

PRIME MINISTER

MT 4

Attached is a minute from Sir Keith Joseph covering a report prepared by a group of school teachers on the impact of television. Also attached is a minute from Ferdinand Mount commenting on Sir Keith Joseph's minute. You do not need to read the whole of the report which mainly comprises comments on individual programmes, but two particular points of interest are at Flag A (the viewing figures for a number of programmes broken down by age) and Flag B (the group's conclusions). On the former, the figures are chiefly remarkable for the high level of viewing they reveal for very young children quite late at night. For example, "Minder" which is a rather well made London low-level drama comedy programme which includes quite a lot of sex and violence (at 9 o'clock at night) is watched by 2% of 4-7 year olds, 12% of 8-11 year olds, and 22% of 12-15 year olds. This is of course only one channel, so on this basis about 20% of 8-11 year olds are watching television between 10 and 11 at night. The figure is even more marked at weekends. Dallas which is at 9 o'clock is watched by 6% of 4-7 year olds and 18% of 8-11 year olds, which suggests that 10% of 4-7 year olds watch television after 9 o'clock on Saturdays and well over 30% of 8-11 year olds.

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Some of the earlier programmes receive some quite startling viewing figures. For example, 35% of 4-7 year olds and 48% of 8-11 year olds watch Top of the Pops; the large majority then watch a comedy programme which, although quite inventive, relies heavily on innuendo and transvestism.

Obviously, the viewing habits of children is essentially a matter for their parents, but as Sir Keith Joseph proposes, and Ferdinand Mount agrees, there is scope for closer liaison between parents and teachers and the broadcasters.

9 December, 1982.

JH.

TEACHERS AND TV COMMITTEE

1. INTRODUCTION

This study carried out by 15 teachers was concerned with the images of adult life and society made available to young people in a range of popular BBC and ITV television programmes. It is hoped that its findings will encourage and inform serious discussion of the issues raised among professionals in education and television, parents and the general public.

The teachers were not a representative sample in the strict social scientific sense, though the group was composed with particular factors in mind: there were members from each region in England (but not Wales or Scotland), some from inner city, suburban, town or rural schools; there was a balance of men and women; there was a range of experience from heads through to recent recruits to the teaching profession; there were representatives of each phase of schooling (except nursery) and teachers from the mainstream, special and independent sectors with a variety of subject backgrounds; West Indian and Asian ethnic minority groups were represented. Some had experience of discussing television programmes with their pupils, but none was chosen as an "expert" or because of a life-time teaching television appreciation. (A list of the teachers involved is given in Appendix 1.)

The concern of teachers and others involved in educational provision about mass media, and television in particular, is of long standing. It is based on both awareness of their potential as educational tools and anxiety lest they be negative influences on the attitudes and behaviour of young people. A considerable amount of research has been done throughout the world on the relationship between television and young people, but few clear-cut, broad conclusions have emerged from such work. Recent studies have suggested that young people between 5 and 14 years of age spend an average of 23 hours per week watching television, and with this amount of exposure it is difficult to believe that a medium in which so much advertising capital is invested has no influence on young people's attitudes and values. A brief bibliography of relevant material is included in Appendix 2. The present study is short and on a small scale, and it is important to note that the focus of attention is

2. THE PROGRAMMES

The programmes selected for viewing were:

Drama

Crossroads (ITV)
Dallas (BBC 1)
The Dukes of Hazzard (BBC 1)
Hill Street Blues (ITV)
McClain's Law (BBC 1)
Minder (ITV)
We'll Meet Again (ITV)

Light Entertainment

Emery (BBC 1)
Family Fortunes (ITV)
The Gaffer (ITV)
The Glamour Girls (ITV)
The Kenny Everett TV Show (BBC 1)
Mind Your Language (ITV)
Shelley (ITV)
Top of the Pops (BBC 1)
Whoops Apocalypse (ITV)

News and Current Affairs

Early Evening News (BBC 1)
ITN at 5.45 (ITV)
Nationwide (BBC 1)
Panorama (BBC 1)
World in Action (ITV)

Science/Features

Tomorrow's World (BBC 1)
Police (BBC 1)

Brief details of these programmes are given in Appendix 4.

The percentage of the total UK population, broken into age groups, watching the selected programmes is given in Tables 1 and 2.

Percentage of total population watching selected television programmes during week beginning 8 March 1982

TABLE 1

	TOTAL POPULATION	AGE 4-7	AGE 8-11	AGE 12-15	AGE 16-24	AGE 25-34	AGE 34-44	AGE 45-54	AGE 55-64	AGE 65-
<u>Monday</u>										
Early Evening News (BBC1)	13	6	11	9	10	11	11	16	16	24
News at 5.45 (ITN)	17	9	9	12	14	10	10	19	26	31
6.00 Nationwide	14	10	11	10	9	13	11	16	16	21
8.00 Panorama	8	3	5	3	3	6	7	10	15	17
8.30 World in Action	12	3	9	10	10	15	11	13	12	18
10.00 Police	16	1	3	7	12	24	19	19	19	18
<u>Tuesday</u>										
Early Evening News	16	9	9	10	12	14	14	18	22	29
News at 5.45	10	10	8	10	13					
6.00 Nationwide	13	9	7	7	8	11	12	15	16	20
8.00 Emery		14	29	24	17					
8.00 The Glamour Girls	15	7	9	9	11	12	10	14	21	27
<u>Wednesday</u>										
Early Evening News	15	14	12	10	9	13	12	17	20	25
News at 5.45	18	8	10	13	16	11	11	22	28	34
6.00 Nationwide	10	6	8	8	4	10	8	12	14	16
9.00 Minder	24	2	12	22	19	33	26	25	26	31
<u>Thursday</u>										
Early Evening News	16	14	13	13	10	13	14	17	17	25
News at 5.45	18	9	13	14	12	13	13	19	27	34
6.00 Nationwide	12	11	9	9	9	13	11	13	14	18
6.55 Tomorrow's World	19	20	30	25	16	25	19	17	13	16
7.20 Top of the Pops	26	35	48	40	26	34	31	20	13	10
8.00 Kenny Everett TV Show	24	23	38	36	21	34	29	22	13	11
9.00 Shelley	17	3	9	11	15	21	15	19	20	24
<u>Friday</u>										
Early Evening News	14	12	9	8	8	13	13	15	18	24
News at 5.45	17	13	10	12	15	13	10	20	25	30
6.00 Nationwide	12	10	4	6	7	11	11	13	17	19
7.00 Family Fortunes	26	23	23	14	18	21	19	26	38	45
8.00 The Gaffer	21	15	25	18	15	21	21	22	25	27
9.00 We'll Meet Again	21	8	15	13	14	24	22	25	27	26
<u>Saturday</u>										
5.15 The Dukes of Hazzard	19	28	29	20	13	19	19	21	20	17
6.15 Mind your Language	19	17	16	13	14	18	14	18	21	30
7.00 Dallas	20	6	18	13	11	20	18	24	23	32

NOTE: Figures for 'Crossroads' and 'Hill Street Blues' are not available as these programmes were not nationally networked at the same time.

