murdered in drug or gang-related killings. This is triple the death rate at the height of gangster violence in 1928. 118 Crime dramas have become increasingly violent and orientated towards law enforcers as the amount of actual social violence increases.

The American media has come full circle, from being blamed for the cultivation of social violence and provoking in viewers the fear of a scary world, to take on the task of rallying public support for an embattled justice system. Lost somewhere in all this frenzy of 'cinema verite' crime series, as "COPS" and "America's Most Wanted", is the thoughtful examination of why capitalist America is such a violent society. However, when circumstances arise in which actual social violence cannot be neutralized through this agenda the results can be disturbing. Such an instance occurred in March of 1991 when the beating of a black motorist, Rodney King, by white LAPD officers was video taped by a bystander using his camcorder. The video tape repulsed television viewers and temporarily focused national attention on the morale problems of police locked into an escalating crime war. 119 This thoughtful examination was short-lived as the viewing public dutifully returned to their daily consumption of crime reenactments, mug shots and suspect arrests on television series like "COPS". Other nations, such as Britain and Australia, although consumers of American crime dramas, do not feel the need to retreat into the titillating pseudo-realism of violent law enforcement video. They seem to prefer their domestic crime dramas to be more realistic and present crime as

a social problem.

Guy Debord has said that the "spectacle is ideology par excellence" as it serves to expose "in its fullness the essence of all ideological systems: the impoverishment, servitude and negation of real life".¹²⁰ The spectacles of crime drama and war coverage on American television have served as superficial rally mechanisms for the citizens of a beleaguered society. The encouragement of patriotism in war and the eager support of law enforcement does little to cause television viewers to think about the implications of the issues involved in either of these instances. Debord states that what lies at the base of contemporary spectacle is the "new power of fraud".¹²¹ The fraud of American television is its apparent need to generate revenue through agreeable programming, as opposed to presenting disagreeable news reports. Television spectacles are a poor substitute for thoughtful social commentary, but in a society of shadow images devoted to the pursuit of global power and monetary wealth, such circumstances are not surprising. War becomes a rallying point for national prestige, and enforcer orientated crime drama becomes an act of sheer desperation. The battle for the home front has been largely dominated by the spectacle of conjecture surrounding the issues of war, patriotism and domestic crime control. For only brief periods of time has a critical dialogue occurred on American television that escapes the rhetoric of "false opinions" concerning the conduct of war abroad and the escalating crime problem at home.

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Artless, heartless tease.

"Your article discussed L.A. Law --- which started life as almost-great TV but has devolved, in just two years, to a risible tawdriness that Hill Street Blues only succumbed to after six seasons! What used to be our favourite show is now an artless, heartless tease.

Harry Hamlin's stunned expression (in your photo) mirrors my reaction to the show this year. We've switched to Roseanne and Murphy Brown --- this year's best TV."

WAYNE ZEITUER

Richmond

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CHAPTER 3: 'Into the Shadows: The Decline of Documentaries and News Specials as Critical Sources of Information.'

Documentaries and news specials were the staples of American broadcast television until the 1970's when these important sources of information seemed to vanish. They were replaced by the abbreviated reports of newsmagazines and elaborate docudramas which attempted to make specific issues more accessible to audiences in the form of popular drama. The power of documentaries and news specials during the 1950's and 1960's on American television was pivotal to the course of society in that period. The programs acted to focus national concerns and arouse the public, as well as politicians, into taking some kind of action. The civil rights movement, environmentalism, auto safety and peace policies were promoted through these television documentaries. If such issues in the 1960's as the civil rights marches in the American south and farm worker poverty in the fields of California had not been broadcast as documentaries, they would have never attained national attention. The makers of documentary films in the 1960's had similar motivations, Edward R. Murrow was a social reformer, while Robert Drew wanted to show history as a living process. Both the films and their makers were very much a part of the 1960's social reform movement that ultimately failed.

However, by the late 1970's and early 1980's the genre had declined into an array of mundane docudramas as well as weekly news magazines. The rise to prominence of cable news channels like Ted Turner's CNN (Cable News Network) further eroded the social activism of American network news as it was forced to emulate the bland reporting style first pioneered by CNN's "live" coverage. The documentary, as designed to bring critical attention to specific issues, became confined in America to

Public Television or PBS. Commercial broadcasters preferred to produce gossipy celebrity specials, as well as rather banal news magazines. Hal Himmelstein writes that documentaries "have been, and are more than ever, second-class citizens in the world dominated by melodramatic and comedic television entertainment".¹ After the 1970's foreign television became the main source of critical information from documentaries. Britain became a documentary exporter through Granada, Thames TV, Channel 4/Central, Anglia TV and BBC. At the same time Canada produced several major documentary series of its own through the state-supported CBC and the NFB (National Film Board of Canada). The radical decline in American documentary television and its exile to PBS suggests that the critical issues raised by this kind of television are no longer seen as urgent social problems in America. Vital issues of national importance having to do with economics, education, crime, drug abuse, civil rights, popular culture and politics have been relegated to segments on magazine-style news shows or nightly news broadcasts. Grotesque issues such as Geraldo Rivera's Satanism special for NBC, American network television's most watched documentary special, have been used by commercial broadcasters to create sheer controversy and thus garner ratings.² The socially crusading documentary has become a neglected art form on American network television as it has descended into a discourse of shadow images based upon conjecture and "false opinion".

i. Edward R. Murrow and the rise of American documentary television:

When television broadcasting began in the United States it brought with it an opportunity to make a great impact on the public mind. The influence of veteran radio news reporter Edward R. Murrow changed the face of both British and American television. Murrow had achieved his notoriety on radio with his war broadcasts from

London during the 'blitz' period of aerial bombing. His hard-nosed and yet intensely emotional war reports were noticed by William Paley, who was posted to London in the Psychological Warfare Department. Paley was influential in bringing Murrow to CBS from radio to be the host and reporter for a documentary news show called "See It Now" (CBS 1951-1958). The executive producer was Fred Friendly, who collaborated with Murrow on most instalments. Paley was to become president of CBS and Friendly headed the news division during the 1960's. Both admired Murrow's journalistic standards and were to invoke his reputation of integrity in later decades. For the first two years the program was quite uneventful, until Murrow decided to attack the anti-communist rhetoric of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Minnesota. As was mentioned in chapter three, it was this full frontal assault of Murrow on McCarthy that was the making of documentary journalism on television. Murrow began by taking up the case of Lieutenant Milo Radulovich who was being asked to resign from the Air Force due to certain accusations of communist sympathy made against his immigrant parents. The Air Force, while not saying he was disloyal, wanted him to resign. Radulovich refused to sign a voluntary dismissal form and he was ordered suspended involuntarily. Murrow used close-up footage of Radulovich's Serbian father reading the simple letter he had written to President Eisenhower, asking him to reinstate "his boy". "The Case Against Milo Radulovich A0589839" (CBS 1953) was not approved by CBS, therefore Murrow and Friendly took out full page advertisements in The New York Times in order to promote the show. The open denunciation of communist "witch hunting" by Murrow was a direct attack on McCarthy and CBS was hesitant to back the show, but allowed its broadcast. Within two weeks of Murrow's broadcast, Secretary of the Air Force, Harold E. Talbott, announced after seeing the show, "I have, therefore, directed that Radulovich be retained

in his present status in the United States Air Force". 3 It was a clear signal to television journalism that it could change the course of events and influence public officials in a manner that only newspapers had been able to do previously.

Murrow's journalistic style reached its pinnacle in his examination of McCarthy's political conduct, reluctantly broadcast by CBS in the spring of 1954. As noted earlier, Murrow cleverly used film footage of McCarthy to show his contradictory statements on many of the communist conspiracy cases. McCarthy's personal insincerity and the shallowness of his accusations became apparent to all those viewing the program. Murrow used McCarthy's own words to cast a shadow of doubt on his reputation. The American public was not excused from this situation, as Murrow stated in his closing remarks that McCarthy "didn't create this situation of fear; he merely exploited it, and rather successfully". Quoting from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Murrow stated, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves". 4 CBS was not entirely supportive of Murrow and offered rebuttal time to McCarthy. Friendly was summoned to see network president Frank Stanton who showed him a survey of the 59% CBS audience share which had seen the McCarthy rebuttal. The survey revealed that 33% of the 59% believed Murrow's reputation was now discredited due to the broadcast and his behaviour could be considered pro-communist. Friendly replied it was all the more reason to continue the attacks. 5 On September 4th, 1955, Murrow successfully showed how McCarthy had stripped hydrogen bomb inventor Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer of his security clearance in "A Conversation with Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer" (CBS 1955). Filmed at Princeton, the one hour interview was supported by future CBS chairman William S. Paley as a truthful documentary expose of McCarthy's paranoia. In the end it was McCarthy who assassinated himself on television

in the April, 1955 army hearings into a communist conspiracy in the ranks of the military itself. His tactics of extorting favours from people in order to expose a communist conspiracy was laid bare. In late 1955 the Senate voted 67 to 22 to censure McCarthy for his conduct. 6

The power of television documentaries to focus the public's attention on a critical issue and create a change in that situation had been realized with Murrow's "See It Now". It was not just America that reacted negatively to the revelation of McCarthy's tyranny, as the BBC also aired the Murrow broadcasts and produced an anti-McCarthy backlash in Britain. 7 As the muckrakers of the Progressive era had used the newspapers of early 20th century America to change social conditions and advance liberalism, so did television. It was naively assumed that people could be moved to action by merely being exposed to the harsh reality of social circumstances through television. By dispersing the shadows of conjecture and the rhetoric of "false opinion" surrounding events, documentary television could supposedly not only confront viewers with the truth but also encourage them to reason through such issues. Murrow demonstrated that this process was possible in the case of McCarthyism and by the late 1950's he attempted to do the same with other broader social concerns.

The documentary was not only concerned with investigative reporting in the 1950's. NBC created the lavish "Victory at Sea" (NBC 1952-1953) series concerning the Atlantic naval battles of the Second World War. In twenty-six half hour episodes "Victory at Sea" was the first historical documentary series developed in America. The NBC unit headed by Henry Salomon that made "Victory at Sea" continued as "Project 20" and created intermittent specials, as well as series, until 1970. Most notable was "The Real West" (NBC 1961) which chronicled the destruction of Native American culture. Even

Murrow himself created an interview show called "Person to Person" (CBS 1953-1961) that focused on famous celebrities. Two failed series that tried to replicate "Project 20's" success were "Adventure" (CBS 1953-1956) and "Odyssey" (CBS 1957).⁸ "You Are There" (CBS 1953 to 1957) used history as news and placed the viewers in historical settings as if they were witnesses to the actual events. It was the first attempt at docudrama and was very successful in reenacting past events in an easily perceived manner.⁹ In the 1950's America created two important types of documentary television, the multi-part series and a kind of docudrama that utilized the past remade as contemporary news items.

ii. Documentary programs as a part of American network television:

The move to intermittently broadcast documentary programs on the regular evening schedule was first made by CBS in 1959 with "CBS Reports", which again used the Friendly/Murrow team. The focus would be on specialty topics of national or international concern and it would fill an hour time slot. The new look of the series was due to the use of film from the documentary location, rather than being studio-bound. Also, because Murrow would not host every episode, it freed him to develop long term projects. The first year was so successful that in 1960 NBC lured Irving Gitlin away from CBS where he was director of public affairs programs. Gitlin created the "NBC White Paper" series to be broadcast six times each season in an hour format. The opening episode in November, 1960, was anchored by Chet Huntley and dealt with how the government had handled the Gary Powers U-2 spy plane incursion into the Soviet Union. In December of 1960 ABC premiered its "Close-up" series, which was the brain child of Robert Drew, a movie photographer who worked for Time magazine. It was Drew's film work for Time that eventually evolved into Time/Life films. Drew began in the spring of

1960 to film the Kennedy campaign in the Democratic primary, using a light-weight film camera and a tape recorder. He filmed a running record of the campaign and created a documentary called "Primary" that was broadcast on Time Inc.'s handful of television stations. ¹⁰ It was the first use of the 'cinema verite' technique of documenting an event using very little narration on the course of the action. Drew had approached Murrow on the Kennedy project, but he was rebuked. The Kennedy primary film received no encouragement from Time until Richard Leacock in the film unit found that he and Drew agreed on the 'verite' film style. When Drew began "Close-up" he brought in Bell & Howell as a sponsor, resulting in the series title "Bell & Howell Close-up". The company had invented a light-weight 16 m/m film camera for Drew which recorded both picture and sound simultaneously. Drew's 'verite' style was suited to the new camera as the tape recorder he first used was never exactly in synch with the film. Drew stayed with Time who agreed to produce documentaries "on contract" for ABC. John Charles Daly of ABC also used independent producer David Wolper's program "The Race for Space" in early 1960, establishing a practice of purchasing documentaries from outside the network itself. In the 1960 fall season American television created a place for documentaries in its schedule. Some thought-provoking people were behind the effort, such as Friendly/Murrow at CBS, Gitlin at NBC and Drew/Leacock at ABC through Time Inc. In the Show Business section of Time magazine it was noted that this "may be remembered as the TV season when public-affairs programs ...began to come into their own". ¹¹ It created a period of documentary television that realized more than Murrow's anti-McCarthy agenda of the 1950's. A few of the programs actually questioned national American values and international policy.

As I have already mentioned, it was NBC with its first instalment of the

"NBC White Paper" that began a tumultuous fall documentary season in November, 1960. "The U-2 Affair" questioned whether Gary Powers' spy mission itself was ethical in the face of the American government's ridiculous cover-up of the spy mission. This stance was cold war heresy, even in the first year of the Kennedy era. This was followed in December, 1960, by "Sit-in" which focused on the lunch counter, bus, park bench sit-ins by blacks in Nashville, as led by the NAACP. It portrayed Nashville mayor Bob West as an uncompromising racist. Only a few days after NBC's U-2 report Murrow broadcast his "Harvest of Shame" (CBS 1960) on "CBS Reports" during the Thanksgiving holiday. The rationale of producer David Lowe was that most of the food cooked for the feast of middle-class Americans had been picked by the exploited migratory farm workers seen in the documentary. It was a gruesome slice of reality that few of the public seemed to care for. The standards for cattle cars were compared to workers loaded on flat-bed trucks being carried to and from the fields, with the cattle being treated more humanely under federal regulations. A rat-infested workers "hovel" was shown only a few hundred yard from a \$500,000 horse stable for race horses belonging to the farm's owner. The children of the farm workers were not allowed to attend the California state schools and only \$3,500,000 was spent on a basic education program that was provided by using tent classrooms in the temporary work camps. Time called it "a moving muckraking masterpiece" that received immediate attention from the incoming Kennedy administration. Murrow faced open hostility from the Mexican workers of California and the Negro cotton harvesters of the south when he tried to film them, until he explained what he was doing. The program's thesis was laid bare when Murrow roamed a field talking to the camera and used the quote of one farmer he met: "We used to own our slaves; now we just rent them." 12 Erik Barnouw points out that some of the public

reacted by calling the film a "fake" as it could not conceivably be true. 13

Similarly the first ABC "Close-up" episode in December, 1960, created hostility in a certain segment of the audience. "Yanki No!" concerned the support of corrupt Latin American dictators by the United States and the appeal of Cuban-style communism to the peasant masses. In a private screening for Kennedy earlier that fall, it had left an uneasy impression of fateful truth. 14 The next controversial "Close-up" was "The Children Were Watching" about a six year old black child attending a first grade class in a previously all-white New Orleans elementary school. Drew's "Close-up" documentaries, even more than Murrow's reports, involved the audience to a greater degree as they simply showed the action and left the concluding commentary for the viewer to fill in. Murrow's CBS Christmas show of 1960 was "The Great Holiday Massacre", an expose of traffic fatalities on the interstate highway system during Labour Day of that year. In dramatic collision footage it showed the human costs of excessive highway speed and careless driving habits, due to a lack of driver education. The public's reaction was again shock, horror and denunciation as they believed the crash scenes had been falsified. In early 1961 Murrow left CBS and network television to work at the USIA (United States Information Agency) at the behest of Kennedy. This appointment was helped by the fact that Murrow knew about the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in advance and, along with Friendly, rejected it as a "CBS Reports" topic, according to Elayne Rapping. Murrow's role as the "people's watchdog" did not extend to liberal administrations such as Kennedy's. 15 Once at the USIA he made a crucial mistake in writing to Hugh Carlton Greene, Controller General of the BBC, asking him not to show "Harvest of Shame" in Britain. 16 Murrow had been badgered at the Senate hearings about his inclination to show American life as "seamy", according to Eric

Barnouw. His departure from CBS, and humiliation over the BBC incident, ended Murrow's journalist career. He was to die of cancer shortly after moving to the USIA. "CBS Reports" was taken over by a new team of reporters, namely Howard K. Smith, Walter Cronkite, Eric Severeid, Charles Kuralt and Harry Reasoner, who would become involved in the moral debate of the Vietnam War.

iii. The social mandate of American documentary television in the 1960's:

The early to mid-1960's saw the role of the documentary on American television gradually shift from social/historical concerns to the Vietnam War. With Kennedy's election and the creation of a "new frontier" mentality, documentary makers like Drew at Time's film unit saw television's role as an agenda for the elevation of public consciousness. 'Cinema verite' would allow viewers to work their way through events and problems using the factual presentation of experience. Drew's "Close-up" projects included such subjects as urban renewal programs and how the process destroyed old neighbourhoods. "The Lost Neighbourhood" (ABC 1967) looked at how a west-end Boston woman felt over the loss of her house and relocation in a "project" apartment. "The 23rd Precinct" (ABC 1963) was a realistic account of the police beat in New York's "Hell's Gate" in Spanish Harlem. The film profiled the entire fabric of inner-city life with its gangs, violence, police enforcement and frustrated social workers.

17 Drew's masterpiece was his 1963 'cinema verite' production for ABC about the integration of the University of Alabama under Kennedy. "Alabama-Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment" documented how Kennedy used federal authority to thwart Governor George Wallace's attempt to bar the first black student from the university campus. This now classic film record had trouble getting a sponsor but ABC aired it nevertheless. As Drew stated at the time, television journalism "works uniquely and best

according to TV's own laws, and for me that would be a TV that records real life as it happens without infringing" on its natural course. 18 His hopes for the "Close-up" project as a monthly slice of reality for the public's rumination abruptly ended in the fall of 1963 when ABC cancelled the series and replaced it by a half-hour weekly news report called "ABC News Reports". "News Reports" lasted only one season until 1964 when ABC cancelled it and brought back "Close-up" as an irregularly scheduled special broadcast. The main focus of news by the mid-1960's at ABC was the Vietnam War, and from 1966 to 1968 upwards of one million dollars a year was spent on the weekly "Vietnam Report". 19 The daring experiments of the Drew unit in presenting a form of television realism to viewers was short-lived.

The approach at "CBS Reports" during this period was best described as topically conservative after Murrow's departure. The series dutifully covered the rapidly occurring changes in American society during the 1960's and the Vietnam War. However, it was a decidedly uncritical commentary on such topics as abortion, LSD use, the Watts riots, gun control, cigarette smoking as a health hazard, marijuana and even the new left radicalism that developed among political dissidents. Such phenomena were merely showcased or presented as social aberrations which did not appear to radically change national values. A few episodes did have a dramatic effect as they violated the standard conventions of the series by suggesting American cultural values were faulty. In "Hunger in America" (CBS 1968) the undernourished poor were profiled across the country, which greatly undermined the Johnson administration's supposed "war on poverty". The documentary revealed that the Department of Agriculture was sabotaging "food-for-the-poor" programs, but it lost credibility when it showed a premature baby in San Antonio apparently dying of hunger. After the show was aired "Agriculture Secretary

Orville Freeman launched a vigorous attack on the report" as sheer propaganda. 20 More shocking was "The Homosexuals" (CBS 1967) which profiled the growing gay liberation movement and received a great deal of negative viewer response. 21 Much of CBS's documentary projects had simply failed to achieve a critical edge and good ratings could easily be had from newsreel shows that focused on historical events or personalities. "The Twentieth Century" (CBS 1957-1966) looked at historical topics of interest and was replaced in 1967 by a futuristic series, "The Twenty-First Century" (CBS 1967-1969) hosted by Walter Cronkite. Although extremely popular, the two series failed to "provoke the type of controversy so often stirred up by the network's investigative series" which focused on problem oriented issues .22 The most controversial documentary made by CBS was Walter Cronkite's 1968 report on the Vietnam conflict that suggested the war was stalemated and a withdrawal prudent. The report's conclusion upset President Johnson who remarked if Cronkite had defected, then the war was lost. 23 The details of this report and Cronkite's summation can be found in the second chapter which dealt with the war in Vietnam.

However, CBS was tarnished over its decision not to air the eighty-five minute film "Inside North Vietnam" which it had commissioned Felix Greene, a British reporter working for The San Francisco Chronicle, to make during his 1967 trip to Hanoi. Greene had produced an uncensored look at a very dedicated people fighting what they saw as a patriotic war. The film also showed the use of bombs on the civilian population, which the Pentagon had denied was occurring. CBS dropped its option on the film and it was taken up by National Educational Television (NET), the precursor to PBS or the Public Broadcasting Service of today. It was Fred Friendly, Murrow's old colleague, who, through his position as a Ford Foundation's consultant, gave NET the grants to launch

a Sunday series called "PBL" or "Public Broadcasting Laboratory" which aired Greene's film. It began a series of films for NET, such as "None of My Business" about life on welfare, that were not complimentary to government policy. President Johnson retaliated by appointing a conservative military man, Frank Pare, Jr. as head of the new Corporation for Public Broadcasting or CPB. 24 Despite Johnson's interference, a crucial outlet for dissenting points of view had been found in NET, or later as PBS.

