

'Fess Up, Now,' SOMEBODY'S Watching Them



Donna Douglas, Buddy Ibsen

Catholic Press Features

New York — We will not get a clear picture of TV's impact on our culture until more people are willing to own up to the fact that they do watch television a lot and that they do prefer situation comedies over documentaries, despite what they tell pollsters and friends.

So asserts media analyst William Kuhns in "Why We Watch Them," published by Benziger, Inc., in which Kuhns looks at a number of popular TV series and comments not upon their quality but upon their "latent content" — the real reason shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Green Acres* and *Mayberry RFD* draw so many viewers.

Kuhns, director of the Institute for Environmental Response, in Chicago, and author of several books on both media and religion writes:

"As an environment particularly, television is insinuating all sorts of ideas, images, moral alternatives into the minds of its audiences. These deserve intelligent comprehension, articulation, debate. Does television get them? Very rarely. And largely because few people are willing to admit how much television they watch."

Kuhns states that despite statistics proving that the average American family has the TV set on 43.5 hours a week, few will admit they watch TV that much or that they watch the kinds of light, trivial or escapist programs the ratings say they do.

"One of the reasons Americans seem ashamed of watching television," according to Kuhns, "may lie in the puritan ances-

try. Almost everybody likes entertainment — which is all that most television is — but in a society as dedicated to hard work as ours, the idea of passing time just for entertainment, as a normal course, seems morally reprehensible.

"The trouble with the peculiarly American schizoid approach to television is that it makes the problem of getting closer to the medium — in order to understand how it works and, especially, what it is saying — much more difficult."

It is Kuhns' contention that if six million people watch an afternoon TV serial like *Days of Our Lives* and over 30 million tune in to *The Beverly Hillbillies*, "that alone makes *Days of Our Lives* and *Beverly Hillbillies* — no matter how bland or empty or ridiculous their content — important."

Besides, he argues, "in many ways, television — through its series, shows, its perception of events, and most particularly its commercials — can tell us more about American culture than any other single source, reflecting and modifying the culture."

In addition, there is that "latent content" to give our attention to.

For example: "We may not like *Beverly Hillbillies* — but *Beverly Hillbillies* is saying too much about the fear of technology and the urge for a rural life style in the midst of the chaotic city for us to be able to ignore it comfortably."

Examining a program's "latent content" may lead to the discovery of major trends that reflect major anxieties within the culture, Kuhns says.

Suit Threatened Over Movie

Cleveland—An attorney here has been retained by actress Loretta Young to bring a \$10 million damage suit against 20th Century Fox movie studios for the unauthorized use of her face and voice in the movie, "Myra Breckenridge."

Attorney Richard M. Bertsch recently sent a telegram to Richard Zanuck, president of 20th Century, demanding deletion of those portions of the film in which Miss Young appears. The film clip was taken from a movie which starred Miss Young and the late Tyrone Power and was inserted in a "Myra" sex scene.

Bertsch said that unless the deletions were made, 20th Century would face a \$10 million suit for harm done to the reputation and character of Miss Young.

Moiseyev Troupe To Dance Here

The spectacular, high-leaping Moiseyev Dance Company will perform in Rochester, Wednesday, Sept. 16 at 8:15 p.m. in the War Memorial.

The Moscow based group recently opened in New York City as part of their 20-city American tour.

The company will perform their standard repertoire including "Gopak," "Old City Quadrille," and "Suite of Old Russian Dances." It will also perform new dances including a Sicilian tarantella, a spur-jangling Argentine flamenco, and an all Russian "Dance of the Buffons," which begins with an impudent face grinning through the back curtain.

FAIR PRIZES

Lt. Gov. Malcolm Wilson and Mrs. Henri Projansky will receive the highest prizes at the Monroe County Fair on Aug. 17. They are the only known winners of the hundreds of prizes and trophies to be awarded.

Each year the Monroe County Citizens Civic Committee presents achievement plaques and citations at the Inter-Faith services of the Fair.

