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# The influence of status on certain television habits.

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

School of Public Relations

Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF STATUS

ON

CERTAIN TELEVISION HABITS

BY

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(A.B., Bates College, 1954)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

1956

7940  
7/5/56

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

DATE: [Illegible]

BY: [Illegible]

FOR THE RECORD

RE: [Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

APPROVED  
BY

First Reader... *W. Lewis Albert* .....  
*Assist. Professor*

Second Reader... *Mylan D. Barnes* .....  
*Assistant Professor*

Out grateful appreciation is extended to  
Mr. James Cronin and Mr. Ian Malcom,  
principles of the Lincoln Elementary school  
in Malden and the Spaulding School in Newton,  
whose cooperation in allowing this study to be  
conducted at their respective schools was  
invaluable.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Programming to a mass audience is at the least a very confusing and difficult job, that is if the object of the communication is that the right people are to be reached with the right material. This alone justifies the use of research in the field of mass communications. To understand the audience one must study it..... a very simple rule, but one difficult to pursue.

Television is the newest form of mass media, and being so, it is the field in which the least research has been done. Surveys of the type that Nielson, A.R.B., Hooper and others conduct do not contribute anything significant to our understanding of the mass audience as far as television is concerned. All they tell us is that so many people listen to a certain program at a certain time. They do not tell us who the people are, why they listen, how they react, or even if they like what they are watching.

Previous research has established that a person's status will affect the manner in which he perceives and reacts to different stimuli. Larzarsfeld<sup>1</sup> showed that those persons who were economically more comfortable also had a tendency to be more satisfied with existing political conditions. Gardner

1 Lazarsfeld, Paul F., "Social Factors in Voting", in Readings in Social Psychology, -edited by Swanson, Newcomb and others, New York, 1952.

Murphy experimented with the retention of controversial material and found that "an individual notes and remembers material which supports his social attitudes better than material which conflicts with these attitudes."<sup>2</sup> Stagner<sup>3</sup> in his book discusses this subject in relation to the personality as a whole and says for instance;

"There is reason to suspect that life in the middle-class atmosphere of many academic communities, with emphasis upon formality in personal relations and a prescribed ritual for seeking new friends, molds personalities which are more rigid and less permeable to outside stimuli than the relatively free and easy patterns of working class and wealthy groups."

It might be expected then, that status might also be an influence in the viewing habits and reactions of individuals as far as television is concerned.

It is in this latter area that the writer proposed to do his study. Others have made investigations of a similar nature into this area. For example in 1951 Eleanor E. Maccoby concluded that at that time there were more people in the high income group who tended to criticize television programs, be concerned about the effects of T V on family life and school work, and in general disapprove of television.<sup>4</sup> In 1949 Frank

2 Murphy, Gardner, Levine, Jerome M., "The Learning and Forgetting of Controversial Material", loc. cit.

3 Stagner, Ross, Psychology of Personality, New York, 1948.

4 Maccoby, Eleanor E., "Television: Its Impact on School Children", in Public Opinion Quarterly, 1951, 15:421-441.

Cantwell<sup>5</sup> found that an immediately apparent effect of TV upon families is to reduce the number of hours devoted to other leisure time. Boston University conducted a study into the effects of television and family life and found for instance that "the television owners of higher education view less and read more than the television owners of lower education."<sup>6</sup> Hal Evry<sup>7</sup> in a case study of 2000 six year olds found that more than half of the children were accustomed to having dreams about the television programs they watched. These studies all investigated the effects of television from both a social and personal aspect.

Although some of these studies did deal in part with the effects of television as they differ between different socio-economic groups they did not devote themselves to it entirely. It is the purpose of this study to determine as far as possible what differences there are in television habits and attitudes of individuals in different status positions. Since there has been what one might call "a great woe and cry" in the past year or so about children's programs

5 Cantwell, Frank W., Riley, John W., Ruttiger, Katherine F., "Some Observation on the Social Effects of Television", in Public Opinion Quarterly, 1949, 13:223-34.

6 Fine, Bernard, Television and Family Life, study completed at Boston University School of Public Relations and Communications, 1952

7 Evry, Hal, "TV Murder Causes Bad Dreams", in Film World, 1952, 8:247.

the writer felt that he would like to attack this project using children as his main consideration.

By taking two groups of children from definitely different socio-economic levels and by questioning both them and their parents we hope to be able to find out if there are any differences between the two groups which we can contribute to their status levels. Other factors which help make this study more valid are the equal age, educational and I.Q. levels of the children, and the almost equal distribution of males and females in both groups. In regards to the latter the data collected will also be examined to see if there are any results we can attribute to sex differences. By questioning the parents we can also discover any differences between them in regards to such subjects as programs preference, viewing time, use of television as reward and punishment etc. The following is a list of the areas in which the subjects will be questioned.

1. Viewing Habits

How much time is spent watching, who is viewing done with, are same programs always watched, are viewing hours controlled, does viewing affect eating habits?

2. Choice of Programs

What are favorite programs of mother, father, child, whole family together, what programs are approved of by parents, forbidden, what does child like about programs, not like?

3. How does television affect the family?

Is it used for punishment or reward, are programs ever suggested to the child by parent or teacher, does he follow or is he aware of suggestions, how are choice of program conflicts settled.

4. Opinions

What do parents think of children's programs, of controlling viewing time and program choice of child?

Using these areas as a framework we can make many comparisons within it and find out if there is anything to be discovered of any significant importance.

Needless to say, a study such as this can not be considered definitive. It will take many similar studies with correlating evidence to establish anything completely definite. This study can only be considered as a part of a broad plan to establish a valid body of research in this field. Of course there is always the question of what use this type of data can be put to after it has been collected. It seems that research of this type should have a threefold purpose. First it should be an aid and guide to those in the business of programming television, in our case, mainly to children. Secondly, it should be an aid to the schools. And finally it should be an aid to the parents. By finding out what 'is', and comparing it with what 'should be', these three groups will be able to discover what has to be done.

## Chapter Two

### Method

After contacting the proper authorities and receiving permission to work in both schools, the teacher of each class was asked to set a convenient date for the survey. Each teacher was asked not to mention to the class that they would be taking the questionnaire.

The writer brought the questionnaires into the classrooms personally. The children filled out the questionnaire question by question with the writer explaining each question as they went along, but not giving any hints or examples that would encourage the children to all give the same answer. The questionnaire was given to both schools within a period of two weeks at the end of December, 1955, and at the beginning of January, 1956.

A few days after the questionnaire was given to each class an explanatory letter, a questionnaire (see appendix), and a return envelope was sent to each parent addressed to the mother. Both schools were co-operative in giving any necessary information including the I.Q.'s of the children. All intelligence scores had been determined within the past two years.

After collecting the questionnaires, results were tabulated and studied by the writer. These data constitute the material in this thesis. As a convenient method of presentation each question and all the results pertaining to it will be discussed one at a time.

## The Sample

Two groups of children of differing socio-economic status were utilized in this project. For easier identification we will henceforth refer to them as the 'uppers' and 'lowers'.

### THE UPPER GROUP

Subjects in this group come from a well known residential town outside of Boston. They all live in a well-to-do section of town in practically new houses. All but one of the families has television in the home. The school which the children attend is quite new, and may be labelled a 'progressive school'. The children are members of the same fifth grade class. There are 29 in this group, 14 males and 15 females. The average I.Q. of the children is 108. However, this figure includes two children who are well above the rest of the group, having I.Q.'s of 151 and 145. If we take out these two scores then the average is 104.

18 of the 29 parents (62%) responded to the mailed questionnaire. Occupationally they were divided as follows: 17 of the wives are at home, 1 is a tennis professional. Among the fathers, 11 had responsible positions (either ownership or managerial) in the manufacturing, merchandising and sales field, 5 were professional men, and 2 worked in other jobs.

The parents were asked to state the highest grade attained by each and were given these four choices: Grammar School, High School, some College, finished College. Assigning the numbers 1 through 4 to these we find that the average education of the fathers was 3.33, or somewhere between some college and finishing college. The average education of the mothers was 3.22, or slightly less than the above. Since this section of the town is settled by predominantly Jewish people it is no surprise to find that in the matter of church attendance 14 attended services of the Hebrew faith, 1 Presbyterian, and 3, none.

The parents' questionnaire had the following question. "Besides regular schooling, what type of instruction or education has the child had (such as piano lessons, elocution, arts and crafts, dance etc.)?" Of the 8 female and 10 male children of the responding parents all had received at least one type of extra instruction and most had received more than one. The results of this question can easily be seen in the following table.

