Communication
Culture
Community

Liber Amicorum James Stappers

edited by

Ed Hollander
Paul Rutten
Coen van der Linden

Index

George Gerbner

Casting and fate
Women and minorities on television drama, game shows, and news

Introduction

A child today is born into a home in which television is on an average of more than seven hours a day. For the first time in human history, most of the stories about people, life and values are told not by parents, schools, churches, or others in the community who have something to tell but by a group of distant conglomerates that have something to sell.

This is a radical change in the way we employ creative talent and the way we cast the symbolic environment. The roles we grow into and the ways others see us are no longer home-made, hand-crafted, community-inspired. They are products of a complex manufacturing and marketing process. Television is the mainstream of the process. Our ongoing study of that process, called Cultural Indicators, has built a unique cumulative database describing many thousands of characters, programs, and items that map key features of the new cultural environment.

Casting and fate are the building blocks of story-telling. Ours is a bird's-eye view of what large communities absorb over long periods of time. It attempts to answer questions about the television all viewers watch but none see: What is the cast of characters that animates the world of television? How are women and minorities (seniors, racial and ethnic groups, poor and disabled persons, etc.) represented? And, finally, how do they fare in that world - what is their share of heroes and villains, winners and losers, violents and victims?

Our focus is on recurrent and inescapable images of the mainstream of the cultural environment in which we all live and which contribute to the shaping of power relations in society. These are features of the total programing structure that cultivate conceptions of majority and minority status and the corresponding calculus of visibility, power, and risk. Inescapable also are the implications citizens concerned with communication, culture, and community, and for the television industry - the people who sponsor it, run it, write, produce and direct its programs, and act in it. This report is based on ten years of monitoring and analyzing commercial television programs. Commercial television dominates American broadcasting with major networks capturing about 80 percent of the total audience. The report is based on the analysis of 19,642 speaking parts appearing in 1,371 major network (ABC, CBS, NBC) prime time and Saturday morning children's programs. One-season samples were used in daytime programs, game-shows and news, cable-originated dramatic programs and Fox network dramatic programs.

'Dramatic' was defined as fictional programs with a story-line or plot, including series, films, cartoons and other clearly fictional programs shown on television. 'Cable-originated' was defined as those programs, including feature movies, in whose

production the 11 major cable networks had a substantial financial interest.

It is important to consider the strengths and limitations of the Cultural Indicators approach. It is intended to reveal features cutting across all types of programming and to bring out general patterns in a representative and comparative perspective. These are the patterns of conceptions and action television cultivates from cradle to grave.

In that perspective, the most remarkable finding is the relative stability of the patterns. We observe the cultural products of a robust industrial and marketing system whose structure changed little in the last decades.

This is not to underestimate the possibility and importance of change but, on the contrary, to emphasize the forces of resistance, both in deep-seated conceptions and in institutional policies. The most important contribution of these studies, therefore, is a realistic understanding of what efforts to change such conceptions and policies are up against. Understanding the cultural terrain in which corrective action is planned is the first requirement for successful intervention.

The studies were supported by the *Screen Actors Guild*, the *American Federation of Television and Radio Artists*, and the *Turner Broadcasting System* in 1992, and conducted by the *Cultural Indicators research team* at the *University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication*.[1] All programs were screened and coded by trained analysts using an extensively tested instrument of analysis. The procedure requires the reliable observation by independent coders of programs and characters in the samples. Further methodological details can be found in publications in the list of references.

Casting

Americans spend more time with television than the next 10 highest-ranked leisure-time activities put together. During that time the average viewer of a major network station is exposed to an average of 355 characters playing speaking parts each week in prime-time dramatic programs, 353 in daytime dramatic series, 138 in Saturday morning (children's) programs, 51 in game shows, and 209 news professionals (including repeated appearances) delivering the local and national news. About 1 out of 5 are 'major characters'.

A general demographic overview finds that women comprise one-third or less of characters in all samples except daytime serials where they are 45% and in game shows where they are 55%. The smallest percentage of women is in the news (28%) and in children's programs (23%). Even that shrinks to 18% as the importance of the role rises to 'major character'.

