VIOLENCE ON THE AIR:

AN ANALYSIS OF RADIO DRAMA

by

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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Chairman

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DEDICATION

To Ron: His help was indispensable; to Lesley: for bearing with me throughout the whole process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Between the dark and the daylight,
There comes from each radio tower
A series of gentle broadcasts
That are known as the Children's Hour.

And the girls and the boys are gathered
To listen with bated breath
To educational programs
Of Murder and Sudden Death.

. . . .

And these educational programs
Will make the youngsters cower
And the night will be filled with nightmares
Induced by the Children's Hour!
<div align="right">(Braley, 1937, p. 45)</div>

The concern of parents over the effects of broadcast violence on their children has not been limited to the television age. One cannot help but be struck by the similarity of articles today about the effects of televised violence and those printed some 40 years ago in <u>Parent's Magazine</u> and various other periodicals--about radio. Such articles and the similar nature of content on radio then and television in the 1970's give indications of a stable system operating. "Emphasis is placed on gore and violence. The other ingredients necessary to dramatic continuity are presented merely as camouflage" (Gibson, 1938, p. 294). Another stated that "every form of crime known to man is

either committed or suggested in the majority of juvenile programs on the radio today" (Mann, 1933, p. 313). Violence on the air waves did not originate on television, and parents rearing their children during radio's "Golden Age" were equally concerned with what effects exposure to this violence might have on the children. The radio dramas were called "over-stimulating, often terrifying, producing bad after-effects of sleeplessness, fright, and nervous symptoms in children" (Littledale, 1933, p. 13). _Time Magazine_ reported in 1940 that a St. Louis probation officer listened regularly to _Gang Busters_ to find out what crimes St. Louis juveniles would be committing in the coming week.

Television is often blamed for contributing to violence in our society, and advertisers and the networks have been pressured by the National Parent-Teachers Association and the American Medical Association to remove much of the violence. Again, such efforts were not limited to television. In 1934 the Michigan Child Study Association sent a petition to the sponsor of _Little Orphan Annie_ protesting "on the grounds that it is unwholesome entertainment for children, is over-stimulating and places too much emphasis on crime" (Mann, 1934, p. 246). DeFleur (1971) analyzed the mass media as a social system. He stated:

> When a formula is discovered for eliciting attention
> and influencing purchasing decisions from any large
> segment of the audience it will be abandoned by the

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media only with great reluctance, if at all. . . . the probability that our system of mass communication can be drastically altered by the occasional outbursts of critics seems small indeed. (p. 83)

Much research has focused on the question of the effects of televised violence: The most notable study was the report to the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior. This study focused on three major research questions:

(a) the characteristics of television program content; (b) the characteristics of the audience; and (c) the potential impact of televised violence on the attitudes, values, and behavior of the viewer. (Murray, 1973, p. 473)

The studies contained in the report revealed three main findings: (2) There is considerable violence portrayed on the television screen. For example, in 1969 one hour of cartoon programming, aimed specifically at young children, contained six times as many violent episodes as an adult hour. (2) Young children view a considerable amount of television, in the course of which they are exposed to a considerable amount of televised violence. (3) There are a number of studies which point to the conclusion that viewing televised violence causes the viewer to become more aggressive. Murray (1973) reported these studies showed children who viewed aggressive programs demonstrated a greater willingness to hurt another child; and one long-range study found that preference for violent programs by boys at age eight was significantly related to aggressive

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and delinquent behavior displayed 10 years later.
Gerbner's (1976) Cultural Indicators research shows a
higher perception of violence in society occurs in heavy
television viewers compared with the perceptions of light
viewers.

Research into the effects of radio violence is vir-
tually nonexistent. Communication research, especially
covering effects, is a very recent development. Violent
dramatic radio programs are now rarely broadcast, and we
are in a position to look at such programs and their
content in a historical perspective; in order to draw some
conclusions about radio's contribution to violence on the
air, and the evolution of broadcasting as a system.

Justification of the Study

Crime and violence are on the increase in our society,
and police statistics indicate that over half of all
crimes are committed by persons under the age of eighteen.
The opinions are many and varied about the cause of this
disturbing trend, but many believe that television, as a
powerful communication force, must accept its share of the
blame. A recent Gallup poll revealed that some 70% of
those interviewed blamed televised violence, at least in
part, for the rising crime rate. In 1954, a similar
Gallup poll revealed that 24% of the adult respondents
thought that mystery and crime programs on radio and tele-

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vision should take "a great deal" of the blame for teenage crime, while another 32% believed the programs should take "some" of the blame (Erskine, 1974).

There is little doubt that television programs are high in violence content. Gerbner's (in Murray, 1973) earliest content analysis studies of television programs from 1967 through 1969 showed eight of 10 television plays containing some form of violence, with episodes occurring at the rate of five per play, or eight episodes per hour. The leading violent program format was cartoons, which contained six times as many violent episodes in an hour as in an adult hour. Greenberg (1974) reported that United States programs purchased for British television have "so much greater an emphasis on violence that, though constituting only 12% of all programs, they contained nearly 25% of all major violent acts" (p. 532).

Indeed, many statements have been made about the relationship between crime and televised violence. The research contained in the Surgeon General's Report was summed up in the following statement: "While the data are by no means wholly consistent or conclusive, there is evidence that a modest relationship does exist between the viewing of violence and aggressive behavior" (Surgeon General's Committee, 1972, p. 183). A statement contained in the report from the National Committee on the Causes and Prevention of Violence concluded that televised

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violence does encourage real violence, especially among children belonging to poor and disorganized families.

Perhaps more disturbing than these generalizations are the isolated incidents reported by Skornia (1965) in which individuals accused of crimes had imitated similar crimes on television. He took the position that "the argument that television 'only triggers' those individuals who are already predisposed is hardly a reassuring defense for industry leadership to use" (p. 174). He cited authorities such as Justice Curtis Bok of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania who, on the basis of his study of crime records, listed crime and violence shows as one of five primary causes of delinquency; and James V. Bennett of the United States Bureau of Prisons who spoke of television as a "school for crime" (cited in Skornia, 1965, p. 170). Skornia concluded:

> Radio and television not only can and do teach, but cannot help teaching. There is no longer any question of what they teach, whether intentional or unintentional. (p. 143)

If television does contribute to violence in our society, then it is reasonable to assume radio also contributed, and the nature and extent of the violence inherent in radio drama programs should be examined. Comparisons may be made between the violence content of these radio programs and that of television programs, thereby adding to the body of research into media violence. The data will enable us to determine if the violence content of broad-

cast drama has increased, decreased, or remained relatively constant. It will also aid in the analysis of the evolution of the system.

Many articles were written about the violence heard on radio, but the content of these articles was confined to descriptions contained in historical studies of radio and the previously cited articles by those concerned with the effects of radio violence on the children of the 1930's and 1940's. There were no content analysis studies of the radio dramas; no experimental research examining the effects of listening to the violent programs. The few studies concerning radio and children covered such subjects as the effectiveness of children's radio programs. Longstaff (1936) concluded that "a large majority of children listen to children's radio programs" (p. 218). He conducted another study (1937) which surveyed mothers' opinions of these programs with results showing that almost half of the mothers believed the programs to be unsuitable; they disapproved of shooting people, calling attention to crime and tragedy, and poor standards of heroism. A study done by DeBoer (1937) disclosed the fact that children spent from two to three hours daily in voluntary listening to the radio, and the most popular type of program for them was the drama. The radio dramas that were presumably high in violence content were undeniably popular with adults as well as children, a fact that is revealed by a

preliminary investigation of the average ratings.

Violence on radio, although aural rather than visual, was no less real to the listeners, both adult and child. "Radio dramas absolutely required imagination and those series that best provided it were rewarded with the greater success" (Harmon, 1967, p. 260). The fact that many programs were accepted as real is probably best illustrated by the panic that followed Orson Welles' production of War of the Worlds.

> The most general reaction was one of amazement at the "incredible stupidity" and "gullibility" of the American public, who had accepted as real, in this single broadcast, incidents which in actual fact would have taken days or even weeks to occur. (Houseman, 1972, p. 367)

In 1940, the Chairman of the Committee on Criminal Law and Procedure of the Federal Bar Association called for a study of the crime programs for possible Federal legislation and regulations (Journal of Criminal Law, 1940). Of course, such legislation never became a reality; possibly the endeavors of the Federal Bar Association to clean up the air waves was interrupted by World War II. I may only speculate what the effects on television program content would be if such legislation had ever been passed.

Statement of the Problem

I propose to examine the violence content of selected radio thriller dramas, from both daytime and evening hours,

and compare the results of this investigation with those obtained by present research in the violence content on television.

The questions I will attempt to answer are:

1. What conclusions may be drawn concerning the effects of viewing televised violence? This may be answered by a review of the current research into the effects of televised violence.

2. What was the climate of opinion of parents, educators, and psychologists about the possible effects of the radio thriller dramas on the children who listened to them? This may be answered by a historical survey of the opinions given by parents, educators and psychologists obtained by reviewing published statements about these effects, and a review of actions taken by parents' groups.

3. What was the nature and extent of violence on adult radio drama from 1931 through 1962? This may be answered by analyzing the content of a representative sample of adult radio thriller dramas.

4. What was the nature and extent of violence in children's radio drama from 1931 through 1962? This may be answered by analyzing the content of a representative sample of children's radio thriller dramas.

5. What is the nature and extent of violence in adult and children's television programs, and how does it compare with the violence content of the radio thriller dramas?

This may be answered through a comparison of the literature on research into television violence content with the data presented in this study.

6. What conclusions may be reached concerning the stability of broadcasting as a system by this comparison of violence content?

Method

This will be a descriptive study, employing content analysis to determine the amount of violence contained in the selected sample of radio programs, and an archival study to determine the possible effects of the violence.

I will examine published materials, including articles, books, and newspapers; and attempt to draw some conclusions about the effects of radio violence on children as reported by parents, educational authorities, and psychologists since there are no experimental studies on the subject of radio violence. I will analyze the violence content of a representative sample of the following radio thriller dramas and compare it with the violence content of similar television programs. These thriller dramas were broadcast in the evening hours: Sherlock Holmes (1931-1955); The Green Hornet (1936-1952); I Love a Mystery (1939-1952); Gang Busters (1935-1957); Mr. District Attorney (1939-1951); David Harding, Counterspy (1939-1951); The Shadow (1931-1954); Inner Sanctum (1941-1950); Lights Out (1935-1947);

Ellery Queen (1937-1948); Big Town (1937-1952); Mr. Keen,
Tracer of Lost Persons (1937-1954); and Suspense (1942-
1962).

These thriller dramas were broadcast in the daytime:
Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy (1933-1951); Superman
(1940-1951); Buck Rogers (1932-1947); Dick Tracy (1935-
1948); Tom Mix (1933-1950); Captain Midnight and the Secret
Squadron (1940-1949); The Lone Ranger (1933-1956); Terry
and the Pirates (1937-1948).

The above programs were selected for these reasons:
(1) The evening thriller dramas will provide a comparison
with prime-time action television programs; the daytime
thriller dramas will provide a comparison with cartoons
and weekend morning action programs, since these types were
all designed specifically for children. (2) The thriller
dramas are presumed to have some violence content; Martin
Halperin, Director of the Archives of the Pacific Pioneer
Broadcasters, stated that violence was contained in all
shows on the list. Gerbner and Gross (1976) stated that
"action" programs contributed the most violence to tele-
vision drama; such programs comprised more than half of all
prime-time and weekend daytime programming. This is
probably similar to the programming on radio; Mahlen (1949)
stated that in 1948 sponsors bought more time for suspense
and mystery than for any other type of program. (3) The
popularity of these thriller dramas, as shown by high

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ratings, and by the length of time each was on the air (the shortest life span of any of the programs was nine years, and one lasted 24 years).

A two-stage random sample of the programs will be drawn, due to the wide variance of number of episodes available for each show. Only three episodes were located for some of the programs; whereas some have over 200 available episodes. A list will be compiled of all available recordings of each program, numbered sequentially, and three episodes will be selected randomly from each of the series. Since these programs tended to be much the same in format the entire time they were broadcast, I will assume this sample to be representative of each program's content. A second random sample will be drawn of 15 adult thriller dramas and 10 children's thriller dramas, which will be more than one-third of the total number of programs selected in the first stage sample.

The violence content of these programs will be analyzed in the same manner as Gerbner has analyzed the violence content of television programs. The play was the basic context unit; and units of analysis within the play were leading characters and scenes of violent action. The measures of the amounts of violence were prevalence, rate and role.

> The prevalence of violence in the program samples is expressed as the percent of plays, program hours, or both, containing any violence at all. This shows the

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likelihood of encountering (or chances of avoiding) violence in the course of nonselective viewing. The rate of violence expresses the frequency and concentration of violent action in the samples. It is based on scenes of violence (violent episodes between the same opponents). The number of violent episodes divided by the total number of plays (whether violent or not) yielded the rate per all programs; the same number divided by the total number of program hours gave the rate per all hours. Roles related to violence are those of leading characters committing violence, falling victim to it, or both. Each of these roles was separately computed; so was the percentage of those involved in lethal violence and fatal victimization. (Gerbner, 1972, pp. 33-34)

These measures were used to compute two intermediate indicators; program score (PS), and character score (CS). The program score is the sum of the percent of programs containing violence, the rate of violent episodes per play, and the rate of violent episodes per hour. The character score represents the sum of the percentage of all leading characters committing violence, suffering violence, or both; and the percentage of those involved in killing as killers or victims, or both. The final indicator is the violence index, obtained by adding the program score to the character score. Analyzing the violence content of the sample of radio thriller dramas by this method will provide a ready comparison with the violence content of television as shown by the yearly violence index. Prevalence, rate, and role violence; program score and character score will be listed for each of the programs, to be computed from the sample episodes. The violence index will be computed for

all adult thriller dramas, to provide a comparison with the violence index for prime time action shows; including crime, western, and action-adventure television programs. The violence index will also be computed for the children's thriller dramas, to provide a comparison with the violence index for television cartoons and weekend morning action shows. The total number of violent acts for each show will also be listed for comparison with total number of violent acts for the above listed television program types.