Table I

Female	Male
7 dancing	12 piano and other music
6 piano	3 religious
5 religious	3 sports
1 arts and crafts	4 arts and crafts
1 elocution	

## THE LOWER GROUP

This group comes from a mixed business, industrial city north of Boston. All the families have television sets. They live in what is recognized as one of the poorest sections of the city. The school is an old school and the children are all in the same fifth grade class. There are 27 subjects in this group, 16 females and 11 males. The average I.Q. of the group is 103. The major difference between this group and the uppers, as far as I.Q.'s are concerned, is that the lowers have more scores below 90 and above 110 than the uppers, the majority of whom were between these figures.

15 of the 27 parents (55%) returned questionnaires. 13 of the mothers were housewives, 2 were bookkeepers. Among the fathers 10 worked for others as clerks in shops or offices, or as laborers in construction etc., 2 were in buying and selling and 2 in other jobs. 1 wife was divorced and there was no father in the house.

In this group the average education of the fathers was 1.93, or a little less than high school, for the mothers it was 1.84. We see in the following table that the average education of the lower parents is almost half that of the upper parents, and that the mothers in each group were only slightly less than the fathers.

Table II

## AVERAGE EDUCATION

	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Lower</u>
Mother	3.22	1.84
Father	3.33	1.93

(explanation of numbers on pages 1 and 2)

In the lower group church attendance was grouped as follows: 7 Hebrew, 5 Catholic, 2 Methodist, 1 none. The following list shows the distribution of extra education and instruction in this group among the 6 male and 9 female children of the responding parents.

Table III

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
2 music	5 music
4 none	5 dance
	2 religious
	1 elocution
	1 none

In comparing the above information with that in Table I we find that the females in each group compare favorably with each other, but that there seems to exist a great deal more interest in giving the upper males this extra instruction and education than the lower. One possible reason for this result is the fact that the upper group parents are probably much more likely to send their boys to summer camp than the lowers, where they do pick up much of this extra training.

### Chapter Three

#### Viewing Habits

Question: "Do you have TV in your own home?"

Table IV

	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Lower</u>
Yes	28	27
No	1	0

In the one family that did not have television the father completed graduate school and the mother some college. The daughter had an I.Q. of 96 and took dancing, piano and Hebrew lessons. Upon questioning the teacher she replied that the child seemed well adjusted and not disturbed about the lack of television.

Question: "How long have you had it?" (TV)

Table V:

#### Responding Parents

	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Lower</u>
6 months	0	0
1-2 years	0	0
3 years	1	0
over 3 years	16	15

Question: Circle the channels which you receive.

Table VI

Channel	Parents	
	Upper	Lower
Educational		
2	15	3
Commercial-VHF		
4	17	15
7	17	15
10	9	3
9	9	2
Commercial-UHF		
56	1	0

Channels 4 and 7 in Boston have been operating for a number of years now and for most of that time have been the only channels in the area. Everyone in each group said that they received them. Channel 2 is a new educational channel in Boston. 15 of the uppers but only 3 of the lowers said that they could receive the station. Although it is possible that reception is poor in the latter's city the writer does not believe that this is the entire reason for the difference. Throughout the questionnaire there is evidence to show that the upper group has a much greater interest in education and in Channel 2 than the lower group. It is probable that the lower group does not bother trying to watch this station's programs.

Question: "Circle those channels you watch."

Table VII  
Children

Channel	Upper	Lower
4	29	27
7	29	27
2	20	6
10	21	5

Again in the discussion about Channel 2 viewing we see that the upper children watch this station much more than the lowers. The probable reason is interest, as shall be shown further on.

Question: "How much do you watch TV during one day?"

Table VIII

	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	1hour	$1\frac{1}{2}$ hours	2hours	$2\frac{1}{2}$ hours	3hours	more
Upper	1	0	0	3	1	4	20
Lower	1	0	0	1	3	13	9

The overall majority of the children in both groups felt that they watched television three or more hours per day. The upper group answered that they watched more than three hours, somewhat more than the lower group.

The parent was asked to list the total hours per day that each of the following watched: mother, father, child, and the

whole family together. In the upper group - of those mothers who watch every day (13) most of them say that they watch between 1 and 2 hours; 3 said it depends on various things, and 1 does not watch. 12 of the fathers watched daily and the average was about 1 hour, 3 said it depended, and 2 did not watch at all.

In the lower group 14 mothers watch daily, averaging about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours a day, 1 watches very little, 12 fathers watched every day averaging almost 3 hours a day, 2 didn't watch and 1 watched very little.

In the matter of the whole family (mother, father and child) watching together we find that in the lower group 10 families watched together every day averaging about 2 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours, 5 watch together very little. In the upper group only 7 families watched together every day only averaging about an hour, 5 didn't watch together and 5 watched together very infrequently. Below is a table comparing the three categories just discussed in each group.

Table IX

X	Average amount of TV watched per day by those who watched every day.	
	Upper	Lower
	hours	
Mother	1-2	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Father	1	3
Whole family	1	$2-2\frac{1}{2}$

We see that in each case the lower group parents watched about three times as much per day than the upper parents, and that in the matter of family viewing the lower group had more families, watch more hours per day.

As previously stated the parent was also asked to estimate the amount of hours their own child watched during one day. Here are the comparisons between child and parent in each group. <sup>1</sup> 'm' stands for "more than 3 hours", 'i' for "irregular".

Table X

Upper	child	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	2½	3	m	m	3	m	2	m	3	m
	parent	i	m	2½	3	3	2½	2	2	3	i	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
Lower	child	3	m	2½	3	m	2½	3	3	m	m	m	3	3	3	2½		
	parent	2	2½	i	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	2	1	2½		

Looking at these figures we can see that very few parents and children agreed on the amount of time spent by the child at the television set. The Upper group children seemed to overestimate their viewing time somewhat more than the lowers. On the whole, the lower group parents were slightly closer in their estimates with an average of 3 hours against their childrens' average of slightly more than 3 hours. The upper

1. This comparison as well as all other parent-child comparisons in this paper are done between the responding parents and their children.

parents averaged an estimate of 2.3 hours against their childrens' average estimate of more than 3 hours.

Question: "How often does the child watch the same show or shows?" A corresponding question was asked the child.

Table XI

	All time	Children Most of time	Sometime	Jump about
Lower	15	9	0	3
Upper	11	14	4	0

We can see from this table that all parents feel that their children are mostly inclined to stick with the same programs every day.

Comparing each parent and child we find that only 8 parents in the upper group and 4 in the lower completely agreed with their children on the answer to this question. Practically all of the disagreeing answers in both groups were a question of the child saying that he watched the same programs to a greater degree than the parent thought (ie. child says 'all the time', parent says 'most of time').

Question: Both parents and children were asked if there were just certain hours when the child was allowed to watch TV. The following results apply only to restrictions or non-restrictions outside of the bedtime hour.

Table XII

	Children			
	Upper		Lower	
	yes	no	yes	no
Male	5	9	5	6
Female	$\frac{5}{10}$	$\frac{9}{18}$	$\frac{6}{11}$	$\frac{10}{16}$

  

	Parents	
	yes	no
Upper	4	13
Lower	$\frac{3}{7}$	$\frac{12}{25}$

$$\chi^2 = 10.12; df = 1; P = \text{better than } .01$$

In comparing the parents in each group with their children we find that all but 2 of the 9 disagreeing answers were a matter of the child saying there were restrictions and the parent saying that there were not. From the evidence it is most likely that we should conclude that most parents in both groups do not impose many restrictions on the child's viewing hours outside of the fact that he must keep a certain bedtime. Although many of the children did answer that there were certain hours imposed on them it is likely that these 'yes' answers can be attributed to considering the bedtime hour as a restriction (although they were asked not to), or to a normal recognition of authority by the child. Of course one cannot completely disregard the possibility that the parents actually did impose restrictions but gave negative answers....

According to the results of the questionnaires television viewing by the child is not a solitary situation, but is carried on most of the time with at least one other person.

Question: Do you generally watch with another person your age?

Table XIII

	Never	Children Sometime	Often
Upper	2	16	11
Lower	1	12	14

(these answers included any brother or sister)

The parents were asked 3 questions which elaborated on this topic to a greater extent.

Questions: How often does your child watch TV alone? How often does your child watch TV with brothers and sisters, if any? How often does your child watch TV with friends?

Table XIV

	Never	Watch alone Sometime	Most of time	All the time
Upper	0	15	2	0
Lower	0	12	2	0

Table XV

	Never	Watch with brother or sister Sometime	Most of time	All the time
Upper	0	7	6	0
Lower	0	5	7	1

Table XVI

	Watch with friends			
	Never	Sometimes	Most of time	All the time
Upper	6	11	0	0
Lower	4	11	1	0

We see then that the child very seldom watches television alone. Although he might occasionally do this, it is not the rule. Although the child doesn't watch alone too often, when he watches with someone else it seems to be most often with some member of the family; not many seem to make it a practice of watching with friends. Those who have brothers and sisters do seem to do a fair amount of viewing with them. This seems to re-affirm the results found by Maccoby,<sup>2</sup> who showed that most of the children interviewed in her study usually went to their own homes to watch television despite the fact that most of their friends also had television.