Percentage of total population watching selected television programmes during week
beginning 22 March 1982

TABLE 2

	TOTAL POPULATION	AGE 4-7	AGE 8-11	AGE 12-15	AGE 16-24	AGE 25-34	AGE 35-44	AGE 45-54	AGE 55-64	AGE 65-
<u>Sunday</u>										
Whoops Apocalypse	13	1	6	9	15	20	17	15	11	9
<u>Monday</u>										
Early Evening News (BBC 1)	15	12	13	11	12	12	14	15	17	26
News at 5.45 (ITN)	15	6	9	7	11	11	10	19	25	31
Nationwide	16	14	14	10	12	14	16	17	20	23
Panorama	8	2	3	4	5	7	7	8	12	14
World in Action	14	4	14	9	9	18	16	13	16	17
Police	12	1	2	4	9	19	15	14	18	12
<u>Tuesday</u>										
Early Evening News	13	8	12	10	8	11	13	14	15	24
News at 5.45		7	9	11	12					
Nationwide	11	5	8	8	7	10	10	12	15	19
Emery	18	14	32	19	11	24	19	15	16	15
The Glamour Girls	14	5	7	7	10	12	10	16	22	28
<u>Wednesday</u>										
Early Evening News	13	8	9	9	7	9	11	15	18	25
News at 5.45	17	5	10	12	13	14	10	21	24	30
Nationwide										
Minder	24	3	11	19	22	33	24	28	25	28
<u>Thursday</u>										
Early Evening News	13	9	7	7	7	8	12	15	16	28
News at 5.45	16	5	9	10	12	11	9	19	24	33
Nationwide	11	8	6	8	6	8	10	12	16	18
Tomorrow's World	16	20	25	21	13	19	16	14	14	15
Top of the Pops	25	34	44	33	25	32	28	22	15	11
Kenny Everett TV Show	23	26	36	31	21	31	27	20	12	12
Shelley	20	3	12	12	17	22	18	24	24	30
<u>Friday</u>										
Early Evening News	12	8	9	6	8	8	10	15	16	22
News at 5.45	15	6	11	11	10	9	9	16	23	29
Nationwide	12	8	9	6	8	10	10	13	15	19
Family Fortunes	26	21	25	13	19	23	23	28	34	41
The Gaffer	24	18	31	14	15	24	22	24	25	33
We'll Meet Again	22	7	14	10	14	23	22	26	29	33
McClain's Law	14	3	9	9	9	15	18	17	16	15
<u>Saturday</u>										
Mind Your Language	22	22	20	16	17	21	19	24	27	30
Dallas	23	8	18	16	15	27	21	25	29	35

NOTE: Figures for 'Crossroads' and 'Hill Street Blues' are not available as these programmes were not nationally networked at the same time.

These figures are compiled by Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB), owned by the BBC and the Independent Television Companies Association. Data are derived from a panel of homes in which each television set has a meter attached and each individual household member, aged 4 or over, keeps a diary record (or has one kept) of all his or her viewing in the home. The meter monitors and records the times at which the television set is switched on or off or between channels and the channel to which the set is tuned. This method makes no assessment of the amount of attention given to a television programme by members of its audience, and the figures should therefore be treated with caution. Among interesting features of the tables are:

- a. The highest percentage viewing figures appear among the 8-11 and 55 - 65+ age groups. Adolescents and those in their early 20s presumably have other things to do such as homework and extending their social lives outside the home. There is also some evidence of differences between adults and children in their programme preferences. Understandable as these are, given the subject matter of the programmes, it means that quite often adults and children in the family will not be watching TV as a group.
- b. Light entertainment programmes are most popular with young people, with "Top of the Pops", and "The Kenny Everett TV Show", scheduled one after the other, attracting the largest audiences. (39% and 31% of all 4-15 year olds, respectively.)
- c. More than one in five young people in each of the age bands between 4 and 15 watched "Tomorrow's World". It is not known the extent to which figures are boosted by its scheduling immediately before "Top of the Pops". It is interesting to note the dip in audience figures in the 16-24 age group for these three very popular programmes on a Thursday evening.
- d. Viewing figures for "Minder" on a week-day and "We'll Meet Again" and "Dallas" at a week-end gave some indication of how many young people may be watching television after the "watershed" at 9.00 pm. No viewing figures within age

bands are available for "Hill Street Blues", but it seems likely from the total viewing figures, and from pupils' comments to the Committee about the programme, that a considerable number of young people watch it. About one in five young people between 12 and 15 watch "Minder"; about one in seven between 8 and 15 watch "Dallas".

- e. About one in five young people, at all age levels, seem regularly to watch an early evening news programme, and about one in ten between 8 and 15 watch "World in Action".

3. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PROGRAMMES

Television is not "a window on the world". In using broadcasting services "as means of disseminating information, education and entertainment", in the words of the BBC's Royal Charter, those working in television select, manipulate and allot priorities to the various aspects of society which they choose to broadcast according to changing economic and professional criteria. Among those subjects whose treatment in television programmes is most persistently a topic of public concern are violence and sex.

VIOLENCE It would be inconceivable to have television without violence. Its news and current affairs programmes must reflect the violent society in which we live, and its drama programmes stand in a tradition many thousands of years old in which violence is a vital element. But young people are faced by a bewildering range of contexts for physical violence on television; close-ups of the real victims of bomb attacks, the fantasy violence of the animated cartoon, the stylised and sanitised violence of the cops 'n' robbers genre, real pictures from international war zones, gratuitous gloating on gory scenes in horror films shown on television, violence genuinely presented as causing pain and injury in fictional programmes which seek to explore its roots in individual or group behaviour. As well as being deeply embedded in human conduct, physical violence may be used as a swift, cheap way of attracting large audiences and may be particularly tempting to the producer or controller competing with others for high viewing figures. It is appropriate that both the BBC and IBA have produced guidelines for producers on the portrayal of violence in television programmes, and the presentation of violence in the programmes we viewed

conformed to the guidelines, with two exceptions: an account of a vicious gang assault in "Hill Street Blues" which was narrated in retrospect rather than directly portrayed, and a hand-crushing incident in "Minder".

In both these episodes the extent of explicit violence went beyond the needs of the dramatic context. There is, of course, physical violence in programmes like "McClains's Law" and "The Dukes of Hazzard", but it is normally presented within accepted conventions and without gratuitous concentration by the programme's makers. The style of "The Dukes of Hazzard" is slapstick, and though much damage is inflicted on material objects such as buildings, fences and, particularly, cars during and at the end of long chases, the programme may be seen as a modern example of the tradition embodied in the Keystone Cops. For some young people, however, the attractive presentation of reckless driving and car bashing without anyone being harmed in the process may be a dangerous illusion. The excitement felt at the car chases is widespread:

"I like "The Dukes of Hazzard" because I like it when they jump over Roscoe's car. It makes me happy and it makes me excited and I like it when Roscoe's car splits in half because it makes me laugh and I like it when they jump through the window and I like it when Roscoe goes after Bo and Luke". (Seven year old boy.)

"Hill Street Blues" seeks to portray accurately and in detail a seedy, violent society, and the attempts of its local police force to uphold law and order sympathetically. However sensitive its picture of the local environment and of fallible human beings responding to it, however subtle its use of humour to lighten the tone, the programme's approach leads it inevitably to include vivid and frequent images of violence. Even if there is no attempt by the programme to exploit the images of violence, judgements must still be made both about the presentation of single scenes of violence which may be seen by some viewers as models, and about the cumulative impact of the series over a period of time. Young people are aware of the dilemma too:

"I enjoy "Hill Street Blues" because it seems very true to life. In most programmes the good guys never get harmed or injured but in "Hill Street Blues" even the good guys are hurt and this seems more like real life. Sometimes not everything goes as planned and mistakes happen; this again is true to life, it

doesn't always work first time. It can be serious but it has its humour." (Fourteen year old boy.)

