



**M.A. (COMMUNICATION AND  
JOURNALISM)  
SEMESTER - I (CBCS)**

**PART - 1  
MEDIA CRITICISM**

**SUBJECT CODE : 63504**

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# SYLLABUS

## MEDIA CRITICISM (CORE COURSE)

<b>M.A.(Communication and Journalism)</b>	<b>Semester – I</b>
<b>Course Name: Media Criticism (English Version)</b>	<b>Course Code: 63504</b>

The course equips the learner with historical context and analytical tools to transform from passive consumers of media to active and critical thinkers and evaluators of mass communication and mass media. The course examines the social, political, commercial roles, cultural effects, philosophical underpinnings, corporate influences and ideological agendas of the media drawing upon a vast range of theories and theorists of communication and mass media. There is an emphasis on developing a critique of the mass media and mass communication universe in India.

### **The course shall comprise of the following units:**

Week 1	Concepts and keywords in Journalism, media and communication	Electronic Media Criticism: Applied Perspectives, Peter B. Orlik, Routledge, 2009 Digital Media Criticism, Anandam P. Kavoori, Peter Lang 2010 A Rasa Reader: Classical Indian Aesthetics, Translated and Edited by Sheldon Pollock, Columbia University Press, 2016 Indian Literary Criticism: Theory and Interpretation, G. N. Devy, Orient Longman, 2004 Indian Narratology, Ayyappa P Panikkar, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Sterling Publishers, 2003
Week 2	What is criticism, the essence of criticism, why critique the mass media	
Week 3	Critical functions, aesthetics and ethics of mass media	
Week 4	Criticism and the Communication Process	
Week 5	Criticism and the Communication Process	
Week 6	Knowledge Processing function of mass media	
Week 7	Tonal and Talent Ingredients, Stage-Molding Ingredients	
Week 8	Tonal and Talent Ingredients, Stage-Molding Ingredients	
Week 9	Business Gratifications, Audience Gratifications	
Week 10	Reality Programming	
Week 11	Depiction Analysis	
Week 12	Structural Analysis	

Week 13	Probing Ethics and Values	
Week 14	Aesthetics and Art	
Week 15	Composite Criticism	
Total Hours	4 hours per week = 60 hours	

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## CONCEPTS AND KEYWORDS IN JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

### Unit Structure

- 13.0 Objective
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Accessibility
- 13.3 Mobile Journalism
- 13.4 Citizen Journalism
- 13.5 Accuracy
- 13.6 Adversarial Journalism
- 13.7 Balanced Journalism
- 13.8 Cartoon Journalism
- 13.9 Censorship
- 13.10 Let's sum up
- 13.11 Questions
- 13.12 References

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### 1.0 OBJECTIVE

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Emergence of new concepts in media
- Trendy keywords in journalistic work and their impact on journalism and communication

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The art of demonstrating how to think critically about competency and media influence is exemplified by the fundamental topics of journalism studies. We'll look at sources of information in depth in this chapter, as well as various popular media buzzwords. The infusion of technology and media digitization has had a significant impact on the source of information and transmission of news. We'll also look at how, in recent years, some terms and keywords have become a hot topic in the media. Particularly since Pandemic media has served as a filter for audiences. The workplace culture has been severely impacted. Journalists rely heavily on sources, but it has also given rise to a slew of new terminology such as whistleblowers, leaks, and spin-doctors, all of which are quite dangerous in practice. Franklin, Hammer, Hanna, Kinsey, and Richardson (Franklin, Hammer, Hanna, Kinsey, & Richardson, 2005). Before trusting any source of information, a journalist must conduct extensive research. The true

worth of a source for journalists is determined by how it is used. The journalist must have access to the source's information in order to verify its accuracy, relevance, reliability, and authenticity.

During the corona virus pandemic, the working ethos shifted, and every industry saw a drop in employment. Working from home has become the standard. As a result of this predicament, journalists began to rely on niche influencers and bloggers as sources of information. Which raises severe doubts about the information's veracity. It also makes people think again about which media they should trust. The new trend of hybrid culture has been adopted into every industry as the number of vaccinated people continues to rise. Every event and conference is held online. However, this has resulted in a sizable turnout. And anyone from any location can now attend the event. Furthermore, the programmes are now available to a global audience. Infect, media professionals have access to a variety of venues through which they can interact and communicate with their audiences. Platforms such as Zoom Meet, Google Meet, WebX, and others are available. However, while digitization has provided journalists with new ways to communicate their stories and interact with their target audiences, it has also increased the amount of working pressure they face.

The internet age has made false information highly persuasive and persistent. It becomes considerably more difficult for journalists to protect citizens from false information in this situation. Given that journalists must devote their full attention to the work for which they are responsible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They're working on a variety of projects, and the staff are still struggling financially. During COVID-19, in particular, numerous journalists and reporters risked their lives. The desire to communicate the truth to the population, on the other hand, inspires them to carry out their responsibilities.