Question: Since some children's programs are on during the supper hours (5-7) what has been your policy toward this, do you: Serve supper earlier; Serve supper later; Eat at the regular time and not let child watch TV; Let child eat near the TV set so he can watch. Some respondents checked more than one answer.

2. Maccoby, Eleanor E., op. cit.

Table XVII

	Parents			
	early	late	regular	watch
Upper	1	2	9	7
Lower	4	2	7	5

The parents in both groups show an unwillingness to change the hour that they serve supper. Most of them serve supper at the same time, either letting the child eat where he can see the set, or making him leave the set and have supper.

Table XVIII

	Children			
	early	late	regular	watch
Upper	6	6	17	16
Lower	9	7	13	17

Again, from the children's answers, we see the trend either to eat at the regular time or in front of the set. Most of the children gave at least two answers to the question indicating that they did not follow one procedure all the time.

Table XIX

	Children - Have to leave set	
	Always	Sometimes
Upper	7	10
Lower	1	12

Judging from the above results the upper group families make their children leave the TV set to eat somewhat more than the lower group families. There was more agreement between parent and child answers in the upper group with practically complete agreement in the 'watch' and 'leave' categories. In the lower group there was also high agreement in these categories, but there were more children who gave other choices besides. Again, this might go to show that the upper group is more set in their procedures, following the same one more of the time than the lower group which has a tendency to follow one method one time and another an other time.

## Chapter Four

### Television and the Family

Question: Does your mother or father ever punish you  
by not letting you watch TV?

Table XX

	Never	Upper Children Sometimes	Often
Male	6	7	1
Female	$\frac{11}{17}$	$\frac{3}{10}$	$\frac{0}{1}$
	Never	Lower Children Sometimes	Often
Male	4	7	0
Female	$\frac{7}{11}$	$\frac{9}{16}$	$\frac{0}{0}$

Some interesting observations can be made from these tables. First we see that according to the children viewing it is not used as a punishment very often by the parents, but about half of all the parents use it sometimes. Secondly, in the upper group the punishment was used significantly more with the males ( $\chi^2 = 3.72$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $P = \text{about } .05$ ), however this did not hold true with the lower group. Finally, we can see that the lower group says television is used as a punishment somewhat more than the upper group ( $\chi^2 = 2.88$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $P = \text{about } .09$ ). According to the above information 17 in the upper group said television was never used for punishment and

11 did, for the lower group the figures are 11/<sup>never</sup>used it, while 16 reported television was used as a form of punishment.

Question: Do you ever get extra TV for being good?

Table XXI

	Never	Upper Children Sometimes	Often
Male	2	9	3
Female	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{6}{15}$	$\frac{4}{7}$
	Never	Lower Children Sometimes	Often
Male	1	8	2
Female	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{9}{17}$	$\frac{4}{6}$

There is substantially little difference in the above results, either between male and female within each group, or between groups. However, according to all the children television is used as a reward much more than as an instrument of punishment.

Table XXII

	Reward	Punish
Upper	22	11
Lower	$\frac{23}{45}$	$\frac{16}{27}$

$$\chi^2 = 4.50, df = 1, P = \text{about } .04$$

The preceding results were of course all taken from the answers of the children to questions. We now present the same questions as given to the parents.

Question: Do you ever forbid child to watch TV as a form of punishment?

Table XXIII

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Upper	3	6	8	0
Lower	4	4	7	0

Question: Do you ever give child extra TV privileges as a form of reward?

Table XXIV

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Upper	6	5	6	0
Lower	4	3	8	0

The data in the preceding questions shows that there is an overall difference between the reports of parents and children, this difference being that the children had more of an inclination to say that they were never punished and that they were rewarded more through use of television. This tendency was also borne out when comparing each parent with her child.

On the punishment question we find that in the upper group 8 out of 10 parent-child disagreeing answers were a matter of the child's saying he was never punished this way

and the parent's saying he was, on occasion. This was also true for 4 out of 6 disagreeing answers in the lower group. On the reward question, 8 in the upper and 4 in the lower children gave a higher estimation of the reward use than their parents. It is difficult to say if the children are displaying a probably natural tendency to forget their punishments, and remember or exaggerate their rewards (with the upper group doing this more than the lower group), or if there are other factors present.

Nevertheless, in summing up the question of the use of television viewing as a reward or a punishment we could say that the majority of parents seem to use it both ways at one time or another. Hardly any use it with any great degree of frequency and about 35% never use it at all. There seems to be some tendency to use television as a punishment with boys to a greater degree than with girls by their parents, but there were no significant results to this effect. There doesn't seem to be any great difference between the upper and lower groups in respect to these uses of television except that the lower children feel more use of television as a punishment than the uppers.

Question: If you ever argue with a friend of yours over what program to watch, how do you decide what to do? ( This included brothers and sisters.) Since there was no observable difference between the two status groups the following figures

are for all the children who answered the question.

Solutions Proposed by Subjects

Table XXIV

	No.
Take turns in some manner, either weekly, daily or by programs	15
Flip coins, draw lots, "buck up" etc.	8
Give in to guest's wishes	5
Have parent decide or help	4
Turn set off	3

The parent was asked the following similar question: If child is watching with another child and some conflict arises as to what program to watch, what do you do? Again, since there was not any substantial difference between the two groups of parents the following figures are for all the parents who answered the question.

Table XXV

<u>Solution</u>	<u>No.</u>
Parents helped settle the problem somehow	15
No problem	9
Children always took turns	5
Left children alone	3

We can see that considerably more parents felt they helped settle the problem than the children did; only 4

children mentioned the parent at all in their answers. However, of those parents who said they did help settle the problem, the majority said they did it by having the children take turns. It is probably true that this routine of taking turns was originally set up by the parent and then adhered to from then on by the children so that the children could carry on the technique themselves and forget the parents' part in it. Taking turns then, is the most common way of settling any conflicts, and all facts seem to show that the method of taking turns is usually an established one in the house, and followed as a matter of course by the children. An interesting note is that of the 9 upper parents reporting no difficulties, 3 gave the reason as being due to the fact that they had 2 TV sets. This was not found in the lower group.

Question: Are there any programs that you forbid your child to watch?

Table XXVI

Upper Group Parents

<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>
12	5

2 parents mentioned specifically that they forbid Medic, the others that said they forbid some shows mentioned general types; murder, violence and "very adult treatments".

## Lower Group Parents

<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>
9	6

One parent specifically forbid Medic, the others mentioned in general murder, crime and "very adult treatments". It is obvious that there is no particular difference between the two groups in regards to this question.

When the question was asked of the children the following results occurred.

Question: Are there any programs your parents won't let you watch?

Table XXVII

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Upper	8	21
Lower	4	23

In the upper group the children said that their parents forbid them to watch such programs as: I Led Three Lives, Dragnet, Westerns, Medic, Crusader. The lower group children named Medic three times, and Amos and Andy.

In comparing the parents with their children we find the following true in the upper group: in only 1 case did parent and child agree both that a show was forbidden, and on the name of the show (Medic). There were 8 disagreeing answers in the group, 4 parents said 'no' while children said 'yes' and vice versa.

In the lower group we find that one parent and child agreed on "Medic" being forbidden. There were four disagreements; 4 children said 'no' to parent's 'yes'.

It seems that the majority of parents are not so set against any particular programs that they actually forbid the child to watch them. There are many programs that the parents disapprove of, but still let the child watch, as we shall see later. "Medic" seems to be the one program which parents do not like their children to watch; the rest, in general, are murder, crime, violence and sex stories. Most of these programs go on after the children at this age are in bed so it is likely that even those parents who answered that they forbid the child to watch them probably meant that if the situation did arise where they were watching, they (the parents) would not want them to, rather than actually forbidding their child to watch these programs.

Question: Do your parents ever suggest that you do watch certain programs?

Table XXVIII

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Upper	19	10
Lower	8	19

$$\chi^2 = 7.44, df = 1, P = \text{better than } .01$$

We see here a substantial difference between the two groups. The following is a list of programs given by each group as having been suggested by their parents; the numbers show how many times a program was named, if more than once.

Table XXIX

<u>Upper Group Children</u>	<u>Lower Group Children</u>
Sleeping Beauty 2	News
Channel II 2	Colgate Comedy Hour
Science Fiction Theatre 2	Milton Berle
Christmas Carol	Bishop Sheen
Alice in Wonderland	Queen for a Day
Jerry Mahoney	Mama
Mickey Mouse	
Producers' Showcase	
Fireside Theatre	
Disneyland	
Mystery Shows	

The parents were asked; Are there any programs that you actually suggest to the child that he watches?

Table XXX

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Upper	13	4
Lower	7	8

Question: How often does he accept the suggestion?