While all seniors are greatly underrepresented, visibly old people, roughly 65 and above, are hardest to find on television. Their representation ranges from none on the youth-oriented Fox network and about 1% on network daytime series to less than 3% in the other samples. In real life, their proportion is 12% and growing. African-Americans are most visible on Fox and in game shows. On major network prime-time programs they are 11% and on daytime serials 9% of all characters. They are least visible on Saturday morning children's programs. (Many cartoon characters cannot be reliably coded for race.)

Latino/ Hispanic characters are rarely seen. Only in game shows do they rise significantly above 1% representation. Americans of Asian/ Pacific origin and Native Americans ('Indians') are even more conspicuous by their absence. Less then 1% (in the case of Native Americans 0.3%) is their general representation.

Almost as invisible are members of the 'lower class' (judged by a three-way classification of the socio-economic status of major characters). Although the US census classifies more than 14% of the general population, 29% of Latino/Hispanics, and 33% of African-Americans as 'poor', and many more as low-income wage-earners, on network television they make up only 1.3% of characters in prime time, 1.2% in daytime, half that (0.6%) in children's programs, and 0.2% in the news.

We shall now take a closer look at the casts of prime-time, daytime, children's, Fox and cable-originated dramatic programs, and news.

Prime-time dramatic programs

Despite changes in styles, stars, and formats, prime-time network dramatic television presents a remarkably stable cast. As we have noted, two-thirds are men. The gender imbalance was virtually the same in 1982 as in 1992 (35% and 34%, respectively).

'Elderly' characters are 2.5% (the real-life proportion is more than 12%). In the 10 years included in the sample, they tended to decline in their proportion of the prime-time population, a trend contrary to facts.

Women in prime time tend to be concentrated in the younger age groups. They 'age faster' than men and lose more roles (and jobs) as they enter middle age. The percentage of young adult females exceeds that of males of the same age group by 12%. As 'settled adults,' however, women's roles are 13% fewer than men's. In the gender-bender world of television, there is a particular shortage of mature women. Contrary to any measure of reality, the average viewer will see 2 1/2 times as many mature men as women.

Romance may be rampant on prime time but marriage is not. Only one in ten characters is known to be married. Marriage is more of a defining circumstance for women than it is for men. For two-thirds of male characters we just don't know or care whether they're married or not. Knowledge of marital status, as of age, religion or income, tends to place conditions on macho adventure. But for more than half of female characters we know; they're married. This results is the anomaly that nearly half of all married characters are women, despite the fact that prime-time women are one-third of the cast and are concentrated in the younger age groups. Selective observers point to the high proportion of career women on television. They miss the fact that women are almost twice as likely to play the role of wife as men are to play the role of husband. Marriage is not only a more defining but also a more confining condition for women than for men.

As already noted, 'lower class' characters make up only 1.3% of the prime-time population. Women, who hold most of the lower-paid jobs in real life, make up only 0.9% of the 'lower class' of all characters and 0.5% of major characters.

Race and ethnicity are as skewed as gender, age and class. The 10-year average of African-Americans is 11% of the prime-time population (12% in the 1991-92 season), fairly close to their actual proportion. But Latino/ Hispanic characters, over 9% of

the US population, are 1.1% of the prime-time cast. Americans of Asian/ Pacific origin, more than 3% of the US population, are 0.8%, and Native Americans ('Indians'), more than 1% in real life, are 0.3% in prime time. Most seasonal fluctuations are within 1% of the 10-season averages, with no clear tendency in any direction.

The relative visibility of African-American characters becomes a double-edged feature of casting. The mark of minority status is not only underrepresentation but also disproportionate deprivation. For example, in reality the poverty and unemployment rates of African-Americans are two to three times those of whites. Arguably, a mass medium of universal appeal and some democratic pretension would pay special attention to that condition. On television it is hidden from view. On both prime time and Saturday morning, the black middle class is larger than the white (92 to 89%) but the 'lower class' is about the same, around a minuscule 1% of each group.