"When violence is shown on the television it is not emphasised enough. If it was shown as if it was real, there would be much more blood. Maybe if they showed a programme where real violence was shown it would decrease the population of violent people, because the violent people would realise what damage they are causing to people". (Fifteen year old girl.)

The consequences of physical violence are made clear when it is used in "Minder", and there is a deliberate attempt to avoid "sanitised" violence. Although frequently just below the surface, physical violence was not during the viewing period a persistent feature of the programme. When it is included, it does not seem gratuitous and it is normally seen to cause pain and injury. Only when provoked does Terry resort to violence, and then with his fists ("a good clean fight").

"My favour programme is "Minder". Each programme is packed with fighting, swearing and women. I like Denis Waterman, he is a real hero. The settings are real and the people seem to be just ordinary". (14 year old boy.)

It is hard to take seriously, literally, the physical violence in light entertainment, and the accepted context of humour must always be borne in mind. Nevertheless, in two cases the presentation of physical violence was unacceptable: the first is the casual linking of violence with sex in some scenes in "The Kenny Everett TV Show", and the second the ambivalent and apparently self-indulgent attitude shown to scenes of torture and brutality in "Whoops Apocalypse".

Scenes of violence and its results were clearly in evidence in news and current events programmes during the viewing period, but overall the preponderance of violence in such programmes reflects on society itself rather than on its reporters. There was some anxiety that the legitimacy of particular causes was being judged by the violence of their supporters' responses, and by the consequent exposure on television of these responses.

Of equal concern is the emotional violence of "Dallas" in which human beings and their feelings are ruthlessly manipulated in the pursuit of wealth and power. The pace of the programme is fast, the production slick: indeed so much happens so fast that any individual human experience is distorted and trivialised because of the superficiality of its treatment.

Pupils themselves have some chilling comments to make on the overall situation:

"One of the major forms of corrupting a child is letting him see physical and verbal conflict as an acceptable and every-day occurrence". (Seventeen year old girl.)

"In violent programmes the fighting and violence never seems to be against the law, and it is always regarded as perfectly acceptable. The television also makes out the men that win the fights and who beat up the other men to be the heroes. In some cases television glorifies the violence and makes it look the right thing to do in a tight situation. This shows young kids that if they get into a difficult patch the thing is to "do what "Minder" did last night and beat him up". (Fifteen year old boy.)

"Violence now is used as another word for entertainment".
(Fourteen year old girl.)

Watching scenes of violence may in the short term make some young people more aggressive, and it may act as an outlet for others: considerable research has already been done. Long term effects are less amenable to research, and we are very concerned about the cumulative effect on young people over a period of time of the frequent presentation of violence, in all its aspects. Does it lose its capacity to shock? or develop an appetite for more?

Finally, in feature films shown on television far more explicit scenes of violence and sex are available to young people than were included in the programmes we chose to view. Many pupils report that they stay up late, if necessary, to watch these films and with the present rise in the sales of video recorders the problems of limiting young people's exposure to such material become massive.

SEX In their treatment of sex, television producers face a similar dilemma to the one inherent in the presentation of violence. It is impossible to ignore so powerful and intimate an aspect of human behaviour, yet the temptation to exploit sex is ever-present, either intentionally to shock or titillate, or to attract large audiences, or to win a cheap, knowing laugh. "Dallas" was of considerable concern to us because of its attitude to sex. Sexual intercourse seemed an extension of business practice, the assumption being that sexual intercourse is a normal part of JR's relationship with any woman. A similar idea, that casual sex is now the norm in a relationship between a man and woman, was reinforced in one episode of "Minder".

Pupils commented that they were embarrassed sometimes when watching television with their families:

"Sex is shown in the wrong way. It shouldn't be abused on telly because it is a private thing between two people. We get more embarrassed when it's true sex, but when it's on soap operas eg "Dallas" you can laugh to cover your embarrassment".
(Thirteen year old girl.)

A more sensitive description of the developing sexuality of a teenage girl was given in "We'll Meet Again", but even in this programme there were so many principal characters in the story (well over 20) that there was insufficient time to explore any one relationship in sufficient detail to provide convincing characterisation: the sexual aspects of relationships were not presented in the context of fully described characters.

There were no over-explicit scenes of sex in any of the selected programmes. What was most worrying was the heavy reliance on sexual innuendo in "The Kenny Everett TV Show", scheduled at a time when many young people must have been watching with their families. The same is true of Bob Monkhouse, compere of "Family Fortunes".

No serious portrayal of homosexuals was noted in the programmes viewed. The view of homosexuals as camp and effeminate, particularly embodied in the BBC situation comedy "Are You Being Served?", is confirmed by references in comedy programmes such as "The Kenny Everett TV Show" where the aim is to raise a quick risque laugh.

One of the most common ways in which young people approach television is through identification with the characters and personalities whom they regularly watch.

HEROES AND PERSONALITIES The characters most easily fitting the traditional image of a "hero" are probably the brave US airmen in "We'll Meet Again", and particularly their handsome leader, Major Jim Kiley. The programme was produced in a romantic style which tried to create an atmosphere of ordinary people trying to be heroic but being thwarted by a range of human problems.

More popular with young people at the moment are characters who are contemporary versions of the Robin Hood figure: they define their own morality; are unfettered by laws, routine or bureaucracy; dispense justice as they see fit. Something of this character is seen in the heroes of situation comedies such as "Shelley" and "The Gaffer", but it is at its clearest in drama programmes. The two boys in "The Dukes of Hazzard" cope with injustices as well as the corrupt local "boss" and his idiot policemen; Jim McClain uses his own methods to bring criminals to justice, even

if that means departing from standard police procedures; the methods used by the police in "Hill Street Blues" are unorthodox and tailored to the needs of their local community, as they see them; clearest of all, and most popular with young people to judge from their comments, is Terry in "Minder". Terry is young, strong, handsome, flawed by a previous spell in gaol but now a warm-hearted protector of the weak or persecuted. His justice is not the remote and impersonal justice of police and law-courts: it is the immediate, spontaneous common morality of fair play for all and particular protection for the weak.

"Minder" is a very good programme. Every time I see that programme I think that I am going to be like him when I grow up. I'm going to be a minder who minds people who are old or disabled." (Ten year old boy.)

While we recognise there is here a positive moral impetus and richness of script, humour and character, there are dangers in presenting so romantic and convincing a picture of the world of petty villainy, and in loading some of the characters in that world with positive values. It is, of course, quite legitimate to suggest that petty criminals may have some positive values and law-abiding citizens some negative ones. But is not "Minder", in spite of its sharply observed script, its wit, its local London rhyming slang, its excellent casting and production values, a romantic fantasy dressed up expertly as reality? Would Terry McCann remain pure and intact in the real world of petty crime?

All the characters so far mentioned use their powers on behalf of positive values which would be acceptable to many people, who might, however, have some reservations about the apparent lack of loyalty to accepted authority. Another character popular with young people is JR in "Dallas":

" I like JR because he acts so cool when things go wrong and I like it when he gets in a temper because his eyes go all small. And I would like to have his money as well, and his power too." (Thirteen year old girl.)