NBC with its "White Paper" raised little controversy after its initial debut on the U-2 incident and Nashville sit-ins by blacks protesting segregation. In "Cuba: The Bay of Pigs" (NBC 1964) two programs were devoted to Kennedy's role in approving the invasion, the Cuban counterattack, and the inept planning of the CIA. In a series of White Papers entitled "Ordeal of the American City" (NBC 1968/1969) a very detailed examination was made of racial tension, growing crime, unequal education and physical decay in several American cities. 25 The very dynamic beginning made by Irving Gitlin seemed to go nowhere. The same could be said for "Project Twenty" which failed to achieve the success it had in 1961 with "The Real West". In fact it seemed to disappear altogether in the 1965 and 1966 seasons. 26 After such stunning successes as "The Tunnel" in 1962 about the actual escape of East Berliners to the west, NBC's output of significant documentary projects seemed to radically decline by the late 1960's. 27 Far more important was the growth of the limited documentary series as a viable format, even on commercial television. As was previously noted, NBC had been the first to demonstrate this concept with "Victory at Sea" in the 1950's. During the early 1960's ABC did the same with "Winston Churchill: The Valiant Years" (ABC 1960-1961), in which Richard Burton read excerpts from Churchill's diaries and Gary Merrill narrated. 28 The producer who recognized the importance of this new format was David L. Wolper who

had sold his two series chronicling the space race and manned space flight to ABC. "The Race for Space" (1958) and "Project: Man in Space" (1959) made Wolper's reputation when they were broadcast in 1960. Wolper followed with a series of short half-hour shows that could be easily sold, such as "Biography" (1962-1963) and "Men in Crisis" (1964-1965). During the 1960's Wolper had three major successes that won him acclaim. "The Making of the President: 1960" (ABC 1963) was a film record of Kennedy's campaign against Nixon as based upon Theodore H. White's book. "China: The Root of Madness" (1967) was another series based on White's book about Chinese political history until the then current turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" (ABC 1968) was a massive three part series based upon William L. Shirer's history of Nazi Germany. 29 In 1965 Wolper launched the first "National Geographic Society Special" on television which appeared four times a year. He created the episodes first for CBS (1965-1973), then for ABC (1973-1974), and finally the initial broadcast on PBS in 1975. 30 Wolper was an astute man who knew documentary television could capture an audience's interest, but in the 1970's even he admitted defeat in the continual struggle to sell his work to the American networks. He began developing an entertainment project in 1975 based on Alex Haley's book about black history, Roots. 31 Wolper felt it would make the public think more about the contributions of blacks to American history and be easier to sell to the networks than documentaries.

iv. The institutionalization of documentary programming in Britain and Japan:

The main impetus, given the limited documentary series besides Wolper's work in America, came from Britain and Japan. In the early 1960's the BBC began a very capital-intensive effort to use its tax revenue to stop the probable influx of American programs and actually exported its own products. In 1960 it built the largest television

production facility in the world and specifically began a concerted effort to enter the international program rerun market. 32 Success remained elusive until 1967 when BBC drama productions as well as documentaries were sold in America and elsewhere. "Civilization" (BBC 1967) was a thirteen part series about western art written and narrated by historian Sir Kenneth Clark. A BBC press release tried to emphasize the magnitude of the project and the numerous technical difficulties in actually filming the series:

Two years to make, 80,000 miles covered, 20,000 feet of film shot ---- the equivalent of six major feature films. Eleven countries and 117 locations visited. Works in 118 museums and 18 libraries shown. 33

The pattern was set for the next two decades in Britain which seemed to specialize in the limited episode series format. The main problem in creating such series was securing adequate financing and the BBC tended to rely on the co-production arrangement with such American partners as Time/Life films. This method was first used by the BBC in the 1964 twenty-six part series "The Great War", which was made with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) 34. The most popular series from British television dealt primarily with two subjects that had wide public appeal, animals and the Royal Family. In 1968 BBC and ITV jointly made a documentary about the investiture of Charles as Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle. The "Royal Family" (BBC/ITV 1969) had a BBC audience of twenty-three million and ITV viewers of fifteen million. 35 It was sold to public television in the United States and to most of the Commonwealth countries. Animals proved to be popular also but the approach taken on British television differed from America. The Walt Disney nature films and such programs as Marlin Perkins' "Wild

Kingdom" (NBC 1968-1971) were aimed at children and the programs' contents were presented on that level. The BBC, through its Natural History Unit at Bristol, and the ITV group put forward a biological perspective on nature that was extremely sophisticated. Amateur naturalist, David Attenborough, eventually became head of the BBC Bristol Unit, while an anthropologist, Desmond Morris, appeared on the ITV affiliate, Granada. In the 1960's the BBC produced the series "The World About Us" (BBC 1967-present) which attempted to educate viewers about ecosystems and environmental concerns. However, the longest running documentary series is BBC's "Horizon" (1964 to present) which has produced programs about scientific issues continuously since the 1960's, and many in partnership with PBS. 36

The approach of BBC's main ITV competitor, Granada of Manchester, was to not produce extended documentary series until the 1970's. Instead the 'cinema verite' style made popular by Drew in America was adopted to create "slice of life" films. The BBC's Denis Mitchell had used this approach in the 1950's to create such classic documentaries as "Morning in the Streets", "Night in the City" and "In Prison". In the early 1960's Mitchell moved to Granada and created "Wedding on a Saturday" about a marriage in a Yorkshire coal-mining village. 37 However, the most important documentary film made at Granada at this time was Michael Apted's "7 UP" about the lives and aspirations of a group of school children, all aged seven. Each seven years he repeated the series focusing on the same group of children as they matured. As "7 UP" became "14, 21, 28" and now "35 UP" a picture emerged of how the class structure of British society dictates who will succeed, as opposed to who will not. Many of the participants have refused to be shown in the latter instalments, although Cockney Tony Walker, now a cab driver, has used his fame to become "sometime" actor. Apt states

that:

The class element now is more of a given. I don't think anybody becomes more mobile or has got out of various restrictions or benefits. 38

In the 1960's the class element was significant as the first films tried show its dominant influence. Charles, an upper-class boy, became a documentary maker for BBC and refused to be seen on "35 UP". Tony, the short East End boy, used his celebrity status to be a stand-in for Christian Bale in Steven Spielberg's "Empire of the Sun" (1987) and is to appear in a BBC film called "Trainers". It reveals the fact that without such publicity Tony would never have been an actor, while Charles would have been successful regardless of the show's influence. Thus British documentary film makers during the 1960's ventured into two major areas of production, the BBC developed the educational series concept, while ITV created films that were themselves social documents.

In Japan NHK launched a second channel in 1957 that would be entirely devoted to documentaries. One of the first series broadcast was "The True Face of Japan" (NHK 1957-1964) that looked at all aspects of Japanese society in a 'cinema verite' style. One of the opening episodes was a film by Naoya Yoshida on the yakuza, the Japanese Mafia, which had a large audience as viewers were curious to see what had been a taboo subject. The series was given a new title in 1964, "Images of Today" (NHK 1964-1971) and lasted another seven years. Yoshida felt the "true role of television is to show people what they hardly ever see". 39 The private networks in Japan, such as NTV and TBS, also aired documentaries in the 1960's. Unlike NHK the documentaries of the commercial networks aroused more controversy as they were connected with the Vietnam War. Junichi Ushiyama's three part series "Actions of a Vietnamese Marine Battalion" (NTV 1965) predicted that South Vietnam would lose the

war due to the brutal actions of its military. The program showed the decapitation and disembowelment of a seven year old village boy in an attempt to find "secret documents". Another disturbing war film was "The Testimony of Hideo Den from Hanoi" (TBS 1967) which profiled the high civilian morale of the North Vietnamese during the bombing of Hanoi when the United States claimed to have nearly won the war. Reporter Hideo Den was fired from TBS due to government pressure, but was later elected to the Diet or national parliament. The brutality of war was not the only subject that Ushiyama explored as his film about mountain hawk trainers, "The Old Man and the Hawk" (NTV 1961), won the Cannes Festival the year it was made. 40 Both NTV and TBS were severely disciplined by the government broadcasting authority for airing the Vietnam war films.

v. Experimentation and conservatism: Documentary television in the 1960's:

The 1960's saw a hopeful beginning in America after the Murrow experience of the 1950's. The power of the televised documentary film to take the audience from the shadow images of conjecture with their "false opinions" into the realm of truth or reality, as founded upon reasoned understanding, was first made apparent in the Murrow/McCarthy broadcasts of the 1950's. The ability of television to reach a mass audience provided a new opportunity in the 1960's for activist documentary film makers to educate the public by informing them about the truth or reality of an issue. It was the prevailing opinion at the time among documentary film artists, such as Robert Drew, that showing reality on television could be a catalyst for social/political change. In 1960 all three American networks began the decade with a concerted effort to create documentary television on a regular basis. Murrow (CBS Reports), Drew (ABC Close-up) and Gitlin (NBC White Paper) made promising starts by raising subjects that reminded

the public of real issues deserving their attention. The public's reaction to reports like Murrow's profile of migrant farm workers in "Harvest of Shame" was denial and shock. As the Vietnam war became a more pressing problem the networks seemed less able to undertake controversial subjects or to openly criticize the war and the Johnson administration. Eric Barnouw states of the 1966-1967 season the networks "with a haunted intensity, looked for safe documentary subjects that might lure a sponsor" for advertising revenue. 41 As American documentary television deteriorated on the commercial networks, films such as Felix Greene's "Inside North Vietnam" were shown on the fledgling National Educational Television (NET). The mid-to-late 1960's was a period of retrenchment for American television as controversial documentaries were to eventually find an outlet only through public television.

In Britain the limited series format came into its own with the BBC's "Civilization". These expensive projects were geared to the export market and had to be made as co-productions with Time/Life films in America due to their cost. In Japan the government network NHK also developed a documentary channel but compared to the private broadcasters as NTV and TBS little controversy was raised, particularly in the Vietnam War. Even the BBC was not adverse to stopping the broadcast of documentaries that might cause negative public reactions. In 1966 Hugh Carleton Greene refused to air Peter Watkins' "The War Game" as its depiction of life in a nuclear war was too offensive. Previously Watkins' television docudrama "Culloden", about the Scottish Highlanders' last stand against the English army, had been shown by the BBC in 1964. 42 The 1960's saw the first concerted effort to create network documentary television that would remove the audience from the shadows of "false opinion" by focusing on the reality of circumstance. By the end of the 1960's independent

documentary films were being refused airplay on network television in America and Britain. David Wolper had begun to think about closing his production company. Only the emerging public television system in America seemed to offer an outlet for dissent.

vi. The effect of the news magazine on American documentary television in the 1970's:

In 1969 a battle was waged between two formats of documentary television. The contest was to signal the end of topical documentary films being shown on American network television. The success of what became known as the news magazine format severely limited the ability of network television to create and broadcast documentary films about important national issues. In the early spring of 1969 CBS premiered its news magazine "60 Minutes" (CBS 1969-present). It was the creation of producer Don Hewitt who realized that the traditional hour long, occasional documentary broadcast was failing to attract audiences. What was needed, thought Hewitt, was a series of short, easily digested news segments that were varied in tempo from light-weight to hard-hitting. The success of "60 Minutes" was not immediate as its host Harry Reasoner quit after one year to work at ABC. The show had its time slot changed several times, but in 1975 the Sunday night 7:00-8:00 P.M. slot was settled upon and a team of veteran reporters was assembled for the show. Dan Rather, Mike Wallace and Morley Safer acted as the learned hosts. The creative input of executive producer Barry Lando, a Canadian, gave the news stories a critical edge. Thus by the "late 1970's, 60 MINUTES was the undisputed champ of network news programming".⁴³ From 1977 until the present day the show has consistently been listed as one of the top ten network programs. In the ratings sweep from April 7th to May 12th, 1983, Himmelstein points out "60 Minutes" had a 39.75 audience share which was three times higher than any documentary aired in the 1982-1983 network season.⁴⁴

The contender against "60 Minutes" in 1969 was NBC's "First Tuesday" (NBC 1969-1973) with a generous two hour broadcast length, which was structured to be the opposite of the magazine format. The first host, Sander Vanocur, and his successor, Garrick Utley, covered six to eight stories in each telecast. However, critics deemed the time allocated for each instalment too long for viewers to absorb all the content being presented. The extended format allowed 'cinema verite' reports to be created on numerous topics. The story quality was generally good as the 1970 report on "Some Footnotes to 25 Nuclear Years" won an Emmy award for proving the American government had violated the nuclear test ban treaty. 45 The show survived only three seasons and had its name changed to "Chronolog" for one. Its cancellation signalled the decline of documentary production on American television into trivial oblivion. The magazine format of "60 Minutes" was safe as it generated little controversy, while documentary films were risky and attracted low audience numbers. John Sharnik stated in 1977: "It's hard to drum up enthusiasm around here for some things when '60 Minutes' has taken off the cream". 46 In 1978 ABC premiered its news magazine "20/20" which was initially a critical disaster. Host Robert Hughes, art critic for Time was replaced after the first show by Hugh Downs, and the occasional appearance by Barbara Walters quickly developed an audience for the show. 47 NBC had little success in creating a permanent news magazine with such efforts as "Weekend" (1974-1979) and "Prime Time Sunday" (1979-1980). "60 Minutes" was a ratings success and its format had a profound influence on discouraging the production of documentary films for network television. The periodic documentary film should have been able to co-exist with its news magazine counterpart but in the drive for ratings the former was sacrificed for the latter.

The 1970's began as a time of very provocative documentary films in

America but ended with this form of programming disappearing from television screens. In 1971 CBS broadcast a series of reports about the role of the military-industrial complex during and after the Vietnam War in perpetuating its own existence through media propaganda. Based upon Senator J. William Fulbright's book, The Pentagon Propaganda Machine (1970), the documentary was supposed to be about how the military sells itself to the public and government in order to consume ever-increasing amounts of money. "The Selling of the Pentagon" (CBS 1971) was actually about how the American military had attempted to create through its publicity a fear of attack by foreign powers and the appropriateness of "military solutions" to international problems. Once this manipulation of media coverage during the Vietnam War was exposed, the Pentagon's efforts were revealed to be largely ineffective. The Nixon administration charged it was a "fake" documentary and the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce investigated by subpoenaing film out-takes as well as script material. CBS Chairman Frank Stanton refused the subpoena and spoke out at the hearings against program censorship through the influence of government licenses for television. The committee cited CBS for contempt but the full House failed to sustain this charge and the investigation ended. 48 The decade had a number of controversial documentaries but none produced the dramatic results of "The Selling of the Pentagon". In 1975 CBS showed "The Guns of Autumn" about the sport of hunting and the carnage of wildlife populations. Graphic footage of killings provoked intense reactions from such diverse organizations as animal rights groups and the NRA, or National Rifle Association. 49 Bill Moyers was the chief reporter for "CBS Reports" from 1976 to 1978 and made a number of quality programs. ABC went for controversy and ratings with such "Close-up" reports as "Youth Terror: The View from Behind the Gun" (ABC 1978) which traced

the lives of several teenage criminals in the New York/New Jersey inner cities. 50 In 1979 ABC received massive criticism for a four part 'cinema verite' examination of the gay life style in "Homosexuals". 51 The "NBC White Paper" produced a few good documentaries as "Suffer the Little Children" (NBC 1972) about the effects of sectarian violence in Belfast's Catholic ghettos on teenage life. In 1974 "White Paper" ceased production until it was resurrected in 1979. 52 The documentary on American network television seemed to fade out of existence by the end of the 1970's.

vii. The problem of docudrama:

The replacement for the documentary was a supposedly revolutionary form of television that examined social problems in a fictional form as drama documentary. The first successful American docudrama was "The Missiles of October" (ABC/Viacom 1974) which focused on the 1962 Cuban missile crisis and starred Martin Sheen as President Kennedy. It used fictional license to take an inside look at what happened in the White House during the crisis and "began the mid-seventies fashion for...reconstructions with actors of real-life events". 53 In fact the basic concept for 'dramadoc', as the British call it, came from a BBC production in 1966 called "Cathy Come Home". The play was written by Jeremy Sandford to show the plight of a homeless mother who has her children taken away by social workers because she can't find housing that would accept children. Director Ken Loach used a documentary style which made his teleplay seem extremely realistic to the audience. The show's impact was startling and led to the creation of the housing charity, Shelter. 54 The BBC again demonstrated it's grasp of the docudrama form in 1976 when Tony Garnett's four part series on the progress of socialism among the British working class entitled "Days of Hope" (BBC/Polytel 1975) was broadcast. It traced the lives of three impoverished

people from 1916 to the General Strike of 1926 showing the harsh social conditions that the socialist/labour movement tried to alleviate. J. Caughie states that "Days of Hope" devoted a great deal of "attention to the social environment and to the community", thus acting to create an "ideology of naturalism". The Times declared that it "made much else on television seem amateur and effete".⁵⁵ The simple clarity of the series in showing how people became involved in socialism in order to deal with the poverty to which they were subjected was the real power of "Days of Hope". British docudramas seem to have grown from a genuine desire by English television producers to explore social concerns as well as problems.

In America this would also be the mandate of docudramas, but the results were not all that satisfactory. The most successful docudrama on America television was David Wolper's 1977 version of "Roots" which used Alex Haley's books about the history of slavery, as traced from his African ancestors, to construct an eight part series. When it was broadcast from January 23rd to 30th of 1977 up to 130 million people, or 85% of all television households, watched it. This was the largest American television audience in history.⁵⁶ It was not a depressing series as it showed the growth of the United States away from slavery through the success of the drama's black characters. Elayne Rapping states that "Roots" portrayed slavery as "being gradually resolved within the strictures of American democratic process". It was a triumph of the American dream for blacks and a cleansing of white America's sins.⁵⁷ The generous use of sexual innuendo and violence in "Roots" lent credence to criticism that the series sacrificed historical accuracy in favour of popular appeal. The British approach to docudrama had been to shock its audience into action through stark social realism. However, in the case of "Roots", the docudrama tended to support the overall success of the United States in

ending social injustice by providing equal access to the American dream.

The 1970's produced a variety of docudramas in America. Many were pointless and exploitive, while only a few had any real value. ABC's 1976 "Victory at Entebbe" was an "instant recreation" of a news event and the acting demonstrated its hasty preparation only a few months after the real rescue of Israeli hostages at the Ugandan airport. CBS's 1976 "Helter Skelter" about the Manson murders was gruesome, to say the least, even though the script was by veteran television writer, J.P. Miller. Karl E. Meyer, writing at the time, stated that the docudrama was a form of mass entertainment "in which history is given an instant replay as a "B" picture".⁵⁸ In the second most successful American docudrama of the 1970's the very sensitive subject of Jewish extermination was dramatized in "Holocaust" (NBC 1978). A large audience of around 120 million watched the four episode series. It was denounced by Elie Wiesel, a survivor of Buchenwald/Auschwitz and a Nazi hunter, who called it an "untrue, offensive, cheap" production for television.⁵⁹ Lance Morrow, in Time's review of the docudrama, wondered if "in telling the story as soap opera ...the producers never truly penetrated the tragedy" of the real event.⁶⁰ The techniques of documentary films could be used successfully in the creation of drama which concerned specific events or subjects only if that production appeared realistic and had a clearly defined purpose behind it. Britain's "Cathy Come Home" and "Days of Hope" did this very successfully but in America docudrama soon devolved into pure soap opera. Such dramas were popular in the ratings, but failed to give people a full understanding of the issues involved. The entire purpose of docudrama television was lost to the conjecture of sensationalism and the shadows of visual extravagance.

viii. British documentaries in the 1970's and the role of America's PBS:

In the 1970's the British became a documentary powerhouse that grew highly profitable from the export market. BBC's first successful series of the decade was Alistair Cooke's 1972 history of the United States, "America", which took over two years to complete. It has proven to be the most popular BBC documentary and was rebroadcast several times by the late 1980's. Such projects as John Berger's "Ways of Seeing" (BBC 1971) about the relationship of western art to capitalism, while academically significant, did not suit the export market. Jacob Bronowski traced the human race's historical record of scientific progress in "The Ascent of Man" (BBC 1974). Kenneth Clark made another art series, "The Romantic Rebellion: Romantic vs. Classic Art" (BBC 1973), with thirty minute episodes on such varied artists as Blake and Turner. John Kenneth Galbraith summarized the western world's economic history in "The Age of Uncertainty" (BBC 1977) with some success. The versatile physician and stage producer, Dr. Jonathan Miller, created a medical series about human physiology called "The Body in Question" (BBC 1978) that was noted for its occasional irreverence. Another highly original series was James Burke's "Connections" (BBC 1978) which attempted to present an alternative explanation of technological change, although some critics found the originality of his historical facts debatable. Granada traced the history of western Christianity in Bamber Gascoigne's 1977 series "The Christians". The most ambitious and enduring series was Jeremy Isaacs' twenty-six part history of the Second World War made for Thames Television called "The World at War" (Thames 1974). The four year film project was narrated by Sir Laurence Olivier and won an American Emmy for the best documentary of 1974. The retreat of primitive people and nature was shown on Granada's "Disappearing World" which was broadcast in the 1970's. Anglia's nature

series for ITV, "Survival", began in the 1950's, but only gained prominence during the 1970's when it was broadcast on America's PBS and won many awards for its overall quality. "Survival" was noted for its stunning photography which took viewers inside a pelican flock, or up a tree with a leopard. 61 Although the production of these series did create a down turn in the number of independent documentary films in the 1970's, something more important was accomplished. The making of documentary series was firmly established within the BBC and ITV companies as a central component of their television production due to profitable sales in several export markets. The British documentary series of the 1970's were ambitious and served a larger educational purpose through such institutions as the televised Open University. American television, except PBS, had lost its educational mandate and had become purely commercial. In the ratings-driven environment of American network television costly documentary projects were doomed to extinction.

The reorganized NET became the Public Broadcasting Service in 1967. Under-funded but undaunted it broadcast some of the British documentary series just mentioned and also managed to produce its own film projects. The "Realities" series was cancelled after the 1970 season due to a film called "Banks and the Poor" which was investigated by Congress. 62 The film had accused the banks of locking ghetto areas into poverty and several congressional members, who were bank directors, of sustaining these conditions. In "The Great American Dream Machine" PBS used humour in a cabaret manner to criticize American government policy. Short film items were made by independent artists for the show and many were anti-war. One film entitled "Who Invited US?", about the interventionist policies of American government, was severely criticized by Washington. In another series "Behind the Lines", a film was aired

about FBI use of "agent provocateurs" to infiltrate and disrupt anti-war protest groups.

63 The appearance of radical actress Jane Fonda on the "Dream Machine" in a series of sketches about women's liberation also aroused negative government interest in PBS. The change in PBS's fortunes came in 1973 when it decided to carry the Watergate hearings live before the commercial networks. Its ratings were the highest in American television history and people began to watch PBS more often. 64 Also in 1973 Craig Gilbert's 'cinema verite' twelve part documentary entitled "An American Family" was broadcast concerning a wealthy California family, the Louds, who were profiled over a seven month period that ended with an on-air divorce. Gilbert's episode on the Loud's homosexual son was particularly provocative to accepted middle-class values. Ratings for the series were high and it spawned a BBC imitation in 1974 called "The Family". 65 By 1980 Peter Davis and Tom Cohen continued this tradition with a film about the struggle of a family to maintain their independent livelihood in "Family Business". It showed their victimization by the Shakey Pizza Corporation, which eventually foreclosed on their business. 66 PBS clearly offered a home to critical documentary film in the 1970's and also broadcast the best of British television. The "Nova" (1974-to present) science series utilized many of the BBC's Horizon films, as well as developing a few of its own scientific documentary projects. PBS kept documentary film alive when the networks had descended into the conjecture and "false opinions" of news magazines.

ix. Docudrama excess and trash television in the 1980's:

The 1980's saw a continuation of many trends from the 1970's and several reversals. The news magazine formats of "60 Minutes" and "20/20" have aged gracefully but ratings have flattened. In a move to return 'cinema verite' CBS created "48 Hours" in 1988. The show takes an issue or event and profiles it over forty-eight hours. Dan

Rather hosts each episode which focuses on such controversial topics as hospital emergency rooms, teenage sex/drug taking and debt repossession in order to gain high ratings. ABC followed in 1989 with "Prime Time Live" hosted by Sam Donaldson and Diane Sawyer. NBC has no 'cinema verite' style news magazines at all in its current schedule.