Some form of disability strikes 11% of prime-time major characters. Violence appears to be mostly painless because physical injury afflicts 8% of men and 7% of women, despite the fact that 49% of men and 31% of women suffer some violence. Physical illness strikes almost as many, and mental illness nearly 4%. We shall discuss their fate later.

Fox network programming targets young viewers. The average age of characters on Fox is 31 - the youngest of all dramatic programs. Fox is also heavily comedy and action-oriented, as is cable-originated programming. Consequently, more men and fewer women are cast in major roles. Seniors are fewer and those cast play mostly minor roles. On Fox, and to a lesser extent on cable-originated programs, more characters are observed as unmarried and as injured than on other networks.

Daytime serials

Daytime is serious business, mostly sexual and marital. Only 7% of daytime drama was judged to be 'mostly humorous,' far below the prime-time 30%. Daytime is the only daypart where the number of women almost equals that of men (45%) and where almost as many women (49%) as men play major roles.

Male hegemony is preserved, if barely, in age-casting. Daytime, as prime time, favors men with longer mid-life span. However, daytime is a little more even-handed than prime time, and the cast is more clearly and evenly defined along marital lines. The world of daytime serial drama has less use for maritally undefined men and more need for married men and women.

The class and race structure of daytime is similar to that of prime time, and, if anything, even less poor and more 'white.' Handicaps, illness and injury are rare and seem to afflict mostly men.

Saturday Morning

Cartoon characters make up most of the Saturday morning cast. Women are less than one-forth of that cast. As major characters, their percentage goes down to 18. Importance declines with age, as well as with gender. As age increases, the percentage of major compared to minor roles drops, especially for women.

Curiously for children's programs, married characters, potential father and mother images, are less than half their prime time proportions Saturday morning shuns married women: they play 20% of major female roles in prime time but only 3% in

children's programs.

Sex comes early on television, especially on cartoons, and most of all the women. Prime-time romance involves a higher percentage of adolescent and young women than men, but more mature men than women. The disparity is even greater in Saturday morning children's programs. Only 22% of males but 49% of females involved in romance are adolescents. In all other age groups, the percentage of romantically involved males is greater than that of females. The child viewer may see 3 mature men involved in romance for every mature woman, and even a romantic old man every once in a while, but never a romantically involved old woman.

Social class, when it can be observed, is as skewed in children's as in prime-time programs. The child viewer of Saturday morning major network programs would see, on the average, one lower class character every three weeks, usually in a minor role.

With more than half of all characters unclassifiable by race, African-Americans average 3%, though their proportion varies greatly, reaching 7% in 1991-92. Hispanics are seen, on the average, once every two weeks (0.5%) and Asian/ Pacific Americans once every three weeks (0.3%), and mostly in minor roles. In the nine Saturday morning three-network samples, only 3 Native Americans appeared (0.1%). Despite all the mayhem, only 3% of Saturday morning characters suffer any injury (in the 1991-92 sample none seemed injured) and less than 5% exhibit signs of any disability (in 1991-92 it was 2%).

Cable-originated children's programs present a slightly more equitable gender, race and disability character distribution, but otherwise they resemble the major network cast.

Game shows
Major network game shows feature a populist patriarchy. The contestants are more diverse than the casts of other programs. Women are 58%, African-Americans 18%, seniors 7%, Latino/ Hispanics 5% - more than on any other programs - and they tend to win more often then the majority types. The hosts, however, are middle-aged men. Women who are not contestants are young white assistants to the hosts, and 3 out of 4 assistants are seen but not heard.

Major network news
News items were classified into 50 different themes, including political, economic, and human interest. Topics judged to be the significant or main themes in more than 15% of the items were issues of power: who has it, who uses it, who seeks it, and, most of all, who threatens it.