JR uses his authority for selfish ends and is happy to manipulate everybody, particularly his most immediate family, in his ruthless pursuit of more money. There are "good" characters in "Dallas", such as Bobby Ewing, who embody positive values such as respect for the individual and a sense of proportion in business life. The prevailing impression from the programme, however, is that success is defined in material terms and that in order to achieve that success, deviousness and an utter disregard of other people are legitimate. One of our main concerns about the programme is the potency of the unpleasant image presented by JR, the material success which surrounds his life, and the apparent inability of the other characters in the story to cope with his evil ways.

As far as TV personalities are concerned, by far the most popular is Kenny Everett. It is clear from what young people say that his appeal is based on his versatility and on his irreverence: he is naughty, and says and does rude things.

"My favourite is Kenny Everett. His programme is original and he portrays different characters very well, showing his ability".
(Ten year old girl.)

".... I like this programme because he isn't afraid to say anything, he just comes out with it". (Fifteen year old girl.)

"....the comedy is outrageous ... the sketches he does make me laugh a lot. But to tell the truth some of the sketches he does I don't get the meaning of". (Eleven year old boy.)

Such qualities are hardly new (or reprehensible?) in children's entertainment and playground culture, but what is disconcerting is the delivery of cheap smut into the living-room at a time when people of all ages are watching, often in a family group.

IMAGES OF SUCCESS More intangibly, the general picture of success which emerges is that which is linked with material wealth and power. In different ways programmes as diverse as "Crossroads", "Dallas", "Family Fortunes", and "Emery" reflected such an emphasis. Although Arthur Daley in "Minder" always gets his come-uppance and his plans are always frustrated, it is clear how he defines his goals of success.

Television also spreads the success of those who are involved in other professions - particularly, perhaps, those in pop music, sport, other forms of entertainment, and politics. Because of its availability, television is a powerful medium for bringing successful people to the attention of the young; but because certain sorts of people are "good television", the range of qualities seen as desirable is limited. Overall, the view of success presented in the programmes selected was restricted, predictable and lacking particularly the element of altruism.

ATTITUDES TO AUTHORITY In approaching the question of how television deals with challenges to authority, the Committee was divided: one man's direct challenge to authority tended to be another's healthy scepticism. The range of programmes in which authority is challenged is wide. On an individual level, both "Shelly" and "The Gaffer" survive by challenging and outwitting bureaucratic authority. Kenny Everett's list of targets include those in real authority and those who assume it

(or are assumed to have it): the Queen, politicians, show-biz personalities, the Church, BBC Governors, judges, generals and the police. Authority is corrupt in "The Dukes of Hazzard", remote and almost irrelevant in "Minder". The most comprehensive attack comes in "Whoops Apocalypse" where world politicians are caricatured as mad, totally irresponsible, and prepared to do anything to achieve their ends. "Hill Street Blues" explores the nature of authority, gives examples of problems faced by those whose job it is to interpret or enforce the law, as well as portraying the social contexts in which authority is most likely to be challenged.

In the news and documentary programmes, the difficulties inherent in the interpretation and enforcement of law are closely observed in "Police". Because the professional background of so many people working in "World in Action", "Panorama" and "Nationwide" is journalism, there is a strong tradition in all of these programmes of persistent investigation, of challenging orthodoxies, of giving support to individuals in their resistance to bureaucracy or big business: the regular "Nationwide" feature "Watchdog!" is one obvious example, the "World in Action" programme on US Government responsibility for deaths from radiation in Utah another. On the other hand, some challenges to established authority take place in a total context in which traditional values are upheld to maintain the stability of the status quo.

It is clear that television presents a varied and confusing set of messages to young people about authority and the viability of challenge, about ways of distinguishing right from wrong, about ways of relating the images of society to its norms. If the individual is encouraged to define his own values of right and wrong, what happens to the law as a means of support to others? How is the role of the police interpreted?

THE POLICE There are plenty of images of the police in television programmes. In American programmes they range from the gullible, corrupt and inefficient buffoons in "The Dukes of Hazzard" to the earnest, vulnerable and versatile human beings in "Hill Street Blues" who have to work under great stress. Somewhere in the middle comes "McClain's Law" in which the hero's infallibility is not frustrated by normal police procedures and regulations. McClain can escape death at the last minute, or lead the death-defying capture of a criminal, in the best tradition of crime fiction. A typical "Hill Street Blues" episode is noisy, fragmented, with frequent cuts from one sub-plot to another. The main characters are policemen and policewomen, and they are presented as fallible representatives of law and order struggling to uphold their values in a deprived and depressed local community.

"This is not one of your "dramatic" American cop programmes; it has hard facts and not "fantasy people" in it like most other American programmes have. It is a real-to-life programme with plenty of action". (Twelve year old boy.)

The picture in the contemporary British programmes viewed is different. The philosophy of "Minder" is based on the idea that the normal channels of protection for the individual seem unsatisfactory: police (and other representatives of law and order who appear in the programme) are often corrupt, nasty, ineffectual or irrelevant. During the period after the inner city riots of summer 1981 and the Scarman Report, it was to be expected that examinations and criticisms of police conduct would feature strongly in news and current events programmes. The fallibility of police officers is underlined in the documentary series "Police" and in the public controversy which surrounds it. Amongst the programme's aims were attempts to show the viewing public what the job of policing is really like, and to get people, including policemen, to rethink their assumptions about the way television reflects police work. Such an approach underlines both the fallibility of policemen and policewomen and the range of routine and sometimes unpleasant tasks which they undertake on society's behalf. It is important to remember that even in the cinema verite style of "Police" there were limitations on editing: for example, only those police who gave their agreement were shown in the final televised version. Though public opinion polls suggested that adults had found the series valuable and not damaging to their trust in the police, it is not clear how young people perceived the programmes and the subsequent controversy. One pupil wrote:

"The police on TV, apart from in the documentary "The Police", are portrayed as a violent, hard and brutal force, although this comes from plays, for example on riot control. "Nationwide" and other news programmes tend to dwell on their violence. Cell deaths and beatings, false confessions seem constantly in the news. The impressions, therefore, may restrict the police's usefulness as the public may fail to report crimes such as rape. "The Police" documentary on the report of a rape did show their brutal way of treating the woman, disbelieving her to the point where she withdrew the complaint. This aspect of the police definitely needs reporting but excessive reporting destroys the police. Programmes such as "Z Cars", "The Gentle Touch", "Softly, Softly", "Dixon of Dock Green and "Juliet Bravo" all give a refreshing helpful impression, too admirable in "Z Cars", for example. There seems to be a lack of realism as they always catch the criminal, always in the right, and so these programmes lose their effectiveness". (Fifteen year old girl.)

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

The group considered the methods of presentation in some news and current events programmes (ie BBC and ITN Early Evening News, "Nationwide", "Panorama" and "World in Action"). How was the separation of fact from comment handled? Was "balance" achieved? What were the roles of presenters, interviewers and interviewees? Was the time allotted to the subject about right?

There were very few obvious examples of biased or irresponsible reporting during the viewing period. Individual members of the group have differing views on the degree of aggression permitted to interviewers, on the most desirable mix of elements in a programme like "Nationwide", and on criteria for a subject's inclusion in a news or current events programme. A general trend which caused us anxiety was an apparent policy of presenting an issue as debate between two representatives of opposed position rather than as a more objective analysis or as a discussion involving "diagonal" thinkers which would keep viewers in touch with complexities not encompassed by the "for" and "against" format. What is important is that young people are able to see and understand how television selects and allots priorities to the news it decides to broadcast; what are the contrasting elements of style that differentiate "World in Action" from "Panorama"; the ways in which a daily magazine programme like "Nationwide" is subject to time and subject pressures which are quite different from those facing a weekly programme like "World in Action"; and the criteria to be used in assessing in as much detail as possible the degree of responsibility a programme is showing in its treatment of a particular item.