Content analysis as a method of field study is of great value to mass media research; few methods are so well suited to the goal of describing and analyzing the structure and function of a system advocated by Fisher (1976). Babbie (1973) states that one advantage of content analysis is that of "providing a systematic examination of materials that are more typically evaluated on an impressionistic basis" (p. 35). Other strengths and weaknesses of content analysis studies and archival studies are similar in nature. Two advantages are low cost and availability of materials. There is a large amount of materials available: Newspapers, periodicals and journals from this period of time are easily found; many hobbyists and former broadcasters have gone to great lengths to preserve as many of the radio programs as possible. A study of this type need cost very little: The printed archives are available in

many libraries; the tapes are available at little or no
cost. Another advantage is the ease with which the study
could be replicated. The major disadvantage is sampling
error. The "universe" of articles from publications may
not be representative of the opinions of parents concerning
the effects of radio violence. If any parents applauded
the Children's Hour, it was probably not newsworthy, and
the study is limited to this recorded data. The "universe"
of available tapes is not the entire universe of programs
broadcast, as many have been lost. Also, "the type of
documents selected for examination may not provide the
most appropriate reflection of the variable under study. ...
scoring methods almost always have an arbitrary element"
(Babbie, 1973, p. 35). Another disadvantage of such studies
is the difficulty of developing indices. The use of the
aforementioned indices for analyzing television program
content will overcome this disadvantage. The issues of
reliability and validity must also be taken into consider-
ation. Holsti (1969) states that there is no single
solution for the problem of reliability; however, careful
design of the catagories will help insure an acceptable
level of reliability; content validity should be assured
by a representative sample and careful listing of cate-
gories.

Definitions of Terms

Violence will be defined in the same manner as Gerbner defined it in his study. Acts were recorded as violent only if containing "the overt expression of physical force against others or self, or the compelling of action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed" (Gerbner, 1972, p. 31). The definition of leading characters as units of analysis is "all those who play leading parts representing the principal types essential to the story and to the thematic elements (including violence) significant to the play" (Gerbner, 1972, p. 32). Scenes of violent action, the other unit of analysis, are defined as "those confined to the same agents of violence" (Gerbner, 1972, p. 32). Each of these scenes were considered a single unit of analysis if the violence was restricted to the same actors. When new agents of violence entered the scene, then this scene became a new violent episode.

The radio programs to be analyzed are defined as thriller dramas, a specific program type listed by Summers (1971) in A Thirty-Year History of Radio Programs: 1926-1956. This category contained programs of either crime, western, or action-adventure type, which was the same as contained in the television category of action shows.

Limitations of the Study

Gerbner analyzed all prime-time and Saturday morning

programs telecast during selected weeks each year for his content analysis study of televised violence. This included comedies and feature films, as well as cartoons and crime, western and action-adventure dramas. I will limit this study to a representative sample of popular radio thriller dramas, as an analysis of every program type on radio during the time period of 1931 to 1962 is beyond the scope of this study. The study is limited to these years since no programs chosen to be analyzed were on the air before 1931 or after 1962.

The analysis of violence content will be limited to the three measures (prevalence, rate and role) and the three indicators (program score, character score and violence index) for each program. A violence index score will be given for the adult thriller dramas, to compare with the violence index for prime time action shows on television; and a violence index score for the combined children's thriller dramas, to compare with the violence index for cartoons and weekend morning action shows. The number of violent acts per program will also be listed for comparisons with similar data on television programs. Gerbner also provided data on television violence content according to network, time and place of the violent action; and sex, age, and occupation of the characters. Presenta- of this data for the radio programs is also beyond the scope of this study.

Feasibility of the Study

There is a great deal of published material readily available on the opinions of parents, educators, and psychologists about the possible effects of radio violence on children. Audio tapes for the content analysis portion exist in several places. One is Memphis State University, which has over 117 program packages available for dubbing. The cost is for blank tapes and postage. Another is the Radiola Company, a commercial company with an extensive collection of tapes and disc recordings; and a number of private collectors also sell tapes. The cost of these tapes and discs is nominal.

Preview of the Study

The second chapter will contain an analysis of broadcasting as a system. The third chapter will present a review of samples of current research into the effects of viewing televised violence. The fourth chapter will examine the possible effects of radio violence on children who listened, through a historical survey of the statements made by parents, educators, and psychologists about these effects. This chapter will also list some of the actions taken by parents' groups or other organizations to remove the violence from radio. Chapter 5 will present an analysis of the violence content of the sample of adult thriller dramas; Chapter 6 will present an analysis of the violence

content of the sample of children's radio thriller dramas.
These two chapters will provide insight into the nature
and extent of the violence inherent in the radio dramas.
In the seventh chapter, I will compare the data discovered
through the content analysis of the radio programs with
similar data for television programs. The eighth chapter
will contain a summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF BROADCASTING AS A SYSTEM

General Systems Theory may be used to analyze broadcasting as a system; one that appears stable, evolving from radio to television. The emphasis will be on the structure of television as a system in 1979.

DeFleur (1971) analyzed the mass media as a social system: His analysis included several forms of mass communication--newspapers, radio, television, films, magazines, and books. Most of his points made may be applied to a systems analysis narrowed to broadcasting only, but I believe broadcasting should be analyzed apart from other mass media. Gerbner and Gross (1976) suggest that the essential differences between television and other media are much more crucial than the similarities; the similarities between radio before television and television today are quite striking.

A Review of DeFleur's Analysis

DeFleur stated that a functional analysis of a social system focuses upon a specific repetitive phenomenon which has consequences that contribute to the stability and permanence of the system as a whole: He posited that this

phenomenon in the media system is "low-taste" content,

defined as "content that has been widely held to contribute

to a lowering of taste, disruption of morals, or stimulation

toward socially unacceptable conduct (whether or not such

charges are true)" (p. 73). Since this type of content

caters to those who make up the bulk of the market,

financial equilibrium is maintained. DeFleur pointed to

the fact the media has the ability to survive while pro-

viding audiences with content which critics condemn as

"being in bad taste or even downright dangerous" (p. 63).

His first major component of the mass media system was

the audience. The second component was the organizations

devoted to research (measuring audience preferences). The

distributor was third; this component included local out-

lets as subsystems, such as newspaper syndicates, broad-

casting networks and movie chains. Fourth was the pro-

ducers of content; fifth, the sponsor; sixth, the adver-

tising agencies; and finally, the legislative bodies which

exert control over the system. DeFleur stated most of the

components are occupational role structures which operate

through money.

> To obtain money, they are all ultimately dependent
> upon the most central component of all--the audience.
> Unless its decisions to give attention, to purchase,
> to vote, etc., are made in favorable ways, the system
> would undergo severe strain and would eventually
> collapse." (p. 80)

Thus, the type of entertainment content that will gain the

largest audience is low-taste content because most of the audience is comprised of individuals whose prior socialization has not provided them with standards for appreciation of the arts. Nonetheless, this segment of the audience has great purchasing power. However, DeFleur does acknowledge that "high-taste" content and "non-debated" content do exist in the media.

I am in agreement with many features of DeFleur's analysis, especially this statement:

> When a formula is discovered for eliciting attention and influencing purchasing decisions from any large segment of the audience it will be abandoned by the media only with great reluctance, if at all. . . . the probability that our system of mass communication in this respect can be drastically altered by the occasional outbursts of critics seems small indeed. (p. 83)

This study may show the stability of one particular type of content; that is violence, which has been criticized more than any other type content since the beginning of entertainment programming on radio, then television.

DeFleur believes low-taste content plays an important part in the financial equilibrium of this system. However, the content structure of broadcasting may be different from the other mass media. In other forms of media, the relative popularity of any type content may be easily determined by direct means--does it sell? If the movie Jaws is a huge box-office draw, then we are likely to have Jaws II. If the National Enquirer sells consistently week after

week, we will have the Midnight Globe. As long as there is a "Top-40" record chart, we will have "Top-40" radio. The popularity of these low-taste forms is easily measured in terms of tickets or magazines or records sold. "Pop" content newspapers measure success in numbers of subscribers and papers sold. But classical music radio stations exist; the Los Angeles Times is thriving; special interest magazines abound; higher-taste films such as Julia and The Turning Point are quite successful.

But what about television? One might say, "Just look at the ratings. Low-taste content wins out every time." Admittedly there is not a great deal of high-taste content on television to satisfy those who read the Los Angeles Times and shun movies such as Jaws. Certainly the ratings contribute to the financial stability of television, and to the fact that programming remains much the same year after year. While we may accept the fact that low-taste content is not universally preferred, then how do we explain the tremendous popularity of television with its preponderance of such content? Ninety-seven percent of American homes have television sets, and the average household television set operates (according to 1974 figures) six hours and 14 minutes daily (Quaal & Brown, 1976). Figures showing the amount of radio listening in radio's Golden Age are not as clear; but in 1939 the Joint Committee for Radio

Research stated that 82% of the total homes in the United States had radio receivers; and the 1939 Broadcasting Year Book listed more than 750 stations (Summers, 1939). It is obvious that television commands a large audience made up partially of individuals who would prefer higher-taste content. The Nielsen ratings possess a large sampling error; so we may not know exactly what people watch (Chagall, 1978a). The important fact is that they do watch many hours and in large numbers, even though many complain about the "garbage" on television. Others admit to using television's low-taste content for relaxation. Regardless of what the key element is, the system and its content seem quite stable.

Why use General Systems Theory to analyze the broadcasting system? Hawes (1977) states one of the problems with communication research has been insufficient description of the communicative activities. He states that General Systems Theory (as well as the structural functionalism and cybernetics systems perspectives) is well suited to descriptive and interpretive work.

Monge (1977) lists five logical conditions which must be met in order to conceptualize any communication phenomenon as an open system. First, it is necessary to determine that the television system meets the requirements of an open system. Berrien (1968) defines such a system as

one which accepts and responds to inputs (stimuli, energy, information, etc.), and he views all real systems as open; although the degree of openness may vary. Cronen and Davis (1978) state the closed systems approach does not account for external environmental factors which may alter the system's logic. Since this system operates within the suprasystem of all mass communication and within the environment of our society, few would argue that it does not accept information and stimuli from society. The next step is to determine how the system meets the five conditions. First is the identification of the components of the system. Berrien (1968) defines a component as "a unit that in combination with other units (subsystems) functions to combine, separate or compare the inputs to produce the outputs" (p. 17). The components of the television system are similar to the components of DeFleur's mass media system. They are: (1) the audience; (2) the local outlets which are all the television stations; (3) the distributors (television networks and program syndicators); (4) the producers of content (production companies and the networks). Advertising agencies and the sponsors will not be considered as components of this system; however, they are subsystems which do interact with this system in the mass communication suprasystem. Each component is a subsystem. The boundary as defined by Berrien (1968) is the region

through which inputs and outputs pass; it acts as a filter. The boundary of this system is comprised of the norms of the society in which it exists. DeFleur (1971) states the actions of any human usually follow the expectations imposed on him by the cultural norms of his society; as we shall see, the cultural norms (which may take the form of self-censorship or official censorship) filter the inputs and outputs of this system.

The second condition imposed by Monge (1977) is the specification of relations in the system; the laws of interaction among the components which form the structure of the system. The producers of content are linked to the distributors, and also to the outside sponsor systems. They provide the content, which the distributor in turn sends to the local outlets; it is then sent to the audience, which supplies its attention: This is what the local outlets and the distributors need.

The third condition is the determination of system behavior, implying the identifcation of the processes which the system engages in over time: Here the properties of the system must be identified. These properties are: first, the exchange between system and environment (input and output). Berrien (1968) defines two types of input, which are the energies absorbed by the system, and the information introduced into it. The maintenance inputs

energize the system and make it functional; in this system
it is money, for without money the system would instantly
disappear. Signal inputs are those which the system pro-
cesses into outputs; in this case they are program raw
materials which are filtered through the boundary of cul-
tural norms. If we accept the idea of radio, then tele-
vision, as a socializing influence, then the system outputs
which are discharged into the environment of society are
the ideas and perceptions of social reality that listening
and viewing have cultivated in the audience. Gerbner and
Gross (1976) assert that television is "the central cul-
tural arm of American society . . . with its chief cultural
function to spread and stabilize social patterns, to culti-
vate not change but resistance to change" (p. 175). A key
assumption of the socialization perspective states: "To
understand human behavior; we must specify its social
origins and the processes by which it is learned and main-
tained" (McLeod & O'Keefe, 1972, p. 127). Berrien (1968)
states that outputs may include fewer variables than inputs.
Thus, ideas filtered through cultural norms may come out
as oversimplifications or distortions of reality. The
Cultural Indicators research (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) shows
heavy television viewers were always more likely to give
the "television answer" than light viewers to such ques-
tions as "Can most people be trusted?" (p. 172). The out-

puts of a system become the waste of this system; social entropy. Since these outputs are also filtered through the boundary of cultural norms, at least a portion of the audience may be prevented from believing that television "tells it like it is." Second, under certain conditions the system attains a steady state at some distance from true equilibrium. Third, this steady state may be reached independently of initial conditions. This is known as equifinality. The concept of equifinality means that the same final state may be reached from different initial conditions and in different ways. Thus it is possible that any program content will do, as long as it is sufficiently entertaining to fulfill the needs of the viewers. Weekly ratings are the most accepted or common form of feedback in the television system. Berrien (1968) states that the near-steady functioning of a system is evidence of feedback: This would be negative or deviation-correcting feedback. The negative feedback in this case is not so much the ratings which attempt to differentiate between programs, but the fact that they show that the audience does indeed give its attention to the local outlets and the distributors, which in turn supply the audience with what they think the audience wants (more of the same). This produces the steady state with the content well established over the years. This is not to say that content

does not change at all; but certain aspects such as the
amount of violence contained have been shown to be steady.
The violence index has revealed only slight yearly fluctua-
tions in the violence content of television programs over
the last 10 years. Fisher (1976) states that any system
that is characterized by a steady state of order has a
predominance of negative feedback loops. Positive feedback
(deviation amplifying) is the criticism that the system
receives--from PTA groups, from the American Medical Associ-
ation, from television critics, both professional and self-
styled. The concentration of these groups is on televised
violence: Obviously there has not been sufficient positive
feedback to produce any change. However, the filtering
property of the cultural norms has brought some changes in
the input so that the system may remain "in tune" with
society. The final property is the decreasing of entropy.
Since entropy is a destructive force and is associated with
closed systems, I do not see it in operation in this sys-
tem.