Criminal activities and health issues each attract major attention in 18% of the items; law enforcement and other legal issues in 16% each; and death and dying in 15%. Women's rights attract major attention only in connection with abortion, in 6% of the items. Other minority groups, people or rights together are featured in only 3%.

The power-oriented thematic structure of television defines who delivers the news, who is cited in the news, and who make news. Next to game show hosts, the world of news is the most male-dominated. The mean age of those in the news is 41, the highest on television except for game show hosts. An article in *American Journalism Review* (September, 1993, p. 22) described the 'classic anchor team' as "craggy

veteran anchorguy; attractive, poised, perfect second-wife-for-the-anchorguy anchorgal; jolly weather fella; rugged sportsguy".

Men are 64% of those delivering the news, 80% of those cited as authorities, and 82% of those making news. Women are most visible (35%) as performers delivering the news. As authorities cited, they drop to 20% and as newsmakers to 18%. Productive aging in the news, even more than in other types of programs, is a privilege of men and majorities. Newsmakers over 60 are 12% of men, 6% of women, and 1% or less of minorities.

The most visible minority newscasters are African-Americans. They make up 14% of those who deliver the news. But as their authority grows their number drops even faster than women's. Their proportion declines to 8% as newsmakers and to 4% of authorities cited in the news. Americans of Asian/ Pacific origin are most likely to appear as sources cited (4%) and as delivering the news (2%). Latino/ Hispanics make 1.5% of news, or less, in any category.

Three major groups dominate the stories in the news. Government officials (including law enforcement) are 43% of newsmakers and 12% of authorities cited. Private business makes up 11.5% of newsmakers and 8% of those cited. The next largest group making news (6.4%) is those suspected, arrested or convicted of crimes. Women are more likely to make news as government officials (16%) than as private business persons (6%). Minorities have a proportionately even better chance to make news as government officials than as private business persons. African-Americans in government (19%) are 10 times as newsworthy and Latino/ Hispanics (21%) 4 times as newsworthy as they are in business. Government is clearly more of an equal-opportunity newsmaker.

The disparities are even greater when we compare news of legitimate and illegal activity. Women make news in connection with legitimate activities 10 times as much as in crime. The same ratio for men is 8, for Latino/ Hispanics 5 and for African-Americans 2. The ratio of legitimate business-related vs. crime-related news shows still more striking contrasts. For every woman in crime news there are 3 in business news; for every man in crime news there are 2 in business news; for every Latino/Hispanic in crime news these is one in business news; but for every African-American in business news there are 6.6 in crime news.

To look at this another way, crime claims 13% of African-Americans in the news compared to 6% of all men, 5% of Latino/Hispanics, and 2% of women. The double-edged visibility of African-Americans becomes clear when we consider that about 62% of real-life criminals are white, African-Americans are at least twice as likely to appear in crime news as any other group.

This brings us to the discussion of 'fate' on television.

Fate

'Fate' in this study means whether characters are destined to be clearly good or bad, to achieve success or to fail, and, if involved in violence, to be perpetrators or victims. We present the dynamics of fate in the multi-season samples of major network prime-time and Saturday morning programs.

In the context of single programs and stories that we typically attend as viewers, these are of course complex matters of plot, reasoning, point of view, and

130

interpretation. Simple counts cannot do justice to these complexities. But our methods are not designed to reflect subtleties, motivations or justifications. Therefore, the validity of relatively simple counts should not be dismissed, nor their ability to illuminate crucial aspects of the dynamics of fate in television story-telling underestimated.

Close, detailed interpretations, such as those of television critics, may provide multiple intriguing and compelling insights about specific outcomes in specific dramatic contexts. But our analysis serves a different function. As the bird's-eye-view of familiar territory, it shows not what individual viewers may or may not see at a particular time but the inescapable features large communities absorb over a lifetime. The repetitive daily systemic experience of who is who, who gets what, and who gets away with what against whom, regardless of reasons or justifications, has a message of its own: a message of value, effectiveness, vulnerability, and of social typing.