The lavish docudramas of the 1970's all but disappeared by the late 1980's due to their sheer expense and inability to find sponsors. NBC profiled "Kennedy", "King" and "Ike" in the mid-1980's. Robert Kennedy was seen as being victimized by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Martin Luther King was a puppet of white liberals and Eisenhower directed the Second World War in Europe between sexual encounters with Kay Summersby. ABC's "The Burning Bed" (1985), starring Farah Fawcett, was a serious effort to recount the story of battered wife, Frances Hughes, who was acquitted of murder after she burned her abusive husband to death, tied to his bed. CBS seemed to indulge in pure sensationalism with "Kill Me if You Can" about sex offender Caryl Chessman, whose gas chamber execution was gruesomely depicted as a way of opposing capital punishment. A storm of protest was unleashed over the restaging of Atlanta child murderer Wayne Williams's trial in the 1985 CBS production of "The Atlanta Child Murders". The producer/writer, Abby Mann, simply omitted evidence against Williams and attempted to right what he saw as a miscarriage of justice. William A. Henry III stated at the time, in a protest essay against docudramas, that it "was not history, not journalism, but crusading entertainment".⁶⁷ ABC had a reputation to live up to in the 1980's as it had originated American docudrama in the 1970's with "Roots". In the fall of 1983 ABC finally released Nicholas Meyer's nuclear holocaust film "The Day After". Before its debut the film was embroiled in controversy between "nuclear freeze"

activists and nuclear power advocates. It was broadcast without sponsorship and ABC emphasized this fact during the film's publicity build-up in order to attract an extremely large audience. However, once again as with "The Holocaust", it was more soap opera than political statement. Brandon Stoddard, head of ABC Motion Pictures, defended the docudrama's apolitical position when he stated:

The movie simply says that nuclear war is horrible. That is all it says. That is a very safe statement. 68

Time magazine pointed out the fact "The Day After" was simply a turgid docudrama in that:

Political immediacy is just about all 'The Day After' has going for it. By any standards other than social, it is a terrible movie. 69

Shortly after, in the spring of 1984, BBC released its anti-nuclear docudrama called "Threads" and distributed it to most of the commonwealth countries. "Threads" was not based upon elaborate special effects/disaster scenes as "The Day After" but on how the threads of society would deteriorate after a nuclear conflict, ushering in a new age of barbarism frozen in an ice age induced by atmospheric debris. 70 At the same time the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) released a thirty minute film with an Australian physician giving an illustrated talk about the medical effects of a nuclear conflict. Dr. Helen Caldicott's "If You Love This Planet" was more effective than "The Day After", particularly after it was banned from public exhibition in America by Ronald Reagan.

In 1987 ABC again generated controversy with "Amerika" about the fictitious military take-over of the United States by the Soviet Union. Once again the sponsors withdrew as criticism mounted. 71 When broadcast, the series was too long and viewers couldn't follow the plot. The previous theatrical release of "Red Dawn" (1984), an

extreme anti-communist movie about a Soviet invasion of the United States, did much to detract from "Amerika's" liberal premise. The worst blow to docudramas was not the debate over how the subject matter was being handled, but the growing production expenses. When ABC aired the second part of its "The Winds of War" miniseries, called "War and Rememberance", in two separate parts during the 1988/1989 season, cost overruns and cast troubles jinxed the production. Although the series was a "novel" for television, its failure was such a disaster that ABC could not recover from the dismal ratings. Plans were shelved for many similar upcoming docudrama projects. American docudrama had lost sight of what it should be, not long elaborate series, but rather short films recreating or dealing with topical events.

The British dealt intelligently with such concerns and yet still managed to raise controversy. ITV's 1980 film by Anthony Thomas, "Death of a Princess", concerned the real life execution of a Saudi Arabian princess for the crime of adultery. Its criticism of the Islamic moral code resulted in then foreign secretary, Lord Carrington, having to convey an official apology to the Saudi leaders.⁷² Michael Wearing's semi-fictitious tale of youth unemployment in the Merseyside area of Liverpool, called "The Boys from the Blackstuff" (BBC 1981-1982), received praise from the Labour Party as an expose of the inadequacies of Thatcherism. Yosser, the lead character, continuously uttered the euphuism "Gizza a job" and it became a protest phrase among real out-of-work young people. The series traced a gang of tarmac layers, whose company laid them off, and how their lives disintegrated thereafter. The young men's treatment by government bureaucracy and police was particularly painful.⁷³ Granada Press published a book based upon the series in 1982 because of the public attention "The Boys from the Blackstuff" received during its telecast. It was an excellent example of British television's

ability to present an acute social problem as a highly personalized drama.

The disappearance of lavish and over-extended docudramas in America has been a positive development. In 1989 NBC aired "The Ryan White Story", a very sensitive portrayal of the life of a teenage haemophillac who became HIV positive through AIDS-tainted blood and was barred from attending public school. ABC aired a new two part docudrama in April of 1991, entitled "Separate but Equal", about the Supreme Court battle over school desegregation, starring Sidney Poitier as civil rights activist, Thurgood Marshall. 74 Thus the American docudrama has moved away from the over-embellished spectacles of the 1970's and 1980's. Leslie Woodhead, a producer at Granada television's docudrama unit in the 1970's, stated such films should "recreate as accurately as possible history as it happened". 75 By making their docudramas too elaborate and lengthy, American television networks nearly obliterated the genre's original purpose. Documentary realism was sacrificed to the shadows of pretense and spectacle.

Documentary films were an extinct species on the American commercial television networks in the 1980's. There was only one significant documentary made and that was CBS's 1983 film about the cover-up by General William Westmoreland of enemy troop strength in the Vietnam War. "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception" was actually guilty of some factual errors, but its overall thesis of a military conspiracy was plausible. Westmoreland's law suit against CBS ended in failure, but the most significant fact to emerge from this incident was that the "news gathering apparatus had gotten so close to some real ideological questions" about the military's conduct. 76 Unfortunately, after this documentary, all serious attempts to raise such questions on the three American commercial networks ended. With each succeeding year serious

documentary films were scheduled less and less. What took their place was a type of frivolous gossip, as found in Barbara Walter's ABC specials, in which she extracts the personal idiosyncrasies of famous people and Hollywood celebrities during superficial interviews. The depth of questioning usually revolves around scandal and the interview subject's sex life. Of even more alarming significance was the fear produced by once-liberal ABC reporter, Geraldo Rivera, in his 1983 special on "Satanism in America". Using simulated animal sacrifices, as well as graveyard scenes, the special convinced the audience that satanism was rampant and, as previously noted, it was the highest rated single program documentary ever shown on American television. Only recently ABC's "20/20" again used this shock technique to obtain ratings with an exorcism segment performed by a Catholic priest on a Florida teenager. 77 American audiences began to ignore hard news and gravitated towards the soft news of programs such as "Entertainment Tonight" which reports on the entertainment industry. The growth of so-called trash television was a phenomenon too large to ignore by the late 1980's. The pseudo-news shows of this genre restage hideous crimes and even turn back to the past for their material. "America's Most Wanted" recreates crimes and solicits viewer assistance in apprehending criminals. "Hard Copy" gives us the news the networks are supposedly afraid to air. "Personalities" tells the sizzling facts about the famous that even Barbara Walters would shy away from. "COPS" documents the everyday role of policemen in America's urban jungles in a 'cinema verite' style. Many viewers of American television believe these shallow exercises in journalism are documented truth.

x. America, Japan and Britain: Documentary output in the 1980's:

Only PBS has continued to broadcast quality documentaries on American television. Many are imports from Britain and originated in the newest ITV company,

Channel 4 or Central Television. However, in the 1980's PBS also undertook many partnership projects. The first significant series of this type was Dr. Carl Sagan's "Cosmos" (BBC/PBS/Polytel 1980) which concerned the potential opportunities of space exploration to the year 2000. It was jointly made by the BBC, the Los Angeles PBS affiliate KCET and EMI's Polytel International due to the expense of the "billions and billions" of special effects required for the series. Sagan stated that: "Television is one of the greatest teaching tools ever invented, particularly for teaching science".⁷⁸ However, the most significant PBS partner project of the 1980's was a thirteen part, \$5.6 million series on the southeast Asian conflict, entitled "Vietnam: A Television History", produced in conjunction with Channel 4, as well as Antenne 2 of France, and telecast in 1985. It so provoked conservative groups that the right wing media group AIM, Accuracy In Media, created a one hour rebuttal to the series hosted by Charleton Heston, entitled "Television's Vietnam: The Real Story". The film did little except to say Ho Chi Minh was a communist and the communists made the people of Vietnam suffer in defeat.⁷⁹ Another lavish partner series developed with Spanish television was an art history anthology that rivalled "Civilization", called "Art of the Western World" (1989). The 1990's has seen these co-production ventures become evermore ambitious in their scope. The 1991 series "Legacy" was broadcast over a three evening period on PBS and attempted to elucidate the social wisdom of Near Eastern, Indian, Chinese, Egyptian and pre-Columbian civilizations as opposed to the dominant western tradition. Written and presented by Michael Wood, "Legacy" was a massive project that was filmed worldwide through a co-production agreement between Maryland Public Television, NHK Japan as well as Central Television-Channel Four of Britain. It is very apparent in the 1990's that such elaborate documentary films for television can only be produced and

financed through international partnerships among broadcasting authorities.

Aside from these partnership projects, PBS also produced many worthwhile documentary series of its own. One of the most ambitious of these was an eight part series on American architectural history called "Pride of Place: Building the American Dream" (1986). Bill Moyers created two powerful series for PBS in the 1980's. The first was about the importance of the historical past to modern American culture, entitled "A Walk Through the Twentieth Century", and the second, called "Public Mind", concerned the media's influence on society. The genius of American culture and its historical evolution were seen through documentary films in the "American Masters" and "The American Experience" series. Of even greater significance was the creation by PBS of the weekly series "Frontline" (1980-present), which was intended as a vehicle to present films from independent film makers on topical news subjects. Hosted at first by Jessica Savitch, and later Judy Woodruff, the series has created its own headlines in the news. Three weeks after the suicide of assassin Dan White in 1985, PBS aired on "Frontline" the academy award winning film about his victim, "The Life and Times of Harvey Milk" (1984). In a nation traumatized by AIDS, PBS gave people something else to think about, human worth. 80 When "Frontline" did profile AIDS it generated great controversy by following a carrier of the disease who continued to have sex. This presented the legal dilemma of whether to restrict that person's freedom. Recently David Frost's interview with Gulf War commander, General Norman Schwarzkoff, created a split between the General and President Bush over the war's conduct. Only PBS's "Frontline" seemed to be able to undertake such a probing interview. The PBS series "POV", or "Point of View", was created to specifically air independent documentary films, although its scheduling has been sporadic. In the fall of 1990, Ken Burn's film "The Civil War" was

premiered. It was the most ambitious documentary series ever undertaken solely by PBS. Over five evenings and in a total of eleven hours, it re-created the trauma of America's bloody civil war over black slavery. The ratings were the highest in PBS history, with a fourteen million audience share. 81 In 1992 Burns aired his second documentary film for PBS, entitled "Empire of the Air", which was about the history of radio broadcasting in the United States. It was a much smaller project than his civil war series but received both critical praise and a significant viewer response in the ratings. The problem with PBS is not that such provocative documentaries cannot be made, but rather that there is insufficient revenue to run the network itself. Michael Kustow, arts editor for Channel Four, states PBS's problem is that it is simply "chronically underfunded". 82 Despite this, its documentary output has been impressive.

Britain and Japan continued to produce large scale documentary projects in the 1980's. The BBC made a sequel to "Civilization" about modern art called "The Shock of the New" (1979), as presented by the first "20/20" host and art critic for Time, Robert Hughes. James Burke's alternative explanation of technological history, entitled "Connections" (BBC 1978), was a very popular documentary, particularly when it was rebroadcast on America's PBS in the early 1980's. Unfortunately the ten episode follow-up series, "The Day the Universe Changed" (BBC 1985), was not understood by television audiences and this explained its lack of popularity. Richard Denton's twelve part portrait of Soviet life under the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev, entitled "Comrades" (BBC 1985-1986), was criticized for being too "accepting" of Soviet state assistance in preparing the film's subject matter. David Attenborough's nature series, "Life on Earth" (1979) and "The Living Planet" (1984), from BBC Bristol were widely praised by critics for their promotion of ecological awareness. However, budget cuts by the Conservative

government in the 1980's significantly curtailed BBC's film output. Short subjects have been made into documentaries, rather than more extensive ones requiring multi-episodic treatment. Two notable short film projects at BBC were "The Strange Case of Yukio Mishima" (BBC 1985) about the ritualistic Samurai death of Japan's leading nationalist writer in the late 1960's, and a two part history of LSD called "The Beyond Within" (BBC/Everyman Films 1986) that even had the drug's inventor, Dr. Albert Hoffman, explaining the mystical revelations of his first "trip". Granada produced a historical series on "Victorian Values" (1987) and how they have influenced modern society. However, Granada's most ambitious effort was a massive thirteen part history of "Television" (1985). In order to properly research this thesis, the sheer volume of global broadcasting material amassed in the "Television" series has proven to be an invaluable resource. In its most recent documentary project on the history of maps and exploration, entitled "The Shape of the World" (1990), Granada found that it was necessary to co-produce the series with PBS's WGBH Boston. 83

Japan has recognized since the 1960's that documentaries are a worthwhile undertaking. In 1975 a film made by a Japanese television network documenting a man's attempt to ascend and then ski down Mount Everest received international attention. "The Man Who Skied Down Everest" (NTV 1975) was a successful theatrical release in North America and Europe. The Japanese employ great patience in making documentaries, for example, "Takashi" which profiled a thalidomide victim over twelve years, from 1963 to 1975. In 1978 an expedition to the North Pole was filmed by Susimi Nakasuma, and in 1980 he climbed to within 300 feet of the summit of Everest. However, despite this significant documentary output, NHK displayed a lack of judgment when it broadcast "Text Books are Made in Such a Way" in 1982 about the revising of

school history books to present Japan's World War II conduct in a more favourable light. 84 It would not criticize the practice directly, but at least revealed it was happening. As in the 1960's with the controversy over the commercial channels' Vietnam war films, NHK failed to take a critical position on such issues. The beautifully photographed documentary films of Shoichiro Sasaki about such things as a piano tuner's obsession with sound and memory are the preferred style, artistic and esoteric. 85

xi. The example of Channel Four:

The most significant change in Britain was the appearance of Channel Four in 1982. Headed by "World at War" producer, Jeremy Isaacs, the network was touted as the solution for arts television in the new age of cable and dwindling funds for the BBC. The completely private network carries commercials, popular American series such as "Hill Street Blues", and feature films. 86 The revenue produced by the sale of advertising time is used for arts programming, of which a major share comprises documentaries. Central Productions is the main drama/documentary source of Channel Four and in the network's first several years of operation many major series were broadcast from Central, as well as other production companies. Many were made in partnership with foreign broadcasters, as in the previously mentioned case of "Vietnam: A Television History", which was co-produced with PBS and Antenne 2 France. "Automania" was a thirteen part history of the automobile made in 1984 by Central; "In the Heart of the Dragon", a twelve part history of China made in 1984 by Ash films; "The Living Body", an extensive twenty-six part visual exploration of how the body functions, using stunning internal photography; "Open the Box", a 1986 series about television by Jane Root; and "State of the Art" was a 1986 series from Illumination films that speculated about the role of art in a postmodernist society. Numerous single subject

documentaries were produced, ranging from Futurism-"Vita Futurista"-1987, to shopping malls-"Mall Time"-1987, and even a retrospective on "The Prisoner" television series from the mid-1960's-"Six into One: The Prisoner File"-1984. A recent film made by Channel Four, Polygram Music and NBD Films, entitled "The Black Leather Jacket" (1990), was extremely controversial because of its depictions of sexual bondage fantasies among London's leather underground. However, most of the film dealt with the cultural history of the leather garment, as communicated by the expressive narration of Dennis Hopper. Larger documentary projects had to be produced through consortium funding, which has been a constant concern since the network first began. The expense of the specialized photography in "The Living Body" series necessitated a partnership between Channel Four, Goldcrest Films, Multimedia and Antenne 2. 87 It was apparent to critics and public alike that even though network had just been launched, Channel Four would be a significant new force in British documentary production.

In the Channel's mandate, documentaries were to specifically include "the individual program...maker's voice" and not be mere description. Thus, the Channel would secure a "diversity of voices" through a variety of "experienced documentary makers as well as new comers" to television production. 88 The liberal attitude of Channel Four over sexuality has caused it to come under great pressure to curtail program plans. A "Visions" episode on sex in the Brazilian cinema was withdrawn and a series called "Sex with Paula" was postponed in 1987. 89 Eventually the SDR (Special Discretion Required) symbol was adopted to warn viewers of programs with explicit sex or violence. However, the honesty of the network, especially in its documentary work, towards sensitive topics seems to have impressed the British public. As one viewer stated: "C4 don't mess around, do they? They say exactly what they want to say and

that's it". Audiences seem to accept "nudity if it is presented in a documentary form". 90 A series of films about the homosexual lifestyle and sex practices called "In the Pink", while very controversial in 1987, was tolerated, for viewers regarded them as educational documentaries, rather than perverse pornography. 91 The success of Channel Four proves that documentary and commercial television can co-exist in a highly creative environment. The latter need not exclude the former. The death of documentary television on America's commercial networks and its exile into the shadows of "false opinions" is a decision based not on the supposed fact that documentaries cannot achieve high audience ratings, but rather on a lack of commitment to investigative realism. The type of subjects chosen to be profiled on American television, such as satanism or the sex lives of celebrities, suggests a penchant for sensationalism and an evasive attitude towards the problems of its own culture. American network television deliberately chose to shape its programming according to commercial considerations and has excluded the production of highly opinionated documentaries. Britain's Channel Four has combined the "commercial" with the "art" of documentary film making, thus demonstrating that the two broadcasting goals are not completely opposed to one another.

xii. Conclusion:

The gradual failure of American commercial television to sustain a periodic output of critical documentary films is significant. Douglas Kellner, in his new book Television and the Crisis of Democracy (1990), points to this fact as one more piece of evidence that a conservative mentality has taken over the American networks. The corporate influence of General Electric over NBC was seen in a documentary extolling the benefits of French nuclear energy during the Chernobyl disaster. 92 The Tisch

group's 1986 take-over of CBS and subsequent budget cutting in the news division intimidated that network's liberals. 93 At ABC the network's Pentagon correspondent has been "used" on several occasions by military informants and the network continues to employ conservative commentator George Will, despite his conduct in the 1980 Reagan/Carter debate. 94 A severe imbalance has occurred between capitalism and democracy through the confounding of journalistic principles by commerce. Thus to Kellner: "Mainstream commercial broadcast media in the United States are therefore best interpreted at this juncture in history as 'capitalist media', as ideological mouthpieces for the corporate capitalist system". 95 A conservative agenda rules American network television which seems to have eliminated independent journalism and thus threatens democracy. The documentary and even the docudrama, if done well, help to keep people informed and promote critical thought. The "critical realist" docudramas "represent a form of popular culture as popular revenge", stated Kellner in 1979, as dramas such as "Roots" helped to create sympathy for blacks as oppressed people. 96 Without such documentaries and docudramas the viewing public lacks an informed sense of their social reality, a condition Kellner detects in American commercial television of the latter 1980's.

The 1960's was a period of hopeful optimism in American documentary film production for network television. Film producers finally seemed to gain a certain degree of access to the national audience about matters of critical national importance. Documentary films were made a part of the three major American networks' regular schedules through their respective news departments. This had been brought about at CBS by the efforts of Edward R. Murrow and his producer, Fred Friendly, who jointly created "CBS Reports" in 1959. Friendly was later to remark: "What you don't know can

kill you; our job is to see that you know". 97 American documentary television developed a definite sense of its social responsibility during the early 1960's. However, this was a contentious mandate as it often revealed certain realities of life that the government did not want exposed and which provoked public disbelief. When the American networks gradually discontinued the production of such irritating documentary specials in the 1970's, it was a major victory for the forces of the social status quo. The lofty goals that Arthur Barron suggested the American documentary was aspiring to in the 1960's, namely the "Jeffersonian...marketplace of ideas" and "an informed electorate", seemed to be swept aside by the glossy news magazine formats. In Europe, particularly Britain, and Japan, the concept of television's social duty to educate the public is still regarded as sacrosanct. The state-funded public broadcasting authorities in these countries, as well as many others, continued to adhere to the principle that "documentaries have a common purpose; to inform and instruct". 98 The corporate malaise that has gripped American network television does not exist in other societies, where the chief concern is the declining revenues devoted to state television systems.

The long-term result of this decline in American documentary film production for commercial television has been to foster a shadowland mentality which seeks to ignore social problems by cultivating the conjecture of "false opinions" and contributing to a state of "informed unreality" among the public. By indulging in the superficial conjecture of such topics as celebrity gossip and horrific murders, American television avoids any serious examination of social problems but yet gives the audience the false sense of being informed. In the corporate society of America, with its deep class divisions and severe economic readjustments due to a shifting world economy, the critical analysis of documentary film should be a vital force in national/political affairs.

The fact that this force has been banished to the under-funded Public Broadcasting System, or PBS, demonstrates the lack of critical analysis occurring in the private television system. The ability of documentary film as an instrument of knowledge to enlighten the masses and promote class consciousness, Barron points out, originated with Lenin. The revolutionary potential of film to become an important vehicle in the process of class struggle suggests a possible reason for the decline of documentary programming on American network television. One could imagine that if the early Soviet film maker, Sergei Eisenstein, were alive in the United States today, he would be documenting the gang carnage in American cities, much as he did for the Odessa steps massacre by Tsarist troops in "The Battleship Potemkin" (1925).⁹⁹ In fact little has appeared on American television about the rising levels of urban gang violence, which seems to have only received critical social analysis in the non-studio financed film projects of Dennis Hopper -"Colors" (1988) and John Singleton -"The Boyz n' the Hood" (1991). Such unsettling images are not readily accepted by the middle-class public and politicians of America who would rather such glaring flaws in their society were not mentioned. The inquiring spirit of Murrow and the 1960's quest for social change through documentary television survives in America today, but it has been exiled into the peripheral economy of art cinema/film festivals and PBS programs such as "POV". American society is dominated by the conjecture of "false opinions" and the shadows of unreality that are supported through the commercial culture of television and the type of images it presents. This is due to the corporate logic of television in the United States and an agenda that purposely down plays social problems by confounding any attempts to criticize the contemporary capitalist order. In no other area of American television production does this shadow logic assert itself more strongly than the telecasting of

documentary film, which is not the case in other broadcasting jurisdictions.