Table XXXI

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Upper	0	1	3	9
Lower	0	0	2	5

In the upper group the programs that the parents said they suggested were mainly spectaculars, such as "Peter Pan" (5) and the ballet (5); others were Channel 2, News, "Disneyland" and in general good plays and educational programs. Most of the parents said that they tried to recommend educational and inoffensive shows.

In the lower group the parents mentioned spectaculars or childrens' shows 4 times, 2 educational shows and 2 others. However, only 2 parents mentioned education as being the reason for the suggestion. Most named "clean entertainment" as the reason. We can easily see that the upper parents do suggest programs to their children considerably more than do the lower parents. This is borne out by the responses of both children and parents. We also see that as far as the parents who do make suggestions are concerned, their children take the suggestion most of the time.

We are interested here not only in the fact that the parent might or might not make a suggestion to the child, but in the acceptance of the suggestion by the child. As stated

above, most of the parents that gave suggestions felt that they were accepted quite frequently. Let us look for a moment at the comparison between the parents and their children in answering this question of the parent suggesting shows.

Table XXXII

## Upper Group

<u>No.</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Parent</u>	<u>No. of Disagreements</u>	<u>No. of Agreements</u>
6	no	yes	9	
3	yes	no		
7	yes	yes		8
1	no	no		

So we see that in this group of the 13 parents that said 'yes', 7 children agreed with them, the other 6 did not. Of the 4 that said 'no' only 1 child agreed. It should also be added, that of the 7 agreeing answers only one child was able to name a program agreeing with one his parent named as having been suggested; the rest either named different programs or couldn't name any at all.

The same trend holds true in the lower group.

Table XXXIII

<u>No.</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Parent</u>	<u>No. of Disagreements</u>	<u>No. of Agreements</u>
5	no	yes	7	
2	yes	no		
6	no	no		8
2	yes	yes		

Out of the 7 children whose parents said 'yes', only 2 agreed and neither could name a show. We see that there seems to be some lack of understanding between the parent and the child. The figures seem to indicate a great deal of suggesting done by the parents in the upper group and about half as much in the lower group. However, when we examine the parent-child comparisons we see that there is a great lack of agreement, with over half the total number of children whose parents said 'yes' answering 'no', and of the rest who agreed, only 1 child named a program which agreed with one his parent named. Although the upper parents suggest more programs, they do not seem to be any more successful with their suggestions than the lower parents.

These results seem to indicate that in both groups the supposed suggestions are not as effective as the parents think. Indeed, they show a definite lack of communication between parent and child as far as television is concerned. This lack of communication is corroborated by further evidence presented in another chapter.

Question: Does your teacher ever suggest that you watch certain programs?

Table XXXIV

	Children	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Upper	27	2
Lower	1	25

Programs suggested by teacher according to upper children.

Table XXXV

<u>Program</u>	<u>No. of Times Named</u>
Christmas Carol	9
Sleeping Beauty Ballet	7
Educational programs in general	7
Peter Pan	5
Channel 2	3
4 R' s	2

In questioning the 2 teachers, the writer learned that the upper group teacher had indeed made it a practice to suggest programs to the children and the lower had not. The upper teacher had recommended, at one time or another, all the programs mentioned above by the children. Notice how much more reliably the children reflected the suggestions of the teacher than of the parents. It is possible that at this age the teacher has more of an influence over the children in certain areas. Certainly the almost unanimous agreement that the teacher had, or had not, suggested programs is an indication of this. The fact that the upper group teacher had also suggested watching Channel 2, explains in a large measure the greater acquaintance this group had with the station as evidenced by the figures in table 7. There certainly is no doubt that the upper group children in this study had received much more guidance from both parent and teacher than had the lower group, especially the latter, in selective television viewing.

## Chapter Five

### Choice of Programs

All the children were asked to list their favorite programs. There was space for 4 choices on the questionnaire, but they were told that they did not have to name 4, or that they could name more. Most of the children did name their 4 favorite programs. In analyzing the program types, the writer placed the individual programs into categories. The categories are as follows: Westerns, Adventure (includes mysteries and other action type serials other than westerns), Hero (refers to fictional hero programs such as "Superman" and "Captains Midnight"), Comedy-situation-Variety (refers to adult programs of this type), Cartoon-Variety (for children), Educational, and Sports.

Table XXXVI

#### Upper Male Children

<u>Catagory</u>	<u>Number</u>
Adventure	14
Situation-Comedy-Variety (adult)	12
Cartoon-Variety (child)	12
Hero	5
Westerns	4
Educational	1
Sports	1

For the 14 boys there were 30 different programs named.  
The favorite single program was "The Mickey Mouse Club".

Table XXXVII

## Upper Female Children

<u>Catagory</u>	<u>Number</u>
Situation-Comedy-Variety (adult)	32
Cartoon-Variety (child)	11
Adventure	11
Western	8

There were 30 different programs named among the 15 girls. The favorite single program was "Mamma".

Table XXXVIII

## Lower Male Children

<u>Catagory</u>	<u>Number</u>
Cartoon-Variety (child)	13
Adventure	10
Western	8
Situation-Comedy-Variety (adult)	6
Hero	3

There were a variety of 25 programs named by the 11 boys.  
The favorite single program was "The Mickey Mouse Club".

Table XIL

## Lower Female Children

<u>Catagory</u>	<u>Number</u>
Situation-Comedy-Variety (adult)	24
Cartoon-Variety (child)	18
Adventure	11
Western	6
Hero	2
Educational	1

There were 36 different programs named by the 16 girls. The favorite single program was "The Mickey Mouse Club".\*

Tables XXXVI to XIL contain some interesting data. The first thing one notices is the difference between the males and females in their choice of programs. Although all the children were of the same educational level, and all were approximately the same age, it is fairly obvious that the girls display a much greater amount of maturity in choosing television programs, this being seen in the fact that in both status groups the predominant catagory chosen by the females were programs of the adult situation-comedy-variety type. The females in the lower group chose these programs approximately 3 times as much as the males, and those in the upper group approximately twice as much. We realize from these figures that females at this age are already beginning to pass from

\* Complete lists of the programs named by each group can be found in Appendix II.

the stage at which pure children's programs have the greatest appeal for them.

In speaking about maturity in choosing television programs, it is noticeable that regardless of sex, the upper group in general, prefer the more adult type programs more than the lower group. We see that the upper females chose more adult programs than the lower females, and that the upper males chose considerably more adult programs than the lower males.

Judging from the above, it is only logical that the upper females were the most mature group of the 4 in choosing TV programs. Although the lower females did choose a considerable number of adult programs, the favorite single program was "Mickey Mouse Club", as it was for the 2 groups of males. The upper females were the only group which chose an adult program as its favorite, this being "Mamma".

By the same token, the lower males seem to be the least mature of the 4 groups. They were the only group in which the adult program category was not a predominant one, and also were the only group in which the 'pure' children's programs were the leaders.

The results pertaining to the adventure and western type programs, are, somewhat surprising. One would possibly suspect that the females would be a little lower in these categories

than the males, however, this was not the case. All groups watched approximately the same amount of adventure programs, with the upper males watching a few more programs. The upper males, however, watched less westerns than any of the other groups, which watched about the same amount.

There was almost a complete absence of educational and sports programs in all groups. There was also a very noticeable trend away from the "Superman-Captain Midnite" type programs. This was especially true for the females, regardless of status.

The preceding results were examined for any evidence of the influence of I.Q. scores. There seemed to be no set pattern evident in these results which would indicate that the I.Q. of the child at this age had any great influence on the programs he chose. There was a tendency among the lower males, for those who named programs in the adult category, to be somewhat higher in I.Q. scores. However, there were not enough cases of this to say anything conclusive. In general, we can state that we find both high and low I.Q. children choosing all types of programs with little visible trends due to the I.Q. factor.

As was mentioned before, there seems to be a lack of communication and understanding between the parents and the children. This is further borne out below.

On the parents' questionnaires, they were asked to name

what they thought were the favorite TV programs of their child. We then compared each parent's answer with those her child gave. The following tables show the results of this comparison in terms of the number of agreeing and disagreeing answers for each parent-child relationship.

Table XII

## Upper Group

<u>Total number of programs listed by child.</u>	<u>Total number of programs listed by parent.</u>	<u>Number of agreeing answers.</u>
4	4	1
4	1	1
3	4	2
4	3	0
4	2	0
4	4	0
4	4	3
4	3	1
4	9	3
4	1	1
4	4	2
4	2	1
4	3	3
5	4	1
4	3	0
4	1	1
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
70	55	23

Table XII

## Upper Group

The number of parents able to name agreeing programs.