Heroes and villains
Television seems to present a pre-ordained world. Positively valued outnumber evil characters between two and three to one in each of the years included in our samples. From half to two-thirds of the casts are mixed. Children's program characters are more sharply differentiated, with fewer mixed evaluations.

For every bad man there are about 2 good men and for every bad woman about 5 good women in both prime-time and Saturday morning programs. But while the ratio is generally favorable to women, the evaluations are reversed for elderly women. For every elderly male villain there are 13 male heroes of the same age. But for every female villain, there is only one female hero. The proportion of bad old females is more than 8 times that of bad old males.

A ranking of 'goodness/ badness' ratios has been constructed by dividing the number of positively valued by the number of negatively valued characters in each group. The results give us an order of 'villainy.'

For every 100 heroes in prime time there are, overall, 43 villains. The most favorable ratios are those of most minorities, women, and children. For example, for every 100 heroes, Asian/ Pacific Americans have only 14, women and children 19, and African-Americans 22 villains. Knowing the age, marital and family status of characters generally means more favorable portrayal than not knowing. The least favorable ratios are those lower class, Latino/ Hispanic and foreign (or at least not identifiable American) characters. For every 100 heroes, lower class characters have 65, foreign characters of color 79, Latino/Hispanics 92 and foreign whites 119 villains.

Differences by gender shed further light on some of these ratios. For males, it is better not to be married than to be married. Among all male characters, foreign, young, and Latino/Hispanic men have the least favorable 'hero/villain' ratios. Evil aliens of color are all men. Foreign white and mentally ill males provide a disproportionate ratio of male villains. The largest ratio of female villains comes from mentally ill and old women characters.

In Saturday morning children's programs, female, disabled and older characters fare even worse than in prime time. Mother figures in leading roles -- married, elderly, settled women -- and major African-American female characters, few as they are, are among the most evil. For every 100 African-American female heroes in Saturday

morning programs there are 33 villains, compared to 11 for African-American men. For every 100 elderly women heroes there are 88 villains, compared to 8 for men -- 11 times the male 'villainy' ratio. Looking at major characters only, wicked married, older, and African-American women -- but not men --actually outnumber positive characters.

Winners and losers
Characters who succeed in their aims we call winners and those who fail losers. Nearly half are 'mixed' both in evaluation and success. Of those judged 'good,' 63% succeed and 6% fail. Of the 'bad' characters, 10% succeed and 70% fail. Success, therefore, may be seen partly as a measure of effectiveness as well as of moral worth. In prime time, the average ratio is 40 failures for every 100 successes. Only foreign whites, Native Americans ('Indians'), and the mentally ill fail at least as often as they succeed. Mentally ill characters fail 1.5 times for every success.

Marriage hurts men but helps women. Men are more likely to succeed if not married. Unmarried men fail 32 times while married men fail 45 times for every 100 successes. Women, on the contrary, are more successful if married; their ratio is 29 failures if married and 42 failures if unmarried for 100 successes.
Latino/ Hispanic and foreign males (but not females) are among those most likely to fail; 60 and 160 failures, respectively, for every 100 successes. Class, age and health cut differently for men and women. Lower class men succeed 5 times as often as they fail but lower class women fail as often as they succeed. Elderly men are among the most successful with only 8 failures for every 100 successes, while elderly women fail over 6 times more, 50 for every 100 successes. Physically ill men fail 58 times but women 75 times for every 100 successes. Mentally ill men fail 147 times but women 160 times for 100 successes. Being cast Hispanic and foreign male, and poor, old, or ill female carry calamitous risks of failure in prime time.
The world of Saturday morning children's programs is more starkly, and darkly, defined. More than one-fourth of all characters fail, compared to 18% in prime time. Foreign, old, and ill characters fail more than they succeed. The mentally ill fail twice as often. All minorities run a higher rate of failure Saturday morning than in prime time.
While marriage hurts men and helps women in prime time, in children's programs it hurts more and it hurts both. Elderly women have four times the relative failure rate of elderly men. To be cast an older woman or a mentally ill character in children's programs is to run the highest risk of ill fate on all of television.