NOTES:

NB: It should be noted by the reader that many of the documentary series mentioned in this chapter have had books published that either accompanied or followed their video releases. The first was Sir Kenneth Clark's Civilization (1967) and since the 1970's it has been an almost automatic practice to simultaneously issue a book along with a documentary series. In the 'War' section of Chapter 2 the Stanley Karnow book often referenced was the text of the Channel Four/Antenne 2/PBS series, "Vietnam: A Television History". Readers should consult the library to locate other such texts.

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CHAPTER 4: 'Dwelling in the Shadows: Soap Operas as Either the Reflections of Repressive Cultural Myths or the Portraits of Social Reality.'

Soap operas are a form of television that holds the potential to be either a realistic mirror of life's struggles or provide a comfortable form of fantasy upon which the real world cannot intrude. On the surface soaps appear to portray the lives of people from varying social strata as they progress through the traumas of social existence in a seemingly natural manner. However, despite their naturalness, soaps are an entirely artificial exercise that is directed by pre-determined social, economic and cultural agendas. The degree of industrialization, level of material consumption, ethnic/political conflicts, disparity among social classes and nationalist movements are intertwined with many of the plotlines found in the diverse world of soap operas. Culture can be portrayed in soaps as a static experience tied to the security of worn-out cultural myths, or soaps can be utilized to provoke social awareness through a realistic depiction of human struggle. Soap operas, or indeed many other forms of television, can be very socially stagnating in their outlook when they become vehicles for the maintenance of existing values and mores. However, these programs can also be highly political in their depiction of the class struggle and at times even advocate an agenda for social change. When soaps tend to reflect the existing social order in a passive manner they are merely shadow images of a dominant ideological power structure, but when avenues of political struggle are suggested, the dramas are transformed into purveyors of social reality. In their shadow form these teleplays reinforce the social status quo by acting as agents of conjecture and "false opinion". When soap operas focus the audience's attention on poor social conditions their dramatic portrayals can act as a potentiator for societal change.

Only through a cross-cultural comparison of the soap opera form can one surmise whether such a divergence does in fact exist. Through a comparison of American, British/European, Australian, Japanese, Indian and Chinese soap operas, as well as Brazilian telenovelas, it is possible to discern some significant differences. Soap operas are cultural forms and they engage in a discourse with the audience through the use of a particular culture's own society as the raw material for the drama itself. This dramatic discourse can be employed to inform the audience about its own society in a critical manner, or it can serve as a propaganda vehicle to perpetuate the myth structure of that society. Foreign soap operas are considered prime time programming that communicates a variety of social, political, economic and religious information to its audience. American soap operas are largely daytime dramaturgy for old people and housewives who happen to be confined to their homes during weekday periods. American soaps focus on sex, wealthy people, fashion tips, health spa visits, dinners at the country club and a myriad of other activities that are involved in the mythical lifestyle of a successful American citizen. Through dream-like states of wealth, power and sexual ecstasy these soap opera fantasies lend credence to the myths of American society. When this utilization of the soap opera is compared to how foreign broadcasters use the drama form, a radical difference is quite apparent.

It is important to consider soap operas as a serious television genre because they create a sense of "intimacy" for the audience, according to Judith Kegan Gardiner. This leads to a sense of trust and acceptance of the intimate relationships being portrayed as "real".¹ This concept could be extended to suggest that along with a sense of personal intimacy, television also transmits the social values at work in a given culture. American soap operas are highly myth-driven and support the

conservative values of what Hobsbawm defined as a proto-nationalistic culture. Many foreign soaps seem to create realistic portraits of their culture and in doing so can promote political change through the depiction of social classes. On the surface some of these dramas are frivolous in nature and appear to be much like American soaps but through the use of internal social themes, issues are introduced that make audiences think about problems in their everyday lives. The complex nature of the issues occurring in these societies and the non-applicability of American values indirectly brings about this effect. Due to the continuing nature of the plotlines in soap operas and their scheduled broadcast each weekday, they can be powerful tools in shaping an acceptance or questioning of the cultural system being presented. Charlotte Brunsdon locates the peculiar fascination of audiences for soaps in the "pleasure of the hermeneutic speculation", as viewers must use their knowledge of the soap opera's plot to seek explanations of mysteries or the characters' actions. ² The cultural values of the soap are a silent partner in the pleasure audiences derive from the soap opera's text. It is how soap operas function in a cultural context that determines whether they project the shadows of conjecture and "false opinion" or act to encourage a realistic social perspective.

I. American soap operas:

American soap operas seem to be centered in a discourse of conjecture that acts to reinforce specific national myths. These soaps tend to emphasize wealth, social position, professional careers and materialism as admirable qualities. American soaps regard the poor as criminals, violent, lazy and common. A great deal of emphasis is placed on sex, physical beauty, remote romantic retreats and bizarre plot explanations. The American audience is being offered a value system centered on the sovereignty of

the individual which regards wealth as a sign of success, materialism as desirable, poor people as constantly scheming to take money from those who earned it, career success as a means of escaping humble origins and the license of sexual desire based on physical attraction as opposed to the mutual commitment of lasting relationships. Such soap conventions also support specific national myths: that America is a land of unlimited abundance as well as opportunity, poor people can be successful through effort, all wealth is earned by hard work, the poor/homeless are not actually a part of society and the personal freedom to gratify physical needs (sex) is to be emphasized above all other considerations. European soaps, for example, do not reflect such peculiarly American preoccupations as they adhere to a totally different set of cultural values. They are concerned with the lives of farmers, the urban working poor, doctors in a rural clinics, disillusioned suburbanites and other social groups engaged in the struggle to survive in difficult circumstances.

i. Soap opera realism in the 1930's:

American soaps began in the 1930's on radio and were entirely concerned with ordinary people and their efforts to weather the economic Depression. Sponsored by soap powder companies, such as Colgate, Lever Brothers and Palmolive, they sold cleaning products to women, but also included a message of faith in the power of people to survive the difficult times. Harrison B. Sumners found in his program surveys of radio that soaps grew rapidly in popularity in the 1930's. In 1931 there were three "women's serial dramas", in 1934 this had grown to ten, in 1936 it was thirty-one, and by 1939 there were sixty-one. ³ J. Fred MacDonald states that thematically "many of the early daytime serials appealed directly to listeners feeling the bite of the Depression". ⁴ "Betty and Boo" (1932) told about the lives of a struggling young couple who had been

disowned by the husband's rich father. Denied the father's assistance, they are forced to work hard, scrimp and save, as did all the listeners at that time. "Ma Perkins" (1931) was the most successful radio soap and was centered around a widow trying to raise a family and run a lumber yard. Ma was both wise and philosophical but yet her "problems are the same as those of thousands of other women in the world today" stated the opening monologue. ⁵ More authenticity was found in "Today's Children" (1933) about the head of a large Irish-American family, Mrs. Moran, who kept her clan together in this divisive era. "Mrs. Wiggs and the Cabbage Patch" (1936) was a serial based on the 1934 Paramount film that featured Zasu Pitts as the widow Pauline Lord who lived in a shack near the train yard with her numerous children in desperate poverty. ⁶ It was Hubbell Robinson Jr. of the advertising agency Young & Rubicam who, in the early 1930's, mandated the four cornerstones of soaps: 1. easily recognized and simple characterizations; 2. understandable predicaments or plots; 3. female lead characters; 4. philosophical relevance. ⁷ The last point is the most important as it suggests even the sponsor's advertising agency recognized that the soap had to be relevant to the lives and experiences of its audience. The simple values of work, honesty and goodness were often pitted against the evil of external circumstances. Thus the values of the soaps became "reaffirmations of commonly-held beliefs". ⁸ In the Depression people would only respond to realism as their situations were so desperate they needed to see this struggle acknowledged. In soaps brave females battled the evil world to protect their families and managed to triumph. It was a hopeful message and therapeutic.

ii. Economic prosperity in the 1940's and the transition to television in the 1950's:

In the late 1930's and early 1940's the American radio soap changed as it became more focused on male characters who were professionals. Women also left the

home to become career girls in the big city. When the Depression ended it was clear that soaps could stop struggling and become a part of the pseudo-prosperity being ushered in by the upcoming war in Europe. "The Road to Life" (1937) was the first soap with a doctor as hero, centered around the practice of Dr. Jim Brent. "Terry Regan, Attorney at Law" (1937) was about a young attorney in a prosperous law firm who built his career as a single man and eventually fell willing victim to marriage. Similarly the lead male character in "Young Doctor Malone" (1939) also married after developing a successful medical career. Women became professionals in the soaps, as for example "Joyce Jordan: Girl Intern" (1938) which evolved into "Joyce Jordan, M.D.", a successful female doctor. "Her Honor, Nancy James" featured a female lawyer turned judge, while "The Woman in White" was about the nursing field. Women also held more traditional female occupations, as Ellen Brown owned a tea house in "Young Widder Brown". Brenda Cummings operated a sewing shop on "Second Husband", whereas Connie Tremayne began her own lingerie store and eventually managed a factory in "Arnold Grim's Daughter", while the lead character in "Jenny Peabody" operated a small hotel. More unorthodox soap careers for female characters were a private detective in "Kitty Keene Inc.", a business woman in "Manhattan Mother", as well as newspaper reporters in "Jane Arden" and "Rich Man's Darling".⁹ Despite such innovations in the soaps many remained traditional by focusing on love/romance, marriage as a means to achieve social status and women standing alone against adversity. "The Romance of Helen Trent" (1933-1960) was a turgid story of love's progress, or the lack of it. "Our Gal Sunday" (1937-1949) had a woman marry into wealth, while in "Stella Dallas" (1937-1955) a woman stubbornly stood alone against the world. Obviously the radio audience was quite diverse as some wanted to see emancipated women, while others required a more

traditional focus to their serials. This was probably due to the emergence of female professionals in a postwar economy and the need to utilize them as female characters in soap operas, along with the traditional homemakers.

Throughout the late 1930's, during the war years and into the pre-television period, the radio soaps in America tried to reflect both social change as well as support for traditional roles. Women had to be brought into the modern world but the writers could not disaffect their traditional audience of homemakers whose values were more conservative. Frank and Anne Hummert churned out soaps centered on the romances of strong-willed career women in an assembly line manner. Irna Phillips tried to understand her female audience and brought topical issues to the forefront in her soap scripts. ¹⁰ Elaine Sterne Carrington tried to show the joys of a fulfilling family life in her soaps, as she did occasionally write for Good Housekeeping. The American soap opera, after its Depression trauma, moved in the postwar period to focus on two primary considerations. The first was the urbane confidence of upwardly mobile men and women making the new prosperity work for them. The second was the small town/suburban setting of romance and family values. Gone were the ordinary concerns of the Depression such as poverty, survival and hard circumstances. The reality of middle-class-based prosperity was combined with the myth of happy small-town life.

In the early 1950's commercial sponsors forced the soaps to move to television. "The Guiding Light" (CBS radio 1937-1952/CBS TV 1952-present) was transferred to video in 1952 and viewers found the radio pace was too slow. Audiences wanted murder and mayhem, with court room battles or even domestic fights. The new television soaps such as "Search for Tomorrow" (CBS 1951-1982/NBC 1982-present), "Love of Life" (CBS 1951-1980), "The Secret Storm" (CBS 1954-1974), "As the World

Turns" (CBS 1956-present) and "Hawkin's Falls" (NBC 1951-1955) contained more action, but each was still centered in urban prosperity or rural tranquillity. "Hawkin's Falls" attempted to faithfully recreate small-town life with outdoor scenes filmed in Woodstock, New York. 11 Mainstreet conversations, coke at the drugstore lunch counter and church socials provided the backdrops to the struggle for happiness in a small town. The success of such soap locales as Henderson in "The Search for Tomorrow" and Springfield in "The Guiding Light" was due to the ease of identification housewife viewers had with the down-home plotlines. Soap writer Roy Winsor had his scripts focus on "problems stemming from marriage, children, and family". Robert La Guardia notes most scenes took place in "kitchens and living rooms, and the talk occurred over coffee cups". 12 Problems were always dealt with over coffee in a very civilized middle-class fashion. Quite different was "The Edge of Night" (CBS 1956-1975/ABC 1975-1985) which was the old title for the Perry Mason radio show. It was designed as a thirty minute, late afternoon urban mystery soap centered around the law practice of Mike Karr who seemed to be constantly involved with the criminal elements of Monticello, the soap's fictional metropolis. The stress on danger, violence and tragedy created a large audience for this unconventional metropolitan soap.

iii. American soap opera mythology from the 1950's to the 1980's:

Throughout the 1950's and 1960's American soaps became caught up in perpetuating the American way of life as a triumph over adversity. The basic underpinnings of family relationships, an expanding economic prosperity and the sanctity of small-town life were always omnipresent. The trials and tribulations of characters were never seen as a product of the social structure. Individuals suffered from emotional problems but they always remained separated from the forces at work in American

society, such as racism, poverty, crime and the Vietnam War. When such problems were dealt with, it was through a distancing perspective that tended to see such issues as the product of deviancy. All crime in "The Edge of Night" was the result of a criminal conspiracy which, through diligent legal and police investigation, could be revealed and justice carried out. Drugs caused death and not mind expansion, as with Lee Randolph's auto accident following an LSD hallucination on "Another World" (NBC 1964-present).¹³ Van Sterling tried to understand young people and their problems at a local coffee house in "Love of Life", only to discover drugs were being sold. The first popular prime time soap simply chose to hide in the superficial bliss of small-town life. "Peyton Place" (ABC 1964-1969) had its share of murder and illegitimate children, but it still stressed the continuity of life in a small New England town dominated by a traditional patriarchal structure.¹⁴ The turbulent social changes in American society whirled around "Peyton Place" as it did with the other soaps, but little impact was made. One soap that defied this trend in the mid-1960's was "Dark Shadows" (ABC 1966-1971), whose central character was a vampire which fed on the blood of the living. This campy exercise in vampirism defied all the pretensions of ordinary soaps and had high ratings until its plots became too complex to sustain.

Agnes Nixon, a dialogue writer for Irna Phillips, attempted to imbue the American soap opera with relevance through the creation of "One Life to Live" (ABC 1968-present). With the cursory inclusion of ethnic characters (Blacks, Poles, Jews, etc.), drug problems, child abuse and sexual disease, Nixon believed she had reformed the soaps. However, La Guardia states these "were occasional concerns...not part of the mainstream events".¹⁵ The premiere of Nixon's "All My Children" (ABC 1970-present) was supposed to be the birth of a soap that could truly be considered relevant

to the problems of modern America. It did show war protestors and dealt with abortion, but its small-town premise and patriarchal rule by an old, wealthy family was very traditional for American soaps. Despite the claims that "All My Children" broke new ground "it did not differ greatly from the shows that Agnes had written with Irna".¹⁶ The mythical community of Pine Valley, New York, is a small town harbouring an unusual number of wealthy people, a medical center and a college. It is removed from seedy Center City, the home of crime, prostitutes and poor people. Corporate deals are carried out in New York City, the financial centre. Phoebe Tyler Wallingford (Ruth Warrick) rules Pine Valley's social scene from her mansion, which adjoins the homes of millionaire, Palmer Courtland (James Mitchell), and former millionaire, Adam Chandler (David Canary).

Most of the American soaps have such small-town settings filled with millionaires and with a leading family as head of the social scene. "Another World" has Bay City; "Somerset" (NBC 1970-1976) was set in the town adjacent to Bay City, Somerset; "General Hospital" (ABC 1963-present) has Port Charles; "Days of Our Lives" (NBC 1965-present) is set in Salem; "Loving" (ABC 1983-present) has Corinth; "The Young and the Restless" (CBS 1973-present) takes place in Genoa City; "As the World Turns" has Oakdale; "Love of Life" had Rosehill in upstate New York and "The Secret Storm" had Woodbridge.¹⁷ Soap opera towns reflect little of America's troubled social reality and instead choose to indulge in a kind of romanticized vision of how the nation would appear according to its mythical ideals. As Charles Derry states:

Soap opera towns are comprised of designer boutiques, designer hospitals, well-appointed homes in a variety of tasteful/conventional styles, and plenty of opportunities to accidentally run into your enemies at the health club/art gallery/free clinic/disco.¹⁸

These soap opera towns are a safe haven in a world of troubling circumstances. Ruth Rosen regards the atmosphere of soap communities to be one of blatant nostalgia for a simpler way of life that is no longer possible. This "search for yesterday" provides viewers with a definite sense of traditional continuity, as the town settings are places where "the four seasons and traditional holidays are observed and a respectable distance separates the community from the evils of the Big City".¹⁹ The soap towns of the northeastern United States, the geographical location most favoured, are 'corridors sanitaire'. They acknowledge the troubled society outside their confines, but keep this social disruption at a safe distance. The so-called reforms in soaps of the late 1960's attempted by Agnes Nixon did little to alter what had become a shadowland of myths that supported the status quo in American society. The pattern was set when the soaps moved from radio to television in the early 1950's and changed little by the 1970's, despite the social problems of the 1960's. Philip Wander describes the drama of daytime serials as the "angst of the upper class". He states that the "problems which face the soap characters ----possesiveness, lust ----are not those of the working-class people, but those of people with a great deal of time and money; they are the perils of Country Club Place". Wander believes that American soaps supply survival strategies appropriate only to the upper class and avoid all references to social problems that would require political or economic struggle against the established order.²⁰ An upper middle-class lens piece has been fashioned to frame human problems through such social conventions as the small-town setting and material abundance as a normal way of life.

The 1970's and 1980's did see American soaps include minorities and terminal medical problems such as AIDS. The soaps never did abandon their very conservative view of American society and despite the inclusion of such social issues,

the main storylines still revolve around human problems that can be solved through adhering to such acceptable values as marriage, family life and increasing one's income level. The only innovation in American soaps in the 1970's was to include more open sexuality to attract larger audiences. "The Young and the Restless" made great use of male torsos in bedroom scenes when it premiered in 1973 and achieved high ratings. Soaps began to include muscular male actors and more young beautiful women, as beef/cheesecake was made a central focus of American soap operas. Exotic fantasies received great attention after "General Hospital" successfully exploited the love adventure of Luke and Laura, marooned on a tropical island. Generally wealth became more prominent in the soaps as some characters achieved super-rich status. Many interior sets, such as mansions or townhouses, became opulent displays of material wealth. In 1989 the super-rich fashion model of "All My Children", Erica Kane (Susan Lucci), became bored and disappeared to Center City in order to escape the pressures of her lifestyle by experiencing what it was like to be poor. This romp in poverty ends when Erica's wealthy ex-husband, using private detectives, brings mother and daughter back to Pine Valley because he is worried about their safety in the nasty outside world. "Ryan's Hope" (ABC 1975-1988) had been a successful soap about a struggling Irish-American family, the Ryans, of New York, whose parents owned a neighbourhood bar, while their children strived to become professionals. It died in the ratings by the late-1980's and was cancelled as audiences no longer seemed interested in struggling ethnics in large cities, they preferred the wealthy gentry of mythical small-town America.

iv. Analysis of American soap operas:

Criticism of the American soap opera has come from feminist writers who view the genre as a means to perpetuate female social oppression. Tania Modleski

believes that the soaps create an audience of female "spectators" whose emotions are constrained by continual exposure to characters who cannot control their own lives. To Modleski, soap characters have "limited egos" that are constantly in conflict and always frustrated by a sense of "powerlessness".²¹ Women in soaps are dependent upon their families and female viewers are encouraged to find a similar solace in their own families. The soap opera is a "female narrative" that is very different from the classic male film narrative.²² Soaps generate a "fantasy of community" for women which does much to take away from the isolation of their nuclear family existence. Feminists must recognize the role soaps fulfill in women's lives and devise alternate ways of meeting these needs.²³ The American soap opera serves to keep the housewife distracted from her real situation of subservience in the home. The soap helps to instill in the house-bound female viewer a "distractable frame of mind" which "is crucial to the housewife's efficient functioning in her real situation".²⁴ If soaps revealed the reality of a repressive culture for women, they would supposedly defeat their main purpose of perpetuating a state of unrealistic domesticity. As this discussion proceeds, it will become quite apparent that Modleski fails to extend her argument into the political nature of American soap operas. It is more than "women's work" that is being perpetuated, but rather the values of a highly materialistic culture utilizing time-honoured myths such as the admiration of wealth and the wholesomeness of small-town life.

A definite lack of criticism is present in the semiotic approach of Robert C. Allen in a 1983 essay concerning soap operas. Allen, following the concepts of Barthes, sees the attachment viewers have for soap operas as a link between the textual code of the soap and the viewer's attempts to interpret that codified knowledge. In the semiotic approach the text is revealed through textual, intertextual and experiential codes

which provide a personal means of decoding the soap by gaining access to a special knowledge of plot events. The syntagmatic axis of soap opera time, extended plotlines, is contrasted to the paradigmatic complexity of the everchanging character situations. 25 A similar line of semiotic analysis is advocated by John Fiske who utilizes three levels of television textuality: the primary, secondary and tertiary. The "tertiary text" of television intertextuality applies particularly to soaps as it is based upon collective viewer opinions about the program's text. Soap phone-in lines, fan magazines and clubs, as well as local television talk shows about soaps help to pool viewer opinion, which is sent directly to the soap as fan mail. The pleasure of soap watching is a type of "controlled identification with characters that necessarily involves 'believability' and 'truth'". 26 Soap opera textual norms dictate how characters act and when they should die off. Viewers, by knowing the text of the soap collectively with other fans, shape the course of its plot. The soap viewer is an intertextual viewer of television, according to Fiske.