The fourth general condition is the stipulation of the
environment, which I have already defined as the society
in which this system is operating.

The final condition is the determination of the sys-
tem's evolution, including both history and future. The
evolution of a system relates to its variability; Berrien

(1968) uses Darwin's biological evolution to illustrate the evolution of organization. He states, "The basic proposition developed in what follows is that organization developed initially by a chance symbiotic relationship between collateral systems . . ." (p. 55). This evolution is associated with changes in the structural and functional relationships. This particular system actually began as radio, with individual stations, networks, and a listening (rather than viewing) audience. The chance symbiotic relationship that developed originally between the sub-systems of audience and outlets and distributors was triggered by a need. The Great Depression had begun at approximately the same time that radio was beginning to supply program content. A great deal of credit for the success of radio must go to the times; for life was grim. There were no jobs, no money, little laughter. Radio supplied the audience with entertainment; something to laugh at or get excited about when there was little else. "Destitute families that had to give up an icebox or furniture or bedding still clung to the radio as to a last link with humanity" (Barnouw, 1968, p. 6). Then technological change brought television and a television system began. Berrien (1968) states that the feature that distinguishes adaptation is an appropriate response to some input that would jeopardize the symbiotic relationships of the system,

thus operating to maintain the steady state. Television
took over radio's content: The system evolved from radio
to television with little change in the structural or
functional relationships. The producers of content are
still producing similar programs; the networks and syndi-
cators are still distributing that content; the outlets are
quite similar to the large radio stations of that time
period (although not necessarily similar to the radio
stations of today); the audience pays the same attention
to the outlets; in fact, some of the individuals that make
up the television audience are the same individuals who
once spent their evenings by the radio! The other adapta-
tion that should be mentioned has to do with maintenance
inputs--money. Obviously the system has adapted well; tele-
vision is considerably more expensive than radio, yet the
maintenance inputs are sufficient to keep the system going.
Growth in the system might be conceptualized as the struc-
tural modification of radio to television.

So much for the history of the evolution of the sys-
tem: now to the future. It is easy to predict that as
long as some type of positive feedback is not introduced
into the system, it will remain much the same. Clearly
second-order change is required: Home videotape recording
systems, more pay-TV, data banks of entertainment to be
brought into the home by computer; any of these may contri-

bute to change in the system. Few would argue that the "steady state" of content dominated by violence will not be changed; the present study may show this stability over many more years than the past 10. "The consequences of living in a symbolic world ruled largely by violence may be much more far-reaching" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 178). Many of us have lived in this symbolic world all our lives.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

INTO THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISED VIOLENCE

Research conducted to determine the possible effects of television on children has been prolific for over 10 years. Comstock (1975), in a study conducted at the Rand Corporation, found 60% of the scientific literature on television and human behavior concerned television and young people. After reviewing this literature, which totaled more than 2300 items, he stated the evidence did suggest that television affected beliefs and behavior of young persons. The prime concern of many researchers has been the possible influence televised violence might have on aggressive and antisocial behavior.

> The question has occupied no less than seven Congressional hearings between 1952 and 1974, was treated extensively in a well-known staff report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence; and was the subject of what is sometimes called "the Surgeon General's study," which consists of a report of a 12-member advisory panel and 2,300 pages of varied research in five volumes. (p. 28)

Comstock's review of the research into television's contribution to socially undesirable behavior shows wide differences in effects--from slight to significant.

It is beyond the scope of this study to present a review of all the literature on television violence.

However, I will summarize several studies which are typical of the type of research being conducted.

Summaries of Typical Research

Several of the studies I reviewed focused on the importance of children's perceptions of violence on television, acknowledging the fact that children may not see things in the same light as adults. Joseph Klapper stated in his testimony before the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence:

> One of the startling areas of ignorance in communication research is that nobody knows what children perceive when they look at television. There has been a tendency in the research literature to assume that children see what adults see . . . and when this is made explicit, it is a bit silly. (Meyer, 1973a, p. 322)

In an attempt to determine what children do see, Snow (1974) presented evidence from a survey of children that their perceptions of violence as play or non-play has implications for the question of the effects of televised violence. In Snow's survey, children were interviewed on a one-to-one basis. The interviewer first ascertained that the children knew the difference between make-believe and real life, and play and non-play. Then they were asked what their favorite programs were, and whether they considered them real or make-believe. The children, who ranged in age from four to 12, favored make-believe programs, especially the younger group. They were then shown

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four television programs, two play and two non-play situations. One of the non-play situations was news film of the Vietnam war. "All children saw it as real and ugly; most of them were sickened or frightened by the sight of real shooting and death on the television screen" (p. 15). Snow suggested that the play versus non-play distinction appeared to be very important, in that violence (as defined by adults) did not affect the child viewer adversely when interpreted within a play context.

Korzenny's (1976) research to determine perceptions of the reality of television by children in Mexico found perceptual similarity between these children of a different culture and those of children of the United States. In this study, no consistent evidence was found that a relationship exists between the perceptions of reality of TV violence and aggressive predispositions. He suggests other variables might interact with the perceptions of reality of television to produce behavioral effects, one of which might be justification.

Meyer's (1973b) study of children's perceptions of justified versus unjustified violence, and fictional versus real film violence showed the children's understanding of the motivations for violence increased with age, and there was little difference in their perceptions from those of young adults. The children saw justified violence as more

acceptable, both in a real and fictional context, and males saw it as a way they would themselves behave if they were placed in that situation.

Still another study of perceptions of violence on television was confined to male subjects only, to test such variables as socio-economic and racial differences. Greenberg and Gordon's (1971) study on these variables indicated disadvantaged (low-income) children perceived incidents of violence as less intense and less violent than did middle-income boys. It was not clear how much of the findings related to race, although the lower-class black, low-income boys saw even less violence in violent scenes than did lower-income whites. However, Greenberg and Gordon believed this might be an extension of the socio-economic difference rather than the racial difference. An explanation was offered for the results: When an individual lives in a hostile environment where violent behavior occurs frequently, he sees televised violence as less intense than do children who are raised in a non-violent environment.

Gordon (1973) also did a study of the effects of the time period of the setting on children's perceptions of aggressive television content. His study, which was also confined to male subjects, indicated present-day settings were perceived as more real than past or future settings. The subjects saw the aggressive action as less acceptable

and more realistic in the present-day context.

Meyer (1973a) attempted to determine how children perceived their favorite television characters as role models. One-hundred-twenty children were interviewed to identify their favorites, and were asked five questions: First, what the child himself would do in a hypothetical situation; second, what was the "right" thing to do; third, what his parents would want him to do; fourth, what a best friend would do; and last, what the favorite TV character would do. Meyer concluded that most of the favorite charac- ters do not provide violent behavioral models; however, for a certain group of males, the favorites provided undesir- able models of behavior which:

> either reinforces or contributes to the child's selec-
> tion of violent alternatives to deal with his own
> conflict situations; and, these violent responses are
> consistently seen as the morally correct way to
> behave and the way their peers would also behave.
> (p. 33)

Donohue (1975) conducted a similar study, narrowing it to the perceptions of black children concerning their TV favorites. He interviewed 247 children and found "in a substantial number of situations both boys and girls per- ceived their favorite TV characters would indeed respond violently" (p. 165). However, he also found the violent responses decreased significantly among males as age in- creased; he believed this might be due to an increasing awareness of the social unacceptability of violence as a

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means of solving problems.

Rubin (1977) surveyed program preferences, and found drama programs in particular were preferred by respondents across all age groups. He also found younger children perceived television to be more realistic than adolescents.

Other studies focused directly on the relationship between viewing violent content and aggressive attitudes. Greenberg (1974-1975) surveyed over 700 British children to determine exposure to particular programs and aggressive attitudes. The findings indicated a relationship between watching programs high in violence and aggressive attitudes, although this was a moderate relationship. He stated, "The aggressive child goes to television to be aroused, according to his own report. Such arousal is likely to feed his aggressive tendencies, given an outlet for such aggression during or after viewing" (p. 546).

Atkin, Greenberg, Korzenny and McDermott (1979) did a panel survey of 227 children in fourth, sixth and eighth grades; interviewing them again a year later. This survey provided evidence that a significant relationship exists between aggressive attitudinal predispositions and choice of aggressive television entertainment programming. The findings suggested the relationship between viewing and aggressiveness may be attributable to selective exposure. The study also showed that boys selected violent content, while girls selected verbal aggression.

Drabman and Thomas (1977) conducted an experimental study to examine children's behavior while viewing alone or in pairs; and their subsequent imitation of aggressive and prosocial behavior. They found pairs who had witnessed the aggressive film displayed more assaultive behavior than boys who were tested alone.

The studies that were part of the Surgeon General's Research program were reviewed by Murray (1973). These studies showed children who had viewed violent programs were more likely to behave aggressively than were those who viewed a prosocial or neutral program. The Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior stated that there was fairly substantial evidence shown through experimental research for short-term causation of aggressive behavior among some children; the evidence was less certain from field studies that long term manifestations of aggressiveness was caused from viewing violence.

Even though the bulk of the research has been of the laboratory variety similar to these examples, some doubt the value of such research. Gerbner and Gross (1976) hold that since nearly everyone "lives" in the world of television, it is impossible to find unexposed persons who could act as control groups for the "ideal" experiment.

> We cannot isolate television from the mainstream of modern culture because it is the mainstream. . . . much of the research on media violence, for example,

has focused on the observation and measurement of
behavior which occurs after a viewer has seen a partic-
ular program or even isolated scenes from programs.
All such studies, no matter how clean the design and
clear the results, are of limited value because they
ignore a fundamental fact: The world of TV drama
consists of a complex and integrated system of charac-
ters, events, actions, and relationships whose effects
cannot be measured with regard to any single element
or program seen in isolation. (pp. 180-181)

Content analysis studies of television conducted by Gerbner

and the Cultural Indicators Research Team have been taking

a different approach to the question of effects. They have

published a television Violence Profile each year, beginning

in 1969. This profile is comprised of indicators which

trace the world of television and the associated ideas of

social reality these indicators might produce for the

viewers. The violence index, which is "not a statistical

finding but serves as a convenient illustrator of trends

and facilitates gross comparisons" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976,

p. 185), has shown remarkable stability of violence content

from 1967 through 1978; with some fluctuations. For example

in 1976 nine out of every 10 programs analyzed contained

some violence; three-fourths of all characters were in-

volved in some violence (Gerbner, Gross, Eleey, Jackson-

Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1977). These research-

ers believe the key to studying the effects of television

lies in the assumptions about the "facts" of life and

society that are cultivated by television, especially by

heavy viewers. Therefore, in addition to the violence

index, cultivation analysis may determine what viewers absorb from living in the TV world. This analysis focuses on the differences in perceptions of light and heavy TV viewers concerning facts, norms and values of society. A sample question was asked respondents regarding violence: "During any given week, what are your chances of being involved in some kind of violence? About one in 10? About one in 100?" (Gerbner, et al., 1977, p. 176). The TV answer, one in 10, was related to the fact that 64.4% of TV characters are involved in violence, whereas in the real world, 1973 police data revealed .41 violent crimes per 100 people. The analysis showed a significant tendency for heavy viewers to see more indications of violence than did the light viewers.

> Fear--that historic instrument of social control--may be an even more critical residue of a show of violence than aggression. Expectation of violence or passivity in the face of injustice may be consequences of even greater social concern. (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 178)

Examples of Imitative Behavior

The isolated incidents which seem to be directly attributed to watching television are nonetheless disturbing. Three examples were reported by Skornia (1965): (1) NBC presented a program called "Ride with Terror," in which hoodlums terrorized subway riders and killed one of them. The New York Transit Authority had protested the

showing of the program. The next day, a person was killed
in similar fashion on an IRT train in Brooklyn. (2) A 1961
New York holdup was committed by young robbers, who said
they had studied television programs for techniques, parti-
cularly a program called "The Perfect Crime." (3) Michael
Lee Gambrill, age 19, while on leave from the Marine Corps,
watched a horror movie on TV. He said "something came over
him," which caused him to kill his parents and sister with
a hatchet.

More recently, the movie "Born Innocent," which was
televised in September of 1974, showed four girls sexually
attacking another girl in a home for wayward girls. Three
days after the showing, a nine-year-old girl was similarly
attacked by three girls and a boy, ages nine to 15. The
victim and her mother sued NBC and its San Francisco
affiliate. A friend-of-the-court brief filed by the
California Medical Association on the side of the victim
asserted "we now have a real-life victim with real-life
scars--brought to her by NBC" (Endicott, 1978, p. 12).

Ronney Zamora, age 15, fatally shot his 82-year-old
neighbor. His attorney contended that years of watching
television had addicted Zamora to "the tube," that his
client was "intoxicated" by TV and that he was acting out a
television script. The boy's favorite program was Kojack.
The attorney claimed the repeated depictions of violence

showed the boy "how to kill" (Rosenberg, 1978, p. 35).