Violents and victims
Mass-produced violence injected into formula-driven programs presents a consistent social structure. It occurs about 5 times per prime time and 25 times per Saturday morning hour. In prime time it involves more than 6 out of 10 programs and nearly half of all characters. In Saturday morning children's programs, more than 9 out of 10 programs and 8 out of 10 characters involve violence.
Of course, there is blood in fairy tales, gore in mythology, murder in Shakespeare. But the individually crafted, selectively used and often dreadful violence of art and journalism, capable of balancing tragic costs against deadly compulsions, has been swamped by 'happy violence' produced for general entertainment and sales on the dramatic assembly-line. Happy violence is swift, cool, painless and effective,

employed by good guys as well as bad, leading to a happy ending. It is designed to deliver an audience to the next commercial in a receptive mood.

With a predominantly male cast, and given the typical action scenario, the stage is set for stories of power, conflict, violence. But violence and victimization are not evenly distributed. The relative risks of victimization are higher for women and for 'lower class' characters. They are also higher, and even more uneven, in Saturday morning programs. Furthermore, as characters age, their risks tend to increase. Lethal victimization extends the pattern. Overall, about 10% of major characters are involved in killing. For every 10 killers 5 are killed. But for every 10 persons of color, 7 are killed; for Latino/ Hispanic characters, 13 are killed; for disabled characters 15 are killed, and for every 10 women also 15 are killed. The most calamitous fatality ratio is reserved for the poor. For every 10 lower class characters who kill, 101 die a violent death, 20 times the general ratio.

Conclusions

Minorities are made, not born. The largest common process of their making is lifetime exposure to the world of television. That world seems to be frozen in a time-warp of obsolete and damaging representations.

Women play one out of three roles in prime time television, one out of four in children's programs, and one out of five of those who make news. They fall short of majority even in daytime serials. They age faster than men, and as they age they are more likely to be portrayed evil and unsuccessful.

Seniors of both genders are greatly underrepresented and seem to be vanishing instead of increasing as in real life. As characters age they lose importance, value, and effectiveness. Visibly old people are almost invisible on television. Mature women seem to be especially hard to cast - and hard to take. They are disproportionately underrepresented, undervalued, and undersexed.

People of color, the vast majority of humankind, African-Americans are less than 11% of prime-time and 3% of children's program casts, and mostly middle-class. Latino/ Hispanics, over 9% of the US population. are about 1% of prime time and half of that of children's program casts. Americans of Asian/ Pacific origin, more than 3% of the US population, and Native Americans ('Indians'), more than 1%, are conspicuous by their virtual absence. The world of daytime serials is even more 'white' than prime time. A child viewer sees the fewest minorities.

In the overwhelmingly middle-class consumer world of television, poor people play a negligible role. The low-income 13% of the US (and much larger%age of minorities)is reduced to 1.3% or less on television. Women of low income, who hold most of the low-income jobs in real life, are even more invisible.

As the 43 million disabled American gain legal rights of equal access and employment in real life, physical disability is visible in only 1.5% of prime-time programs. Those shown as disabled fare relatively badly in Saturday morning children's programs. Mentally ill characters fare badly in all types of programs.

If prime time is a time of macho adventures, family comedies, and societal power-plays, daytime is a time of interior turbulence. Its sexual and marital themes raise female representation but reduce social diversity below that of prime time.

Programs designed specifically for children's favorite viewing time, Saturday morning, present a world that is the harshest and most exploitive of all. The inequities of prime time are magnified Saturday morning. A child will see about 123 characters each Saturday morning, but rarely, if ever, a mature female as leader. The Saturday morning viewer sees an elderly leading character, if at all, about once every three weeks, and it is most likely to be a man. Married and parent images are curiously rare and gloomy in children's programs. Midlife and older women in Saturday morning children's programs are one of the least visible but most evil and, consequently victimized group; this is where the witches come from.