<u>No. of Agreeing Programs</u>	<u>No. of Parents Scoring Each Amount</u>
0	4
1	7
2	2
3	4
4	0

Table XIII

## Lower Group

<u>Total Number of Programs Listed by Child</u>	<u>Total Number of Programs Listed by Parent</u>	<u>Number of Agreeing Answers</u>
4	10	0
4	4	0
4	2	1
1	1	1
4	4	3
4	1	0
4	6	1
4	2	2
4	4	3
4	1	1
4	4	2
4	1	1
4	2	2
4	1	1
<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
57	44	19

Table XLIII

## Lower Group

The number of parents able to name agreeing programs

No. of agreeing programs	No. of parents scoring each amount
<hr/>	<hr/>
0	3
1	7
2	3
3	2
4	0

We see from the above figures that very few parents actually know what their children consider to be their favorite programs. There was not one parent in both groups who was able to name all the programs the child named, and as a matter of fact there were only 6 parents between both groups who could name 3 programs. These figures help illustrate what was pointed out earlier, viz, that there is a definite lack of understanding and communication between the parents and the child concerning the child's television viewing habits and preferences. It is possible that the parents do not yet feel that television is an important part of their child's life and consequently do not interest themselves in discovering what the child likes and dislikes, or that they just do not know.

The parent besides being asked to list the favorite programs of the child was also asked to list the favorite

programs of the mother, the father, and the whole family together. For complete lists of the programs named for each of these groups see Appendix II. Following is a breakdown of the programs, listed by categories.

Table XLIV

## Upper Group\*

Mother		Father	
<u>Category</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>No.</u>
Plays	37	Plays	22
Quiz	7	Quiz	5
Variety	4	Educational	4
Situation-Comedy	2	Sports	3
Other	2	News	3
News	1	Variety	3
		Other	3

Table XLV

## Lower Group\*

Mother		Father	
<u>Category</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>No.</u>
Plays	18	Plays	10

\* In the upper group the favorite programs of the mothers are "Robert Montgomery" and "Studio One," for the fathers, "Robert Montgomery" and "Kraft Theater". In the lower group they are Groucho Marx and "Climax" for the mothers and Groucho Marx and sports for the fathers.

Table XLV cont.

<u>Catagory</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Catagory</u>	<u>No.</u>
Variety	8	Variety	5
Soap Opera	8	Sports	4
Quiz	6	Mystery	3
Other	2	Quiz	3
Situation-Comedy	4	Western	2
Mystery	1	Other	2
Western	1	Situation-Comedy	1

Examining the above two tables we again see a great deal of difference between the upper and lower groups. First, one notices that the upper group favors plays at least twice as much as the lower group. In the upper group plays were listed more times than all the other catagories combined.... This was not true of the lower group. A second major difference in these tables is the appearance of catagories in one group that do not appear in the other, e.g., in the lower group mothers we find listed soap operas, mysteries and westerns, none of which appeared in the programs listed by the mothers in the upper group. Listed for the fathers in the lower group were mysteries and westerns, which did not appear in the list for the upper group fathers. It must be remembered that these questionnaires were almost all answered by the mothers, so we might assume that the favorite programs of the fathers that were listed were probably a result of their judgement.

It is to be noticed that situation-comedy shows did not appear to be very popular among the parents in both groups. However, when it came to listing the favorite programs of the whole family they did appear to some extent in both groups. By the whole family we mean, of course, programs that the mother, father and child watch together. In general, the programs listed as being favorites of the whole family were different programs than those which made their appearance on the favorite program list of any one member of the family and tended to be on the order of the more mundane situation-comedy shows.

Question: Do you ever watch any programs your parents don't approve of?

Table XLVI

	Upper Group Children	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Male	3	11
Female	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>
	7	22

Total-  $X^2 = 7.8$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $PP =$  better than .01

	Lower Group Children	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Male	3	8
Female	<u>3</u>	<u>13</u>
	6	21

Total-  $X^2 = 8.4$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $PP =$  better than .01

Programs named in the above category by the upper group children were "Dragnet", "I Led 3 Lives", "Dear Homemakers", "Eisenhower's speeches", "Ramar of the Jungle", and "Pinky Lee Show". The lower group children named "Dragnet" (2), "Death Valley Days", "Life of Riley", and "Superman".

We can see by the above figures that there are no noticeable differences between males and females or between the upper and lower groups. The great majority of the children feel that their parents do not disapprove of any of the shows that they watch.

Question: Concerning the programs the child watches, are there any that you don't approve of?

Table XLVII

Parents	Yes	No
Upper	13	4
Lower	$\frac{11}{24}$	$\frac{4}{8}$

Total- $\chi^2 = 10.7$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $P =$  better than .01

The upper group parents that answered 'yes' to this question named Murder and Westerns 11 times in general; specific shows named in this category were "Science Fiction Theater", "Dragnet", "I Led 3 Lives", and "Robin Hood". They also mentioned shows with strong love or divorce themes 3 times, and "Pinky Lee Show" once. The reasons given by these parents for disapproving of certain shows were that they were

too exciting, had excess violence, gave bad ideas, wasted time, distorted the truth, and taught bad English.

In the lower group, of those parents who answered 'yes' to this question, Murder and Westerns were mentioned 7 times, love stories once, "Howdy Doody" 2 times, Jackie Gleason and "Dragnet" once. Reasons for disapproving of these shows were that they gave bad ideas, set a bad example, frightened the children, and wasted time. It is interesting to note that two of the reasons given by the upper group parents did not appear in those of this group, that is, the fact that the programs distorted the truth and taught bad English. This would seem to be indicative of the higher educational level of the upper group parents.

Once again we see evidence of what we have been calling a lack of communication between the children and the parents. In the upper group, of the 13 parents that answered 'yes' to this question, only 3 of their children also gave the same answer. Of the 4 parents answering 'no', 2 children gave the same response. In the lower group 8 out of 11 children said 'no' to their parent's 'yes', and 3 out of 4 agreed on a 'no' answer. These figures show that in most cases the parent's disapproval of any shows that the child watches is not communicated to the child strongly enough, if at all. It is obvious that most of the children do not recall any disapproval at all on the part of the parents. Even where

the child did agree with the parent and say 'yes', there was only one child out of both groups who named a show his parent named...."Dragnet".

In connection with this last question concerning approval of programs, parents were also asked if there were any programs the child watched that they completely approved of.

Table XLVIII

Parents	Yes	No	Didn't Answer
Upper	15	-	2
Lower	15	-	-

Practically all the parents could name some shows that their child watched that they completely approved of. Both groups tended to name pure children's shows, with over half mentioning, among others, the Disney productions ("Mickey Mouse Club" and "Disneyland"). The rest of the shows fell either into the category of situation-comedy (such as "Father Knows Best" and "Make Room For Daddy"), or shows such as "Peter Pan", and the "Sleeping Beauty Ballet", the upper group tending to name programs of the latter type somewhat more than the lower group. In both groups the reasons given for approving of these programs were mainly that they were educational and informative, or good clean entertainment, or both. The upper group was slightly higher in mentioning education and the lower was slightly higher in mentioning entertainment.

The children were asked to name programs that they did not like and to tell why they did not like them. Complete lists of the programs named and the reasons given can be found in Appendix III. In general we found that the upper group females were most outspoken against young children's shows, "Howdy Doody" and "Pinky Lee" in particular, feeling that they were much too "babyish". The upper group males and the lower group females also named these shows more than any others, but to a lesser degree respectively than the upper females. It was strange to find that the lower group males only named this type of show once as compared to 26 for the upper females, 15 for the upper males, and 11 for the lower females. The only other noticeable trends were that of the boys to dislike "soap operas", and of the girls to feel that many programs were too adult for them. These last two trends can probably be attributed in the case of the former to a natural dislike of "sissy" or feminine material, and in the latter to the more "mature" thinking of the females in general.

Question: How often do you watch them? (referring to the above programs)

Table XLIX

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>
Upper	11	14	0
Lower	7	11	2

We can see by this table that more than half of the children watch these shows once in a while even though they claim that they don't like them. When the subjects who answered that they did watch the shows sometimes were asked why they did so.... most replied either that someone else in the room wanted to see it or that there was nothing else on. It would be interesting in some future study to find out at what age level the children do turn away from the "Howdy Doody-Pinky Lee" type show.... for it is obvious that these children have already done so.

## Chapter Six

### Opinions

This and the following two questions were addressed to the the parents.\*

Question: In general how do you feel about the present selection of children's programs?

Table I

#### Selection of Programs- Upper group parents

<u>No. of parents</u>	<u>Opinion</u>
5	Commented in some way about the lack of educational material
4	Felt that the programs were pretty good or were improving
3	Said they were too busy or didn't bother to watch them and therefor had no opinion
3	Felt that in general the programs weren't too good
2	Felt that there wasn't enough variety
1	Commented on late hours of spectaculars

Table II

#### Selection of Programs-Lower group parents

<u>No. of parents</u>	<u>Opinion</u>
11	Felt that in general the selection was pretty good or improving
2	Thought that there were too many western and murders

\* The tables used in connection with these questions are drawn from condensations of the answer contents.

Table II cont.