Many topics of political significance were covered in news and current events programmes during the viewing period. Four out of five "World in Action" programmes contained political elements: one takes the people's case against the US Government which is accused of causing illness and death from radiation of many citizens in Utah; another, entitled "Worried Men", examines the views of Tory MPs who have reservations about current economic policies; a third examines the record of the present government of Guatemala, particularly in civil rights; the fourth looks at the resilience of certain pupils in Northern Ireland who, in spite of the political troubles, manage to achieve excellent examination results. During the viewing period, "Panorama" included items on Nicaragua, the political lobby system, the fight for Times Newspapers, extradition laws in Ireland, and Afghanistan, as well as interviews with Robert Mugabe, Mrs Gandhi and David Steel. The national and international ground is well covered. There is also comprehensive coverage, of course, in news bulletins and in "Nationwide".

At the beginning of this year a new Editor of "Nationwide" was appointed. The programmes during the viewing period were different from the previous "Nationwide" tradition: there were fewer light, human interest stories; more and weightier attention was given to international news; an attempt was made, in two series of films, one about poverty, one about the House of Lords, to explore the broader social context of news rather than constantly being "summoned by gunfire" to temporary or sensational events. Most of us welcome the move towards more detailed and analytical examination of important news stories; one or two feel that there are already programmes such as "Panorama" which fulfil that role, and that the light idiosyncratic approach of previous "Nationwide" programmes was appropriate to the schedule time and likely family audience. The basic issue remains of how television can give adequate coverage to important subjects, granted its constant need to review priorities in its selection of newsworthy items to be broadcast.

In the first week of the viewing period "Nationwide" included a "Watchdog!" item claiming the law is an ass because police appear to side with criminals; an analysis of attitudes towards the police in Toxteth, including allegations of repression of blacks by police and employers and suggestions that the riots were externally-prompted. In addition in items about rent rebates, a woman allergic to most 20th century products and about poverty and unemployment, local authorities, the health service, the DHSS and social services were shown to be harsh and uncaring. At the same time there was a constructive and positive feature on the work of the House of Lords.

POLITICS AND POLITICIANS A worrying aspect of this coverage is the unbalanced view of politics and politicians which it makes available. There is a long and honourable tradition of investigative journalism which exists in programmes like "Nationwide" which probe the motives and actions of elected representatives, or stand beside the individual citizen and attempt to assess the effects of political decisions. Nevertheless if the predominant impression offered to young people is that politicians and "the system" are not to be trusted, that they do not care about society, that they are unsympathetic to the needs of the individual, then there may be risk of disillusionment with democratic institutions and procedures.

Many pupils commented on the fact that they avoided watching programmes on politics:

"If you're interested in politics you can find out quite a bit.
Personally I find politics boring so I keep away from them on TV".
(Fourteen year old girl.)

But the position is not retrieved by the presentation of politics in other sorts of programmes watched, perhaps, by more young people. "Hill Street Blues" presents an example of the frustrating overlap between policing and politics, with politicians presented as publicity-seeking opportunists attempting to thwart the efforts of the humane professionals. "The Gaffer", "Shelley" and "The Kenny Everett TV Show" all make scathing references to the motives, speeches or actions of politicians. "Whoops Apocalypse" is an extreme example of cynicism and caricature addressed to the world of politics, where mismanagement, incompetence and greed will inevitably lead to catastrophe.

This is not a case of seeking immunity from attack or caricature for politicians, or indeed for anybody else: but television does present a one-sided picture, with an apparent lack of coverage of those elements in politics which are to do with personal commitment, service to the public, a desire to improve the condition of society through democratic procedures. This is linked with the suggestion of a "them" and "us" problem: "they" represent the government and system and have power, "we" have no power, cannot effect change and therefore need not become too involved.

In reflecting the society in which it operates, television provides images of various groups which make up that society. We noted the portrayal of several such groups in the selected programmes: families, women, old people, children and young people, the handicapped, ethnic minority groups and foreigners, and the unemployed.

VIEWS OF THE FAMILY Families are treated in a variety of ways on television. "Dallas" is an example of the family used as a central device to bind together the plot. The intensity of family feeling within the Ewings of "Dallas" is matched only by the intensity of plot and counter-plot between family members. The luxurious life-style is not based on common family activity or even in a recognisable home: the Ewings normally get together only at breakfast and for evening drinks, and the locations for these activities might as well be a hotel. The family seems to stay together simply to retain power.

"The Dukes of Hazzard" portrays traditional aspects of family life, a close-knit group concerned about kith and kin, with relationships strong yet the structure of the family difficult to identify. The family unit supports its members against the outside world.

"We'll Meet Again" describes the tensions of everyday families under pressure from the cataclysmic events of the Second World War. The social problems shown are easy to identify with - the son who leaves home because he is unable to get on with his father, yet retains his concern for his mother and sister. Family tensions are shown when an affair threatens the stability of the family; problems of disability, attitudes towards pregnancy before marriage - these situations are easily identifiable whatever the period of time.

"Crossroads" incorporates some contemporary family problems - that of a demoralised unemployed man, for example, or the stresses within an Asian family living and working in the Midlands. Unfortunately teachers and pupils agreed that the poor production of the programme made these portrayals unconvincing and predictable. As far as light entertainment programmes are concerned, aspects of a contemporary family scene are shown in "Shelley" where husband and wife explore modern notions of equality tentatively and with humour. Between Shelley and his wife there seems a natural and unforced warmth of domestic feeling, reflecting a situation not often found in the programmes the Committee viewed: marital contentment. In other programmes such as "Emery", "The Glamour Girls" and "The Kenny Everett TV Show" occasional aspects of family life are caricatured. "Family Fortunes" celebrated the advertisers' family norm: smartly dressed, happy, white families compete for material rewards, congratulatory of each other in success, sympathetic in defeat. From what pupils say, it seems that the programme involves viewers in the experience of the successful family.

It is difficult to draw conclusions. Certainly there are examples of the positive and fulfilling aspects of family life, as there are of the difficult and sometimes destructive nature of family relationships. Overall, there appear to be few instances, however, in the programmes watched by large numbers of young people where the experience of contemporary families is explored in depth, with sensitivity or with humour. One 17 year old girl added an interesting view:

"In large families portrayed on TV eg the Ewings in "Dallas", there are always dramatic conflicts taking place, divorces and affairs and it almost seems as if no family can live in perfect harmony with each other with the exception of the "The Waltons" and "Little House on the Prairie", and both of these exceptions are outdated programmes and therefore this gives us the impression that modern families cannot be united in their family life".

WOMEN There was little in the selected programmes which convincingly reflected the changing role of women in contemporary society: the Asian girl in "Crossroads"

and the young wife in "Shelley" were honourable exceptions. In commenting that newsreaders and "Nationwide" interviewers do their job "beautifully", one member of the group noted that the ambiguity in the word "beautifully" characterised much of the presentation of women characters in television drama and light entertainment. On the one hand, there are overt protests in some programmes about the sexual exploitation of women, yet on the other some of the programmes' appeal is based on exactly that exploitation. Some of the group felt strongly that the apparent obsession with women's bodies and the reliance on sexual innuendo to get quick laughs in "The Kenny Everett TV Show" reflected overall a degrading and offensive attitude to women.