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## **1.2 ACCESSIBILITY**

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When we only had print media to provide news, our reach was relatively limited. Many new publishers from all over the world were able to flourish as a result of it. But because of the low literacy rate, audience engagement was also limited. Then came the technological era, which provided us not only access to electronic media of information, but also to digital news. The digitization of the world provided us with several informational instruments. Journalism implies "by the people, for the people," and the same is true of information that must be accessible to the general public. A good is journalism is when information reach is not limited and it is able to provide service to all people, regardless of their caste, creed, or ethnicity.

Today, we have a plethora of information sources that allow people from the most remote parts of the world to easily access any piece of information. Tim Berners-Lee, the creator of the World Wide Web, insisted on its universality. Because of the features designed, such as screen readers, he stressed its ability to reach even the impaired people. Berners-Lee came up with the notion of designing a technology that can

support a feature that can eliminate barriers to information access. He was successful in putting this wonderful concept into action, and he directed all information providers, journalists, and reporters to reach out to their viewers regardless of infrastructure, language, culture, geographic location, or physical or mental incapacity. (Franklin, Hammer, Hanna, Kinsey & Richardson, 2005) Because of the World Wide Web there are an immense number of websites running on digital devices. The world of digitization gave rise to new terms like, mobile journalism, social media and digital media.

Let us acknowledge the role of journalists in informing their audiences about major events, as well as the obstacles journalists confront in the COVID 19 pandemic.

The media has played an important role in informing the public about the precautions to take in the event of a pandemic. In serving the people, media professionals were at the forefront, alongside healthcare personnel such as doctors and nurses. Journalists and reporters, on the other hand, stood in the front row to raise awareness and educate the public about the dangers of not maintaining social distance, the significance of wearing a mask, and how to avoid economic crises and maintain good health. This is how the media fulfilled its social responsibility by enabling citizens at home to make informed decisions in light of the circumstances. The COVID 19 outbreak exposed weaknesses and failures in social and economic policies aimed at addressing the risks and difficulties to successful journalistic practices, as well as the well-being of journalists, so that they can fulfill their societal responsibilities. The media's involvement in normal pandemic coverage brought to mind the potential difficulties involved with journalistic employment, ranging from poor income, lack of insurance, and exposure to health risks. (2020, Safiyyah Adam) During the epidemic, fewer people bought newspapers, and because people relied solely on media, the amount of news consumed via electronic media and social media skyrocketed. As we all know, media outlets today have a digital presence. Other shady organisations, on the other hand, are utilising the platforms to deceive citizens. As a result, social media had a significant negative impact on residents' mental health during the pandemic. And that the doctors appeared to be advising citizens to avoid the media. Television news appeared to having the highest rating of all platforms in the United States, with national free-to-air stations obtaining the highest score of all platforms, and legacy media in general exceeding digital outlets. Citizens in the United Kingdom, meanwhile, rely on traditional media such as broadcast, print, and even internet news, but they distrust social media news. The patterns were seen across Europe and beyond. Citizens relied on conventional media rather than a digital-only news source for COVID-related information. (Sabina Mihelj, 2021).

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### **1.3 MOBILE JOURNALISM**

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Mobile journalism is a new form of media for storytelling. Reporters use portable electronic devices, such as cellphones, to inform and educate citizens about current events. Journalists and reporters benefit greatly from



mobile journalism. It enables them to cover any event that would otherwise be impossible to capture without large cameras and a camera crew. Mobile journalism refers to news that is first gathered on cell phones and then transported to newsrooms for broadcast on television. Within the discipline of journalism, mobile journalism is a new field that has evolved. Mobile journalism refers to the rise of numerous social media platforms that have encouraged smartphones to become the most powerful electronic devices capable of doing practically all production-related tasks. Now, the popularity of social media has fueled fierce competition in the mobile business. According to ibef.org, the Indian market alone has grown by tenfold from 14.5 million shipments in 2011 to 150 million shipments in 2020. India is regarded as one of the most lucrative smartphone markets. Mobile journalism is an innovative form of newsgathering that has spread around the world since the year 2007. It gives a new way to news reporting. And helps the newspaper industry to compete with the television and radio industry and to be able to survive in the market. (Stephen Quinn, 2009).

### **Case Study of Mobile Journalism from United Kingdom:**

In Europe, the concept of Mojo was first introduced by Reuters and then by the BBC. In 2007, Reuter's reporters collaborated with Nokia's research and development division to experiment with mobile journalism. Nokia representatives traveled to London to speak with a few journalists about their needs for mobile reporting. As a result of the interview, WordPress Software was created. Which became a useful tool for Reuters when it comes to blogging. Later, Nokia offered a few journalists N95 devices with software that allows them to edit and do multimedia activities. Nokia then provided those phones with Bluetooth keyboards, tripods, microphones, and PowerMonkey Solar Power Units. The New York Fashion Week and the Edinburg Television Festival were the first events covered by this phone. Mojo, according to Reuter's product manager at the time, was "the beginning of mobile journalism." Since 2008, the BBC has been practising mojo journalism. Waters and his colleague Rory Cellan-Jones used mobile phones to cover the Barcelona Mobile Phone Congress. Despite the fact that this was a trial, they shot 26 videos, the most popular of which earned nearly 60,000 views. Waters described the experiment as a success in this way. (Stephen Quinn, 2009).