<u>No. of parents</u>	<u>Opinion</u>
1	Commented on the need for educational material
1	Felt that there wasn't enough variety
1	Felt that some programs were "silly"

We can see from these two tables that the upper group parents are not as happy with the present selection of children's programs as are the lower group parents. Only 4 in the former group as compared to 11 in the latter group felt that the selection was particularly good. Again we find a greater concern about education in the replies of the upper group, ... a factor which has been prevalent throughout this study. We also notice a few parents in the upper group admitting that they didn't know much about the programs because they just never watched them. ... this did not appear in the lower group. In general we could probably surmise that the lower educational and cultural level in the one group accounts for the greater tendency to be more satisfied with the present selection of children's shows.

Question: How do you feel about the parent greatly controlling the amount of time the child watches TV?

Table LIII

## Controlling Time-Upper group parents

<u>No. of parents</u>	<u>Opinion</u>
7	Felt that the parent <u>should</u> definitely have a hand in controlling the child's viewing time
4	Felt that there <u>was no problem</u> because of the child's other interests, but if there were one they would step in
3	Felt that children should take care of their school work and other duties <u>first</u> , then they could do as they pleased
1	Felt that it was very hard to do
1	Answered that it depended on the situation

Table LIIII

## Controlling Time- Lower group parents

<u>No. of parents</u>	<u>Opinion</u>
5	Felt that the parent <u>should</u> take a hand in the matter
4	Felt that there <u>was no particular need</u> to mix in except for bed time
4	Considered it the parents duty to see that the child did all his 'duties' and indulged in other activities
2	Thought that they should control the time, but that this was a difficult thing to do

We find that there is no particular difference between the two groups. The most interesting point made by these

tables is that the majority of parents felt that they should control the child's viewing time in some way. However when we recall both the parent's and the children's answers to the question concerning the child's having certain hours during which he should watch television (See table XII), we can see that the parent's obviously do not put their beliefs into practice.

Question: How do you feel about the parent greatly controlling the type of shows the child watches?

Table LIV

## Controlling Type- Upper group parents

<u>No. of parents</u>	<u>Opinion</u>
8	Felt that the parent <u>should</u> offer considerable guidance to the child in his selection of programs
5	Did <u>not</u> think that the parent ought to interfere too much
2	Felt that it would be a hard thing to do
1	Said it depends on the situation

Table LV

## Controlling Type-Lower group parents

<u>No. of parents</u>	<u>Opinion</u>
6	Felt that the parent <u>should</u> control the child's selection of programs
6	Did <u>not</u> think that the parent should interfere to any great extent
2	Felt that it would be hard to do.

There is little difference between the two groups. If it is at all important for parents to offer guidance to their children in the matter of programs selection, then judging from the above results about half of them have yet to be convinced of it. Even though the other half do feel the need of control in this area, we have already seen that they are not too effective in carrying out this 'program'. (See tables XXVI, XXVII, and XXVIII)

Question: Do you think that you ever learn any new things just from watching television?

Table LVI

	Upper Group Children	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Male	11	3
Female	$\frac{13}{24}$	$\frac{2}{5}$

Total-  $X^2 = 12.4$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $P = \text{better than } .01$

Table LVII

	Lower Group Children	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Male	7	4
Female	$\frac{10}{17}$	$\frac{6}{10}$

Total-  $X^2 = 1.80$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $P = \text{about } .20$

The major difference in regards to this question appears not to be between male and female but between the upper and

lower groups. Although the 'yes' answers were in the majority in both groups it was much more significantly so in the upper group. The study concluded with a follow-up to this last question seeking a more indicative answer.

Question: Can you name three things you have learned from watching TV and tell what program they were on?

Table LVII

Number of Programs Named

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Upper Group Children	14	18	32
Lower Group Children	5	9	14

We can see that the females in both groups are just slightly higher than the males, but that there is an overall statistically significant difference between the upper and lower groups. Strictly educational programs were named 7 times by the upper group and only once by the lower group. In general the females gave much better answers than the males when it came to telling what they had learned. These results follow the trend we have noticed, in that the upper group children are generally ahead of the lower group in matters pertaining to education and television, and that the females are more mature than the males in most instances. In regards to this question, there were no children in either group who could name three programs and satisfactorily say what they had learned from them.

## Chapter Seven

### Summary and Conclusions

It has been our purpose in this study to discover whether the status of certain individuals affects any of their habits relative to television. Naturally we could not hope to cover every status classification nor every habit or custom relative to television. In order to carry on a feasible study we had to confine the study to certain areas.

By questioning two groups of fifth grade students, of mixed sex, similar I.Q. Level and from an upper and a lower socio-economic level we hoped to be able to find whether or not there were any differences in certain television habits between the two groups and between the males and females. By questioning the parents of these children we could not only check on the children's answers, but compare them with their parent's and also compare the two groups of parents.

The questions were designed to discover information about the groups in the following areas: viewing habits; use of television as reward or punishment; choice of programs; amount of control parents exercise; opinions about certain matters pertaining to television. For the exact questions asked samples of the questionnaires used can be found in Appendix I.

- The writer realizes, as was previously mentioned, that this study should not be considered as definitive. It was his purpose to carry out some research which might be valuable when combined with data gathered from past and future studies. This study was not begun with the idea in mind of proving any particular hypothesis. It is true that the writer suspected that some differences would be found between the test groups, however it was not intended that one particular point should be proved. We might say, in summary, that our purpose was to discover whether or not there was anything to be discovered, feeling that the results in any case would be valuable.

Following is a summary of the <sup>major</sup> conclusions drawn from the information in this study as it was presented.

1. Both the parents and the children in the upper group are more aware of, and do more viewing of WGBH-TV, Boston's educational station, than those in the lower group.

2. The lower group parents watch television more hours per day than the upper group parents, both individually and as a family (with the child).

3. A majority of all the parents felt that they should control the time spent by the child in viewing television, but outside of setting a bedtime hour practically none of them did so.

4. Television viewing by children is not a solitary situation and is carried on most of the time with some member of the family, usually a brother or sister if there are any.

5. Most parents do not change the hour of eating to accommodate the child if he wants to watch television, but will either let him watch in front of the set or make him leave the set to eat. The upper group parents follow this latter procedure somewhat more consistently than do the lower group parents.

6. The lower group children felt that television was used as a punishment somewhat more than did the upper group children. All children in general felt that it was not used as a punishment very often, but was used as a reward considerably more. The parents claimed the use of television as a punishment more than did the children, and its use as a reward less.

7. Most families have some system of taking turns so that the children can avoid conflict over choice of program.

8. While most parents felt that they should exercise some control over the child's selection of programs, most of them never actually forbid any particular program nor managed to communicate any disapproval to the child despite the fact that practically all of them disapproved of some programs that the child was watching.

9. The upper group parents made it a practice of suggesting programs to their children considerably more than did the lower group parents, however, both groups appeared to be fairly unsuccessful with their suggestions.

10. Results show that where the teacher had suggested programs to the children (in the upper group) she was very successful..... considerably more so than were the parents. Almost all of the upper group children were aware of and could recall shows that the teacher had suggested. In the lower group where the teacher had not suggested any programs the children were quite aware of this. It would seem that these results show the importance of educating teachers to both guide the children as far as television is concerned, and to use it as an aid to education.

11. The female children in both groups were much more mature in the matter of choice of programs than the males, results showing that at this age they are already watching adult type programs. The upper group children in general were more mature in this matter than the lower group children. Most of the children in general classified the "Howdy Doody-Pinky Lee" type show as being too babyish for them and there was a very noticeable trend away from the comic book hero shows such as "Superman." There was little difference between male and female children in the matter of watching adventure and western shows.

12. There seems to be no indication in this study that the I.Q. level of a child at this age has much influence on his choice of programs.

13. The upper group parents favor watching plays on television at least twice as much as do the lower group parents. Soap operas, mysteries and westerns were not listed as a favorite program of any of the upper group parents but were by the lower group parents.

14. The lower group parents were much more satisfied with the present selection of children's shows than were the upper group parents.

15. The upper group children were considerably stronger in feeling that they learned new things from watching television. The upper group children in general were more aware of and more exposed to educational features on television.

16. In general there was a distinct lack of communication between parent and child in both groups concerning many matters pertaining to television and the child, most of which we have mentioned above. There was also very little awareness on the parents part of some of the child's viewing habits such as how much time he spent viewing and what his favorite programs were.

17. The upper class parents were considerably more aware of the educational functions of television and much more concerned with it. We naturally conclude that this is

a manifestation of their own higher educational level. This concern was a major point of difference between the two groups throughout the entire study and was substantiated, as we have pointed out, by a noticeably greater awareness of the more educational and better type programs on the part of the children in the upper group.