Just as demeaning to women is the range of roles they are allocated in "Dallas". With the exception of one, all seem to live their lives through men, who are dominant and manipulative. Women may manipulate men only through their sex appeal: otherwise, they remain flawless ornaments, beautifully attired and always decorative. The growing independence, professional and emotional, of a middle-class woman doctor is one of the main elements in "We'll Meet Again", and contrasts with other examples in the programmes of more traditional roles for women in the 1940s. Though much of the series seems pre-occupied with the American airmen's view of local women as sex objects, there is also a sensitive description of the developing sexuality of a teenage girl as she strives for independence, supported by her mother and brother, and thwarted by her father. Perhaps the clearest portrayal of independent women is in a programme imported from America, "Hill Street Blues". Two leading characters, a lawyer and policewoman, have strong individual personalities and are presented as the equal of men. Many light entertainment programmes continue to rely on comic stereotypes of women in the seaside postcard tradition. Women do read "The News" and share in the interviewing and presentation of "Nationwide". One of the three popular presenters of "Tomorrow's World" is a woman, and the scientific or technological items in the programme do not seem to be allocated to presenters on the basis of any supposed sex bias. Though there are women on the production teams of both "Panorama" and "World in Action", there are currently no female reporters.

Many young people seem aware of the restricted role allocated to women, particularly in fictional programmes:

"Women on TV are always beautiful and well-dressed, such as Sue-Ellen from "Dallas". If anybody kidnaps or threatens them, someone always comes to the rescue. Women are portrayed as weak and defenceless people." (14 year old girl.)

"Women are sex objects on telly. Example: men are never seen in the nude but women are." (14 year old boy.)

OLD PEOPLE There seems considerable under-representation of old people, with little sense that their age and experience are deserving of attention or respect. They are caricatured as senile in "Emery", "Whoops Apocalypse" and "The Kenny Everett TV Show"; an elderly mother-in-law is presented as selfish and cantankerous in "We'll Meet Again", and in news programmes and "Nationwide" they appear most often as victims or problems. Overall, the opportunity to show the valuable contribution which old people can make to society is being lost.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS The main image of children and teenagers emerging from news and current events programmes during the viewing period is one of trouble and conflict: the violence of young children in a Toxteth school, for example, or black teenagers' expectations of police violence and corruption. On the other hand a "World in Action" film on young people in Northern Ireland presents them as resilient, hard-working and coping in a very mature way with the civil disturbances there.

Children, like everybody else, are there to be manipulated in "Dallas". In "Hill Street Blues" their capacity for violence and cruelty is exposed, but often set in the context of adult neglect and urban deprivation. Some of the problems involved in growing up are explored in "We'll Meet Again", but play no part in "The Dukes of Hazzard".

'Smart' young people take part in "Family Fortunes"; more exotic young people are enthusiastic participants in "Top of the Pops", which is the most popular of the selected programmes with young people, watched by more than one in three. It presents a cheerful, colourful picture of young people of various ages and races enjoying themselves, with much stress on exotic lighting, clothes and make-up. Its appeal to young people is varied:

"I like "Top of the Pops" because one it annoys my dad and two I can get absorbed into it and forget the world problems and my problems." (Sixteen year old boy.)

"It is a cheerful, musical and colourful programme. They play some good music and you can see the group or singer at

the same time which isn't the same as listening to the radio. There are also some good videos that are shown. You can keep track of the latest music and there is a lot of dancing and you can also see the latest fashions that they are wearing. You can sing and dance along with it if you are alone." (Sixteen year old girl.)

PEOPLE WITH HANDICAPS The handicapped appeared in the programmes only occasionally, and then as figures either of fun or of menace - or both. The hunchback in "Whoops Apocalypse", the mysterious limping man in "Emery", and a one-eared man in "The Kenny Everett TV Show" are three examples. (The second example seems in direct contravention to the BBC's guidelines on "The Portrayal of Violence in TV Programmes", p.25: "The use of physical disabilities in association with "bad" characters who may employ violence is almost certainly to be avoided.") We particularly regret the absence of positive images of handicapped people on television because many children are not familiar with handicapped people and may assume the popular stereotype, based in literature and films, which links physical abnormality with behavioural aberration. Occasional coverage in current affairs programmes and an item in "Tomorrow's World" which deals with artificial limbs may provide young people with more information, but may tend to confirm a restricted view of handicapped people as "a problem". An attempt is made in "We'll Meet Again" to show the difficulties a man faces in the early stages of disability, having been wounded in the war. His failure to cope with simple things causes tension, and both his need for independence and the responsibilities thrown onto his family, especially the effect upon his wife's conscience, are shown.

UNEMPLOYMENT The unemployed appeared mostly as statistics in news and current events programmes. In human terms television does not yet seem to be reflecting current changes in society, let alone approaching them positively. The emphasis in the situation comedy "Shelley" is not unnaturally on the more light-hearted aspects of outwitting the system rather than on a genuine exploration of the difficulties to be faced.

ETHNIC MINORITIES AND VIEWS OF FOREIGNERS Representation of ethnic minority groups in the programmes viewed was sparse. "Crossroads" included as regulars a West Indian car mechanic and an Asian businessman, and described some of the problems they face. Blacks appeared in small roles only in "Minder": a dishonest car dealer, and a gang boss's henchman during the viewing period. They played no part in "Dallas" or "We'll Meet Again", though it is apparently a matter of history that there were no blacks in the US Air Corps based in Britain during the Second World War. By far the most positive and comprehensive stance was taken in

"Hill Street Blues", in which a multiracial police force is seen to serve its multiracial community: one of the black policemen, a leading character in the programme, is seen to be both more articulate as a human being and more effective as a policeman than his white colleague.

Young people of all nationalities mix apparently unselfconsciously in "Top of the Pops" but elsewhere in light entertainment programmes the picture is bleak. "Emery" included an episode in which the two detectives are confronted by drunken, black savages engaged in voodoo and eating cockroaches. "Let's get back to civilisation", said Emery at the end. "Whoops Apocalypse" mocked Islamic law, and "Mind your Language" included a rather ambivalent sequence in which an Asian fails to recognise his own voice because it sounds like a foreigner's. No black families were featured on "Family Fortunes" during the viewing period.

Black newsreaders and interviewers are involved in BBC news, ITN, and "Nationwide". There are none in the reporting teams on "Panorama", "World in Action" or "Tomorrow's World". "Police" included a chilling sequence in which an officer described to a class of trainees the supposed racial characteristics of ethnic minority groups. The overall impression gained from news items involving ethnic minority groups was negative, with the focus frequently on conflict rather than any possible contribution they might be making.

"Mind Your Language" depends for its humour upon the premise that foreigners' language, dress, manners and beliefs are humorous together with their inability to understand English properly. There is no explicit suggestion that the British or their language are superior. Elsewhere stock caricatures abound: Italians in "Emery" are shifty, greasy and unreliable; the recurrent Frenchman, a sort of cross between Charles Boyer and Maurice Chevalier, brings romance to "The Kenny Everett TV Show"; stupid Irish are everywhere; a solemnly efficient German policeman in "Minder" relentlessly pursues his man; and "Whoops Apocalypse" provides a galaxy of different foreign stereotypes. By far the most intensive coverage is of Americans, mainly, of course, through imported American programmes such as "Dallas". "We'll Meet Again" attempted a range of American characters, perhaps too many for the time available. Overall, in drama and light entertainment the treatment of foreigners is crude and unsympathetic, all too often sowing the seeds of stereotypes or confirming them.