Opinions About Violence on Television

The climate of opinion about television violence from parents and others has been only alarm. The American Medical Association declared television violence to be an environmental health risk. The national Parent-Teachers Association issued a booklet rating television programs in an effort to guide parents (PTA announces, 1978). The National Association for Better Broadcasting filed a petition to deny the 1974 license renewal application of KCOP in Los Angeles because of excessive violent programming (Better Radio and Television, 1978).

The broadcast industry usually offers the defense of "self regulation." However, Persky's (1977) analysis of the National Association of Broadcasters Code revealed it is now merely an appearance of self-regulation. Code subscription has dropped from 81% in 1952 to 55% in 1975; few viewers or advertisers know what the Code means, therefore there is little likelihood of audience or revenue loss for non-members.

The alarm about broadcast violence is not new; Chapter 4 will trace the history of the citizen's protests concerning this type content.

CHAPTER 4

THE CLIMATE OF OPINION

TOWARDS THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF RADIO VIOLENCE

Standard entertainment fare broadcast in America seems
to have been liberally laced with violence for nearly 50
years; and for at least 45 of those years, concerned
parents have been trying to persuade broadcasters to elim-
inate this content.

Almost every day one may pick up a newspaper, a maga-
zine, or a journal and read an article about televised
violence: its effects or the latest attempts to get rid
of it. Few, if any, of these articles mention its longe-
vity, almost as if broadcast violence had originated on
television. No mention is made of the fact that one of
the earliest (and obviously unsuccessful) attempts by a
parent's organization to bring about change occurred in
1933. Parents rearing their children during radio's Golden
Age were equally concerned with what effects this exposure
to violence might have on the children. Quotes at the
beginning of Chapter 1 voice this concern.

As I indicated earlier, communication research study
of effects is quite recent; thus we find no studies of

radio violence. However, this violence, although aural rather than visual, may have been no less real to the listeners, both adult and child. In the absence of content analysis studies covering radio violence, descriptions of the violence and its reported effects must suffice.

The Portrayal of Violent Acts on Radio

"Radio dramas absolutely required imagination and those series that best provided it were rewarded with the greater success" (Harmon, 1967, p. 260). Cantril and Allport, (1935) believed one of the biggest advantages of radio was "its ability to produce 'close-ups' of sound, extracting the last ounce of emotional quality from even the 'sounds of silence.' And when it comes to producing eerie and uncanny effects the radio has no rival" (p. 232). Great pains were taken to insure that sound effects were as realistic as possible. The following description of an incident in the production of Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre of the Air illustrates the realism:

> In A Tale of Two Cities several hours of precious studio time were spent on the decapitation of Sydney Carton--the severing of the head and its fall into the basket. Various solid objects were tried under a cleaver wielded by one of the best sound men in the business: a melon, a pillow, a coconut and a leg of lamb. Finally it was discovered that a cabbage gave just the right kind of scrunching resistance. (Houseman, 1972, p. 367)

More graphic descriptions of sound effects could be found in other articles. "One hears the thud of the lead

pipe against the head of the victim as well as the resulting
crashing of the skull and his blood-curdling shrieks for
help and mercy" (Journal of Criminal Law, 1940, p. 222).
The technical features (sound effects) of War of the Worlds
were mentioned by many in a series of interviews conducted
with people who had been affected by the broadcast (Herzog,
in Lichty & Topping, 1975). The thriller drama, as the
genre was called in those days, was an almost instant
success, especially among the children. As early as 1931
there were nine quarter-hours per week in the evenings
devoted to thrillers. This figure increased rapidly to 34
quarter-hours per week in 1934, with a high of 92 per week
in 1952. During the time period from 1934 through 1955
the thriller format was the leading type of drama program,
and in some years was the leading program format over-all
(Herzog, 1975). The number of thriller dramas was rela-
tively stable over the years: Many of the programs were
amazingly durable, remaining on the air for up to 24 years
(Summers, 1971). A 1935 survey of children's preferences
for program types showed a majority (52%) preferred drama-
tizations; over half of these children liked best the
thriller-adventure type drama (Eisenberg, 1936). Other
early surveys revealed that "children spend from two to
three hours daily in voluntary listening to the radio. The
same studies have revealed that by far the most popular

type of radio program for children is the radio drama" (DeBoer, 1937, p. 456). A 1952 report on children and radio stated "the average time per head spend listening to the radio in the United States appears to range from a minimum of five and one-fourth hours a week to a maximum of 18 and one-fourth hours" (Bauchard, 1952, p. 94).

Parents who listened to the children's programs broadcast between five and six in the afternoon in 1933 heard such programs as Skippy. "Tuning in, I find Skippy and his father captives in a truck and being taken to a hideaway. They have been kidnapped to prevent their testifying against 'the Brain,' a super-criminal" (Mann, 1933, p. 313). Mann went to describe Lil' Orphan Annie being kidnapped and chloroformed, knocked unconscious by a blow to the head, held prisoner in barns, hovels and freight cars. He described earlier episodes of Myrt and Marge which dealt with Marge's dope addict brother, who blackmailed her to obtain money for drugs. Many parents objected not only to the programs, but to the premium offers which seemed to go hand in hand with most of them. "The bulk of the gewgaws savor of crime, violence, or skulduggery" (Gibson, 1938, p. 295).

Review of Radio Research

But what was actually known about the effects of all this murder and mayhem filling the air? Unfortunately,

studies of radio were limited largely to the type mentioned before which surveyed listening preferences. In 1936, Dr. Frank Stanton of CBS wrote about psychological research in radio. Most of this research had to do with what people listened to, how well they remembered what they listened to, and what they did while listening.

> But a study of listening behavior, as pointed out earlier, takes in more than that. It includes the very important psychological questions; "Why does he listen" as well as "What effect does listening have on his subsequent behavior?" (Stanton, in Lichty & Topping, 1975, p. 487)

Even then, research into behavioral effects was beginning to be of interest, but most of this interest was motivated by the desire to determine the effectiveness of auditory presentation of advertising material. Cantril and Allport (1935) also believed in the importance of the psychological aspects of radio listening:

> The really important problems of the radio now are psychological problems. The radio revolution caught the social psychologist unprepared and has left him far behind. Radio is a novel phenomenon, something new under the psychological sun. It produces audiences of a size hitherto undreamed of, and plays havoc with the traditional theories of crowd formation and of group thinking. It eliminates the importance of the eye in social relations, and exalts the role of the human voice and the auditory sense to a new pinnacle of importance. (p. 4)

They reviewed experimental research covering such subjects as the matching of personalities with radio voices, sex differences in radio voices, the difference in mental processes when listening to speakers present or over a

loudspeaker, and effective conditions for broadcasting.
Through interviews they concluded that typical American
youngsters believed comic strip characters were make-believe
and that radio heroes were real. They believed that when a
child hears a living person speak, he cannot doubt that
person's existence.

A 1935 survey listed programs that children preferred--
only four of the top 15 programs had nothing to do with
adventure or crime. Needless to say, parents and teachers
rated these programs as poor ("What do they really like?",
1933).

Cantril and Allport (1935) reviewed a study done by
Eisenberg covering the preferences, listening habits and
reactions to radio programs of New York City children. His
results revealed children would rather listen to the radio
than read. About a third did report dreaming about radio
plots (three-fourths of the dreams were nightmares). The
children believed radio gave them good things (he noted an
increase in vocabulary, in learning new games and stories,
becoming familiar with popular music, and the imitation of
radio stars). About a 10th of the children reported radio
had taught them bad things: disobedience, stealing,
michieveousness, and fear. Parents reported that they
disapproved of programs because they were too frightening
and produced nightmares.

Other research reported on the opinions of mothers about the children's radio programs: Forty-four percent of the mothers surveyed said the programs were unsuitable because "shooting people gives rise to bad ideas, crime is called to attention too much, tragedies affect children's games" (Longstaff, 1936, p. 419). In Chapter 1, I quoted from a 1954 Gallup Poll, in which 56% of adult respondents felt crime programs on radio and television should be blamed, at least in part, for teenage crime (Erskine, 1974).

In the absence of any other research examining the effects of listening to the violent programs, reported incidents and opinions can give some feel for the possible effects. The problem of "The Children's Hour" (programs broadcast in the late afternoon of the thriller drama type) was of great concern to parents. By 1934, they were beginning to realize that advertisers considered young listeners easy prey; virtually every show on the Children's Hour offered prizes in exchange for box tops or labels. A meeting of the Child Study Association of America passed a resolution condemning these sales methods and the programs.

> Children generally pick as their favorites the very
> programs which parents as a whole view with special
> concern. Radio seems to find parents more helpless
> than did the funnies . . . it cannot be locked out
> or the children locked in to escape it." (Summers,
> 1939, p. 37)

Others speculated that it was hardly surprising the children liked the programs, for adults showed a preference

for thrillers also.

One of the greatest concerns were the nightmares which the programs produced. Doctors reported cases of children waking screaming night after night. One child who was troubled by nightmares had listened to a children's radio program which featured "a corpse, two ghosts, a haunted castle, and an ogre-like monster with one flaming eye. Each night as he lay in bed, the boy disclosed, his last waking thought dwelt upon the monster" (Gibson, 1938, p. 296).

In spite of the reported nightmares and the ranking of radio as public enemy number one by parents, surveys invariably showed that the shows parents approved were at the bottom of the children's preferences, and vice versa. One child who listened with her mother to a program the mother approved said, "I suppose that is a program your committee would recommend. But you won't get anybody to listen" (Frank, 1939, p. 29).

By the 1940's it was becoming evident that radio did teach children a great deal--not all of it good. The program Gang Busters was purported to be a crime-doesn't-pay sermon, but some law enforcement officers thought otherwise. The chief probation officer of the St. Louis Juvenile Court tuned in regularly to:

> get a line on what tricky mischief St. Louis small
> fry may be up to the next week . . . last week Officer
> Reller totted up his juvenile catch for 1939. Forty-
> six young law busters admittedly took their cues

straight from Gang Busters. ("Listen, flatfoot," 1940, p. 48)

During the next 10 years the same objections were still being raised by parents and teachers: Listening interferes with other activities such as reading and outdoor play; crime programs inspire children to crime; horror and mystery programs induce nightmares (Frank, 1939). But not all of the problems came from the children's programs: By this time, it was obvious that programs such as The Shadow and Inner Sanctum were as popular with children as the Children's Hour.

> Even the most daring juvenile adventure serial would
> be hard put to compete with the violence, the pace,
> and the grueling suspense of these adult crime and
> mystery programs. Evidently children like it rough,
> and when they don't get what they want in their own
> programs, they take it where they find it. (Frank,
> 1949, p. 12)

But children were not the only ones affected by radio. Virtually everyone knows of the furor over the Orson Welles' production of War of the Worlds. A memo to Dr. Frank Stanton of CBS reported on 30 detailed interviews with persons who were greatly affected by the program. (Herzog, in Lichty & Topping, 1975). Some of the reasons these people gave for accepting the story as reality were: (1) The talk about war, developments of science and recent natural catastrophes; (2) the realism of the program, including authenticity of places and persons mentioned, the technical realism, and the "official" statements; and

(3) the situational context--mostly because they did not hear the beginning of the program. Some attempted to check and were usually able to relate anything they saw to the supposed disaster: If there were no cars on the street they thought traffic was jammed elsewhere; if there was traffic, it meant people were fleeing. One man tried to calm his wife by turning to another station where there was music. She retorted, "Nero fiddled while Rome burned" (p. 503).

Frank Orme, Executive Vice President of the National Association for Better Broadcasting, stated in an interview that the PTA in Southern California once surveyed psychiatrists, psychologists, neurologists, and sociologists. This survey indicated "about 95% of all of them were appalled; or strongly of the opinion that violence on radio was doing a great deal of harm to children in general" (Orme, 1978). The survey was conducted around 1946, Orme recalled.

Review of Parents' Opinions of Radio Violence

A review of published material about parents' objections to broadcast violence and their attempts to get it off the air looks like "same song, different verse" from 1933 to the present. It did not take American parents long to decide that a daily diet of "blood and thunder" was not good for children. In 1933 a Scarsdale, New York Parent-Teacher Association rated 16 programs "pernicious."

One mother told of nightmares and children screaming in
fright, holding their ears until they thought the danger
past (Eisenberg, 1936). The protest grew and articles
appeared in the New York Times, Nation, Parent's Magazine,
Time, and Literary Digest. The editor of Parent's Magazine
advised parents to write to the sponsors of the programs in
the somewhat naive belief that "those responsible for pro-
grams will be glad of your criticism and suggestions"
(Eisenberg, 1936, p. 20). The National Association of
Broadcasters promised to improve conditions. The National
Council for Radio in Education set up a committee to study
the juvenile radio programs (Eisenberg, 1936). The Michi-
gan Child Study Association sent a petition to the sponsor
of Lil' Orphan Annie protesting "on the grounds that it is
unwholesome entertainment for children, is over-stimulating,
and places too much emphasis on crime" (Mann, 1934, p. 246).
In 1933 a Minneapolis branch of the American Association of
University Women and the Iowa Congress of Parents and
Teachers adopted resolutions condemning the Skippy and Lil'
Orphan Annie series. It was reported that the sponsors of
these two shows were "quick to modify the objectionable
features" (Summers, 1939, p. 26). Obviously these modifi-
cations didn't last long. In 1935 Chairman Paley of CBS
announced that all blood and thunder themes for juvenile
programs would be banned if unacceptable to eminent child

psychologists ("Cleaning up Radio," 1935). CBS then set

forth official policies regarding children's programs, and

NBC soon followed. The NAB Code was revised and expanded

in 1935 (Summers, 1939). CBS cleared out all the children's

programs from five to six Monday through Friday afternoons

and scheduled such programs as <u>Wilderness Road</u>, an award-

winning serial of American Frontier life. It lasted only

one year (Gordon, 1942). Regardless of awards, programs of

this type were notoriously short-lived, while the Lone

Ranger rode on and Superman continued to leap tall buildings

and fly through the air.