## APPENDIX I

Including the questionnaires used in this study the letter  
which was sent to the parents

# BOSTON UNIVERSITY

*School of Public Relations and Communications • 84 Exeter Street • Boston 16 Massachusetts*

Dear

As you might know, within the past few years there has been an ever increasing concern over television as far as its programs for and effect on children are concerned. As a parent we feel sure that you are interested in the future of television programing for children.

In order to study this problem completely, much research must be done. We at Boston University are doing a part of this research and would appreciate your help. The specific project we are concerned with at the moment deals with the study of television habits of children and we have chosen fifth grade pupils to work with.

You have a child in the fifth grade, and with the school's help he (or she) has already filled out a questionnaire for us dealing with his television habits. In order for us to complete the study we need your cooperation in filling out this questionnaire concerning your observations on the child's television habits. We feel that this is an important study and know that you will want to make it a successful one.

A few notes about the questionnaire: the study will remain completely anonymous. No names will be used, we ask for your name on the questionnaire so that we might match it with your child's; in every instance the word "child" refers to your child who is in the fifth grade, and the words "mother" and "father" refer to you, his parents. We would appreciate it if you would fill this out as soon as possible, and mail it back to us in the envelope provided for that purpose. Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

Division of Communications  
Research Department

1. NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_ MALE \_\_\_\_\_ FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

2. DO YOU HAVE A TELEVISION (T.V.) SET IN YOUR HOME? Yes No

3. CIRCLE THOSE CHANNELS YOU WATCH:

Channel 4 7 2 10

4. HOW MUCH DO YOU WATCH T. V. DURING ONE DAY?

$\frac{1}{2}$  hour 1 hour  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours 2 hours  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours 3 hours more than 3 hrs

5. WHAT TIME OF DAY DO YOU USUALLY WATCH (FOR INSTANCE, 3 to 5, and 6 to 8)

6. PLEASE LIST YOUR FAVORITE PROGRAMS?

1.

2.

3.

4.

7. WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT EACH PROGRAM?

1.

2.

3.

4.

8. DO YOU GENERALLY WATCH THEM WITH ANOTHER PERSON YOUR AGE? (CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER)

Never Sometimes Often

9. PLEASE PICK ONE PROGRAM THAT YOU WATCHED YESTERDAY AND WRITE DOWN A FEW THINGS THAT YOU REMEMBER ABOUT IT.

10. DO YOU WATCH THE SAME PROGRAMS? (CIRCLE THE ONE ANSWER THAT FITS YOU BEST)

All the time Most of the time Sometimes Jump about to different programs

11. DOES YOUR MOTHER OR FATHER EVER PUNISH YOU BY NOT LETTING YOU WATCH T.V.? (CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

Never Sometimes Often

12. DO YOU EVER GET EXTRA T.V. FOR BEING GOOD? (CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

Never                      Sometimes                      Often

13. ARE THERE CERTAIN HOURS WHEN YOU ARE ALLOWED TO WATCH T.V.? (CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

Yes                      No

14. DO YOU EVER WATCH ANY PROGRAMS YOUR PARENTS DON'T APPROVE OF?      Yes      No

If you do, what programs are they?

15. DO YOUR PARENTS EVER SUGGEST THAT YOU DO WATCH CERTAIN PROGRAMS?      Yes      No

If your answer is yes, what are they?

16. DOES YOUR TEACHER EVER SUGGEST THAT YOU WATCH CERTAIN PROGRAMS?      Yes      No

If your answer is yes, what are they?

17. WHAT DO YOU GENERALLY DO IF A PROGRAM YOU WANT TO WATCH IS ON DURING SUPPER.  
CHECK YOUR ANSWER.

a) You eat late \_\_\_\_\_

b) You eat early \_\_\_\_\_

c) You have to leave the T.V. set to eat \_\_\_\_\_

d) You eat in front of the T.V. set \_\_\_\_\_

18. NAME WHAT PROGRAMS YOU DO NOT LIKE

1.

2.

3.

Why don't you like them?

1.

2.

3.

How often do you watch them? (Circle your answer)

Never                      Sometimes                      Often

If you do watch, why do you?

19. IF YOU EVER ARGUE WITH A FRIEND OF YOURS OVER WHAT PROGRAM TO WATCH, HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO DO? (WRITE OUT ANSWER PLEASE)

20. ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS YOUR PARENTS WON'T LET YOU WATCH?      Yes      No

If there are, please name them. (1)

(2)

(3)

21. DO YOU THINK THAT YOU EVER LEARN ANY NEW THINGS JUST FROM WATCHING T. V. (CIRCLE)

Yes

No

22. CAN YOU NAME THREE THINGS YOU HAVE LEARNT FROM WATCHING T.V. AND TELL WHAT PROGRAM THEY WERE ON?

1.

2.

3.

IN THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, WHERE THERE IS A MULTIPLE CHOICE PLEASE CIRCLE JUST ONE OF THE ANSWERS

1. YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

2. YOUR OCCUPATION (WRITE OUT) \_\_\_\_\_

3. YOUR SPOUSE'S OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

4. HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED BY FATHER

Grammar School      High School      Some College      Finished College

5. HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED BY MOTHER

Grammar School      High School      Some College      Finished College

6. NAME OF CHURCH YOU ATTEND, IF ANY \_\_\_\_\_

7. BESIDES REGULAR SCHOOLING, WHAT TYPE OF INSTRUCTION OR EDUCATION HAS THE CHILD HAD (SUCH AS PIANO LESSONS, ELOCUTION, ARTS AND CRAFTS, DANCE ETC.)

8. DO YOU HAVE T. V. IN YOUR OWN HOME?

Yes      No

HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD IT?

6 months    1-2 yrs.    3 yrs.    over 3 yrs.

9. CIRCLE THE CHANNELS THAT YOU RECEIVE

Channel 2 4 7 9 10 56

10. HOW MUCH DO YOU WATCH?

total hours per day

Most watching is done at what time or times of day (i.e. 10 a.m. to 11, 2-4 and 7-10)

Mother .....

.....

Father .....

.....

Child .....

.....

Whole Family Together .....

.....

11. WHAT ARE THE FAVORITE T.V. PROGRAMS OF (PLEASE GIVE NAMES OF SHOWS, IF POSSIBLE)

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Father \_\_\_\_\_

Child \_\_\_\_\_

Whole Family Together \_\_\_\_\_

12. HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR CHILD WATCH THE SAME SHOW OR SHOWS?

All the time    Most of the time    Some of the time    He jumps about

13. DO YOU EVER FORBID CHILD TO WATCH T.V. AS A FORM OF PUNISHMENT?

Never    Rarely    Sometimes    Frequently

14. DO YOU EVER GIVE CHILD EXTRA T.V. PRIVILEGES AS A FORM OF REWARD?

Never    Rarely    Sometimes    Frequently

15. ARE THERE JUST CERTAIN HOURS WHEN YOU ALLOW THE CHILD TO WATCH T.V.?

Yes    No

IF YES, WHAT ARE THESE HOURS.....

16. IN THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PLEASE TRY TO GIVE THE NAMES OF THE SHOWS, IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THEN GIVE THE GENERAL TYPE.....

CONCERNING THE PROGRAMS THE CHILD WATCHES ARE THERE ANY THAT:

a) You completely approve of?    Yes    No

If yes, what are they?

Why do you approve of them?

b) You don't approve of?    Yes    No

If yes, what are they?

Why don't you approve of them?

17. ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS THAT YOU FORBID YOUR CHILD TO WATCH?    Yes    No

If yes, what are they?

Why do you do so?

18. ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS THAT YOU ACTUALLY SUGGEST TO THE CHILD THAT HE WATCHES?

Yes    No

If yes, What are they?

Why do you do so?

19. HOW OFTEN DOES HE ACCEPT THE SUGGESTION?

Never    Rarely    Sometimes    Frequently

20. SINCE SOME CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS ARE ON DURING THE SUPPER HOURS (5-7) WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR POLICY TOWARD THIS, DO YOU: CIRCLE ONE

Serve supper earlier? At what time? \_\_\_\_\_

Serve supper later? At what time? \_\_\_\_\_

Eat at the regular time and not let child watch T.V. At what time? \_\_\_\_\_

Let child eat near the T.V. set so he can watch.

21. HOW OFTEN DOES CHILD WATCH T.V. ALONE? (CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

Never      Sometime      Most of the time      All the time

22. HOW OFTEN DOES CHILD WATCH WITH BROTHERS OR SISTERS IF ANY? (CIRCLE ONE)

Never      Sometime      Most of the time      All the time

23. HOW OFTEN DOES CHILD WATCH WITH FRIENDS? (CIRCLE ONE)

Never      Sometime      Most of the time      All the time

24. IF CHILD IS WATCHING WITH ANOTHER CHILD AND SOME CONFLICT ARISES AS TO WHAT PROGRAM TO WATCH, WHAT DO YOU DO?

PLEASE COMMENT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

25. IN GENERAL HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PRESENT SELECTION OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS? SUCH AS THE VARIETY OF KINDS OF PROGRAMS, THE NUMBER OF THEM, THE CONTENT OF THEM ETC.

26. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PARENT GREATLY CONTROLLING THE AMOUNT OF TIME THE CHILD WATCHES T.V.?

27. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PARENT GREATLY CONTROLLING THE TYPE OF SHOWS THE CHILD WATCHES?

## APPENDIX II

Including the favorite programs of each group  
and how many times each was named.\*

\* A number next to a program indicates how many times it  
was named, if more than once.

Upper Group Male Children

Mickey Mouse 7	Stories of the Century
Lassie 4	Badge 714
Superman 3	Sky King
Science Fiction Theatre 2	Search for Tomorrow
Big Surprise 2	Buffalo Bill Jr.
Rin Tin Tin 2	Cartoon Time
Father Knows Best 2	Mamma
Disneyland 2	Truth or Consequences
Captain Midnite 2	Life of Riley
Robin Hood 2	Groucho Marx
Children's Theatre 2	People are Funny
Football	Stories of the Texas Rangers
Lone Ranger	Captain Gallant
Great Plains Trilogy	\$64,000 Question
Spectaculars	Navy Log

Upper Group Female Children (15)

Mamma 6	Tales of the Texas Rangers
Disneyland 5	Topper
Mickey Mouse 5	Schlitz Playhouse
Lassie 5	Big Story
Fury 4	Buffalo Bill Jr.
Father Knows Best 4	The Brighter Day
L one Ranger 3	The Millionaire
Our Miss Brooks 2	The Nelsons
The Peoples Choice 2	Climax
Life With Father 2	Medic
Range Rider 2	Rascals
New England Matinee 2	Life of Riley
People Are Funny 2	Dragnet
The Big Surprise 2	Big Town
Wild Bill Hickok	Robin Hood

Lower Group Male Children (11)

Mickey Mouse 8	Jackie Gleason
Navy Log 2	Johnny MacBrown
Range Rider 2	You Asked For It
Lassie 2	Western Marshals
Superman 2	Dangerous Assignment
Disneyland 2	Wild Bill Hicock
Rin Tin Tin 2	Milton Berle
Carnival 2	Roy Rogers
Stories of the Century 2	Tales of Texas Rangers
Fury	Children's Theatre
Robin Hood	Captain Midnite
You Are There	At Four on Four
Father Knows Best	

Lower Group Female Children (16)

Mickey Mouse	9	Wild Bill Hickock
Big Payoff	4	Mr. Sweeps
Fury	3	Sid Ceasar
Lassie	3	Meet Millie
Robin Hood	3	Strike It Rich
Disneyland	2	Eddie Fisher
Children's Theatre	2	Father Knows Best
Buffalo Bill Jr.	2	Amos and Andy
Tales of the Texas Rangers	2	Perry Como
Mamma	2	Pinky Lee
Superman	2	Topper
Life of Riley	2	Dangerous Assignment
Carnival	2	Little Rascals
Queen for a Day	2	House Party
Bob Grosby		Love Stories
Navy Log		News
Ed Sullivan		Jackie Gleason
Milton Berle		Stories of the Century

Upper Group Mothers

Studio One 6	Goodyear Theatre
Robert Montgomery 6	Talent Scouts
All Plays 4	Tonite
Groucho Marx 4	Camel News Caravan
Omnibus 4	Fireside Theatre
Kraft Television Theatre	United States Steel Hour
Climax 3	Totem Pole Matinee
Father Knows Best 2	Medic
\$64,000 Question 2	Armstrong Circle Theatre
Hallmark Hall of Fame 2	Producers' Showcase
Lux-Video Theatre 2	Wide, Wide, World
Ed Sullivan	Musicals
Philco Theatre	

Upper Group Fathers

Robert Montgomery 4	Channel 2
Kraft Television Theatre 4	Ed Sullivan
Studio One 3	Goodyear Theatre
News 3	Tonite
Sports 3	Variety Shows
Groucho Marx 3	Navy Log
All Plays 2	United States Steel Hour
Climax 2	Lux Video Theatre
Meet the Press 2	March of Medicine
Philco Theatre 2	What's My Line
Omnibus 2	\$64,000 Question
Late Movie	Musicals

### Lower Group Mothers

Groucho Marx 5	Arthur Godfrey
Climax 5	Gary Moore
Perry Como 3	Robert Montgomery
Medic 3	Hallmark Hall of Fame
Lux Video Theatre 2	Quizzes
Ed Sullivan 2	Comedy
Search for Tomorrow 2	Kraft Theatre
Valiant Lady 2	Death Valley Days
Guiding Light 2	Matinee Theatre
Love of Life 2	Line Up
Studio One 3	Jack Benny
Movies 2	Wide, Wide, World
I Love Lucy 2	U.S. Steel Hour
Spectaculars 2	Sid Ceasar

### Lower Group Fathers

Groucho Marx 3	Matinee Theatre
Sports 3	Movies
Studio One 3	Lone Ranger
I Led Three Lives 2	Range Rider
Climax 2	Medic
Spectaculars 2	Wide, Wide, World
Sid Ceasar 2	Jimmy Durante
Comedy	Person to Person
Boxing	Dagnet
Navy Log	Lux Video Theatre
Father Knows Best	

Lower Group - Whole Family

Groucho Marx 4	Camel Caravan
Perry Como 3	Warner Brothers
Medic 2	Peter Pan
Father Knows Best 2	Babe s in Toyland
Life with Riley 2	Spectaculars
Plays 2	This is Your L ife
Danny Thomas	Jack Benny
I've Got a Secret	Sports
Arthur Godfrey	Beat the Clock

Upper Group - Whole Family

Peter Pan 3	Navy Log
Special Shows 3	Topper
Ballet 2	Life with Father
Mamma 2	I Remember Mamma
Sunday Afternoon Shows 2	Amahl and the Night Visitors
Disneyland	Millionaire
Channel 2	Life of Riley
Variety Shows	Badge 714
Musicals	I Led Three L <sub>1</sub> ves
Make Room for Daddy	Plays
Producers' Showcase	Ed Sullivan

The Big Surprise

### APPENDIX III

Containing lists of the programs the children disliked  
and where they were given, the reasons why.\*

\* A number next to a program indicates how many times the program was named, if more than once.

## Upper Group Males

<u>Program</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Howdy Doody 9	Babyish - "Stupid"
Pinky Lee 4	Babyish
Modern Romance 2	"Mushy"
Peggy Lee	
Arthur Godfrey	Talks too much
Play House	
News	Boring
Range Rider	
Mickey Mouse	"Stupid"
Big Brother	"Stupid"
Dear Homemaker	Boring
Some Plays	"Too old"
Love of Life	Too sad
Brighter Day	Too sad
Dragnet	Bad influence
Church programs	"I'm Jewish"
Murder and Cowboy	"It's not civilized watching people get shot."

Upper Group Females

<u>Program</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Howdy Doody 14	Babyish
Pinky Lee 7	Babyish
News 4	Don't understand - boring
Science Fiction Theatre 2	"Stupid" - boring
Modern Romance 2	For adults
Ding Dong School 2	Babyish
Big Brother	Babyish
Kukla, Fran and Ollie	Babyish
Mr. Sweeps	Babyish
Mickey Mouse Club	Babyish
Jack Benny	"Too old"
Wheel of Fortune	
Sports News	Doesn't like sports
Circus	Doesn't like the circus
You Asked For It	
Medic	"Sickening"
Captain Gallant	Boring
Lady of the Bookshelf	Boring
Swan Boat	For adults

Lower Group Males

<u>Program</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Arthur Godfrey 3	Talks too much - don't like singing
Perry Como 3	Don't like singing
Brighter Day 2	
Howdy Doody	Babyish
Dragnet	"Crime"
Gangbusters	"Crime"
Search for Tomorrow	
Love of Life	
News	
Football	
Baseball	
Hollywood Playhouse	For adults
Medic	Parent forbids it
Eddie Fisher	Doesn't like singing
Milton Berle	"Corny"
Mr. Sweeps	
Queen for a Day	
Howdy Doody	Babyish
Pinky Lee	Babyish
Carnival	Babyish

## Lower Group Females

<u>Program</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Howdy Doody 5	Babyish
Pinky Lee 4	Babyish
Mickey Mouse 2	Babyish
Robert Q. Lewis 2	"Silly"- "Crazy"
Gene Autry 2	Doesn't like cowboys Doesn't like singing
True Love 2	Stories not for children
Modern Romances	Stories not for children
Carnival	
T opper	It's not true
L ife Begins at 80	For adults
Love stories	Boring
Our Miss Brooks	"Crazy"
Dear Homemaker	For adults
Jackie Gleason	"He hollars too much"
Two for the Money	There are too many "money" shows
News	
Eastern Kodak Hour	For adults
Baseball	For boys
Medic	"Sickening"