The problem with Fiske and Allen's semiotic approach is that it ignores the text of the soap as an ideological carrier of messages. Allen blandly observes that the "middle-class orientation of all soaps is a frequently noted characteristic". 27 He excuses this on the grounds that blue-collar occupations do not allow the inter-personal relationships soaps need to function. The soap opera narrative better suits professional offices, although this is hard to believe when one looks at British working-class soaps, as will be done shortly. The small towns of American soaps filled with wealthy people, as well as middle-class work places such as hospitals, magazine publishing offices, cosmetic factory headquarters, law offices and the like are deliberate choices, not plot conveniences. Soaps do work at a semiotic textual level due to their very nature as continuing dramatic storylines. The choice of setting, social/class dynamics, social

preferences for character types and other such factors are culture specific. Michael James Intintoli believes that American soaps are held in bondage by the past traditions of their production and the importance of securing ratings which prevents any experimentation in plotlines, as found in other soaps around the world. Controversial issues as AIDS, homosexuality, child beating or poverty are only given minor importance in storylines as they constitute a begrudging obligation to social responsibility. American soaps and their storylines are, according to Intintoli, a "corporate enterprise". Thus, not only the "exploration of everyday life is constrained by the pursuit of ratings, but also by the dominant ideological emphasis on a romanticized domestic world". 28

American soaps can only survive as a competitive product if they follow their traditional textual conventions. Fiske and Allen do not seem to consider this factor in their semiotic analysis. It is astonishing that Allen in his later book on the soaps, Speaking of Soaps (1985), takes the same position as Intintoli, that the production of these dramas in America has always been controlled by a corporate agenda. Allen writes that the soaps represent "a form of cultural production that has been fully penetrated by capital since the moment of its conception, a form driven and sustained by corporate imperatives". 29 However, Allen naively believes there exists no "adversarial relationship" between the artistic and economic forces within American soap opera production. If that were the case, then why did Norman Lear find it nearly impossible to sell his soap parody "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" (Syndicated 1976-1977) which eventually achieved high ratings through syndication. This instance demonstrates the problems of the American soap market, as well as its potential.

American soap operas, through their time-honoured parameters, continue to employ the shadows of conjecture and contribute to the belief in certain "false

opinions" which aids in the maintenance of the larger national culture. The overall text of American soaps provides uncritical support for a materialistic way of life that relegates the working class, poor and homeless to a virtual state of nonexistence. Foreign soap operas seem to deliberately cultivate a sense of the ordinary in that they use the everyday life experiences of farmers, urban labourers, rural doctors, and city dwellers as source material for their plots. Religious, historical and political themes are extremely prominent in foreign soaps, although at times this can be more harmful than productive. American studies of their own soap opera genre fail to grasp the consensus-building power of such corporate projects. Mary Cassata and Thomas Skill began a massive research project in 1977 called 'Project Daytime' which sought to "seek a balance between the empirical and humanistic perspectives". Soaps, to the researchers, were lessons that viewers could avail themselves of, for they "might simulate or suggest(s) solutions for their problems" in a seemingly supportive manner. 30 Such a perspective cannot possibly conceive of the ideological implications American soap operas contain.

II. Europe:

i. British social realism in "Coronation Street":

In Europe, Britain has pioneered the soap opera as a form of social reality. Britain's public broadcasting authority, the BBC, was slow to adopt the soap opera form in the 1950's. "The Grove Family" (BBC 1953-1956) was a domestic advice show that taught viewers to check for gas leaks and fraudulent peddlers. The Grove family characters gradually developed and viewers began to believe they were real. 31 This was to change in 1960 when the ITV broadcaster, Granada of Manchester, premiered a working-class soap opera set in a typical row-house street centered around a public house (bar) in fictitious Weatherfield. "Coronation Street" (Granada 1960-present) is the

second-oldest soap opera in the world, being succeeded only by "The Guiding Light" (Radio 1937-1952/TV 1952-present). The impetus to depict working-class life on television was due to the influence of Richard Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy (1952), which tried to identify genuine working-class culture as a unique part of British society. Hoggart's sociology was apolitical in tone and was probably a romantic reaction to the inroads made by American popular culture into British social life. When "Coronation Street" appeared, it parodied Hoggart's conception of community life and the cultural uniqueness of the British working class. 32

The families of "Coronation Street" were diverse and often in conflict. They represented the struggles of working-class life but their portrayals were often seen, as with Hoggart, in a romantic light. The pub landlady, Annie Walker, was a gentle lady aspiring to be a part of the gentry but still having to serve ale to the masses. Ken Barlow was a promising young man going to university on a scholarship and who, one thinks, would escape the street, but somehow seems tied to it. Ken's childhood friends are now ordinary labourers and resent his education. Sometimes bar maid and kept-woman, Bet Lynch, is engaged in a struggle to survive by questionable means, but retains a heart of gold. Elsie Tanner is the dark horse of the street and is considered a "slut" since her divorce in 1961, when she began a series of affairs. Elsie's son, Dennis, is a "bad lot" with his black leather jacket and criminal friends. Dennis hates Ken Barlow because he acts "superior". Minnie Caldwell and Ena Sharples are the street's elderly grandmothers, who meet in the pub's "snug" each day for a Guinness stout. Minnie is soft and Ena hard on those in difficulty, as together they watch over the street's moral standards. Stan and Hilda Ogden's position on the street is one of chronic bad luck as they are always scrimping and never seem to get ahead. Historical tradition is

found in the person of Albert Tatlock who lives at No. 1 Coronation Street. He was born to a family of weavers, educated at a factory school, served in World War I, unemployed in the Great Depression, and finally retired as a local government clerk. Albert is a figure of history and a reminder of the past to younger characters.

As the series matured characters died and were replaced by younger actors. However, the community of "Coronation Street" remained the same with Annie Walker in The Rovers Return Pub, Ena Sharples watching over the community morals, and Albert Tatlock wearing his medals as a reminder of the war. In the 1970's the older characters, such as Ena Sharples and Minnie Caldwell, had to die in the series as the actors themselves became ill and died. In the early 1980's Annie Walker died in real life, as did Albert Tatlock. Some characters retired out of exhaustion, such as Hilda Ogden who left the series long after her soap husband, Stan, had actually died in the mid-1980's.³³ This would have caused insurmountable difficulties for an American soap, but the style of documentary realism developed by creator Tony Warren sustained the series. The 1960's had been a period in which "relevance" became a goal for media to work towards and social realism dominated, according to Marion Jordan.³⁴ This was achieved by continually emphasizing class divisions within the community of the street. Education was contrasted to manual labour in the very first episode when Dennis began an argument in the pub, resentful of Ken's college scholarship. In 1976 the building of a garment factory, Baldwin's Casuals, by capitalist Mike Baldwin brought home the union/management divisions of British society. The corner grocery shop owned by Alf Roberts and Rita Fairclough's magazine/sweet shop, the Kabin, are examples of small entrepreneurship. The struggle of young couples, such as Kevin and Sally Webster who are striving to own a an older house on the street through Kevin's garage work, is

contrasted to the materialistic lifestyle of those living in the new town houses built where Mike Baldwin's factory used to stand. Baldwin sold it for demolition in 1988 and moved to a condominium development in an old warehouse dock area. Still, all classes mix in the Rovers pub as it unifies a street that now resembles the altered social character of Britain. Jordan argues that despite the "old-fashioned" almost Dickensian approach to realism, the series "asks us to take pleasure in its artistry".³⁵ Today "Coronation Street" is less Dickensian, but its old-fashioned approach still "eschews inner searching".³⁶ The tradition of the past, as seen in elderly characters, is still present in pensioners Percy Sugden and Phyllis Pearce, but the street now has yuppies installed in its new town houses. The old class divisions have been replaced by new ones and formerly disreputable characters, as current pub mistress Bet Lynch, are now pillars of the community. The series continues to flourish as it still seems to provide a portrait of everyday life in a now-depressed British northern industrial town. "Coronation Street" has managed to retain a certain degree of the documentary realism that Tony Warren first gave it in the early 1960's and continues to be a relevant social drama.

ii. British realism updated: "Brookside" and "East Enders":

In the 1980's two new British soap operas appeared during the conservative political ascendancy of Margaret Thatcher. Each sought to capture the harsh social reality of British life under Thatcherism, as seen in two distinct geographical areas. It was felt that "Coronation Street" was simply too tired and apolitical to tackle the social issues facing Britain. In 1982 the new ITV broadcasting authority, Channel Four, created "Brookside" (Channel Four/Mersey Television 1982 to present) about a Liverpool housing estate and its residents. Realism was the producer's mandate and this was carried to the extreme when they actually purchased an entire housing estate outside Liverpool as

the set. There would be no meeting places like the pub in "Coronation Street" as this was an unrealistic convention. People are shown as isolated in their homes for this is a "realistic portrayal of atomised life as it is lived today".³⁷ Families were set up in opposition to each other in order to accentuate class antagonisms. People became wary of each other and did not form a "Coronation Street" community but rather reflected the hostility of the suburbs. The suburbs in "Brookside" are family territory as the elderly, singles, gays, widows and divorcees are excluded, according to Christine Geraghty. These suburban families are a convenient way to display the problems of modern family life in Britain. "Brookside" explores the topics that "Coronation Street" would not deal with, such as spouse infertility, teenage pregnancy, heroin use by the young, gang violence, marital infidelity, middle-class unemployment and similar concerns. Through the soap's production method of showing how individuals cope with these difficulties, either alone or with their families, the situations become more plausible. In older British soaps an emphasis was placed on group situations, as the Rovers Return Pub in "Coronation Street", to resolve such problems. In "Brookside" female characters are always counterbalanced with male characters as the soap lacks the female patriarchal structure found in older dramas. The main attraction for audiences of "Brookside" is the show's willingness to deal with sexual matters that have been previously ignored by other British soap operas. Sex is regarded as a fact of life that usually results in such unpleasant circumstances as unwanted pregnancy ("in the club") or sexually transmitted diseases. "Brookside" does not provide its audience with the romantic fantasies found in American soap operas. In the end Geraghty finds that the social realism in "Brookside" has its price as the audience is denied the pleasurable artificiality of a soap community like "Coronation Street" but instead receives a stark portrait of modern life.

Thus:

Brookside has rejected certain conventions in order to represent society more realistically than does Coronation Street. Realism is defined by an attention to naturalistic detail and a desire to grapple with major social issues. 38

"Brookside" attracts many younger viewers who seem to dislike the romantic nostalgia of other soaps. "Brookside" is Channel Four's most successful program with a five million audience share but this still pales in comparison to the sixteen million viewers of "Coronation Street". 39 The impact of "Brookside" on the British soap opera scene was to inject the genre with an emphasis on realism not seen since "Coronation Street" had first premiered.

The popularity of "Brookside" created a shift in British soap operas. In response the BBC launched its first new soap since the 1950's and used the working-class environment of London's East End for its series, "East Enders" (BBC 1985-present), which will be discussed shortly. Also, one of the dullest British soap operas was finally cancelled, despite high ratings, because its premises were too unrealistic for the social conditions of the 1980's. The soap was the creation of Sir Lew Grade's ATV in 1964 and was later carried by Thames TV. "Crossroads" (ATV/Thames 1964-1988) concerned the Crossroads Motel and the small town around it. Travellers came and went but Meg Mortimer remained at the charming Georgian mansion that was the Crossroads Motel. Her sister, Kitty, lived in the squalor of industrial Birmingham, but as the series developed the village life of "Crossroads" became the soap's focus. The town remained the same through the 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's. The town's population was all white and always seemed prosperous. Alessandro Silj believes the soap's viewers craved this "parallel-world" of an unchanged society patterned after a classic

English hamlet. It gave them a sense of "security" despite a society being rapidly changed by immigration. 40 In 1981 producers decided to burn the motel down and ship Meg away on a long sea voyage. They had planned to kill her but viewer pressure resulted in the sea voyage. 41 "Crossroads" continued to be broadcast even after the remaining cast was replaced in what the press called a massacre. The show's ratings remained very high with a twelve million audience share, compared to ten million for "Dallas" during its prime. As I have stated, "Brookside" had only five million, while "Coronation Street" was the ratings winner with sixteen million viewers. 42 In April, 1988, "Crossroads" was abruptly ended as it came under increasing pressure to become more socially relevant, which proved impossible. The idyllic rural setting of "Crossroads" was simply inappropriate for such situations as drug abuse, violent crime, sexual assault and other topics that would be involved in the type of soap opera the BBC wanted to broadcast.

The BBC decided in the early 1980's to develop a contemporary soap opera to be transmitted twice weekly in the evening for thirty minutes. Research revealed that the audience still wanted the "sense of community" provided by "Coronation Street" and "Crossroads". However, the BBC's public mandate also dictated that any depiction of society must be realistic. The producers cleverly combined the two concepts in an innovative script, given the working title "East Eight" that evolved into "East Enders". Using the EMI-Elstree film studio outside London, a massive set was built in 1984 that would later become the fictitious Albert Square of East End London. It was decided early on by script writers Julia Smith and Tony Holland that a focus for the characters had to be present in the square and a pub was created called the Queen Victoria or Queen Vic. 43 The actual characters were derived from interviews of people

done in the East End boroughs of Dalston and Hackney. These sketches were further refined through focus/discussion groups held in 1984 in both London and Manchester. 44 The result was a cast of characters that held the attention of audiences from the very first show. The Beal family had lived on the square since 1900 in a Victorian house which is still owned by the eldest Beal, grandmother Lou. Her daughter, Pauline, is married to Arthur Fowler and they have a son, Mark, a daughter Michelle and they all live in the Beal household. The pub's owner, Den Watts and his wife, Angie, have one daughter, Sharon. Pauline's brother, Pete Beal, runs a push-cart fruit stand in the square and lives with wife Kathy and son Ian in a high-rise flat. Elderly sage Ethel lives in a flat over the office of Dr. Legg and is a neighbour to the befuddled young Lofty. Sue and Ali Osman run a small cafe, another meeting place in the square. Ali is a Turkish Cypriot, while Sue is British and they live in a flat next door to single punk mother Mary with her new baby. Kelvin is a black teenager living with his father Tony in a half renovated house. Saeed and his wife Naima run an open air shop in the square. They are from Bangladesh and are Asian which makes them the target of racist attacks. Dot Cotton works with Pauline in the launderette, but Dot's son Nick is the hood of the square. He is always the cause of robberies and racist attacks, which result in his eventual expulsion from the square by its residents.

The attraction of the program is the vast array of characters in the show and the cast of actors that portrays them. The show's storylines attracted great public attention in the first season, although ratings remained only moderately successful. Michelle became pregnant and carried her baby to term. After its birth we learn the father is pub owner "Dirty Den", who took advantage of Michelle late one night in the bar. Nick Cotton mugs elderly Ethel, ransacks Ali's cafe and robs Said's shop, writing racist

comments on the walls. Nick is beaten up by the neighbourhood men and thrown out of the square. Mark runs away from home and is found living with an older woman in a seaside town. The Michelle pregnancy story caused both The Daily Sun and Evening Standard to do feature articles on teenage pregnancies, as well as Family Planning services. After it was revealed who had impregnated Michelle, The Sun of September 3, 1985, had the headline 'TV Soap Too Sexy For Kids'. The response of the BBC to such criticism was that: "East Enders simply 'mirrors real life'". 45 The racial tensions caused by the attitudes of Nick Cotton were an effective critique of the social discord taking place in Britain. The Daily Express said that in the present time of racial troubles "East Enders" directly tackles the problem, while "Coronation Street" is "pale pink on controversial issues-no coloureds, no kinks, no aggro-...East Enders is raw carbolic". 46 The second year of production of "East Enders" produced high ratings with an audience share for BBC of twenty-three million, or 45% of all homes in the United Kingdom. 47 The reason it achieved such rapid success was the realistic manner in which the show handled issues that mattered to the audience, while still having the "community feel" of "Coronation Street". In a survey of young British viewers, David Buckingham found that "East Enders" was "less artificial" than most soaps, especially American ones such as "Dallas", but that reality did have its limits. One girl, Sandra, states:

If you compare East Enders to another soap opera, say for instance Dallas or Dynasty, then it's realistic. But if you take it on its own, then there are parts that aren't. 48

The success of "East Enders" was due to the fact its plot lay somewhere between the romantic working-class life of "Coronation Street" and the isolated reality of suburban "Brookside". Soap operas present an "illusion of realism", according to Buckingham, as they attempt to pass off "a representation of reality". 49 "East Enders" is the most

successful British soap because it manages to achieve a high level of social realism, while still providing some of the romantic notions of stereotypical British working-class culture.

iii. Ireland's rural soap operas:

British soaps have their counterparts in continental Europe and Ireland. The soap format is familiar but each culture fashions the plot and storyline around social-political realities within their own society. In Ireland the urban/rural split has been a national concern since independence. The city was more progressive, while the rural way of life was quaint and archaic. Television has been used to reconcile these two opposites in Irish society and the soap opera is the preferred drama form. In 1965 the state television authority, Radio Telefis Eireann, premiered "The Riordans" (RTE 1965-1978) about a rural Irish farm family that defied traditional agricultural methods by using fertilizer and machinery. The series broke new ground as it rejected "the idyllic view of Irish life that has traditionally prevailed when depicting the countryside".⁵⁰ It tried to show that modern, urban-based technology could be used on the farm. The rural audience was extremely large and the series helped to create an acceptance of change in country life. An actual farm show called "Telefis Feirmi" was created due to the success of "The Riordans".⁵¹ In 1984 "Glenroe" (RTE 1984-end date unknown) was launched and it directly dealt with the rural/urban Irish schism. The small farming community of Glenroe had many families, some of whom were content in the rural settings, while others journeyed to Dublin frequently. Urban modernity was continually contrasted to rural ways.⁵² Irish television has been successful in promoting rural change through soap operas.

iv. France and the assault of "Dallas":

American television culture has penetrated France to a degree seen nowhere else in Europe. In the 1970's France produced a thriving domestic television soap opera industry which created a series of elaborate historical/family chronicles called 'feuilletons'. They were patterned after the 19th century 'feuilleton' serialized novels with their highly dramatic and romantic themes which spread from France to southern/eastern Europe as well as into South America. 53 The television productions were joint efforts of ORTF and film companies such as Gaumont, Pathe, and Telefrance. In the 1960's the format was pioneered first in fifteen minute segments shown daily during the week, then thirty minute segments shown on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. By 1971 the soaps had become evening mini-series broadcast in prime time. They dealt with 'genie francais' or sentimental intrigue, historical drama, family sagas and heroic adventures. This success was to last only a decade as by 1980 the 'feuilletons' had only a 27% share of television fiction, whereas in 1971 they made up 43% of fictional programming. 54 When TF1 started to transmit "Dallas" in 1981 it destroyed the 'feuilletons' and began a national trend for things 'L'American'. In retaliation Pierre Desgraupes of Antenne 2 created 'Dallas a la francaise' in the form of "Chateauvallon" (Antenne 2: 1985-1986). It was a straight copy of "Dallas" set in a small provincial town with the aristocratic Bergs as the Ewing clan, the opportunistic Kovalics as the Barnes, and both fought over control of a newspaper, instead of an oil company. The French public responded well to the program and it reached a 35% audience share. 55 Other French networks such as FR3 also cloned "Dallas" under the title "La Paria" which ran in October and November of 1985. 56 An encouraging trend has been to mix the 'feuilleton' with the American soap format, as in Antenne 2's "Allo Beatrice" about a female radio host for a male-only personal problems show. 57 However, the allure of American television and cultural

values remains strong in France. Currently direct imitations of American-style game shows are extremely popular and although "Jeopardy" may use questions on French culture, while a French Vanna White turns the letters on the "Wheel of Fortune", the social implications of the shows' formats are still the same as in the United States.

v. German soap opera 'Kultur':

In West Germany a conscious effort was made to counter the popular appeal of American soap operas by co-opting the format. In 1972 ARD, the largest of the WDR affiliates, funded the leftist film maker, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, to make a provocative German soap opera. Fassbinder created "Acht Studen Sind Kein Tag" - "Eight Hours are Not a Day" in 1972 starring his favourite actress, Hanna Schygulla. The soap was to deal with social alienation in the family as caused by modern bourgeois German culture. The series was cancelled after the fifth episode. Another Fassbinder soap project for television was "Berlin Alexanderplatz" (WDR/RAI 1984) which aired in thirteen hour-long episodes, and traced the life of a recently released convict among the brothels and bars of Berlin on the eve of the Nazi era. The series was marketed internationally as a film due to the seamy subject matter and the fact it starred the now famous Hanna Schygulla. It was Fassbinder's last project before his suicide.⁵⁸ The most significant impact on German soaps came in 1979 when WDR aired the American docudrama "Holocaust" with Meryl Streep and Fritz Weaver. Despite its simplistic approach, "Holocaust" raised the issues of war guilt as nothing had done before in West Germany. In response WDR created "Hiemat" which told the story of Germany through a Black Forest family from 1918 to the 1970's in eleven episodes. Director Edgar Reitz's series showed a family that embraced Nazism and remained unrepentant as they prospered in the postwar economic miracle. The "Hiemat" concept of a tranquil forest

inhabited by Aryan woodfolk was a symbol of Teutonic nationalism and 'Hiemattfilm' was originally a Nazi propaganda device. Brechtian drama techniques could be seen in the central character, Maria, who seemed to bear the weight of her family's guilt. 59 "Hiemat" was a soap to sooth the national conscience after the disturbing doubts of "Holocaust".