Senator Herring of Iowa brought the radio industry to

task over the children's programs in 1939. He stated:

> Recent statistics with regard to juvenile delinquency
> and crime reveal an increase of nearly 11% last year
> over 1937. I should not wish to claim that this was
> in large measure due to the impropriety of radio
> programs, but that a goodly measure of inspiration for
> unsocial conduct is gathered from stories of banditry
> and law-breaking presented in radio programs can
> hardly be denied. (Summers, 1939, p. 223)

Senator Herring later proposed an amendment to the Communi-

cations Act which would have created a radio censorship

board.

In 1940, the Chairman of the Committee on Criminal Law

and Procedure of the Federal Bar Association called for a

study of the crime programs for possible federal legisla-

tion and regulations ("Radio Crime Programs," 1940). In

1944, the Blue Network sent a representative to the Third

Regional Radio Conference, with assurances that "construc-
tive steps are being taken to guarantee a superior type of
program" (Are Children's . . . ," 1945, p. 175). The
Wisconsin Joint Committee for Better Radio Listening pub-
lished a book in 1945, with suggestions for suitable pro-
grams, proper amounts of listening, and recommended sponsor
boycotts (Spence, 1945).

Analysis of Visual Versus Aural Violence

The fact that all this protesting has been going on
for some 45 years with virtually no results supports
Gerbner's idea of deeply rooted sociocultural forces
working rather than just obstinacy or profit-seeking on the
part of the broadcasters. Gerbner and Gross (1976) state,
"symbolic violence is demonstration of power and an instru-
ment of social control serving, on the whole, to reinforce
and preserve the existing social order . . ." (p. 189). I
believe that had a yearly Violence Profile been started in
1939 instead of 1969, the results would have been much the
same during that 30-year period as they have for the past
10-year period, and this study will attempt to show this
stability of violence content. This would mean that most
Americans born after the late 1920's were raised on a
steady diet of broadcast violence; received first aurally,
then visually, and it may be extremely difficult to elim-
inate something that most of us have always known.

A question may be stated: "Is visual violence that much worse than aural violence?" Most researchers are convinced that it is: Gerbner points out that "unlike radio, television can show as well as tell" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 176). Obviously it is very difficult for the adults of today who were raised without television to comprehend the effects of that medium upon the mind of a child. But it is equally as difficult for anyone, including those adults who were raised with radio, to remember or comprehend what it was like to have radio without ever having seen television. It may be true that it was possible to imagine far worse horrors from listening to the radio than those seen on television; the "fear of the unknown." Gerbner and Gross (1976) draw a comparison between the 12-year-old of today who may watch as much as six hours of television daily and the 12-year-old of the 1940's who could hardly have contemplated spending six hours a day at the movies. But what about those same children who did spend up to six hours a day listening to the radio? A few of the early communication researchers saw the possibility of profound effects of radio:

> There is an element of danger in the use of radio as
> a means of communication that is not evident. It lies
> in the fact that our ears are less civilized than our
> eyes. Or, we might say, our sight has developed
> capacities for discrimination not yet possible to our
> hearing. And if the broadcasters are speaking truth
> when they say they are going to make us ear-minded
> again, after so many centuries of eye-mindedness, our

answer ought to be: "Thanks for the warning."
(Eisenberg, 1936, p. 3)

Cantril and Allport (1935) discussed the possible effects of
radio:

> In a sense radio drama is modeled on the plays of
> Shakespeare. Scenery and costumes are neglected.
> Language alone sustains the dramatic burden. But
> radio drama is more radical than Shakespearean drama
> in dispensing altogether with visual experience. In
> so doing it has placed an unaccustomed burden upon
> the listener's visual imagery, a relatively neglected
> function of the adult human mind. The visual imagin-
> ation of children is both fresh and compelling, but
> in adults it has been impaired by long adaptation to
> the ready-made settings of the cinema and stage and
> dulled by the routine of living. The advent of tele-
> vision will change the situation and will destroy one
> of the most distinctive benefits that radio has
> brought to a too literal-minded mankind. (p. 233)

They went on to speculate that television "will add little
or nothing to children's enjoyment of radio. It will con-
strain their imagery and tend to displace their aesthetic
creations with a literal-minded and relatively dull reality"
(p. 238).

Another difference which might have made the effects
of radio greater than we can now imagine was the general
lack of sophistication, the greater amount of impression-
ability of the general public compared to today. This was
probably best illustrated by the War of the Worlds scare.

> The most general reaction was one of amazement at the
> "incredible stupidity" and "gullibility" of the Amer-
> ican public, who had accepted as real, in this single
> broadcast, incidents which in actual fact would have
> taken days or even weeks to occur. (Houseman, 1972,
> p. 400)

The radio mystery program was somewhat unique: "Not print, film or theatre, but radio--a special kind of communication in a special kind of language" (Maloney, in Lichty & Topping, 1975, p. 395). Once the technology was sufficiently advanced to provide filter mikes and realistic sound effects, shows like The Shadow and Inner Sanctum were possible. The creaking door on radio created "a mansion, a whole universe of pleasurable terror" (Maloney, p. 398). When Lamont Cranston's voice was switched to the filter mike, everyone knew he had become invisible.

It may be difficult to prove beyond a doubt what effects televised violence has on children; we will never know what the effects of aural and imagined violence were on past generations. I can only speculate that they may be quite similar.

CHAPTER 5

THE VIOLENCE CONTENT OF

ADULT RADIO THRILLER DRAMAS

The violence content of the radio dramas was analyzed in a manner similar to the way television violence content is studied each year as a part of the Cultural Indicators Project at Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. Violence is defined as "the overt expression of physical force, with or without a weapon, against self or other, compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually killing or hurting" (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan & Jackson-Beeck, 1979, p. 30). This definition of violence was used in the present study for both the adult and children's thriller dramas. Some other criteria required for the violence included the following: (1) The violence must be plausible and credible; (2) it must be directed against humans; and (3) it must hurt or kill or threaten to hurt or kill. Accidents were included in the violence totals, as "'accidents' written into scripts victimize characters who fall prey to them, and the message of victimization is one significant aspect of exposure to violence" (Gerbner, et al., 1979, p. 30).

Since this study was limited to thriller dramas, which were all of a serious tone (no comedy overtones were detected in this sample), the difficulties that could have arisen in making decisions concerning violence in a humorous context were eliminated. However, some difficulty was encountered in the determination of violence that was aural only. Most of the violent incidents were fairly clear-cut, with sound effects (hitting, breaking glass, gunshots and verbal threats) aiding the detection. Other violent acts were more difficult to analyze, as it was impossible to determine if anyone had been injured without the visual element present. In such cases I assumed that the threat of hurting or killing did exist.

Units of Analysis

The recording instrument used for the present study was adapted from that used to analyze television content each year for the Violence Profile, as I was provided with a copy of that recording instrument. Three units of analysis were used: (1) observations of the program as a whole; (2) each violent action contained in the program; and (3) each major or leading character. Several of the items contained in the television study were eliminated: Some were beyond the scope of the study, such as personal relationships between characters; others were impossible to determine without the visual element being present. (For

example, "race" and "nationality," unless mentioned speci-
fically in the script, would be difficult to assess in the
characters without actually seeing them.) Other items
recorded but not included in the report of the analysis
included items used to assess reliability coefficients, as
two separate coder-pairs analyzed each program in the tele-
vision studies. These items were (1) the place, date and
setting of the major action; and (2) the significance and
seriousness of any violence contained in the program. This
information is available in the event the present study is
replicated.

Violence Indicators

The Violence Indicators include three sets of direct
observational data which comprise the violence index. The
first indicator is prevalence, or the percent of programs
containing any violence in a particular program sample,
calculated both as percent of programs (%P) and percent of
program hours. (The latter figure is not part of the
index.) The second indicator is the the frequency of
violent acts, expressed by rate and obtained by dividing
the number of violent episodes by the total number of
programs to obtain rate per program (R/P), and dividing
the total number of violent episodes by the total number
of program hours to obtain rate per hour (R/H). The third
indicator is role, the portrayal of characters as violents

(committing violence) or victims (subjected to violence) or both. The measures used are (1) the percentage of violents and percentage of victims and (2) the percentage of killers and percentage of killed out of all the leading characters in the sample. The figures actually used in computing the violence index are the total percentage of those involved as violents, victims, or both (%V); and the total percentage of those involved as killers, killed or both (%K) (Gerbner, et al., 1979).

Prevalence (%P), rate per program (R/P), and rate per hour (R/H) are reflected in the program score (PS) which is computed as follows: PS = (%P) + 2(R/P) + 2(R/H). The character score contains those involved in violence weighted by those involved in killing. The formula for character score (CS) is CS = (%V) + (%K). The violence index is obtained by adding the program score to the character score; VI = PS + CS (Gerbner, et al., 1979).

The Sample of Programs

The sample of television programs analyzed each year for the Violence Profile consists of one week of all network dramatic programs in prime-time, and one week of the network children's dramatic programs transmitted during weekend morning. This sample is usually from fall programming. Since a sample like this is not available for radio programs broadcast during radio's Golden Age, I drew

a random sample from the population of program tapes that
were available to me. In order to limit the study, the
programs analyzed were all thriller dramas, a program format
chosen to compare with the action format on television.
Presumably these program types are quite similar in nature,
and would be the most likely to have similar violence
content of any of the program types. For example, movies
broadcast on television are generally high in violence
content, but there was no program format broadcast on radio
that was similar to movies. The children's thriller dramas
were also compared with cartoons and the weekend morning
action programs, since both of these television program
types were designed specifically for children.

The sample of adult thriller dramas selected included
one show each of the following programs: Big Town; David
Harding, Counterspy; Ellery Queen; Gangbusters; Inner
Sanctum; Lights Out; Mr. District Attorney; Mr. Keen,
Tracer of Lost Persons; and The Shadow. Two shows were
selected of each of these programs: The Green Hornet; I
Love a Mystery; and Suspense; for a total of 15 programs.
All programs were 30 minutes in length. Each program will
be described briefly, with some background information such
as the network or networks broadcasting the program (most
of the programs in the sample switched networks several
times), length of time on the air, program date and program

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title (where available), and a description of the violent episodes.

1. Big Town starred Edward G. Robinson as Steve Wilson who was a newspaper editor. It began on CBS in 1937 where it ran for 11 years, switching to NBC until it ended in 1952 (Dunning, 1976). The show analyzed was the first of the series, broadcast October 19, 1937, and it contained one violent episode. A wealthy woman of high social stature shot Wilson in the arm in retaliation for his printed expose' of her as a young woman of dubious reputation.

2. David Harding, Counterspy, was on the air from 1942 until 1957 on NBC, ABC, and Mutual (Dunning, 1976). The show entitled "The Fabulous Formula" was broadcast April 20, 1950. It featured a woman foreign spy who first pushed another woman off a train, killing her; the spy then shot and killed a railroad stationmaster; she held an old friend (who was a carnival snake-charmer) captive at gun- point. In turn, the spy was threatened by the snake-charmer with his deadly Cobra snake, and she was captured at gun- point by Harding. This was a total of five violent epi- sodes.

3. Ellery Queen ran from 1939 until 1948 on CBS, NBC, and ABC, and featured the panel of "armchair detectives" who tried to guess the solution of the mystery each week (Dunning, 1976). "The Mischief Maker" was broadcast January 15, 1944, and contained one episode of violence:

the discovery of the body of a man who had shot himself.

4. Gangbusters began in 1935 and lasted until 1957, changing networks from NBC to ABC to CBS to Mutual (Dunning, 1976). The air date for "The Case of the Dakota Badman" was not available. An escaped convict, Jack Benson, shot an FBI agent who later died. Benson was then shot and killed by two other FBI agents, for a total of two violent episodes.

5. The Green Hornet (two shows) ran from 1936 until 1952 on Mutual, NBC and ABC (Dunning, 1976). "The Hornet Does It" (no air date available) was about an ex-convict, just paroled, who is blackmailed back into crime by two of his former associates. The violent episodes included a fight between the ex-convict and one of the other gang members; then the gang hijacked a boat and a truck, "knocking out" the boat's two operators and the truck driver. Finally the ex-convict decided to go to the police and was shot at by the other gang members, who were captured and rendered unconscious by some kind of gas administered by the Green Hornet. This totaled five violent acts. In the second show analyzed, "Parking Lot Racket," gangsters attempt to get "protection money" from parking lot owners by blowing up cars. One of the gang hits a policeman with a blackjack, the Green Hornet uses his magic gas on a parking-lot owner after Cato holds a gun on the man, the

gang leader fires a gun at an image he thinks is the Green
Hornet, and the police capture the gang by shooting at
them. This show, broadcast October 31, 1939, also con-
tained five violent episodes.

6. I Love a Mystery (two shows) was on the air from
1939 until 1952 on NBC, CBS, and Mutual (Dunning, 1976).
This adventure serial featured three main characters; Jack,
Doc and Jerry. The first show analyzed (part of "The
Pirate Loot of the Island of Skulls") was broadcast between
1940 and 1942 (no exact air date available), and contained
two violent episodes: Doc is captured behind a movable
wall; then Jack and Doc are both threatened with being
thrown into a pit filled with man-eating jaguars. The
second show, "Grandma, What Big Teeth You Have," was aired
May 21, 1945. Unfortunately it was such poor quality that
the tape was almost not listenable. I could distinguish
only one violent episode, although there may have been
more. An elderly woman had a policeman tied up in her
basement.