Against these fictional representations, news and current events programmes provide much factual information, and many contacts with foreign statesmen and their peoples: "World in Action" reported on human conflicts in Guatemala. "Panorama" included an investigation of the real state of affairs in Afghanistan and interviews with Mr Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Mrs Gandhi of India.

In summary, there was a distinct under-representation in the selected programmes of the groups we studied, with too few positive and realistic images of them made available. There was little suggestion of the part they were playing, or might play, in contemporary society, and such treatment as there was in the selected programmes tended to reinforce stereotypes, or link members of these groups to a problem. In giving insufficient coverage to these groups, television is not only giving a distorted view of the society in which it operates; it is also missing opportunities to provide a richer, more varied coverage of human experience and restricting itself to too narrow, well-worn and sometimes trivial a view of life.

REGIONAL DIVERSITY It was unfortunate, too, that the most detailed exploration of regional diversity amongst the programmes viewed was in a programme which does not reflect contemporary life: "We'll Meet Again", based in East Anglia. There did not seem much attempt to reflect the culture of ethnic minority groups: indeed, "Mind Your Language" may be counter-productive in this. "The Gaffer" in its title and in the flavour of its humour reflects an unspecified area of the North, and "Minder" also attempts through dialect and wit to establish a strong London atmosphere. Weekly general slots and daily "Nationwide" slots are available for viewers to see their own local programmes, but it would be interesting to know the degree to which this arrangement precludes regional items from being shown nationally. Certainly we were disappointed by the apparent lack of diversity in the programmes viewed, and by the strong bias towards the South and particularly London as the source of programme materials.

VIEWS OF THE FUTURE As for the future, "Tomorrow's World" carried to young people a strong message that science and technology are making the world a better place. Its viewing figures of one in five young people are impressive and as a "taster" programme covering 7 items in 25 minutes, it seems excellent. The amount of time allotted allows no more than a brief exploration of the subject so that it is not possible, for example, to describe the social implications of the development. The items are shared between one female and two male presenters, and their approach is cheerful and informal rather than didactic. Attractive and striking visual aids are included, and an atmosphere of suspense and fun is created through the "live" presentation of the greater part of the programme. What this

format makes difficult is conveying a sense of the relative importance of each item, and, often, suggesting to the programme's large audience where it might seek more detailed information. The vast majority of pupils enjoy "Tomorrow's World" and find it interesting.

The other programme viewed which looks to the future was "Whoops Apocalypse". Its cynical assumption that world leaders are mad and that therefore nuclear war is inevitable certainly painted a depressing picture. Some of us feel that nuclear disaster is not a proper topic for comedy, but those who accept that it may be felt that in spite of some clever ideas and funny one-line jokes, the programme relied too heavily on crude caricature and displayed an ambivalent and rather sick fascination with the violence it portrayed. With no hint of amendment or reform, it lacked satirical bite.

4. CONCLUSION

(a) In the programmes viewed there was a high level of professional and technical excellence and much of the output of BBC and ITV was interesting and entertaining. It is important to bear in mind the quality and acceptability of much of British television, particularly when concentrating on that which is controversial or anxiety-provoking. It is also important, particularly for teachers, to avoid falling into the trap of conferring greater value per se on programmes which set out to educate and inform than on those whose primary aim is to entertain.

(b) Having said that it became clear in the course of discussions with producers and others working for the BBC and ITV companies that there was little agreement among them about the wider educational influence and possibilities of television. Producers often assumed that any discussion of the educational role of the programmes was an attempt to press them into taking a more didactic stance in their productions. This defensiveness militated against a thorough examination of how programmes of all kinds make available to young people images of the world and in this sense, and often more directly, disseminate information and opinions as well as relaying particular attitudes and values. For a minority of children the products of television may be the main source of significant influence on the way in which their images of certain groups develop: for example, the images of black people built up by those children who never meet blacks in real life.

(c) Despite the work and efforts of the BBC's weekly Programme Review Boards, the regular studies of audience reaction carried out by both BBC and IBA, and of the various advisory groups, there was relatively little evidence among producers of a concerned awareness of just how powerful an influence their programmes may be on the

lives of young people. In both the BBC and ITV companies too often it was assumed that if teachers were interested in the educational impact of television then schools programmes must be their main concern. It is not possible to separate the responsibilities to educate and to entertain into such self-contained boxes. Yet it seems that programme makers often do so. As a consequence they fail to recognise or act upon the conflict and continuity between the duties to educate and to entertain. It is this failure to link the two that causes concern to teachers, parents and others. For many outside the professional world of television there is a worrying and obvious contradiction between, for example, the exploration of crime, violence or the causes and consequences of war in programmes intended to educate and inform, and the treatment of these same themes in television drama and light entertainment. There is a desire for balance and some consistency that for most people falls far short of anything that could be described as censorship. But there should be at the least a clearer recognition among those in television at all levels that just as entertainment should not be missing from that which is primarily educational, education does not stop just because a programme is described as a play, a feature film or light entertainment.

(d) The imminent arrival of Channel 4, the present video boom and the potential of cable television all underline the urgency with which those working in television must consider their role with reference to children. Already through video clubs young people can have regular access to material which would be unacceptable to many adults; many young people now have access to video recorders which enable them to replay television material however often and at whatever time they choose; American research suggests that the more television channels that are available to young people, the more restricted becomes their taste as they become less likely to try something "new". How will broadcasters respond to these future developments, and how high a priority will their educational responsibilities have? In the past producers have too often used the lack of clear and consistent research evidence about the effects of television on young people as an excuse for their avoidance of such questions.

(e) Schools, too, must review their responsibilities with reference to young people's experience of television. The fact that most children between five and fourteen spend more time watching television than they do working in a classroom underlines the magnitude of the part which television plays in their lives. There are few aspects of life about which television does not pass on messages to young people. Teachers now know what many of their pupils do in their leisure time, insofar as much of the evening is spent in the common experience of watching the same programmes on television. There are obvious opportunities for teachers to

share some of this experience and to put it to constructive use in the classroom. It may be that the nature of the medium makes certain sorts of presentation almost inevitable: the drama series is drawn to 'soap opera', with social context and depth giving way to tortuous personal relationships; the complex industrial dispute is reduced to a personal confrontation between representatives of two extreme positions; previous success and public expectations lead comedy towards stereotypes of character and plot; the normal routine is ignored, the colourful, unusual or controversial is highlighted. It must certainly be part of the educator's responsibility to explain these pressures to young people. In some schools, both primary and secondary, considerable attention has been given to the discussion of television programmes seen at home. Bodies such as the British Film Institute's Education Department and The Society for Education in Film and Television have been offering advice and in-service training to teachers for many years, and a small number of secondary schools have courses in media studies which may lead to public examination at CSE or O level. Both the BBC and ITV have themselves put on television programmes for schools which looked critically at their network programmes, although the present copyright position which among other things makes it illegal for schools to record evening television programmes for subsequent educational use in the classroom is a considerable handicap. But specialist courses in media studies are not enough: all teachers should be involved in examining and discussing television programmes with young people.

(f) The vast majority of young people's viewing takes place at home and this lays considerable responsibility on parents to control the amount and nature of the viewing, and to discuss what young people have seen. This is no easy task because young people often have different interests from adults, and in quite properly seeking to cater for those different interests, specific programmes are aimed at particular age groups.