All the mayhem in children's cartoons (32 acts per hour according to our studies) seems painless. Cartoon humor appears to be the sugar coating on the pill of cool, happy violence.
A disproportionate number of ill-fated characters comes from the ranks of poor, Latino and foreign men, and both young and old, African-American, and poor women. At the bottom of fate's 'pecking order' are characters portrayed as old women and as mentally ill, perpetuating stigma of the most damaging kinds.

Casting and fate also affect those who deliver the news, who are referred to and cited in the news, and who are news. In most essential characteristics, news deals with the exercise of power: who has it, who uses it, who seeks it, and, most of all, who threatens it.
Women decline in representation from 35% as newscasters to 20% as authorities cited and 17% as newsmakers. Other minorities are also most visible delivering and least visible making news. When they do, they are most likely to appear as government officials or as criminals. African-Americans make news as criminals at least twice as often as other groups do, despite the fact that 62% of criminals are white. No other minority suffers such fate.

These results show not what the US television industry says or thinks it does but what it actually presents to the public. They provide a basis for judgment, policy, and citizen action. The cultural environment into which our children are born, just as the physical environment, is no longer a matter of individual choice but a matter of social policy and of human rights. A movement toward a free, diverse, and fair cultural environment has become a necessity to achieve media democracy in the telecommunication age.
Channels multiply but communication technologies converge and media merge. With every merger, staffs shrink and creative opportunities diminish. Cross-media conglomeration reduces competition and denies entry to newcomers. The coming of cable and VCR's has not led to greater diversity of product or actual viewing.
Fewer sources fill more outlets more of the time with ever more standardized fare designed for global markets. Global marketing streamlines production, homogenizes content, sweeps alternative perspectives from the mainstream, and moves cultural policy beyond democratic, or even national, reach. There is no historical precedent, constitutional provision, or legislative blueprint to confront the challenge of the

new consolidated controls that really count -- global conglomerate controls over the design, production, promotion and distribution of media content and the iniquitous portrayals and power relationships embedded in it.

The *Cultural Environment Movement* (CEM) was launched in 1991 in response to this drift. *CEM* is an educational nonprofit tax-exempt corporation organized in the US to address the need to reach out internationally to build a coalition of independent organizations committed to joint action in developing mechanisms of greater public participation in cultural decision-making[2]. It provides the liberating alternative to repressive movements in the field. It works to gain the right of a child to be born into a cultural environment that is reasonable free, fair, diverse, and non-damaging.

Notes

1 The Cultural Indicators project was initiated by the *National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence* in 1969 and supported by the *Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior*, the *National Institute of Mental Health*, the *White House Office of Telecommunications Policy*, the *American Medical Association*, the CEM *Administration on Aging*, the *National Science Foundation*, *The Hoso Bunka Foundation*, the *National Cable Television Association*, the *Turner Broadcastig System*, the *American Association of Retired Persons*, the *Screen Actors Guild*, and other organizations.
2 For more information write CEM, P.O. Box 31847, Philadelphia, PA, 19104, USA.

References

Gerbner, G., Holsti, O.R., Krippendorff, K., Paisley, W.J., & Stone, Ph. (Eds.) (1969). *The analysis of communications content: Developments in scientific theories and computer techniques.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Gerbner, G. (1985). Mass media discourse: Message System Analysis as a component of Cultural Indicators. In T.A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse and communication* (pp. 13-25). Berlin: Walter De Guyter & Co..

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1986). Living with television: The dynamics of the cultivation process. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Perspectives on media effects* (pp. 17-40). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Ass.. [Reprinted in Halberstadt, A.G., & Steve L. Ellyson, S.L. (Eds.) (1990), *Social psychology readings: A century of research.* New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.]

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1993). Growing up with television: The cultivation perspective' . In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 17-41). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Ass..

Gerbner, G. (1993). *Violence in cable-originated television programs. Research report.* Washington, DC.: National Cable Television Association.

Signorielli, N., & Morgan, M.J. (Eds.) (1990). *Cultivation Analysis; New directions in media effects research.* Newburry Park, Ca: Sage.