7. Inner Sanctum was heard on NBC, CBS and ABC from
1941 until 1952 (Dunning, 1976). "Dead Man's Holiday" did
not have an air date available, but with a total of six
violent acts was the most violent of any program analyzed.
These acts included: (1) a train wreck, (2) a fight
between Keating (the main character) and a policeman, in

which the policeman is shot in the arm and hit with a stone, (3) Keating kills a doctor by hitting him with a paper-weight, (4) Keating hits a woman, (5) then kills her husband by running him down with a car, and (6) Keating is shot and killed by the police.

8. Lights Out began in 1935 and went off the air in 1947. One of the hallmarks of this program, run by NBC and CBS, was its particularly grisly sound effects. "In what Radio Guide once described as the most monstrous of all sounds, cooked spaghetti was squished and squashed to connote human flesh being eaten" (Dunning, 1976, p. 363). In the show entitled "The Day Sinatra Got Fat" (no air date available), a couple snowbound in their mountain vacation home notice green dust everywhere. They argue, and the husband chokes his wife, although she is not injured. They begin to put on weight, getting fatter and fatter. Finally the husband, who owns prize hogs, deduces that earth people are being "slopped" by outer-space creatures to fatten them up. The wife runs outside where she is snatched up by the outer-space creatures, and we hear the man's anguished cries as she is devoured. This was a total of two violent episodes.

9. Mr. District Attorney was first aired in 1939 on NBC, and ended in 1951 on ABC (Dunning, 1976). No air date was available for the program analyzed, which contained

three violent acts. This show, "Rocky Ritano," was the story of a deported gangster who slips back into the United States. The first violent episode occurs when the gangster's lawyer threatens a newspaper reporter with a gun. Then the gangster kidnaps the reporter, shoots and kills him. The gangster and his gang are surrounded by police, and Mr. District Attorney hits the gangster with his fists in revenge for the death of the reporter.

10. Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons, began in 1937 on NBC and later moved to CBS until its demise in 1955 (Dunning, 1976). "The Case of Murder and the Revengeful Ghost" was broadcast February 22, 1955, and had a total of five violent acts. The first was the stabbing death of a wealthy man. Then Mr. Keen discovers a man tied and gagged in the murdered man's house; Keen is then threatened by a man with a gun and is saved by his aid, Mike Clancy. Finally, Keen is threatened by a woman (former mental patient) from whom he is seeking information.

11. The Shadow began on CBS in 1930, ran also on NBC, and ended in 1954 (Dunning, 1976). "The Chill of Death" was aired January 4, 1948. It was the story of an elderly couple who hired maids, insured them, then murdered them for the insurance money. The first violent episode featured a screaming woman who was dying. The next was the murder of the undertaker who intended to blackmail the couple; the

husband cuts the undertaker's throat. Then Margo Lane is hired as the next maid and is drugged and put in a cold shower with an open window so that she might catch pneumonia, often fatal in those days before antibiotics. Then in an argument between the couple, the husband strikes his wife, for a total of four violent episodes.

12. Suspense (two shows) ran on CBS for 20 years, from 1942 until 1962 (Dunning, 1976). "Present Tense," aired March 3, 1957, was a dream sequence story in which a man murders his wife and her lover over and over. The story begins with a train wreck, in which the guard taking the husband to prison is killed. The man returns to his home and kills his wife and her lover again. He kidnaps an ambulance driver, beating the guard unconscious, returning to his home again to kill his wife and her lover once more. The final violent episode is the execution of the man in prison, for a total of five violent episodes. The second Suspense analyzed was "The Search for Henri LeFevre." It was aired July 6, 1944, and was the only one of the adult thriller dramas to contain no violent acts.

Data for this sample of adult thriller dramas, including prevalence of violence, rate of violent episodes per all programs and per all hours, and the percentages of leading characters involved in violence and killing are presented in Table 1, which also shows the violence index for these programs.

Portrayal of Violence

Integral to the Violence Profile are the risk ratios,
which show the percentage of leading characters involved
in violence, and what the chances are for all types of
characters to have a positive or negative outcome of being
involved. The risk ratios for the characters in the adult
radio thriller dramas were figured in the same way the risk
ratios for television characters were presented in the
Violence Profiles over the years. "The violent-victim
ratio denotes chances for being a violent or a victim. The
killer-killed ratio marks the risk of killing or being
killed" (Gerbner, et al., 1979, p. 40). In each case, the
larger number is divided by the smaller number for each
category. If the number is positive, this means there were
more violents than victims or more killers than killed; a
negative number indicates the reverse is true. A ratio of
1.00 means an equal number of each; if there were only
violents or killers, the ratio is a +0.00; if only victims
or killed, it will be -0.00 (Gerbner, et al., 1979).

In the world of adult radio thriller dramas, a +1.12
violent-victim ratio indicates more violents than victims
among the major characters. The killer-killed ratio was
1.00, indicating an equal number of each. The breakdown
according to sex revealed that male characters were much
more likely than females to be violents and killers; where-

as females were more likely to be the victims or to be killed. The violent-to-victim ratio for male characters was +1.16; the killer-killed ratio was +1.14. The violent-victim ratio for females was 1.00, meaning equal involvement; but the killer-killed ratio was -1.50 which indicates females were much more likely to be killed than killers. A complete breakdown of the risk ratios for the adult thriller dramas according to age, marital status, class and character type is presented in Table 2.

CHAPTER 6

THE VIOLENCE CONTENT OF

CHILDREN'S RADIO THRILLER DRAMAS

The random sample of children's thriller dramas was selected to compare with television cartoons and the week-end morning action programs. These two program types were specifically designed for children, as were the radio thrillers broadcast during the Children's Hour every week-day afternoon.

The sample of children's thriller dramas selected included the following programs: Buck Rogers in the 25th Century; Dick Tracy; Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy; The Lone Ranger; Terry and the Pirates; and Tom Mix. Two shows each were selected from the available tapes of Captain Midnight and the Secret Squadron and The Adventures of Superman. Tom Mix and The Lone Ranger were each 30 minutes in length, and were complete stories; the remainder of the programs were 15 minutes each and were serialized. Each program will be described briefly, giving some background information and a description of the violence contained, as were the adult thriller dramas described in Chapter 5.

1. The Adventures of Superman (two shows) came on the

air in 1938, very shortly after Superman's appearance in Action Comics. The program began in syndication, then ran on Mutual for most of its run through 1951. "The comics have always adapted well to juvenile radio" (Dunning, 1976, p. 14). The first show, aired December 8, 1944, contained one violent episode. Daily Planet reporter Jimmy Olson was kidnapped and threatened with bodily harm by a man who claimed to be Lois Lane's uncle. Lois had suffered from amnesia, and was unable to realize that this man was not actually her uncle. The second Superman show analyzed was broadcast May 8, 1945, and contained two violent acts. Jimmy Olson and Tom Sloan (who was also a Daily Planet reporter) were rendered unconscious in a mysterious house by a gas escaping from the walls. They are revived by Superman, who gets them out of the house just in time to save them from being blown up along with the house. Presumably whoever blew up the house intended to kill Jimmy and Tom.

2. Buck Rogers in the 25th Century ran on CBS and Mutual in serial form from 1932 until 1947, and was also adapted from the comics (Dunning, 1976). The show aired April 4, 1939, contained two violent acts. The first was a flashback description of the mineshaft collapse and accompanying gas that rendered Buck Rogers unconscious until he woke up in the 25th century. The second violent

act was a large object crashing through the window of the laboratory where Buck, Wilma Deering and Dr. Huer were working. Since this occurred at the end of the show, "to be continued tomorrow," it was impossible to determine what injuries might have been sustained by the three people. Therefore I assumed this object was intended to harm them.

3. Captain Midnight (two shows) began in 1939 and ran until 1949 on Mutual (Dunning, 1976). The first show, which was aired September 30, 1940, had no violent episodes. The second show, aired June 9, 1941, had one violent act: the sinking of a submarine. Once more this event happened at the end of the show, which made it impossible to assess deaths or injuries.

4. Dick Tracy, still another program developed from a comic strip, had two separate runs on the air: the first from 1935 until 1939 on Mutual and NBC; then from 1943 until 1948 on ABC. This program was also serialized, but "The Case of the Empty Safe," broadcast May 1, 1945, had more clear-cut violence than some of the other children's programs. There were three violent acts--the first was the attempted capture of two outlaws, Spike and Gert, by Pat Patton, who was hit on the head by Gert, enabling the outlaws to escape. The second violent act featured the two outlaws "knocking out" a motorist in order to steal his car. The third episode consisted of the pair holding

a farmer hostage at gunpoint.

5. *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*, ran from 1933 until 1950 on various networks (Dunning, 1976). This show was also serialized, and the show that was part of "Atom Splitting" (broadcast October 3, 1940) contained no violent acts.

6. *The Lone Ranger* was another program developed by Station WXYZ in Detroit in 1933. It was syndicated and sent to WGN in Chicago and WOR in New York. These three stations formed the Mutual Network in 1934 with *The Lone Ranger* as its biggest attraction. The program wound up its long run on ABC in 1955 (Dunning, 1976). "The Lone Ranger's Double" was broadcast May 9, 1945, and contained four acts of violence. The first was the attempted kidnapping of a young woman by outlaws, which was witnessed by the Lone Ranger and Tonto, who fired at the outlaws and frightened them away. The next violent act was the result of the classic case of mistaken identity that often befell the Lone Ranger--he was mistaken for an outlaw, and was chased by a posse which shot at him and Tonto. The third episode began as the real outlaws kidnapped Tonto from jail and locked the sheriff in a cell at gunpoint. The last violent act was the capture of the outlaws by the Lone Ranger, in which he shot at them, injuring one slightly.

7. *Terry and the Pirates*, another adaptation of a

comic strip, began on NBC in 1937 and lasted until 1948 (Dunning, 1976). The show that was part of "Pirate's Gold Detector Ring" did not have an air date available—it contained one violent act. Terry had been kidnapped, and threatened with bodily harm if he did not comply with the wishes of his captor.

8. <u>Tom Mix</u> was on the air from 1933 until 1950 (Summers, 1971). "The Mystery of the Magic Mesa" was aired December 16, 1949, on Mutual; and was a story broadcast in its entirety in 30 minutes, as was <u>The Lone Ranger</u>. This was the most violent of the children's shows: It contained five acts of violence. Tom Mix and his cohorts ride to investigate a fire on the mesa. They are ambushed by outlaws; Tom returns fire and slightly injures one of the outlaws, Jack Crockett, and captures him. In the second act of violence, Jack Crockett is jailed—he hits a tray of food out of the sheriff's hands and threatens the sheriff. The third violent act occurs when Crockett hits the sheriff and breaks out of jail. Then Crockett grabs a passer-by in the street and throws the man down. Finally, Crockett and Tom Mix fight; Tom is thrown through a window, but hits Crockett, making him unconscious and recapturing him.

The data for this sample of programs, including prevalence of violence, rate of violent episodes per all

programs and per all hours, and the percentage of leading
characters involved in violence, are presented in Table 1.
This table also gives the violence index for the sample of
children's radio thriller dramas.

Risk ratios for the leading characters in the chil-
dren's programs were calculated in the same manner as they
were for the adult programs. During the Children's Hour,
a -1.66 violent-to-victim ratio indicates more victims than
violents. The killer-to-killed ratio is 0.00, as no
killing was found in this sample. The breakdown of figures
according to sex reveals that both males and females were
more likely to be victims in the children's programs;
however, the incidence of victimization was much higher for
females: -3.00 compared to -1.55 for males. A complete
breakdown of the risk ratios for the children's thriller
dramas according to age, marital status, class and char-
acter type is presented in Table 3.

CHAPTER 7

COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE VIOLENCE CONTENT

OF RADIO AND OF TELEVISION

A comparison between the violence indicators for radio and for television shows some important similarities; also some important differences. The averages of the television violence indicators were compiled for nine seasons, from 1967 through 1978. These figures were obtained from Tables 8, 10, and 11 published in Violence Profile No. 10 by George Gerbner, Larry Gross, Nancy Signorielli, Michael Morgan and Marilyn Jackson-Beeck. Table 8 presented the figures for cartoons, Table 10 listed the data for prime-time action programs, and Table 11 was a breakdown of figures for week-end morning action programs. In these tables, all percentages were averaged for the nine seasons; however, certain figures were given as totals over the entire sample. These figures included the number of programs analyzed, program hours analyzed, number of leading characters analyzed, and the total number of all violent episodes. These totals were averaged for the present study and these averages are presented in Table 4, which shows the comparisons of the violence indicators for radio and television. The averages give a better idea of the sample size used

for the television program analysis, so that it may be compared with the size of the radio sample.

Comparisons of the Adult Programs

Rate Indicator Comparisons: The sample of adult thriller dramas analyzed was composed of nothing but 30-minute programs, so that the number of program hours analyzed was exactly half of the total number of programs. However, in the television sample, the average number of prime time action programs was 50.3, while the number of program hours averaged 57.7, indicating many programs of one hour or more in length. This difference was reflected in the rate indicator, as the rate per all programs for radio was 3.1 and the rate per all programs for television was 7.8. However, the rate per all hours was quite similar: 6.3 for radio and 6.8 for television. The range of scores or rate per all hours for television was 5.2 in 1978 to 8.1 in 1976.

Prevalence Indicator Comparisons: The percentage of programs containing violence in the sample of radio adult thrillers was 93.3%; the average percentage of television programs containing violence was 94.7%. The range of scores over the years on television was from 90% in 1978 to 98.3% during the 1971-1972 season. The percentage of program hours containing violence in the radio sample was 93.3%; on television prime time action programs, the

average was 95.7%. The range of percentages was from 91% in 1978 to 99.3% during the 1971-1972 season.