The viability of "Hiemat" convinced German television that a continuing soap opera was worth producing. In 1985 ZDF and ORF (Austria) premiered "Schwarzwaldklinik" (ZDF/ORF 1985-1988) which dealt with a medical clinic in the Black Forest. It combined the 'Hiemattfilm' concept of homeland with 'Arztfilm' storylines about doctors in hospital settings and traditional family serials or 'Forellenhofs', according to Alessandro Silj. The series was unlike any American medical series in that it dealt with clinical medicine in a serious manner. The usual love attachments are found among the clinic's staff but serious attention is paid to medical concerns. A rape episode was judged to be "pornographic material" after it was broadcast. A prisoner is rushed to the clinic for surgery and doctors are torn between saving a murderer's life over another patient's. 60 The success of the program was both domestic and foreign. "Schwarzwaldklinik" had an audience of 24.6 million viewers in the first week compared to 22 million for "Dallas". 61 The series was sold to Italy (RAI), Great Britain (Channel Four), France, Belgium, Switzerland, Finland and South Africa. Paramount brought it to the Canadian, American, Asian and Arabic markets as "Black Forest Clinic". 62 West German television also developed a "Brookside" clone called "Lindenstrasse" or "Linden Street" (ARD 1986-end date unknown) but it has not proved to be as popular as "Schwarzwaldklinik". West German television has been able to consistently produce soap operas that are based upon a firm sense of cultural identity and raise issues of national

importance.

vi. Italian domestic drama:

Italy has also produced a strong series of domestic soap operas. An important national concern in Italy since unification in the 1800's has been cultural modernization. The hold of Catholic family morality over the populace as opposed to urban modernity has always been a contentious issue in modern Italian history. Television, mainly the state-owned RAI channels, has tried to use soap operas as a means of promoting a progressive family morality. In the 1950's and 1960's the soap opera/mini-series used historical themes taken from the period between Italian independence and World War I. In the 1970's American soap operas were used as models, but the central conflict between modern and traditional forces within the family remained an essential feature of the plotlines. In the 1980's the RAI soaps attempted to show families in crisis. "Voglia di Volare" or "Longing to Fly" showed young couples in difficulty and unable to stabilize their relationships. "E la Vita Continua" or "And Life Goes On" profiles a family of Lombardi industrialists and their emotional turmoils from the 1950's to the 1980's. The storyline uses many political references such as the 1968 student riots in order to depict family conflicts between traditional parental values and those of youth. However, family unity always prevails despite such adversities as drug addiction. "Quei 36 Grandini", or "Those 36 Steps", shows the discords between the wealthy occupants of a palatial apartment building in Rome's exclusive Parioli district. The soap tries to show how rich people can be unhappy and equally affected by misfortune. It also focuses on the lives of the servants in the building, as well as outside trades people who attend to the tenants' needs, making it rather "unorthodox". "Casa Cecilia-un anno dopo", or "Cecilia's House-a year after", showed a middle-class family,

the Tanzis, who are normal and do not experience many problems that cannot be overcome. Viewers found this soap boring and the ratings were low. 63 Milly Buonanno's study of Italian soaps reveals that "changes in the family--being still a fairly recent phenomenon--are more acutely perceived" in Italian society which accounts for the dramatic emphasis on domestic turmoil. 64 Italian soaps are largely based upon purely native domestic concerns and represent a direct attempt to influence the course of family life in a period of changing values.

vii. European resistance:

European soaps are, with the exception of France, cultural texts that deal with the specific realities of the nation concerned. The British, Germans and Italians did not succumb to the influence of imported American soap operas but have developed an alternative form of drama that is culturally relevant. In France the domestic 'feuilleton' form of soap opera was destroyed by imported dramas, specifically "Dallas". However, in Britain the traditional working-class basis of soap operas still holds widespread appeal, although a recent innovative soap deals with the suburban middle class. Since the 1970's Germany has developed its own type of serialized drama and in the 1980's 'Heimatfilm' was used to appeal to the nation's sense of tradition. In Italy the changing nature of family life has been a continuous theme in soap operas from the first years of television broadcasting until the late 1980's. The constant theme has been that the cultural reality of most European countries cannot be overcome by the ideological conjecture of "false opinion" found in American programming like "Dallas". To Europeans, American soaps are interesting, funny, but in the end very artificial. Europeans seem to prefer their own domestic soap productions, with the exception of France, which has openly embraced American culture.

III. Australia:

Australia produces its own soap operas which are successfully exported to Britain, Canada and other parts of the Commonwealth. The output of Australian television in terms of soap operas and mini-series since the 1960's has been astounding. Production quality rivals the BBC and the ITV networks of Britain, which the Australian domestic television structure seems to closely resemble. In the 1970's historical mini-series based in Australian culture became dominant and by the 1980's production of these quasi-soap series became very elaborate. The state-run Australian Broadcasting Corporation or ABC, seemed to specialize in these extended historical narratives of Australian culture. Such ABC productions as "I Can Jump Puddles" (1981), "1915" (1982) and "Melba" (1988) have received international distribution. But as ABC was developing its drama emphasis, the independent Seven Network was creating two soap operas that would become almost national institutions. "A Country Practice" (JNP Films: 1981-present) was first shown in 1981 on the Seven Network. Its setting was in a pastoral country landscape of green hills outside the city but not in the outback. The mythical town of Wandin Valley requires only one policeman to patrol the surrounding pastures and vineyards which are very green for Australia. The staff of the Wandin Valley Bush Nursing Hospital form the country practice that serves both people and animals. Two doctors, along with one veterinarian, make house calls by horse cart and in this way interact with the valley's inhabitants. The "locals" all meet at the club for liquor and entertainment, which invariably develops into gossipy conversation. This is not a moralistic soap opera as there is extramarital sex and occasional violence, but these are always counterbalanced by more wholesome events. The soap is a retreat from the city into a slow way of life that highly urbanized Australians seem to relish. As

one character in the soap remarked to another: "It's all so quaint and picturesque" 65

To offset this rural soap the Seven Network also premiered "Sons and Daughters" (The Grundy Organization: 1981-present), a soap that deals with the lives of five families in Melbourne and Sydney. The Hamiltons, Palmers, Armstrongs, Hardys and Healeys are riddled with illicit sex, nervous breakdowns, suicides, incest, internal power struggles and other familial concerns. The show's "emphasis is on the disruption of the family and the consequent struggle for domestic and sexual control". 66 This is the other pole of Australian society, the urban reality that "A Country Practice" prefers to ignore. Australian soap operas represent both the ideal reality of a pastoral country valley and the troubled reality of domestic urban life. On the one hand Australian soaps do indulge in nostalgia, but they also acknowledge the turbulent conditions of family life in a largely urbanized country. However, even Australia is not above producing its own "Dallas" clone about the internal power struggles of a wealthy Sydney Ewing-like clan, battling to control the family fortune and estate, in "Return to Eden" (McElroy & McElroy Films: 1983). However, the series failed to sustain itself longer than one season after the initial climax of a crocodile attacking the heroine. This was probably due to the inability of the producers to find a direction for the series after all the pseudo-Dallas storylines had been employed.

IV. Asia:

i. Innovation in Communist China:

Asian soap operas are both highly political in nature and relevant to the cultural imperatives of their particular national situation. Asian soap operas have become a forum for specific political objectives within a given culture. Communist China, through its state-run television, China Central Television (CCTV), began to develop its own

domestic drama in the mid-1980's. Soap operas such as "Four Generations Under One Roof" (1985/1986) stressed the difficulties of modernization and how it affected family life. The importation of foreign television brought in American soaps like "Falcon Crest", but Chinese audiences failed to respond positively. In the fall of 1990 a new series from state television was premiered called "Kewang" or "Expectations". In a fifty episode series, seen in three block instalments since the fall of 1990, "Expectations" received a 95% audience share in Beijing and other large cities. The soap is a story of two very different families, the Wangs, an intellectually-oriented family, and the Lius, a family of workers. The soap evolves from the 1960's to the 1980's beginning with the Liu's daughter, Liu Huifang, marrying Wang Husheng, just before he is sent to the countryside during the cultural revolution. Liu Huifang finds a baby which she adopts but when her husband returns he dislikes married life and strays into several sexual affairs. Liu Huifang is very unassertive in a traditional way which has made female viewers extremely angry. The People's Daily praises her tenacity and adherence to duty as a role model, but many women believe she is too old-fashioned. China has resisted the importation of American television and created a drama that, as Beijing correspondent Valerie Boser states, "really reflects people's lives".⁶⁷ American television is not usually preferred over a well-written domestic drama simply because its themes are too elusive. Chinese audiences in the People's Republic are not interested in dramas about the troubled lives of upper-class Americans, but are intensely interested in an historical epic that spans the period from the Cultural Revolution until the present day.

ii. Japanese heroines and fashion dramas:

In Japan the most popular soap opera is "Oshin" (NHK 1985-broadcast dates unknown) which is about the struggle of a woman to survive from 1900 to the

1970's. "Oshin" is an analogy for the survival of the Japanese nation, as seen through the eyes of one female character. Japan's historical suffering is Oshin's agony in that she experiences indentured slavery, famine, the Tokyo earthquake of the 1920's, devastation of war and the postwar recovery. During the height of the series in 1985, "Oshin" had a 60% audience share and a statue of her was erected in Tokyo. "Oshin" spawned a thriving merchandise trade with Oshin dolls, saki and even rice. Another suffering soap opera was "A Wandering Life" (Network and broadcast dates unknown) which began in 1977. It followed a young heroine, Royoko, who marries and has a son, but must flee because she is thought to be socially inferior to her rich husband. She struggles while her husband is successful and when he runs for parliament, Royko even kills a blackmailer who threatens to expose the sordid matter. Her son, now a lawyer, defends her in court and must watch his own mother being taken to prison without acknowledging her presence. 68 The contemporary side of Japanese life is seen in the so-called "fashion-dramas" such as "Machigai-darake no Omna-Migaki" or "Misconceived Adornments" (Fuji Television 1987-broadcast dates unknown). This genre of Japanese soaps concentrates on the corporate side of life both in the office and at home. In "Misconceived Adornments" adultery and sex are used frequently to appeal to the largely female audience. In one episode the manager of a tile manufacturing company tries to fire a division chief. The staff decide the man may keep his job on the condition he shaves off his pubic hair, which he does off screen. Women are powerful forces in the "fashion dramas", whereas they are not in the social reality of a male-oriented society. Fuji Television head, Hajime Shigemura, states: "The heroine, a working woman, acts out what the female viewers cannot do in real life". 69 Japanese soap operas suit the goals of the dominant national/historical culture. They act to reinforce the notion of

national sacrifice and the corporation as a dominant influence over family life. Japanese soaps are the postwar fiction of their nation's struggle through adversity and subsequent economic success through corporate productivity.

iii. Nationalism in Indian soap operas:

India's soap operas are similar to those of Japan, in that they attempt to foster a collective national identity through characters which embody the struggle of the Indian nation. As of spring 1987 one hundred and four episodes of "Buniyaad" or "Foundation" had been broadcast twice weekly to an audience of twenty-three million people. The soap follows the Gaiindamal family from World War I to the 1970's in a somewhat somber storyline of unwed mothers and alcoholic fathers. Series director, Kundan Shah, states, "the audience is a voyeur" into the family's changing circumstances.⁷⁰ However, recent events in India during the May election of 1991, culminating in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, can be traced to the power of soap operas. In a BBC report called "The Awakening of the Godmen", reporter Brian Baron traced the rise of Hindu fundamentalism to a soap opera. The 'Bharatiya Janata Party', or BJP, of L.K.Advani has been promoting the Hindu god, Lord Ram, from the northern city of Ayodhya. The battle has been over whether to demolish a mosque built on the foundations of Lord Ram's temple in Ayodhya. This religious conflict between fundamentalist Hindus and minority Muslims led to the collapse of Gandhi's coalition government followed by an election call. The cult of Lord Ram was created through a soap opera/mini-series broadcast in 1990 on Indian television called "Ramayana". The Lord Ram series was a sacred soap as "families blessed TV sets" in a frenzy of Hindu revivalism. The series showed Lord Ram's birth, exile in the jungle, return to power and defeat of the King of Sri Lanka for kidnapping Princess Sita. The series

producer/director, Ramanand Sagar, makes no apologies for this use of nationalism disguised as a religious/historical soap opera. The defeat of the Sri Lankan King of the Tamils through the monkey god who burns the country is a veiled attack on Tamil separatists. After the success of the "Ramayana" another dramatized series followed which brought the Hindu myths of the "Mahabharata" to television. However, the emphasis on Hindu nationalism after the death of Rajiv Gandhi was seen as disturbing and Indian State Television, Doordarshan, launched a new series in September, 1992, that was specifically designed to defuse national tensions. "Chanakya" is a fifty-two part series about the life of the 4th century B.C. Brahman philosopher, Chanakya, and his stabilizing influence over the quarrelling states of that period in Indian history. The Sunday Statesman commented that "Chanakaya doesn't stop with telling the story, but tries telling it in a context of a society, 2,000 years ago".⁷¹ Indian soaps have moved from promoting a collective identity in "Foundations", to a rampant form of Hindu nationalism in Ramanand Sagar's "Ramayana" and has returned again to the theme of unity with "Chanakya". They have followed the political reality of India in its course from national consensus to sectarian warfare, and have made a cautious plea for a return to social stability.

V. Brazil and the case of the Telenovela:

In South America the soap opera looms large in the life of the populace. Originating in the studios of Globo TV in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the elaborate soap operas called telenovelas are created in factory production. They are broadcast not only in Brazil but in most of South and Central America, as well as Mexico, Portugal, Spain and Italy. The actors are chosen by computer from the large number of performers under contract to match the script's character sketches. The novelas, as most people call

them, are watched by fifty million Brazilians each week night and Saturday. Sunday is the only respite viewers have from the novelas' six nightly broadcasts. The novelas originated in the popular 'feuilleton' novels of the 19th century which, as was mentioned previously, also influenced French soap operas in the 1960's and 1970's. The telenovelas have a profound influence on the population of Brazil, as Monica Rector found in a study of the effect of the three hundred neologisms created for the characters in Globo's 1973 novela "The Well-beloved". The urban viewers surveyed began to use the neologisms in their everyday speech, suggesting a direct relationship "between the narrative morphology of a TV serial and the language used". 72 The novela audience not only actively internalizes the language of the serials but also the political/social messages implicit within their content.

The first novelas were made in the 1950's when Assis Chateaubriand established Brazilian television. In 1950 there were only three hundred television sets in Brazil, owned mostly by the urban elite. The social agenda of television was to produce "high culture" such as opera or symphony broadcasts. In time the demand for domestic drama did, however, cause the radio novela to be transferred to television with few changes. The radio novelas were the most popular form of drama in Brazil and were started in June, 1941, by Sao Paulo's Radio Nacional. Brazil had taken the novela from Cuban radio, which developed the concept in the 1930's combining the 'feuilleton' style with American radio soaps. Tupi, a Sao Paulo network, made the first novela entitled "Sua Vida me pertence", or "Your Life Belongs to Me", which began on December 21st, 1951 and ran for three months in fifteen minute instalments. 73 The elite audience responded positively to the novela and Tupi continued to create the drama serials into the early 1960's. The arrival of industry and urban centers in the 1960's created a

middle-class audience that dwelt mostly in the new urban apartment developments and commuter suburbs. The middle class had acquired television sets as status symbols and for the first time a national audience developed. In July, 1963, TV Excelsior broadcast the first daily novela called "2.5499 Ocupado". It was patterned after the novelas found on Argentinian and Mexican television, from whom scripts were bought. In April, 1965, Globo TV began to broadcast in Rio de Janeiro and was the first network to have American financing as well as a Time/Life delegate on the board of directors. 74 The American director encouraged the production of novela soaps and game shows in order to create a large audience for advertising revenue. Globo hired a Cuban exile named Gloria Magadan, who had written novelas for the American company, Colgate, in Cuba. Her downfall came in 1968 when Tupi made a highly successful novela with a totally Brazilian plot called "Beto Rockefeller" and Globo subsequently rejected Magadan's non-Brazilian storylines. Globo hired a protege of Magadan, Janete Clair, who established the concept of elaborate one hour soap operas, six nights a week. The genre was thus set.

Clair's soaps were glossy and sexy. Despite the valiant efforts of REI's independent stations and Tupi to create literary soaps, their efforts failed. Globo's novelas were taken over in 1978 by Daniel Filho who had Janete Clair write a script about the man behind Isabelita Peron, Lopez Rega. "The Star" demolished the Tupi novela "The Prophet" in the ratings and this in effect gave Globo an absolute monopoly on novela productions. 75 Since 1977 Globo has been selling its novelas at the Cannes International Television Convention and in 1985 Globo assumed control of a Monte Carlo television station to broadcast directly into Italy. 76 Globo's owner, Roberto Marinho, is a publishing magnate with a diverse range of industrial interests. He has been accused

of extreme conservative bias by opposing the 1982 election of Leonel Brizol as Governor of Rio de Janeiro, broadcasting biased information about the 1978 metal workers strike in Sao Paulo and virtually ignoring the 1984 campaign for direct elections. 77 This conservative bias is said to dominate the Clair novelas, with their emphasis on mixing product advertising directly into the script.

One series called "Roque" emphasized many products, but Hope Panties had the foresight to launch a billboard campaign while the novela ran. 78 Certain industries, such as plastics, increased their sales through an emphasis on plastic products in the novelas. Globo approached a few banks with investment plans and in consideration for the loan guarantees, these banks were shown in a generous light by the novelas. Daniel Filho states that the "people of Brazil believe in miracles". If they watch how the rich live and love then it could happen to them, thus they will begin to think "So I can be a rich guy". The people of the slum 'favelas' do not believe in the "miracles" and complain that their poverty is never acknowledged in the novelas. Jeremy Tunstall, a British media critic, states it is merely "cheap programming to build audience loyalty" and the real purpose is to export "commercial TV from a rich country to a much poorer one". Tunstall refers to the other nations of South and Central America which are, on the whole, poorer than Brazil. However, when a novela called "Malu, Woman" was sold to British and Dutch television, Tunstall's concept of Brazil's domination of regional television was thrown into doubt. 79 Britain's Channel Four has shown several novelas since the mid-1980's and the market for novelas in southern Europe continues to grow with each successive year.

The most extensive study of the impact of telenovelas on Brazilian society was undertaken in the late 1980's by Nico Vink of the Dutch Royal Tropical Institute.

Vink studied twenty-three Globo novelas that were made between 1970 and 1986. Many in the 1970's and early 1980's were written by Janete Clair until her sudden death and subsequently televised national funeral. In studying the novelas, Vink looked at many factors including "images of class oppression" and he found that the historical novelas contained very open depictions of hierarchical repression. Those novelas that included slavery openly dealt with elite domination, while others which concerned the rule of military colonels in the countryside during the 1930's contained scenes of rebel executions. The example Vink drew upon for slavery was "Slave Isaura" (1975), while "Sinha Moca", or "Escalation" (1975), depicted a rising commercial class being challenged by a conservative military who were manipulated by the agricultural gentry. In "Jungle of Concrete" (1972) a hotel porter is ashamed of his servile work and becomes embarrassed when asked about it at a party given by his rich uncle. Vink believes that in the novela the "working class is confronted with its own lack of education and refinement".⁸⁰ The middle class are thought to be celebrated in the novelas, but the constant emphasis on consumption and their lack of purchasing power in the present economic crisis of Brazil, makes the novela's very premise seem absurd.

Modernization is always emphasized but "the novela sometimes makes it clear that change is only apparent".⁸¹ Power is not in the hands of the middle class but resides with the ruling elite and this fact is continually made apparent in the novelas. The press is seen as a positive social force, as in "Father Hero" (1979), where seemingly good priestly works are really a cover-up for illegal activities until exposed by the newspapers. Similarly, in "Gabriela" (1975-1979), the press is used constructively as an agent of political opposition. The middle class are assigned the role of champions of social justice in the novelas because they are composed of professionals.⁸² Novelas

that showed working-class opposition, as "Sinal de Alerta" or "Partido Alto" (Network and broadcast dates unknown), were rejected by viewers, according to Fernandes (1987).⁸³ Unions are never seen in the telenovelas, as "legitimate" avenues of worker protest do not exist. The people engaged in political activism who would lead such social groups into a democratic era are absent from the novelas. Perhaps this is why Fernando Collor de Mello was elected president in March, 1990, as he was a prominent national figure and part-owner of Globo TV network.

If the telenovelas of Brazil try to reinforce the traditional power relationships of the country in a very conservative manner, how could they possibly promote social change? Vink's answer is to claim that they seemingly act to denounce inequality, offer people new categories of social standing, create a collective identity and provide models of collective action for fighting oppression. This may not always be the intention of the novelas' producers but one should consider that "subversive activities take place in the communication process of TV".⁸⁴ The discourse of the novela is polysemic and the drama's text is read by viewers with diverse class values. Many of the messages are blatantly subversive as they "denaturalize the existing social world".⁸⁵ Even when they are not subversive the individual decoding by the viewer occurs at a highly personal level and working-class people perceive the novelas through their own perspectives. Any decoding of the television text is not a predictable process and cannot be viewed from content alone, Vink argues. The person reading the novela's text, if wealthy, would be comforted by the orderly picture of the power relationships shown, while a poor person may have his notions of class oppression affirmed in a negative manner. Vink states that if a "working-class woman identifies with a middle-class or even a bourgeois woman, she is conscious of the differences in social position and able to draw a distinction

between class and gender identity". There is little or no evidence that "subversive messages related to class identity are perceived and decoded as such by working-class viewers".⁸⁶ However, the very format of novela television invites viewer involvement and the result of that interaction is not always as the creators planned. This is because in using Brazilian society as the raw material for its plots, the novelas introduce contentious issues to the audience and consequently stimulate a social dialogue on these matters. The research of Monica Rector shows the extent to which the novelas are discussed and their terminology is internalized by the Brazilian populace. Vink sees the Brazilian telenovelas as a "cultural product" of a capitalist television industry, but viewer "involvement is no impediment to a critical decoding of telenovelas".⁸⁷ The reality presented by the novelas is that they are not based on mere conjecture and "false opinions" as actual problems in Brazilian society are always featured in the plotlines. Even when these problems are downgraded in an attempt to diffuse their influence, it is possible for viewers to ignore the obvious intention and draw upon deeper meanings from the novela's text. Brazil is a politically-charged culture that has a history of distinct class boundaries, slavery and military rule. The presentation of these subjects in novela dramas, even in a negative fashion, does not always result in the social effect desired by the producers. Novelas are not just a passive form of television entertainment but a dynamic influence that causes viewer speculation and discussion about their dramatic content. The social experience of Brazilian culture simply does not lend itself to viewer non-involvement.

VI. Conclusion:

Soap operas constitute a very vital form of television programming around the world that seem to embody many elements of the culture in which they exist. In

cultures where extreme class divisions, economic disparity and a sense of the historical past are acknowledged in soap opera drama, a type of social realism seems to predominate. Many European soap operas reflect this notion, as in Britain the working class is the main subject of soaps like "Coronation Street" or "East Enders", in Germany the tradition of 'Heimatfilm' continues in "Schwarzwaldklinik", while in Italy the modernization of the family has been an important concern since soaps were first broadcast in that country. Asia also reflects this pattern as Japanese soaps seem to depict the nation's struggle to prosperity over adversity, either through a lead character such as "Oshin", or by delivering a picture of domestic corporate competitiveness in fashion dramas such as "Misconceived Adornments". India's soap operas have utilized themes of national unity, as seen in "Foundations", to those of turmoil with the Lord Ram revivalism of Ramanand Sagar and presently have returned to the promotion of stability in "Chanakya". Australian soaps reflect the two poles of its society with the tranquil, romantic rural setting of "A Country Practice" and the rancorous urban family upheavals of "Sons and Daughters". In Brazil, as well as throughout South and Central America, the telenovelas dominate television production. It is commonly assumed that with their conservative messages they attempt to trivialize social issues and provide a form of dramatic diversion for their audience. However, the populations in many countries of the region are politically very volatile and despite the generally conservative messages of the novelas their actual influence is difficult to gauge. Brazil itself has managed to democratize after many years of dictatorship and pro-conservative novelas. In the view of Nicco Vink, the novelas are read subversively by the Brazilian populace due to the fact the dramas raise issues which are then decoded by viewers in an opposite manner to what was intended. In some instances the themes of novelas are blatantly oppositional

while others attempt to reinforce class divisions. The novela's power to influence people was demonstrated as recently as April, 1990, when TV Manchete broadcast a "steamy" sex fantasy about a wealthy ranching family in the Pantanal wetlands region of central Brazil. Picturesque landscape panoramas served as the backdrop in "Pantanal" for "near-explicit love scenes" which resulted in a massive influx of eager tourists to the region seeking erotic adventure and disturbing the natural environment. 88 The unifying factor among foreign soap operas is that the basis for their production content is drawn from the internal cultural reality of the society concerned. They thus tend to emphasize the class divisions, past history and problems of the society to which they are attached.