(g) Parents and teachers have common concerns about the impact of television on the views and attitudes of young people. The debate about these matters tends to be confined to public confrontation between those taking up extreme positions in respect of particular programmes. There is an undoubted need for arrangements at appropriate levels to enable programme makers, teachers and parents to explore together their different but related responsibilities in understanding better the impact of television upon the young and seeking to ensure that it is a positive and constructive influence.

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- Mr Dennis Bevan, Headmaster, Rose Hill Day Special School, Warndon, Worcester.
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- Mrs Helen Firth, Stanton County Primary School, Stanton, Suffolk.
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QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF PROGRAMMES VIEWED

1. What picture emerges from the programme of:
- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) families and family life | g) different social classes |
| b) women | h) homosexuals |
| c) ethnic minority groups | i) handicapped people |
| d) old people | j) the police |
| e) children and teenagers | k) foreigners |
| f) the unemployed | |

Evidence may come from direct representation of people in these groups, or from others' reactions to / comments about them.

2. What clues are given which might contribute to a young person's definition of a hero? or of a successful person? are heroes set in a convincing social context? are there stereotypes of successful people?
3. What is the range of circumstances in which authority is challenged in the programmes? How are conflicts, physical and / or verbal, resolved? what are the attitudes conveyed (by writer, producer or characters) towards resolution of conflict by physical violence?
4. Does the content of the programme reflect the regional, cultural and religious diversity of Britain? What information is given about these topics?
5. What picture of the future is given to young people in terms of the world of work, the impact of science and technology, the possibility of social change, environmental issues?
6. What information is given about people involved in politics and about the political process generally at local, national and international levels?
7. NEWS AND CURRENT EVENTS SUPPLEMENT

In addition to the questions above, please also consider these with reference to programmes viewed:

- a) How was the separation of fact from comment handled?
- b) Was "balance" achieved? If not, in what ways was the programme distorted? If there was debate, was the form of debate appropriate?
- c) What were the roles of the BBC / ITV presenters? If an interview took place, what was the interviewer's attitude to the subject(s)?
- d) What were the roles of the external experts/spokesmen/interviewees?
- e) Was too much / about the right amount / too little time given to the issue? What effect did pressure of time have? Should the total amount of time have been allocated otherwise?

NOTES

1. These questions are offered as a guide only. Please do not feel bound by them. Important general themes, such as relationships (including sexual relationships), are very relevant.

2. Please classify the strength of your opinion by making a note as follows after each comment on the report sheet:

3. strong view

2. normal opinion

1. tentative judgement

DATE

PROGRAMME TITLE

COMMITTEE MEMBER

WHIP

(please circle)

3 2 1

1. Groups (please specify by letter)

2. QUALITIES OF HERO/SUCCESS

3. ATTITUDES TO AUTHORITY/CONFLICT/VIOLENCE

4. REGIONAL DIVERSITY

5. PICTURE OF FUTURE

6. ARGUMENT/ PRESENTATION OF ISSUES

7. POLITICS

8. SUMMARY (please circle if appropriate)

Superficial and trivial	1	2	3	4	5	perceptive and in depth
traditional and accepted	1	2	3	4	5	new and challenging
easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	hard to understand
sympathetic and friendly	1	2	3	4	5	unsympathetic and hostile
wide, mass interest appeal	1	2	3	4	5	narrow, minority interest and appeal
a good programme of its kind	1	2	3	4	5	a poor programme of its kind

9. ANY OTHER COMMENTS

DATE

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NEWS AND CURRENT EVENTS SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT SHEET

1. Fact / Comment

2. Balance

3. Presenters

4. External guests

5. Time

6. Other comments

THE PROGRAMMES

The programmes selected for viewing by the Committee were:

Drama

- a. "Crossroads", Central. Three times weekly, 6.30 pm.
"Crossroads" is a long-established serial based on a motel in the Midlands. It deals with the personal and professional lives of the motel's owners, staff, guests and local community, and is watched regularly by over 25% of the UK population; its audience contains many young people.
- b. "Dallas", BBC1. Saturday, 9.00 pm.
"Dallas" is a weekly American serial based on the Ewings, a family of oil tycoons.
- c. "The Dukes of Hazzard" BBC1. Saturday, 5.15 pm
Two teenage boys, a girl and their elderly uncle are the heroes of this American comic drama series.
- d. "Hill Street Blues". Most ITV companies. Monday, 9.00 pm.
"Hill Street Blues" is an American series set in a New York police precinct.
- e. "McClain's Law". BBC1. Friday, 9.25 pm.
"McClain's Law" is a traditional American police series.
- f. "Minder". Thames. Wednesday, 9.00 pm.
A crime series, featuring two central characters, Terry and Arthur, and normally set in London.
- g. "We'll Meet Again". London Weekend. Friday, 9.00 pm.
"We'll Meet Again" is a serial based on the arrival of US airmen in an East Anglian community during the Second World War.

Light entertainment

- a. "Emery". BBC1. Tuesday, 8.00 pm.
This series of "Emery" is different from Dick Emery's previous shows in that it takes the form of a comedy serial, with Emery and friend as detectives hired to find six missing persons.
- b. "Family Fortunes". Central. Friday, 7.00 pm.
A quiz which is one of the most popular programmes of all, particularly with younger children and older people. It features a contest between two families, the skill involved being to guess as accurately as possible what other people have answered to questions put to the contestants. Success is rewarded with both cash prizes and a range of consumer goods.
- c. "The Gaffer". Yorkshire. Thursday, 8.30 pm.
"The Gaffer" is a comic series built around the talent of Bill Maynard who plays the boss of a small, run-down light engineering firm.
- d. "The Glamour Girls". Granada. Tuesday, 8.00 pm.
"The Glamour Girls" is a situation comedy featuring two young women, of contrasting characters, who work for Glamgirl Ltd and are required by their boss to promote a variety of products or ideas.
- e. "Kenny Everett Television Show". BBC1. Thursday, 8.00 pm.
The programme is typically a series of comic sketches, many featuring Everett in a variety of disguises; there is also pop music and dance.
- f. "Mind Your Language". London Weekend. Saturday, 6.15 pm.
The basic scene for the comedy series "Mind Your Language" is a language school, and most of the humour derives from the foreign pupils' inability to speak the English language.
- g. "Shelley". Thames. Thursday, 9.00 pm.
"Shelley" is a situation comedy based on the life of a young unemployed man, his wife and their baby.

- h. "Top of the Pops". BBC1. Thursday, 7.20 pm.
"Top of the Pops" is based on currently successful records of pop music. Some of the groups involved mime their records to the studio audience, others have pre-recorded their music on video.
- i. "Whoops Apocalypse". London Weekend. Sunday, 10.00 pm.
"Whoops Apocalypse" is a situation comedy serial describing the final stages of our world before it is overtaken by nuclear catastrophe.

News and Current Events

- a. Early Evening News. BBC1. Weekdays, 5.40 pm.
ITN at 5.45. ITV. Weekdays, 5.45 pm.
- b. Nationwide. BBC1. Weekdays, 6.25 pm.
- c. Panorama. BBC1. Monday, 8.10 pm.
- d. World in Action. Granada. Monday, 8.30 pm.

Science/Features

- a. Tomorrow's World. BBC1. Thursday, 6.55 pm.
A typical programme includes seven short items, two on film, five live in the studio, about aspects of technological, medical, scientific or environmental progress.
- b. Police. BBC1. Monday, 9.55pm.
The documentary series "Police" recorded the work of the Thames Valley Police in a style known as "cinema verite".