Role Indicator Comparisons: In the adult radio programs, the percentage of leading characters who committed violence was 45.9%; the television average was 62.3%. However, the range of television percentages was wide--from 44.3% in 1978 to 78.3% in 1976. The percentage of leading characters who were victims on radio was 41.7%; the television average was 66.2%. Scores for television ranged from 52.9% in 1978 to 73.8% in the 1967-68 season. Total involvement in violence, either as violents or victims, was reflected on radio by a percentage of 67.2% and a violent-to-victim ratio of +1.12, reflecting more violents than victims among leading characters. On television, the average percentage involved in violence was 77.6% (the range was 61.4% in 1978 to 87% in 1976). The average violent-to-victim ratio for television was -1.06, reflecting more victims than violents, which was the case in all but two seasons: in 1976 with a +1.11 ratio and 1977, with a +1.03 ratio.

An average of 16.4% of the radio leading characters were killers (committing fatal violence); on television the average was 18.4%. The range of scores for television was 11.4% in 1978 to 23.5% in the 1974-75 season. The victims of fatal violence among the radio leading charac-

ters was 16.4% (the only score higher than the highest television score), and the leading characters killed on television averaged 8%, with a range of none killed in 1978 to a high of 12.3% killed during the 1974-75 seasons. On radio, 27.9% of the leading characters were involved in killing; on television, an average of only 22.7% were involved in killing either as killers or killed. The range of scores for television involvement in killing was 11.4% in 1978 to 29.6% in the 1974-75 season. The killer-to-killed ratio on radio was an even 1.00; the television ratio averaged +2.28 with each showing a plus figure.

Violence Indicators: The program score for the radio adult thrillers was 112.1, the average for television was 123.9. The range of program scores for television was from a low of 112 in 1978 to a high of 127.4 in 1976. The character score for radio was 95.1 and the average television character score was 100.3, with a range of 72.9 in 1978 to 112.6 during the 1967-68 viewing season. The violence index for the radio adult thriller dramas was 207.2. The television violence index has ranged from 184.9 in 1978 to 237 in 1967-68, with an average violence index of 224.3.

Comparisons of the Children's Programs

The children's radio programs were compared with both cartoons and weekend morning action programs, since all these formats are designed for children.

Prevalence Indicator Comparisons: The percentage of program hours containing violence on radio was 80%; on television this average percentage was identical for both cartoons and action programs--95.1%. The range for cartoons was from 92.2% in 1974-75 to 97.8% in 1978; the range for action programs was from 91.3% in 1971-72 to 100% in 1973, 1976, and 1978. On radio, the program hours containing violence was 83.3%; for television cartoons the average was 94.6% ranging from 90% in 1974-75 to 100% in 1976. The television action programs ranged from 87.3% in 1975-76 to 100% in 1973, 1976, and 1978, with an average of 94.8% of program hours containing violence.

Rate Indicator Comparisons: The rate per all programs for radio was 1.9 violent episodes per program; the television figures were much higher, averaging 6.1 per program for the weekend morning action programs and 6.3 for cartoon shows. The rate per all hours for radio was 6.3; for television cartoons it was 20.5 and 17.3 for the television weekend morning action programs. In all cases, the lowest rate score on television was higher than the radio violence rate.

Role Indicator Comparisons: This indicator was also much higher for television than it was for radio. The percentage of leading characters committing violence on radio was 33.3%; during television cartoons the percentage

was 56.9%, and on action programs the figure was 55.4%.
The percentage of radio leading characters who were victims
was 55.6%; while 74.1% were victims on televison action
shows and 75.1% on cartoons. The percentage of leading
characters who were involved in violence on radio was 58.3%;
for television cartoons the figure was 82.7% and for action
programs 81.5%.

The figures for leading characters involved in killing
were more similar. There were no killings at all in the
sample of radio programs; and there were several years of
the television samples in which no killing occurred in the
children's programs. However, there were a few seasons in
which cartoon characters were killers with an average per-
centage of 1.9, and 1.2% of the leading characters were
killed. The total involvement percentage was 2%. The
figures for the weekend morning action programs were simi-
lar; there were 1.2% killers, 1.2% killed, and 2.3% invol-
ved in killing.

The violent-to-victim ratio for radio leading char-
acters was -1.66; for television action programs -1.34 and
-1.32 for cartoons. (There were no seasons during the
television analysis in which there were more violents than
victims.) The killer-to-killed ratio for radio was 0.00;
for the action programs on television the average was an
even 1.00, and -1.25 for the cartoons.

Violence Indicator Comparisons: The program score for the radio children's thriller dramas was 96.4 compared to 141.9 for the television weekend morning action programs and 148.7 for the television cartoons. The character score for radio was 58.3; for action programs it was 83.8 and 84.7 for cartoons. The violence index for radio was 154.7; for television action programs 225.7 and 233.4 for cartoons, reflecting the higher incidence of violence contained in these programs.

Risk Ratio Comparisons for Adult Programs

The risk ratio comparisons between the adult radio thriller dramas and television prime time action programs was not possible, as the figures for these television programs were not given. All prime time programs in the television samples were included in the risk ratio table; therefore, I will not attempt to compare the risk ratios for radio with those for television. However, the risk ratios for the adult radio programs are presented in Table 2.

Risk Ratio Comparisons for Children's Programs

The combined risk ratios for all the television weekend morning programs were presented in Table 6 of the Violence Profile No. 10, thus a comparison with the children's radio programs is possible. The figures broken down according to

sex were as follows: -1.55 for male radio leading charac-
ters and -1.33 for television male characters. However, for
females, on the radio the ratio was -3.00 and the ratio was
-1.52 on television, meaning the female leading characters
on the radio children's shows were even more likely to be
victimized than on television. The only other breakdown
that appears significant was that of character type. On the
television programs, the "good" characters had a violent-to-
victim ratio of -1.54, while on radio the "good" characters
ratio was -3.25. The "bad" characters on radio had a ratio
of +1.14 and on television "bad" characters ratio was -1.06.
This reflected a tendency for the "bad guys" to do violence
to the "good guys" on radio, whereas on television weekend
mornings, both character types were the recipients of
violence.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study has shown violence content was part of the radio thriller dramas from the Golden Age of Radio. Although the sample of children's programs was somewhat less violent than the television children's shows, the sample of adult thriller dramas was very similar in the amount of violence to the prime time action shows on television. These similarities support the idea of broadcasting as a stable system.

Broadcasting as a System

This analysis concentrates on the structure of television in 1979, using General Systems Theory. DeFleur (1971) analyzed the mass media as a system; certainly many aspects of this analysis did apply to broadcasting. However, there are important differences between broadcasting and the other mass media. DeFleur was of the opinion low-taste content plays a very important part in maintaining the financial equilibrium, and therefore the overall stability, of the system of mass media. Few would argue the fact that much of the content of television would be classified as "low taste": Whether or not these programs that

are consistently high in the television ratings are actually
as popular as the ratings indicate depend on one's belief
in the validity of the sample used to obtain the ratings.
However, no one could deny the tremendous popularity of
television. The analysis in Chapter 2 of the television
system showed it to be an open system, meeting Monge's
(1977) five conditions for an open system. They are (1)
the identification of the components of the system as the
audience, the local outlets which are all the television
stations, the distributors of programming, and the pro-
ducers of content; (2) the specification of relations be-
tween these components of the system; (3) the determination
of the behavior of the system over time (this is the
stipulation of the input and output which is the exchange
between the system and its environment); (4) the stipu-
lation of the environment as the society in which the sys-
tem operates; and (5) the determination of the system's
evolution. Thus the inputs of money and raw program
materials become the programs which are discharged back
into the environment, thus contributing to the socializa-
tion of the viewers. This system has evolved from radio
as it was from the 1930's through the early 1950's to
television in 1979, and is based on entertainment pro-
gramming. Television took over radio's content, and
insufficient positive feedback has been introduced into

the system to effect any real change; thus many Americans
have lived in the "symbolic world ruled by violence"
(Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 178) all of their lives.

Research into Effects of Televised Violence

The bulk of television research has investigated tele-
vision and young people and its effect on their beliefs and
behavior. A Rand Corporation study of the scientific
literature on television and human behavior of young people
concluded that evidence did suggest that television
affected their beliefs and behavior (Comstock, 1975). The
present study reviewed some typical laboratory research;
many of the studies dealt with children's perceptions of
the violence on television. Other studies indicated some
relationship between aggressive behavior and viewing
violence on television. However, other researchers
approach the question in a different manner. They believe
the key to studying the effects of television lies in the
assumptions about the "facts" of life and society that are
cultivated by television, expecially in heavy viewers;
facts which cause these viewers to expect violence in their
lives (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). The present study also
reviewed some isolated incidents of violence which seemed
to be in direct imitation of incidents seen on television.

The Possible Effects of Radio Violence

Communication research into "effects" is quite recent;

thus no studies exist on the effects of radio violence.
However, this violence, although aural rather than visual,
may have been no less real to the listeners. Violent acts
were graphically portrayed on radio through the use of
realistic sound effects, especially on the thriller dramas,
which was the leading type of drama program from 1934 until
1955 (Herzog, 1975). Some rather graphic descriptions of
sound effects denoting violence were published in articles
written by those who objected to this content. Many
articles were written raising strong objections to the
"blood and thunder" programming for both children and
adults. Parents' groups protested to network officials
(who promised to take action); many believed increases in
juvenile crime could be attributed to these programs. Most
researchers now feel the televised violence is much worse
than the aural violence on radio: However, it may be true
that it was possible to imagine far worse horrors by lis-
tening to the radio than by actually seeing them on tele-
vision. The War of the Worlds scare supports this point:
Radio listeners could use their imaginations to conjure
unspeakable horrors. Certainly nothing like this ever
happened as a result of watching television. Just what
effects the radio violence may have had on the listeners
will never be known. I can only speculate that it may have
been quite similar to the effects of viewing the violence
on television.

Conclusions

The present study supports the idea of the evolution of
the system: from radio to television, with television
taking over radio's content. The adult radio thriller
dramas were quite similar in format to television programs;
they were also quite similar in the amount of violence
content. The sample of adult shows contained crime programs
(police, detectives, and governmental agencies fighting to
maintain law and order); programs about newspapers; and
plays with violence or horror as the central theme: This
type of programming is typical of that found in prime time
action shows on television. Prevalence indicators revealed
figures for radio that were very close to the averages for
television for nine seasons through 1978. The percentage
of programs and program hours containing violence was simi-
lar; the rate per all hours of programming containing
violence was also very close. The major difference in the
programs was length: Many of the television programs were
60 minutes or more in length, while all of the adult radio
thrillers in the sample were 30 minutes long. The range
of scores for television for the nine seasons revealed the
fact that in almost all cases, the radio violence indicator
was well within this range of television scores.

The percentage of leading characters committing
violence on radio in the adult programs was somewhat lower

than the television average; here again the figure was well within the range of scores for television. Radio leading characters who fell victim to violence was one indicator that was less than the similar figure for television, indicating the radio characters were less likely to be victimized than television characters. Overall involvement in violence was a little less for radio than for television characters, but the radio score was still within the range of television scores. The one percentage that was much greater for radio than the television average was leading characters involved in killing. More of the radio leading characters were killed; twice as many as the average television percentage. Slightly fewer radio characters were killers. A possible reason for the difference in per-. centage killed was the fact the criminal leading characters who killed anyone were quite likely to wind up being killed in retaliation. Of course, leading characters who were featured in series programs such as The Shadow were not killed; certainly similar characters on television also stay alive during the run of the program.

The program score, character score and violence index for the adult radio thriller dramas were all slightly less than the average indicators for television. All three scores were within the range of scores for television over the nine seasons. It appears the violence content of

shows based on violence has remained much the same over the years, lending support to the idea of broadcasting as a stable system.

The children's radio thriller dramas were somewhat lower in violence content than the weekend morning programs on television designed for children; both the action shows and the cartoons. The prevalence of violence was less; the rate per all programs and per all hours was considerably less; and the percentage of leading characters involved in violence either as victims or violents was also smaller. The basic similarity between the two samples was in killing: No radio characters were killed in this sample; and few television characters have been killed over the years on children's television, with no killing at all during during several seasons. Weekend morning cartoons and action programs for children have been consistently higher in violence content during the years of the television samples than any other program format, and the violence index for the children's radio programs was certainly lower than the television average for these two program types. There are several possible explanations for this finding, which is inconsistent with the findings for the adult shows, and is certainly inconsistent with the climate of opinion about the violence content of the children's radio programs. These explanations are:

(1) A small sample such as this is subject to sampling error. An indication of less violence in the children's shows may be a result since most of the shows were serialized, with some containing no violence but hinting strongly of violence to come in a later show. (2) A daily dose of violence for children was quite new to parents of that day: People were generally unsophisticated and possibly reacted more strongly to any type of violence aimed at their children. (3) Several sources indicated that children did listen to the adult thriller dramas, which were shown by the present study to be more violent than the children's programs. (4) The children's radio programs are different from the television programs used in the comparison, while the adult programs were quite similar to prime time television action shows. The children's television programs were complete stories, usually 30 minutes in length, whereas the radio shows were 15-minute shows which were serials running Monday through Friday. Often the story line was completed during the week; so that the climax of the story (which was usually quite violent) was broadcast on Thursday or Friday. The only two shows that were complete stories were Tom Mix and The Lone Ranger; these programs were the most violent of the sample of children's radio thrillers. These basic differences may be responsible for the difference in violence content; especially since the similarities

in format of the programs broadcast in the evening for
adults seemed to produce a similar amount of violence con-
tent.

The similarities found in radio and television violence
content are indeed important; but there are also important
differences. Some differences I observed in listening to
these programs appear to be a reflection of society as it
was then. Life was simpler in many ways: The problems of
society grow increasingly more complex with population
growth and overcrowded cities. Thus certain aspects of
the radio violence content reflect this more simple way of
life; with values clearly black or white, rather than subtle
shades of gray. It was evident in this sample that the
"crime does not pay" message was backed by death for the
criminal in many cases. Lawmen shot and killed the murderer
or he was executed. There was no question of right or
wrong in such cases; no argument over the morality of
capital punishment. In today's society law enforcement
officers are reluctant to display weapons, let alone dis-
charge them; capital punishment is rare. The radio "bad
guys" did violence to the "good guys" who often retaliated--
"bad" and "good" were much more clearly differentiated in
the world of radio drama. Radio gave the message of
optimism: Criminals are always caught and punished and
everything will be fine. Television often seems more

cynical to me, reflecting the increasing complexity of our society. The courts have accorded greater protection for individual rights, which sometimes results in crimes going unpunished; and a homeowner who protects his property with a gun may wind up being sued by the burglar.