THE MUSIC BAG

'Ball of Confusion'

People moving out, people moving in, all because of the color of their skin.
Run, run, run, but you sure can't hide.
An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, vote for me and I'll set you free. Rap on, brother, rap on.
The only person talking love and brotherhood is the preacher, and it seems nobody's here to study learning but the teacher.
Segregation, determination, demonstration, integration, aggravation, humiliation, abrogation to our nation.
Ball of confusion, that's what our world is today.
The sale of pills is at an all-time high.
Young folks walking round with their heads in the sky.
Cities ablaze in the summertime, and the beat goes on.
Evolution, revolution, birth control, sell your soul.
Shooting rockets to the moon, kids growing up too soon.
Politicians say more taxes will solve everything, and the band played on.
Round and round we go, where the world's headed nobody knows, Ball of confusion, that's what the world is today.
Fear in the air, tension everywhere.
Unemployment rising fast, the Beatle's new record's a gas.
And the only safe place to live is on an Indian reservation.
And the band played on.
Eye of destruction, tax deduction, city inspectors, bill collectors.
Car pool, end of land, population out of hand.
Suicide, too many bills, help is moving to the hills.
People all over the world are shouting, 'End the war!'
And the band played on.
Ball of confusion, that's what the world is today.
(Published by Jobete, BMI)

'Ball of Confusion' Just Adds Chaos

By The Mission Singers

A lot of people think the Temptation's "new record" is a gas. "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World Is Today)" is certainly a smash hit. It's good rock and soul music, and it's got strong and hard lyrics.

But really, isn't the song simply an apostle of the obvious? So it's pointing out some — maybe all — of the problems of our world. As one of our ten-year-old friends in our neighborhood would say, "Big wow!" Haven't we heard enough complaints?

Don't get the wrong idea. The problems Ball of Confusion talks about are deadly serious. But what good is stirring up the dust unless you have a hose to wet it down afterwards? What's the use of complaining without suggesting?

Let's face it: complaining helps us feel sorry for ourselves, and most of us like the idea of being a martyr. The heroic sufferer presents a great

image — from a distance. Ball of Confusion lets us take on the role of martyr. The quick phrasing, the bluesy harmonica, the torrid pace of the rhythm — all these lend support to the song's lyrics, which tell us that the whole situation is beyond our control.

To struggle against overwhelming odds is a very difficult thing. What's easier is a simple, but false, substitute: to talk about struggling against overwhelming odds. The song suggests the substitute.

It's easier to become an instant martyr than a regular worker. A few months back, the leader of the National Student Mobilization came to a university in St. Louis, where he asked kids to sign up for door-to-door political campaigning for peace candidates. A good number of the college students rejected his plan outright: he wasn't radical enough for their purpose. Meaning, that is, that his plan involved too much day-to-day practical work.

Ball of Confusion rolls in the same direction as those college kids: provoke, procrastinate, castigate, but by all means equivocate. As another song says, though, "Lord, we don't need another mountain; we've got mountains and valleys enough to climb."

What we do need is some hope, some optimism. Every single thing that Ball of Confusion says is true. But the total song is all wrong. The song mentions a new Beatle's song; it should pay more heed to an earlier tune by the group: *We Can Work It Out*.

For we can work it out. If this world sprang out of chaos through some working of order, then order can work out the confusion we have now. And this "order" is not the riding partner of "Law and Order." This order springs from the consistent action of people who are determined to achieve their goals of peace and love and harmony.

Some people will defend the song's approach by saying, "There really is nothing we can do." If that is so, they are weak people, and should make way for people who can do something. We don't have to condemn them, but neither do we have to admire or imitate them.

If there is a ball of confusion, it can only be our heads. And only we can determine whether it's there or not. No simplistic song can do that.

(Catholic Press Features)

As I See It

Medical Center ... Ditto Plots

By Pat Costa

In case anyone is wondering what the everyday housewife is going to look like come fall when the midi fashion is supposed to come into its own, all one has to do is search the television listings until you find a movie made in the fifties.

Some of the recent films screened in the era that come to mind are "Private War of Major Benson," "Island in the Sun" and "The Quiet Man."

And such lovelies as Julia Adams, Joan Collins, Joan Fontaine and Maureen O'Hara do not exactly benefit from the half-length costumes that they sport throughout the flicks.

We have become devotees of the medical shows during the summer months—at least the first 10 minutes of each. "Medical Center" at 9 p.m. Wednesdays, a CBS entry, is our special favorite, although I am not

sure our support is flattering.

Cause for our amusement is the identical plot each week for more weeks than we cared to keep track of. Each week Dr. Joe Gannon insists that his patient (victim?) be hospitalized for tests to determine the cause of the mysterious fainting spells. Each week the ailing one declines vigorously due to the fact that: 1. He is a contender for Olympic diving team — and cannot spare the time; 2. He is a star high school basketball star aiming for Ivy League College and cannot spare the time; 3. He is a college whiz football star and the pros are going to pay him big money. If he's absent from the field, no contract; 4. He is a former sports great and he can't take time from his business.

We have come to the conclusion that all these people know something about this particular hospital that they're not telling.