The soap operas of America are driven by idealistic national myths and act to reinforce the conjecture of "false opinions" that supports the notion of a materially prosperous nation, unaffected by class divisions or social inequality. This world view originates in an archaic Enlightenment conception of 18th century proto-nationalism which was inward looking and believed that it had created the most stable civilization in history. When this type of nationalism and its well-developed myth structure were bolstered by the power of post-World War II American corporate capitalism, an attitude of cultural superiority permeated the United States. The lingering social doubts of the 1930's and realistic pessimism of the Great Depression were replaced by the strident confidence of the 1950's and 1960's. America was more prosperous, more free, more moral and more envied than any other nation in the world. American soap operas underwent a gradual transformation from the portrayal of 1930's Depression life to 1950's suburban comfort. By the 1970's the soap opera storylines increasingly concentrated on the more noble aspects of American life, such as wealth, social status, poverty-free small towns and the trivial pursuit of sexual lust. The very settings of the soaps in small towns became linked

to this vision of America as a conflict-free and highly stable society. Urban-based soaps have all but disappeared from American television, and along with them all references to poverty, crime, as well as social tensions.

Michael James Intintoli pointed out that soap opera story telling in America is a decidedly "corporate enterprise" and it is more concerned with ratings than innovative plotlines. The basic formula of love and emotional strife in an imaginary small town has remained the same, despite superficial attempts to modernize the soaps. Donna Woolfolk Cross believes that the very language used in American soap operas acts to enshrine ancient myths, which in turn only serve to maintain the status quo.⁸⁹ The fact that the soaps have been organized around the notion of America as a land of equal opportunity in which class-driven politics does not exist is extremely significant. Benjamin DeMott in The Imperial Middle (1990) points out that the middle-class culture of America is dependent upon the widely-held belief in a classless society of boundless opportunity. DeMott specifically indicts the American media as an agent of "exorcism" and "erasure" when it comes to dealing with class politics or tensions.⁹⁰ Soap operas are a clear example of how the class structure of American society is neutralized on television and the mythical values of the nation are thrust prominently forward. Viewers are conditioned to accept soap opera stories of characters living an existence that is radically different from their own. The lives of soap characters on American television are tailored to suit the demands of a corporate lifestyle within the free enterprise system. Lawyers, doctors, millionaires, publishers, college professors, investment counsellors, fashion models, cosmetic queens, district attorneys, club owners, and socialites are but a few of the roles characters are allotted on American soap operas. Ordinary professions, such as maids or hairdressers, serve as peripheral roles only. The prime

source of power in the soap towns comes from easily identifiable people in positions of economic and social prestige. Common characters are only important when they are involved with, or manipulated by, these social leaders who clearly direct the soap communities.

Only on American cable television can truly experimental soap operas be developed. David Gadberry's all-gay soap called "Secret Passions" premiered in the spring of 1990 and would not be accepted on commercial television as it might offend the public's middle-class sensibilities.⁹¹ All socially unacceptable groups are excluded from soap operas, just as they are excluded from full participation in the American social system. Gays, the homeless, feminists, social activists and minorities receive as little attention on the soaps as they do in the capitalist social structure of America. This lack of realism in American soaps is most apparent to viewers of other cultures who are more accustomed to seeing people like themselves in their television dramas. Dorothy Hobson interviewed six women and obtained their reactions to American soap operas. Here is just a small segment of their comments:

Mary (age 35): "I think some are more down to earth than others."

Diane (age 27): "The fantasy Americans and that, you can't relate to. I mean they're on a different planet really."

Mary: "But they're nice to watch because of the clothes and their houses, and etc."

Dorothy Hobson: "And what about the characters in the American soaps? I mean why do you like them or don't you really like them and do you feel you can identify with any of them?"

?: "No" (Laughter) 92

Hobson's study was undertaken to see how aware British viewers are about the soaps they watch. It also revealed that British viewers found American soap too artificial, while their own were much more realistic in nature. If American soap operas are seen by

foreign viewers as objects of fantasy, it is only because they originate in a culture dominated by the political myths of economic abundance and a classless society.

Television is usually a poor traveller in that program content does not easily make the transition from one culture to another except in the case of comedy. When "East Enders" was becoming successful in Britain, program directors at several PBS stations in America decided to broadcast the series. One such station was KTPS TV28 Tacoma, Washington, which began to air "East Enders" in the spring of 1990 and continues to do so. In response to a letter of inquiry, the Program Director of KTPS stated that "problems of economic survival and other social ills; e.g. drug abuse are better handled" on "East Enders" than in American soap operas. Viewer response has been significant with many favourable phone calls about the series and its content. 93 This example suggests that when American audiences are provided with a realistic soap opera production which is not based upon the economic and social conjecture of their own culture, it will be given a favourable reception. The decision to provide American television viewers with a form of fantasy drama that uses the conjecture of commercial considerations and ratings is usually justified on the basis that this is the kind of programming the public desires. The fact that American audiences are receptive to the sophisticated socio-political themes found in a foreign soap opera like "East Enders" suggests that network television is not serving the public's need for critical programming. Any movement to dispel the shadow images found in American soap operas must originate within the domestic audience and their desire for a realistic representation of the society in which they live.

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CONCLUSION: 'Moving from the Shadows of the Cave into the Light.'

i. Returning to the cave:

What does the cave analogy of Plato really have to do with television? A great deal if the analogy is related to a few current theories about the place of media in modern culture. Throughout the four chapters of this thesis a distinction has been made between the conjecture of shadow images which leads to the "false opinion" of unreality and the attempt to depict truth or reality. In looking at family life, war coverage, crime depiction, documentaries, docudramas and soap operas on television a definite pattern has emerged. The concept of the cave, with its prisoners being denied the benefits of reality while shown the shadow images of unreality, resembles the broadcast conditions which govern the domestic audience of American television. They are prisoners of the shadow images that emanate from the parapet screens of corporate network television. Those dwelling within the confines of this captive society have become conditioned by the commercial conjecture of "false opinions" which form the basis of corporate network programming.

Plato said that "such prisoners would recognize as reality nothing but the shadows of those artificial objects".¹ The shadow images which dominate American television are more than its overt content as they also include the ideological premises found within the programs themselves. These images have been crafted in such fashion as to combine values of American patriotism with the commercial goals of corporate capitalism. Images of a disconcerting nature that do not conform to these established norms evoke strong panic reactions and violent rejection. The shadow images seen by these cave dwellers seem to deny the fact that American society is in any way flawed. When the realistic images of a contentious war abroad and a rampant crime problem at

home were shown on American television the stability of the entire society was called into question. The reaction of viewers was to seek an immediate return to the safety of these shadow images. No disturbing family portrayals are needed; no documentaries on social problems are necessary; never broadcast a war unless it is already won; and definitely do not show crime as an uncontrollable social aberration. Instead, present the audience with parapet shadows of a world that appears real but which is, in fact, an artificial creation based upon commercial considerations. The consensus-building power which belies much of what the cave dwellers are viewing is highly seductive and linked to a set of beliefs that form the very basis of American national culture. The American middle class are the target audience for these shadow images and they dwell in a symbolic corporate cave, not unlike Plato's underground cavern.

Plato's tale was concerned with the struggle to attain truth or reality and the massive odds against that truth emerging in the stifling atmosphere of the cave. True philosophers must always seek the truth and thus satisfy the desire "to know the whole of that reality".² Only through the "constant passion" for knowledge can one find truth which yields the ultimate reality. The path to remedy the plight of the prisoners was to educate an elite in the truth of understanding and have them return to the cave in order to dispel the shadows of conjecture and "false opinion". American network television could learn a great deal from the techniques of foreign broadcasters who seem to produce a more socially relevant type of programming. In the past the direct export of television content, as well as the machinery of television production, from America to the entire world did imply direct market domination and psycho-cultural colonization. In the current television marketplace it is more through stylistic emulation than export that American media products are in fact reproduced. This thesis has shown that

independent and culturally applicable forms of television broadcasting thrive in foreign countries, despite the all-pervasive influence of American television production. American television production is highly nationalistic and seems chiefly concerned with the commercial goals of the domestic economy as its programming attempts to make a consumerist lifestyle appear as natural as possible to the audience. Except for periods of creative experimentation, as with the domestic comedies of Norman Lear, and the possibilities for artistic freedom offered on the Public Broadcasting Service, PBS, American television remains firmly tied to the shadow images of conjecture or "false opinion". In this sense it is isolated from the cultural influences of foreign television which is not bound by these considerations.

Plato said of the cave dwellers: "They may have had a practice of honouring and commending one another, with prizes for the man who had the keenest eye for the passing shadows and best memory for the order in which they followed or accompanied one another".³ Like the cave dwellers, the audiences of American television seem to question little of what they watch and their acceptance of that content is likened to a patriotic duty. Eric Hobsbawm speculates that this type of artificial patriotic allegiance to the state originated in the 18th century Enlightenment and termed this phenomenon "proto-nationalism". America, with its myths of personal freedom and open democracy, was born in this period of proto-nationalism and its mythology has been sustained over a long period of historical change. Thus, according to Barthesian theory, America's national mythology may be "worn-out". The arbitrary relationships it espouses may not be relevant to the turbulent social conditions of contemporary corporate America and, as C. G. Jung speculated, may cast "potentially destructive" shadows on the minds of the populace. American television may act to hold together what Benedict R. O'G.

Anderson termed an "imagined community" through the use of outdated proto-nationalistic concepts. This prevents America from becoming an integral part of a wider global cultural reality and promotes an attitude of innate superiority. Americans expect that other nations will adopt their cultural values via the television programs they export. However, despite massive sales of American television productions in most foreign markets, this has not occurred. Specific historical factors involved in the socio-political culture of these nations and the belief in a state-sponsored broadcasting system, have produced a form of television that is not a strict emulation of American prototypes. The assault of modernization on traditional cultures has not always resulted in their destruction, as many appear to be highly adaptable. The ability of the Japanese to reconcile modern forms with their own cultural imperatives has been fully explored by Roland Barthes in Empire of Signs (1982). However, in France native drama has collapsed under the weight of American television exports, although this may be more to do with the desire of the French to adopt the values of these programs. The shadow images of American corporate television are watched around the world but a distinct national/cultural use of the media has been demonstrated by foreign broadcasters. The sense of mastery shown by American television over its own cave dwellers or viewers remains firmly entrenched, but in the world outside the cave a different kind of reality seems to govern broadcast media.

ii. The relationship to Kellner and Baudrillard:

The continued attempt by American corporate network television to dominate global broadcasting in order to distribute both its televisual products as well as ideological premises has been critically dealt with by two social theorists, Douglas Kellner and Jean Baudrillard. Kellner's recent book, Television and the Crisis of Democracy

(1990), attempts to show how the creation of a corporate network system in the United States has resulted in an inferior form of television. The reporting of news in an analytical manner has particularly suffered in the climate of American "corporate hegemony". Kellner is distressed by the imbalance between capitalism and democracy present in American television. He also notes that the "world wide trend" towards democratization runs counter to a conservative media in the United States, the supposed champion of democracy. During the Reagan/Bush administrations the once relatively independent networks have been transformed "into blatant corporate tools to advance corporate interests".⁴ Thus Kellner believes emphatically that the "commercial broadcast media in the United States are therefore best interpreted at this juncture in history as capitalist media, as ideological mouthpieces for the corporate capitalist system".⁵ The course of action to elevate this terrible situation is to cultivate an "alternative media structure" that is locally based and open to all. Kellner does not extend his analysis to examine how other cultures have developed their broadcasting systems in a more realistic fashion.

The distinct impression one has after delving into the four topic areas of this thesis is that American network television is becoming isolated by its insular corporate logic. The lack of realism in family drama only serves to promote a superficial way of life which suits consumptive practices and in this American television excels. The censorship of war reporting, the mock control of crime by either dramatized or cinema verite depictions and the lack of documentaries on critical national issues highlight only some of the failings of American television. American corporate television is highly seductive, as it seems to elicit viewer participation in such activities as the apprehension of crime offenders, but the actual purpose of this so-called "trash TV" is merely to create

large audiences through sensationalism. Kellner's concept of America's conservative media operating within a "corporate hegemony" that runs counter to the world-wide democratic trend can be seen in many forms of programming, other than broadcast journalism. Even in the seemingly frivolous area of American soap opera production the conservative agenda of avoiding all references to social classes is blatantly apparent, particularly when compared to the plots of foreign soaps. The unrealistic nature of America's televised shadow images is clearly understood by the world's populace. Much of what constitutes American television drama is seen by foreign audiences as the products of a commercial capitalist system that, while visually attractive, bear little resemblance to how their lives are conducted.

Jean Baudrillard is a contemporary French philosopher whose adoption of postmodernism, rejection of Marxism and views on feminism have gained him almost cult status. Baudrillard's theoretical stance on media, and television in particular, is a product of his belief that industrial society has entered the postmodernist era of late capitalism. In the Baudrillardian scheme of history there have been three "orders of appearance" that have dominated the creation of goods, images and ideas since the Renaissance. The "counterfeit" governed the period of time between the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, when a conscious resurrection of classical antiquity occurred. The industrial era was governed by "production" and the mass dissemination of identical material products. The post-industrial era that exists today is one of "simulation" which is controlled by codes. Each of the three orders of the simulacrum is based upon its own law of value. The first was a natural law of value, the second, commercial, and the third a structural law. The structural law that propels the age of simulation forward is the predominance of a "coded reality" of hyperrealism. In Baudrillard's opinion the real has

become: "that which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction". 6 Reality has been coded and perpetually reproduced beyond all recognition of what it once was. The image has been altered from a basic reflection of reality, to a perversion of reality, to an absence of reality and finally to a pure simulation that bears no relation to reality. 7 The coded reality of hyperrealism is controlled by many factors in the third order. However, the major agent involved in this process, according to Baudrillard, is television. A symbiotic process takes place in which there is a "dissolution of TV into life" and a "dissolution of life into TV". 8 Television governs how reality will be created for its viewers and is, in turn, controlled by a code.

Baudrillard believes that "we must think of the media" as a code which "controls the mutation of the real into the hyperreal". 9 All meaning in this simulation of reality is imploded and the attainment of truth is no longer possible. Baudrillard brings into question the entire concept of maintaining "the reality principle". When the real is no longer real but a simulation of a simulation, is any kind of base reality even possible to conceive of? On this point he is far from clear. In many ways Baudrillard shares the same values as Plato, that much of what is regarded as fact is mere conjecture or "false opinion" based upon shadow images. Plato's shadow images are not unlike Baudrillard's simulations of reality as both are based on the appearance of the real, but are in fact not real. The environment that best typifies the new condition of hyperreality is America. Disneyland is commonly regarded as a fantasyland situated in a real country, but Baudrillard states that Disneyland is the "real" country and the American nation surrounding it is no longer real, but a simulation of itself. 10 In his 1986 Amerique Baudrillard expands on this concept and even speculates on the mythology of American civilization as an idealized utopia. Baudrillard states:

America is neither dream nor reality. It is hyperreality. It is a hyperreality because it is a utopia which has behaved from the very beginning as though it were already achieved. 11

It is interesting that Baudrillard should focus on America as an example of a society submerged in hyperreality. In fact he begins Amerique with the warning, "Caution: objects in this mirror may be closer than they appear". Douglas Kellner believes Baudrillard is implying that the American model "will soon be manifest in France and much of the rest of the world". 12 Baudrillard's fear of American commercial culture is well founded and would be in agreement with the basis of this thesis, that American television is a collection of shadow images which supports a society held captive in the dark recesses of a cave. Plato stressed that the shadow images were only to appear as real objects for the objects creating the shadows were themselves artificial. This is very similar to Baudrillard's idea of simulation and the loss of meaning from the experience of these simulations. Two central focuses in Baudrillard's work have particular relevance to this thesis, a cautionary fear of American commercial culture and a distrust of television to provide a sense of real. However, it is hard to know if Baudrillard believes in an ultimate reality or truth, as Plato so clearly did. If everything is simulated and its meaning imploded, then can any real truths ever be found? This frustration has already been expressed in Andre Frankovits' volume of collected essays Seduced and Abandoned: The Baudrillard Scene (1984).

Much of what Baudrillard has to say about the course of history and the influence of media is simply too all-encompassing. He makes the assumption that the simulated hyperreality of America is actively being adopted in all cultures. Andrew Wernick suggests that Baudrillard's preoccupation with the "centrality of commodity semiosis" in the mass culture ensemble is simply "unhelpful" to any understanding of

how entertainment, such as television, functions. Wernick's suggestion that such mass entertainment as television programming must be examined more closely is important.

13 In Baudrillard's view television is "inoffensive to the imagination" because its imagery is neutralized and provides no lasting visual or mental images. Cinema still "carries an intense imaginary" but television is merely a screen of inoffensive scenes registering in the viewer's head. 14 Television cannot transmit a sense of reality, even though its images have been assigned the status of reality. The problem with Baudrillard's position is that while he does focus upon American commercial culture as problematic and television as a medium of simulated rather than actual experience, he fails to consider, as Wernick points out, how such media functions as entertainment. There are qualitative differences between the entertainment products of the American commercial television system when compared to the type of programming found in state, or even private, broadcasting authorities of Europe or Asia. To treat television as a mass cultural experience of pure simulation is to discount the highly significant variations in broadcast programming itself. Baudrillard believes that only cinema can provide lasting visual or mental images, while television cannot. In many ways the documentary television of Britain or Edward R. Murrow's news projects contain cinematic elements. American commercial television seems to have the effect that Baudrillard claims it does, to be "inoffensive to the imagination". However, a great deal of foreign broadcasting is highly stimulating and provokes the imagination of viewers in the same manner as the cinema. Baudrillard's analysis of television is extremely wide ranging and does not deal with the varied dimensions of international television production. The American model is trying to aggressively dominate the global television marketplace and in fact its televisual commodities are cultural carriers. Baudrillard fails to contrast the hyperreality of

American television to the specific qualities of those foreign productions which it is actively attempting to displace.

iii. What this thesis demonstrates:

Both Kellner and Baudrillard seem to acknowledge in different ways America's corporate domination of the world's media structure. However, both theorists do not seem to appreciate the varied nature of the television products which comprise international broadcasting. This thesis has demonstrated the shifting internal dimensions of American television programming and foreign resistance to its influence through four areas of inquiry. In the first chapter on family life as seen on television, the corporate agenda of America's media machine is brought forward. The consumption model of the 1950's suburban family was an invention conceived during the early years of American television. Urban, ethnic and class-based family dramas like "The Goldbergs" or "The Honeymooners" were very short-lived. With the advent of the 1960's the stale family sitcoms from the last decade, as "Father Knows Best", received some revitalization from bizarre plot devices. Impoverished Ozark mountain folk became rich in "The Beverly Hillbillies", monsters wanted to be accepted as neighbours in "The Munsters", witchcraft confounded suburban life in "Bewitched" and bachelors inherited extended families as in "Family Affair".

During the 1960's family portrayals on television became so exaggerated they were gradually seen as unbelievable. It took an injection of reality from outside the shadowland of the corporate cave to dislodge the consumption model. Norman Lear's use of the British social realism he found in "Till Death Do Us Part" became "All In The Family". This period of political awareness during the 1970's was all too brief as American television retreated back to the overly nostalgic shadow images of family life

found in "Happy Days". The critical social perspective brought from Britain was never resurrected, even during the Reagan era. Such experimental storylines as "Family Ties", concerning the generation gap between liberal parents and conservative children, was overshadowed by the "Father Knows Best" mentality of "The Cosby Show". Eventually Cosby was opposed by the vulgar "Married With Children" and a clever cartoon, "The Simpsons". Noticeably absent was the highly political humour found in Lear's family settings and instead a contrived domesticity seemed to prevail.

Fredric Jameson's insight into the present trend of signs being gradually detached from their historical referents in postmodernist video culture is extremely valuable. It is necessary to neutralize the contextual referents of television programming by de-emphasizing the actual hardships of life and making material consumption appear as a natural process. Viewers cannot be reminded of monetary recession, economic depression, class oppression or poverty as these tend to discourage the feeling of belonging to a social structure unified by the freedom to consume goods. The entire thrust of American family drama on television since the 1950's has been to dislodge all troubling historical references to ethnicity, social class and poverty to further a social pattern of expanding material consumption. This process failed in the early 1970's due to domestic political turmoil and economic depression/recession, which allowed Norman Lear's comedies to rise to prominence. However, generally the strategy of removing all disconcerting historical references has succeeded in American television and this stands in utter contrast to other cultures whose family drama is very much referent dependent. British family drama could not function without its references to social class, taken largely from the working-class experience. The latest example of this type of humorous domestic drama is BBC's "Keeping Up Appearances" in which the social worlds of four

sisters are continuously contrasted. One sister, Hyacinth Bucket, maintains a middle-class household with proper standards, while the other two, Daisy and Rose, live on a council estate in a state of blissful squalor. The two social worlds frequently collide, despite Hyacinth's best efforts to the contrary. Violet, the fourth sister, remains a mystery but appears to be married to a wealthy husband. Using Jameson's postmodernist analysis, the uncritical consensus building agenda of American family drama is thus readily ascertained. From the suburban tract house of *Beaver Cleaver* to Homer Simpson's shopping mall expeditions, these television shadow images subtly reaffirm an unrealistic portrait of family life that is severed from such past historical traumas as the Great Depression.

In the second chapter war and crime were examined to find the reasons behind American television's depiction of these contentious issues as patriotic shadow images. In order to diffuse any potential negative consequences, the public must be convinced that an effective campaign is being waged on these two fronts. A successful war strategy requires the hearts and minds of the home front population who, according to Freud, must be treated like ignorant children. This occurred during the Korean police action and at first the Vietnam War seemed no different. However, the new light-weight film cameras and satellite transmission of news gradually informed the American public that this war was not a moral crusade for democracy as in World War II. The disturbing images of burning Buddhist monks, the protracted urban combat of Tet, the siege of Khe Sanh and the Morley Safer report of a GI igniting a village with his cigarette as punishment were inconsistent with past American wars. Walter Cronkite's stalemate report from Vietnam made Lyndon Johnson remark as he watched it, that the war was lost. Surveys conducted at the time show that graphic news reports from Vietnam

actually increased support for the war in middle America. However, the important effect of war coverage was not its alteration of public opinion but that it gave television news reporting a level of maturity based upon probing activism. The press broke the bonds of cold war propaganda and gave the home audience a sense of reality, even if they chose to ignore it. The fear of the media's ability to create an open conflict on public display for all to see has haunted many military authorities ever since. In the 1980's the censorship of war reporting by the American and British governments eroded the media's activism. In the recent Gulf conflict a preference for patriotism was displayed by television rather than the active questioning of military strategy. This may signal a retreat back to the cold war role of television in rallying the American home front to support interventionist actions abroad.