Another difference in society then was the role women played as secondary to men. The role of women in the radio dramas also seemed to be a reflection of this role: No woman had a major part as a protagonist. The important roles were carried by men, the heroes who solved the crimes were male. Women might act as "assistants": such as Margo Lane for the Shadow, Miss Miller for Mr. D.A., Lois Lane for Superman; but they were not heroines. In fact, in the sample of adult thriller dramas, the only leading female characters were villains. The foreign spy on David Harding, Counterspy, murdered two people. An elderly woman on The Shadow collaborated with her husband in murdering several maids. Others were "gun molls" or companions of the "bad guys." Women were also victimized on radio, as they are on television; however, women were usually relegated to minor roles in the sample of both adult and children's radio programs. It seemed they were ignored more than victimized.

Another observation from this sample was the attitude of society toward mental patients: anyone having had the misfortune to have been confined to a mental institution

was immediately suspect, even though innocent. This
attitude is changing: The television treatment of such
individuals is more sensitive, reflecting more understanding
of such illnesses.

An important difference between the radio programs and
similar television programs was length of time on the air.
All of the sample of programs analyzed had a run of not
less than nine years: Many were on the air for more than
20 years. The average life span of a reasonably popular
television program is around five years. What was the
reason for the longevity of the radio programs? I suspect
there are several, mostly related to ratings and money.
Radio ratings assumed a far less important role than do
the television ratings; they were not developed when many
of these programs first went on the air. Advertisers
usually sponsored an entire program, as radio was rela-
tively inexpensive to produce; whereas television programs
may need several sponsors to bear the high costs of tele-
vision time and television production. It is possible
advertisers paid less attention to the ratings for radio
because they were not spending as much money for sponsor-
ship. Many of the programs in the radio sample ran for
short periods of time as non-sponsored shows. This was
also possible because of low cost. It is unheard of for a
prime time network television program to be unsponsored.

The present study has shown that radio programs were violent: What may we assume about the effects of this earlier violence content? Television effects include specific instances of imitative behavior listed in Chapter 3. Direct effects of radio violence reported included nightmares caused by the shows, children reporting that radio taught them to steal, the St. Louis probation officer observed direct imitative behavior of young law-breakers who had listened to Gangbusters; and of course the War of the Worlds scare. I can remember being very frightened listening to Inner Sanctum when I was 10 or 11 years old. I have never observed this effect evidenced by my own children at that age while they were viewing television.

Other effects indicated by experimental television research include the tendency to promote aggressive behavior in those who have aggressive tendencies. I may only assume that similar effects may have been observed if this type research had been conducted during the Golden Age of Radio. Although the violence content of the children's radio programs was less than that of the children's programs on television, it was still high: 83.3% of all program hours in the sample contained violence. The adult thriller dramas were very close in the amount of violence content to the prime time action television programs. I assume children did listen to the adult shows, just as

they watch prime time television. Thus most Americans alive today have been accustomed to a steady diet of broadcast violence; aurally, then visually, as television took over radio's content. The stability of violence content in the system supports the idea of a stable system in operation, with insufficient positive feedback to effect any real change. It also supports the idea of deeply rooted sociocultural forces in operation (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Therefore an explanation may be offered for the lack of success of the popular protests in eliminating violence content; first on radio, then on television. The protests have simply represented an insufficient amount of positive (deviation amplifying) feedback to change the system: This becomes obvious when we look at the length of time such protests have been offered. In some ways, these protests only reinforce the idea of the popularity of programs high in violence content: Obviously, if no one had listened to them on radio or viewed them on television, there would be little reason to protest. Therefore the protests contain some aspects of negative feedback which keeps the system stable. It seems unlikely at this point in time that protests from any group of parents, doctors, psychologists, or other professionals will ever eliminate the action-adventure format with its integral violence content.

TABLE 1: VIOLENCE INDICATORS

	ADULT THRILLERS	CHILDREN'S THRILLERS	ALL THRILLERS
SAMPLES	N	N	N
Programs (plays) analyzed	15	10	25
Program Hours Analyzed	7.5	3	10.5
Leading Characters Analyzed	61	36	97
PREVALENCE	%	%	%
(%P) Programs containing violence	93.3	80	88
Program hours containing violence	93.3	83.3	90.5
RATE	N	N	N
Number of all violent episodes	47	19	66
(R/P) Rate per all programs (plays)	3.1	1.9	2.6
(R/H) Rate per all hours	6.3	6.3	6.3
ROLES (% OF LEADING CHARACTERS)	%	%	%
Violents (committing violence)	45.9	33.3	41.2
Victims (subjected to violence)	41.7	55.6	46.4
(%V) Any involvement in violence	67.2	58.3	63.9
Killers (committing fatal violence)	16.4	0	10.3
Killed (victims of fatal violence)	16.4	0	10.3
(%K) Any involvement in killing	27.9	0	17.5
Violents : Victims Ratio	⁺1.12	⁻1.66	⁻1.13
Killers : Killed Ratio	1.00	0.00	1.00
INDICATORS OF VIOLENCE			
Program Score: $PS = (\%P) + 2(R/P) + 2(R/H)$	112.1	96.4	105.8
Character Score: $CS = (\%V) + (\%K)$	95.1	58.3	81.4
Violence Index: $VI = PS + CS$	207.2	154.7	187.2

TABLE 2: RISK RATIOS
MAJOR CHARACTERS IN ADULT THRILLERS

	All Characters				Male Characters				Female Characters		
	N	Involved in Violence	Violent-Victim Ratio	"Killer"-Killed Ratio	N	Involved in Violence	Violent-Victim Ratio	"Killer"-Killed Ratio	N	Involved in Violence	Violent-Victim Ratio	"Killer"-Killed Ratio
All Characters	61	67.2	+1.12	1.00	41	75.6	+1.16	+1.14	20	50.0	1.00	-1.50
Social Age												
Children-Adol.	1	0	0.00	0.00	1	0	0.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00
Young Adults	9	55.6	-1.33	1.00	2	50.0	1.00	1.00	7	57.1	-1.50	1.00
Settled Adults	46	69.6	+1.16	-1.16	35	80.0	+1.17	+1.20	11	36.3	1.00	-0.00
Elderly	5	80.0	+1.50	+2.00	3	66.7	1.00	1.00	2	100.0	+2.00	+0.00
Marital Status												
Not Married	45	62.2	+1.12	+1.67	33	72.7	+1.07	+1.33	12	33.3	+1.50	+0.00
Married	16	31.2	+1.13	-1.40	8	87.5	+1.50	1.00	8	75.0	-1.33	-3.00
Class												
Clearly Upper	21	66.7	+1.29	-1.33	13	69.2	+2.33	1.00	8	62.5	-2.00	-2.00
Mixed	25	68.0	1.00	1.00	18	77.8	-1.12	+1.33	7	42.9	+2.00	-0.00
Clearly Lower	15	66.7	+1.13	+1.50	10	80.0	1.00	1.00	5	40.0	+2.00	+0.00
Character Type												
"Good"	33	57.6	-1.10	-2.00	24	70.8	+1.11	-1.15	9	22.2	-0.00	-0.00
Mixed	14	57.1	-1.25	-0.00	7	57.1	-1.50	-0.00	7	57.4	1.00	-0.00
"Bad"	14	100.0	+1.56	+2.67	10	100.0	+1.42	+2.00	4	100.0	+2.00	+0.00

Note. PLUS SIGN MEANS MORE VIOLENTS THAN VICTIMS, MORE KILLERS THAN KILLED; MINUS MEANS MORE VICTIMS OR MORE KILLED. -0.00 MEANS SOME VICTIMS OR KILLED, BUT NO VIOLENTS OR KILLERS; +0.00 MEANS VIOLENTS OR KILLERS IN THE SAMPLE BUT NO VICTIMS OR KILLED AMONG THE MAJOR CHARACTERS. 0.00 MEANS NEITHER VIOLENTS OR VICTIMS, NOR KILLERS OR KILLED.

TABLE 3: RISK RATIOS
MAJOR CHARACTERS IN CHILDREN'S THRILLERS

	ALL CHARACTERS			MALE CHARACTERS			FEMALE CHARACTERS		
	N	INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE	VIOLENT-VICTIM RATIO	N	INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE	VIOLENT-VICTIM RATIO	N	INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE	VIOLENT-VICTIM RATIO
ALL CHARACTERS	36	58.3	-1.66	30	60.0	-1.55	6	50.0	-3.00
SOCIAL AGE									
CHILDREN-ADOLESCENTS	3	0	-.00	2	0	0.00	1	0	0.00
YOUNG ADULTS	18	66.7	-2.40	13	69.4	-2.25	5	60.0	-3.00
SETTLED ADULTS	15	60.0	-1.14	15	60.0	-1.14	0	0	0.00
ELDERLY	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
MARITAL STATUS									
NOT MARRIED	34	68.8	-0.00	29	62.1	-1.55	5	40.0	-0.00
MARRIED	2	50.0	-1.58	1	0	0.00	1	100.0	-2.00
CLASS									
CLEARLY UPPER	8	25.0	-0.00	6	33.3	-0.00	2	0	0.00
MIXED	20	60.0	-2.00	17	58.8	-1.66	3	66.7	-2.00
CLEARLY LOWER	8	87.5	1.00	7	85.7	1.00	1	100.0	1.00
CHARACTER TYPE									
"GOOD"	26	50.0	-3.25	22	50.0	-2.75	4	50.0	-2.00
MIXED	1	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	0	0.00
"BAD"	9	88.9	+1.14	8	87.5	+1.67	1	100.0	1.00

NOTE. PLUS SIGN MEANS MORE VIOLENTS THAN VICTIMS, MINUS MEANS MORE VICTIMS. -0.00 MEANS SOME
VICTIMS, BUT NO VIOLENTS; 0.00 MEANS NEITHER VIOLENTS OR VICTIMS. SINCE THERE WAS NO KILLING IN
ANY OF THE SAMPLE OF CHILDREN'S THRILLER DRAMAS, THE KILLER-KILLED RATIO WAS NOT SHOWN.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON OF VIOLENCE INDICATORS:
RADIO SAMPLE AND TV AVERAGES FROM 1967 THROUGH 1978

	(RADIO) ADULT THRILLERS	(TV) PRIME TIME ACTION PGMS.[A]	(RADIO) CHILDREN'S THRILLERS	(TV) WEEKEND AM ACTION PGMS.[B]	(TV) CARTOONS[C]
SAMPLES	N	N	N	N	N
PROGRAMS ANALYZED	15	50.3[D]	10	38.8[D]	58.9[D]
PROGRAM HOURS ANALYZED	7.5	57.7[D]	3.	13.6[D]	18.0[D]
LEADING CHARACTERS ANALYZED	61	169.8[D]	36	101.6[D]	140.8[D]
PREVALENCE	%	%	%	%	%
($\%$P) PROGRAMS CONTAINING VIOLENCE	93.3	94.7	80.0	95.1	95.1
PROGRAM HOURS CONTAINING VIOLENCE	93.3	95.7	83.3	94.8	94.6
RATE	N	N	N	N	N
NUMBER OF ALL VIOLENT EPISODES	47	392.9[D]	19	236.0[D]	370.3[D]
(R/P) RATE PER ALL PROGRAMS	3.1	7.8	1.9	6.1	6.3
(R/H) RATE PER ALL HOURS	6.3	6.8	6.3	17.3	20.5
ROLES (% OF LEADING CHARACTERS)	%	%	%	%	%
VIOLENTS (COMMITTING VIOLENCE)	45.9	62.6	33.3	55.4	56.9
VICTIMS (SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE)	41.7	66.2	55.6	74.1	75.1
($\%$V) ANY INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENCE	67.2	77.6	58.3	81.5	82.7
KILLERS (COMMITTING FATAL VIOLENCE)	16.4	18.4	0.0	1.2	0.9
KILLED (VICTIMS OF FATAL VIOLENCE)	16.4	8.0	0.0	1.2	1.2
($\%$K) ANY INVOLVEMENT IN KILLING	27.9	22.7	0.0	2.3	2.0
VIOLENTS : VICTIMS RATIO	+1.12	-1.06	-1.66	-1.34	-1.32
KILLERS : KILLED RATIO	1.00	+2.28	0.00	1.00	-1.25
INDICATORS OF VIOLENCE					
PROGRAM SCORE: PS=($\%$P)+2(R/P)+2(R/H)	112.1	123.9	94.6	141.9	148.7
CHARACTER SCORE: CS=($\%$V) + ($\%$K)	95.1	100.3	58.3	83.8	84.7
VIOLENCE INDEX: VI=PS + CS	207.2	224.3	154.7	225.7	233.4

[A]FIGURES FROM TABLE 10 (GERBNER, GROSS, SIGNORIELLI, MORGAN & JACKSON-BEECK, 1979, P. 88).
[B]FIGURES FROM TABLE 8 (GERBNER, GROSS, SIGNORIELLI, MORGAN & JACKSON-BEECK, 1979, P. 86).
[C]FIGURES FROM TABLE 11 (GERBNER, GROSS, SIGNORIELLI, MORGAN & JACKSON-BEECK, 1979, P. 89).
[D]THESE FIGURES ARE PRESENTED AS AVERAGES RATHER THAN THE TOTALS WHICH WERE GIVEN IN THE ABOVE TABLES.

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