American television has been frequently used to aid law enforcement both in the past as well as in the present. Television's depiction of crime can serve as an adjunct to the justice system in that it helps to create an impression in the public's mind that the crime problem is under control. Without such a Dostoyevskian depiction of crime and punishment America could be forced to confront the reality of the internal class warfare occurring in its urban centers. From the very beginning of American broadcasting in the 1950's, models were devised to depict the control of crime in television drama. The enforcers of law, professionals and sleuths fought crime respectively as policemen, lawyers and private investigators. When crime was simple, during the 1950's, the three character types were rather benign, as in "Dragnet", "Perry Mason" and "77 Sunset Strip". However, with the increase in social violence, these cerebral professionals disappeared as law enforcers began to launch open warfare on communists, student radicals, and other subversive groups in such dramas as "The FBI"

and "Hawaii Five-O".

In the 1970's these depictions became more violent through an orgy of shoot-outs, car chases and hot pursuits in shows like "Kojak", "SWAT", as well as "Starsky and Hutch". A respite occurred in the early 1980's, with the social emphasis of "Hill Street Blues" and "Cagney and Lacey", but this soon reverted to the fashionable enforcers of the "Miami Vice" drug squad. Foreign television had no need of this role for crime drama and concentrated on the real, everyday business of police work. From "Z-Cars" to "Juliet Bravo" the BBC has striven to depict the reality of police work and this was finally realized in the 1982 documentary series, "Police". The most violent British crime drama of the 1970's, ITV's "The Sweeney", gradually gave way to the mundane realism of "The Bill", although "Edge of Darkness" did reintroduce the harsh side of police work. Even a seemingly harmless romp, such as "Widows", contained a disconcerting message that crime could be both fun and profitable. In Australia the same realistic portrayals could be seen, starting in the 1960's with "Homicide"/"Matlock Police" and through the 1970's into the 1980's with "Cop Shop"/"Bellamy". By the late 1980's British and Australian television continued to produce realistic portraits of criminal law enforcement that did not rely on violence and employed socially relevant plots. A current example of this realism is the "Prime Suspect" series from BBC about the difficulties faced by a female Detective Chief Inspector or D.I., Helen Mirren, forced to take over a murder investigation on an all male police unit. The entire plot was based upon the career of an actual female D.I. at Scotland Yard. Japan employed gruesome execution scenes in its major crime series, "Underground Executioner", but the purpose was not to curb a rampant domestic crime problem and possibly served as a substitute for the lack of actual criminal violence. Only in the United States was television actively

recruited as a vicarious agent of crime control through the use of ever-increasing violent law enforcers. The most recent American crime shows, as "Cops" and "America's Most Wanted", depict criminal acts being swiftly punished in a 'cinema verite' manner. Crimes are either restaged for television and viewer help elicited to capture the suspects, or the police are accompanied by cameramen as they perform their duties. In a society containing a large underclass of poor citizens and virtually no gun control legislation, the shadow images of crime being punished are comforting to America's largely suburban television audience.

There appears to be a unifying theme in the battle to make war seem palatable and to depict crime as being kept in check, namely the "rally principle". As Sut Jhally and Ian H. Angus point out, it is necessary to maintain the moral authority of American capitalism by focusing the public's attention on the "other enemy". Whether that enemy is Saddam Hussein or a fugitive on the FBI's most-wanted list, America must be rallied into action against such evil. This constitutes the battle for the home front and it is waged through the patriotic images of American television. Despite a brief hiatus during the Vietnam War, American television news has come to lend its support to national patriotism during foreign conflicts. Crime dramas in America began with the turgid realism of "Dragnet" in the 1950's, but sank into the violent depiction of crime suppression which steadily accelerated from the 1960's to the late 1980's. The documentary-like images of policemen doing their duty in such current series as "COPS" eschews a desperate feeling of a crime epidemic barely being managed. Other nations do not feel the need to rely on such violent video crime control tactics as their societies are simply not as chaotic. The conduct of war policy, as in the recent Gulf conflict, and the exploding crime problem in America seems to require that the domestic populace be

"rallied" into action through patriotic fervour in order to preserve the morale of the home front. It was Guy Debord who first speculated in 1967 about the relationship between media spectacles and the ideological manipulation of the masses. In a society that must create archaic spectacles around the issues involved in war policy and crime control, meaningful social dialogue is an impossibility.

Documentaries were examined in the third chapter for in no other form of television is such an effort made to capture a sense of the truth or, in Platonic terms, reality. At the present time documentaries are conspicuously absent from American network television. This sorry state did not always exist as it was Edward R. Murrow who first proved broadcast journalism could be a powerful force by halting McCarthyism in the 1950's. Thus, by 1962 all three American networks had scheduled regular documentary showcases. With "CBS Reports" a probing tradition of critical social comment was created by Murrow in broadcasts such as "Harvest of Shame" in 1960. As a result NBC created its "White Paper" and ABC had its "Close-up" series. The problem-oriented 1960's were a difficult period of American history and the television documentary makers of the day believed that their films could influence the course of society for the better. However, after CBS aired its infamous "The Selling of the Pentagon" in 1971 a new format was introduced, called the newsmagazine. With its four story segments in an hour, "60 Minutes" (CBS) took several years to become a ratings success. The newsmagazine format effectively ended documentary film production on American network television by the mid-1970's. It was believed that social issues could be more readily dealt with in a new genre that combined the documentary style with drama to create a docudrama. A break-through was thought to be made in 1976 when David Wolper premiered his docudrama about black slavery, called "Roots". However,

by the mid-1980's, American docudramas had become too lavish and unfocused to be effective, unlike their British counterparts which reached new levels of excellence. In 1978 ABC's Barbara Walters ushered in a misguided form of gossipy entertainment and celebrity news that had been confined to the supermarket tabloid press before "20/20" made its debut. It was "20/20" that allowed Geraldo Rivera to rise to prominence as a reporter before he began his solo career of creating controversial media spectacles. The grotesque hybrids of this pseudo-documentary style are the so-called trash TV productions which depict violent crimes, sex assaults, or celebrity scandals in programs as "Hard Copy", "Personalities" and "A Current Affair". They are the ultimate simulations as half truths are made real.

In many parts of the world, particularly Britain, documentary films are still made and are in fact an integral part of television broadcasting. During the late 1950's and early 1960's, Dennis Mitchell created his "Slice of Life" films, first for BBC and later ITV's Granada. His young protege at Granada, Michael Apted, began the "7 Up" tradition of filming a group of individuals each seven years, from grammar school to adulthood. In the mid-1960's the BBC created its first lavish art history documentary series, "Civilization". However, at the same time, BBC director, Hugh Carleton Greene, suppressed Peter Watkins' nuclear war documentary film, "The War Game", because of its supposed scenes of human mutilation. It was export profit and critical acclaim which launched British television on a course that resulted in it becoming the world's leading documentary maker. By the 1980's serious studies of art history, nature, economics, electronic media and other topics had been made by the BBC, as well as the ITV affiliates. They were shown in America on PBS which undertook few if any such projects due to chronic underfunding. Documentary production is strong in Europe and Japan,

but not America. The recent advent of Britain's Channel Four proves that a commercial channel can combine such diverse programming as soap operas, sports coverage, imported American sitcoms and well-crafted documentaries in an innovative scheduling format.

In the conservative corporate culture of contemporary America the type of left-of-center, critical thought that exists in documentaries simply cannot flourish. Douglas Kellner is quite correct about the declining quality of news coverage in corporate American television. The Murrow tradition of critically documenting an urgent social problem and directly bringing about a positive change in the political direction of the nation was a powerful lesson. Yet, as the 1960's progressed and social tensions mounted, the documentary tradition seemed to be abruptly abandoned in favour of the abbreviated news magazine format. Although the first magazine efforts, as "60 Minutes", did deal seriously with social issues, their successors became embroiled in the frivolous depths of celebrity gossip. It is hard to believe that Barbara Walters and her "specials" concerning the sex secrets of the famous are actually descended from Murrow's "Person to Person". In the state-funded, as well as private broadcasting systems of Europe and Japan the educational mandate of documentary television remains a priority. Arthur Barron points to the significance of Lenin's concept that documentary film contains a revolutionary potential as it can promote class consciousness. In the corporate culture of America this type of critical awareness would not serve the interests of the dominant order and could create social instability. This is essentially why documentary films are no longer shown on American network television and the banal shadow images of entertainment-based news dominates the nation's parapet screens.

The fourth and final chapter on soap operas is crucial as it reveals a

surprising phenomenon. The world television market is not actually dominated by American programming and seems unwilling to emulate its highly formulaic drama conventions. Soap operas in America began on radio during the Depression of the 1930's. Their plots usually had a single mother struggling to feed a family or run a business, as in "Ma Perkins". Turgid as they were, the 1930's radio soaps at least constituted a realistic portrayal of the Depression's hardships. As the Depression ended and the economy normalized, the soaps became the domain of single women in search of love, usually in small towns or middle-class professions. Nurses, doctors, lawyers, teachers and loyal wives were the soap operas' characters. American soaps have remained amazingly consistent as they simply moved from radio to television while resisting all efforts to be dislodged from their premises of social and economic normalcy. Small towns with a homey atmosphere controlled by a wealthy aristocracy have existed since the 1950's in the form of "Hawkins Falls", "Peyton Place", Pine Valley, Bay City, and Port Charles to name but a few. Urban soap opera locales vanished in the late 1980's, relegating American soaps to small-town settings. Studies of American soaps vary from the strict content analysis of Mary Cassata, to Tania Modleski's feminist critiques, and Robert C. Allen's textual semiotics. Only Michael James Intintoli correctly labels the soap opera industry a "corporate enterprise". American soaps carry the ideological baggage of a conservative culture and are imbued with myth-driven images of prosperity that run counter to the reality of a society in which the good life is not as easily realized.

The ability of the now extinct prime time American soaps to dominate world television was more symbolic than real. The export of soaps like "Dallas" failed to change the viewing habits of foreign audiences as they preferred their own domestic

soaps, except in France. Since 1960 Britain has been broadcasting the working-class-based soap "Coronation Street", which was joined by "East Enders" and "Brookside" during the mid-1980's. Class realism is apparent in British soap operas as there must be active audience identification with the soap community being shown. Especially in BBC's "East Enders" certain factors as class, race, gender and the lack of social power are continually emphasized. Ireland's soaps are concerned with rural or country matters, as was "The Riordans" and its replacement, "Glenroe". In Germany it was the 'Heimatfilm' tradition of the Volk community which helped to shape the popular "Schwarzwaldklinik". Germans wanted their own 'Kultur' in soap operas and their television networks have produced such programs since the 1970's. In Italy the soap operas of RAI were designed to bring modernity to the families of a highly traditional society. Contemporary Italian soaps such as "E la Vita Continua" preserved their sense of class realism by dramatizing family turmoil within such political events as the 1968 student uprisings. Only France abandoned its flourishing 'feuilleton' style of soaps in the late 1970's to embrace the imported American soap, "Dallas". The rapid creation of a French "Dallas" clone, "Chateaufallon", demonstrated how accepting France was of American culture.

Outside of Europe, Australia has its own soaps representing the two extremes of its society. The rural "A Country Practice" is the pastoral ideal, and the urban-based tale of infidelity, "Sons and Daughters", encapsulates the reality of modernity. Japan has "Oshin", a soap which chronicles the historical struggle of the Japanese nation as personified through the suffering of one character. Japanese soap operas also promote the social acceptance of corporate values in the so-called "fashion-dramas". Indian soap operas initially stressed national unity, but were later used to

create social dissension in the Hindu revival dramas of Ramanand Sagar. After this period of extremity, a return has been made to the cautious promotion of factional unity in "Chanakya". The most popular soap operas in the world are made in Brazil at the studios of Sao Paulo's Globo TV. Their origins can be traced back to the 'feuilleton' literary tradition of continental Europe during the 19th century, which was utilized in the making of novela soap operas for Cuban radio in the 1930's and then adapted to Brazilian television in the 1950's. Criticized as shallow, the novelas are actually a medium for the display of class tension and can act subversively, according to Nico Vink's recent study. Historical telenovelas focusing on slave characters purposely depict them being exploited by their masters, and rebellion is presented as a realistic political option. Novelas set in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's often focused upon a corrupt landed aristocracy and their military henchmen who were always successfully challenged. It is only modern novelas that fail to show such social rebellion. The novelas contain storylines which at various times profile the diverse social classes of Brazil, allowing viewers to decode the soap's content in a subversive manner by continually assessing their own social status. In trying to create the shadow images of conjecture to stifle social change, the novelas may actually advance the process.

America produces soap operas which fail to reflect the turbulent social dynamics of their nation's own culture. Soap operas in America are blatant examples of commercial corporate television's ability to present "false opinion" as fact because their plotlines actively promote the social psychology of capitalism. Michael James Intintoli correctly labels these soaps as "corporate enterprises" that have remained essentially stagnant, despite the turbulent social and political events in American society over the last thirty years. There are few realistic depictions of social classes, poverty, racism and

other urgent societal concerns in American soaps, as the corporate media agenda specifically excludes such references, according to Benjamin DeMott. The purpose of such programs, states DeMott, is to exert a form of "erasure" on the public's mind by de-emphasizing social tensions. The soap operas produced by most foreign broadcasters are enlivened by the inclusion of class conflict and thus reflect a more realistic view of daily life. The recent attempt to broadcast the first racially integrated soap on American network television, "Generations" (NBC 1989-1990), failed. An audience following for the radical soap never developed and this was perhaps due to the inability of viewers to accept black and white couples interacting socially, as well as sexually. ¹⁵ However, this does not mean that American audiences are unable to understand a soap opera that deals realistically with controversial subject matter. The success of "East Enders" on the Tacoma public television station, KCTPS, attests to the fact viewers can respond positively to a soap that depicts life in London's impoverished East End. In the soap opera genre the shadow images of American commercial television can be seen as the conjecture of "false opinion", particularly when compared to the realistic productions of other broadcasting jurisdictions.

iv. Escaping the cave mentality:

The influence of America's corporate television system over its domestic audience is still persuasive, however the actual degree of control exerted over global broadcasting is more mythical than absolute. A recent CBC/NFB production called "Distress Signals: America's TV Global Domination" highlights the ambiguous nature of this power. Through undercutting the price of now-cancelled programs such as "Miami Vice" (France \$60,000, Zimbabwe \$500), inexpensive American reruns have deluged third world markets and stifled local production. ¹⁶ However, in the wealthier nations,

or those with a sufficient capacity to produce domestic television, the populace seems to want a cultural-based form of programming. "Distress Signals" purposely down plays the ability of European, Brazilian, Japanese, Chinese and Indian television to counter the American story machine. Furthermore, it does not point out that American viewership of network television has been rapidly declining. Despite the foreboding messages of Baudrillard that the entire planet will be overtaken by the cultural hyperreality of the American model, such a cybernetic process is not necessarily inevitable. In the diverse marketplace of global television, domestic programming is generally preferred if it can be produced.

A visit to the United States in November of 1990 by the chairman of Nepal Television, Neer Bikram Shah, highlights this fact. After speaking to a US Information Agency conference on how television helped to bring democracy to his country, Shah declared that its future role must be educational and not a "tool of entertainment", as in America.¹⁷ A recently published study by Ien Ang on the use of audience survey data in America and Europe highlighted a few startling differences. European audiences believed they were still "served" by their largely state-owned broadcasters. However, American viewers felt alienated as they had been made into a "commodity" through the aggressive use of program ratings techniques. The rebellion by American viewers against the domination of the ratings system and its uninspired formulaic programming has been assisted by the use of VCR's to record specific television content, from which commercials are later edited out using the VCR's remote control. Thus, the viewer is effectively divorced from the national audience. Also, the refusal of most European broadcasters, except the BBC and the Dutch broadcasting association or VARA, to use program ratings at all is another sign of the growing opposition towards the

commoditization of television content. Ang concludes that "within the global structural frameworks of television provisions that the institutions are in the business to impose upon us, actual audiences are constantly negotiating to appropriate those provisions in ways amenable to their concrete social worlds and historical situations". 18

This thesis has argued a more comprehensive point, that American corporate television has isolated itself from a wider global culture because it regards broadcasting as purely a business function. Foreign television programming has to a significant degree been driven by its own respective cultural rationale and shaped its broadcasting mandate according to cultural criteria. American television seems to regard its broadcasting system as ideologically superior and encourages its emulation on a global basis. This belief in the innate culture superiority of the American capitalist system has been challenged by the periodic presentation of realistic television content. The televised presentation of war violence, rioting minorities, probing documentaries and class-based domestic humour tends to disturb the security of the American world view or 'weltanschauung', creating a panic mentality. Stanley Cohen defined the sociology of moral panics as "a theory of the societal reactions to deviance". Cohen stresses that authority figures such as magistrates, leader writers and politicians "do not react like laboratory creatures" to "random stimuli" but have an almost ingrained response to deviance dictated by their "ideologies and values". 19 The American television audience, inculcated by the myth-driven images of domestic nationalism, appears to suffer from a type of moral panic when the realistic content of war, crime or class oppression is directly transmitted. To avoid moral panic, the American audience seeks comforting solace in the shadow images of conjecture and "false opinion" offered by commercial television. Only when the corporate ethos of American broadcasting is banished into the shadows

will the captive audience of prisoners be freed from their chains of media domination and the light of reality be allowed to penetrate the very recesses of the cave.

NOTES:

1. Plato, The Republic of Plato, Francis MacDonal Cornford (Translator), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.229 - originally published by Oxford University Press, 1941
2. Ibid., p. 191
3. Ibid., p. 230
4. Douglas Kellner, Television and the Crisis of Democracy, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), p. 174
5. Ibid., p. 173
6. Jean Baudrillard, Simulations, (New York: Semiotext Press, 1983), p. 146
7. Ibid., p. 11
8. Ibid., p. 55
9. Ibid., p. 55
10. Ibid., p. 25
11. Jean Baudrillard, America, Chris Turner (Translator), (New York: Verso Press, 1988) - original edition in French, 1986, p. 28
12. Douglas Kellner, Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 168
13. Andrew Wernick, 'Sign and Commodity: Aspects of the Cultural Dynamic of Advanced Capitalism' in Arthur & Marilouise Kroker (Editors), Ideology and Power in the Age of Lenin in Ruins, (Montreal: New World Perspectives Books Press, 1991), p. 164
14. Jean Baudrillard, The Evil Demon of Images, (Sydney, Australia: Power Institute Publications, No. 3, 1987), p. 25
15. Jesse Birnbaum, 'A Soap Goes Black and White: NBC unveils an interracial daytime serial, Generations', Time, March 27th, 1989, p.85
16. The Vancouver Sun TV Times, 'Distressing Signals Around the World', Friday, May 31st, 1991, p. 53

17. Nancy Spiller, 'U.S. entertainment loses out as Nepal TV shuns sex and violence', The Vancouver Sun, November 24th, 1990, p.C-16
18. Ian Ang, Desperately Seeking the Audience, (London: Routledge Press, 1991). For Ang's contention about VCR program recording and ratings producing formulaic television content see pp.94-96. For the refusal of most European broadcasters to use ratings see p.148. The final quote is in the conclusion p.170
19. Stanley Cohen, Folk Devils & Moral Panics: The Creation of The Mods and Rockers, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) - originally published 1972, p. 191

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- CBC Radio's "Prime Time"-Host Geoff Pevere-An interview with Valerie Boser from Beijing on June 3rd, 1991 about the effect of the new soap opera "Expectations" on Chinese State Television and its audience. See appendix no. II
- A BBC report entitled "The Awakening of the Godmen" as reported by Brian Barron, broadcast on CBC's The Journal, Friday, May 17th, 1991
- "Television" (Granada Television U.K., 1985), Episode VII: "Play Power" & Episode VIII: "The Rise and Fall of the Documentary" -Broadcast on The Knowledge Network in the spring of 1986

Appendix I:

CHART: Television Network's full titles.

United States:

- CBS: Columbia Broadcasting System
- ABC: American Broadcasting System
- NBC: National Broadcasting System
- DUM: Dumont Television Network
- FOX: Twentieth Century Fox Television

Britain:

- BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
 - BBC 1
 - BBC 2
- ITV: Independent Television (British Group)
 - Granada
 - LWT: London Weekend Television
 - Thames
 - Central
 - Channel Four
 - East Anglia/Anglia
 - Yorkshire

Australia:

- ABC: Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- Seven Network
- Ten Network

Japan:

- NHK: Nippon Housou Kyokai
- TBS: Tokyo Broadcasting Service
- NTV: Nippon Television

Canada:

- CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
- NFB: National Film Board of Canada

Italy:

- RAI: Radio Televisione Italiana

Peolpe's Republic of China:

- CCTV: China Central Television

Brazil:

- Tupi
- Globo TV
- REI
- TV Excelsior
- TV Manchete

India:

- Indian State Television: Doordarshan

France:

- Antenne 2
- FR3: France Regions 3
- ORTF: Organization of French Radio/Television
- TF1: Television Francais 1

Ireland:

- RTE: Radio Telefis Eireann

Germany:

- WDR: Westdeutscher Rundfunk
- ARD: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deroffentlich-Rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
- ZDF: Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen

Austria:

- ORF: Austrian Radio/Television

Holland/Netherlands:

- VARA: Originally founded in 1925 as the 'socialist broadcasting association' for radio; while retaining its social mandate for television to 'zorg om de cultuur' or 'care for culture' it is now known as the 'Dutch Broadcasting Association'.

Appendix II:

Letter from Valerie Boser in Beijing, China concerning the CCTV soap opera series "Kewang" or "Expectations".

June 21, 1991

Gerald Thomson,
#108 - 330 Ash St.,
New Westminster, B.C.
V3M 3M7
CANADA

Dear Gerald,

Geoff Pevere of CBC Radio's "prime Time" passed your letter on to me. I did the piece from Beijing on 'Expectations' and I'm pleased that you found it interesting. Here are answers to your questions:

1. The name of program is 'Kewang', or 'Expectations' in English.
2. It is the story of two families, the Wangs, a family of intellectuals, and the Lius, a family of workers.
3. The lead female character is Liu Huifang, a factory worker who marries Wang Husheng, an intellectual sent to the countryside for re-education during the Cultural Revolution.
4. Liu Huifang is a member of the Liu family of workers. Wang Husheng is part of the Wang family of intellectuals.

I hope this is the information you need. If you require anything else on Kewang, please feel free to write me. Good luck!

Yours truly,

Valerie Boser,
64843 Friendship Hotel,
3 Baishiqiao Road,
Beijing 100873, PRC