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## **1.4 CITIZEN JOURNALISM**

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Citizen journalism is a form of journalism in which any ordinary person, acting in his or her capacity, is responsible for interpreting and disseminating news. Despite the fact that he has no journalistic experience or training, he sees it as his responsibility to his country. In India, citizen journalism is based on the concept that information empowers people. It is believed, citizen's sense of responsibility motivates them to participate in citizen journalism in order to give accurate, reliable, comprehensive, and timely information, which is critical for any democratic society like India.

Citizen journalism has not only revolutionized the media as a whole, but it has also become a critical instrument for citizens to report on issues that affect their daily lives. The expanding use of mobile technology, as well as the Right to Information Act of 2005, are two major factors that influence citizens' willingness to participate in citizen journalism. In the process of spreading news and information, the mainstream media no longer works alone. They collaborate with engaged citizens who share viral films and photos that circulate on the internet.

### **Case Study:**

Crime, cruelty, and bloodshed are all too common in India. However, during the Nirbhaya case in India, the power of citizens was witnessed through social media for the first time. The rape and murder of a 23-year-old physiotherapy intern in Delhi was known as the Delhi Gang Rape. On December 16, 2012, she was riding in a bus with her male partner in New Delhi. She was viciously beaten and then raped, suffering multiple injuries to her private parts as a result. She was brought to a hospital in Singapore for treatment, where she died after thirteen days. The heroic heart of the victim was Nirbhaya. Regardless of her caste, religion, or faith, her incident struck a chord with the public. The incident erupted in rage on the streets of not only Delhi, but also across the country, with people demanding justice. In India, rape is a national issue, but for the first time, the public's wrath was expressed in the form of millions of images, posts, and comments. On social media, people vented their frustrations and feelings. Everyone who came forward expressed their dissatisfaction with the country's poor legal system and requested strong legal action against the perpetrators. The case drew the attention of the whole mainstream media, and a new trend began to emerge on the internet. User-generated content was broadcast by the mainstream media. Citizens have also been seen on social media expressing their voices in protest of the cruelty shown to the young women. Many such cases have gone unnoticed, and no strict legal action has been taken against them. With this new trend of citizen-generated content, the mainstream media included a Citizen News & Views section to their bulletins and programmes. With regard to the Nirbhaya case, journalist Namita Bhandare started a website called [change.org](http://change.org) to file an online petition named "Stop Rape Now." The rape case in Nirbhaya demonstrated the power of citizen journalism. Many news networks and print publications now offer a section dedicated to citizen journalism, which encourages citizens to contribute and share essential information with respect to mainstream media. (Mishra & Krishnaswami, 2014).

### **Check your Progress:**

1. Discuss citizen journalism in detail.

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2. What is mobile journalism?

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3. Discuss accessibility.

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## 1.5 ACCURACY

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Accuracy is a criterion for judging the quality of a report. It's also linked to other important notions in journalism, such as trustworthiness and truthfulness. Because it raises the question of whether journalistic activity is capable of portraying the news with accuracy and truth. Working on the basis of fact-checked reporting is critical in the media. Also, to double-check the news that has already been delivered to the audience. Accuracy is vital not just for the viewers, but also for the reputation of any media outlet. In the realm of digitalization, internet news media sources work quickly and believe in first broadcasting the news and then verifying the facts. This media trend has piqued the interest of philosophers and media regulators, forcing them to investigate the accuracy of journalistic work. (Colin Porlezza, 2019).

At its most basic level, accuracy means that each news item mentioning a well-known person or business must be spelled accurately. The quote must be precise and clear. The term "accuracy" refers to the ethical standard that every journalist should follow. Take all required steps to verify any occurrence covered by the journalist that has the potential to become a source of contention. It doesn't matter if the news is important to the public, but the journalist must leave no room for doubt when it comes to validating his work. (Franklin, Hammer, Hanna, Kinsey & Richardson, 2005).

### **Case study on Brian Williams:**

Brian Williams was a well-known news anchor and reporter on NBC news channel. In 2013, he reported a story on the Iraq war that took place in the year 2003. He claimed that he was covering the event in a helicopter and that the one in front of him was hit by an RPG. He gave a clear depiction of the story that he claimed. He said that not only the helicopter in front of him was hit with an RPG but also the one he was in was targeted. In 2015, the New York Rangers were doing the story on the same incident that happened 12 years ago. And the announcer emphasized the incident about Williams being hit by an RPG. When the soldiers learned of the news, they went out claiming the statement is false. There was no hostile fire on any of the helicopters, according to one of the pilots of the helicopter in

which Williams was flying. Instead, they received a radio message that one of the helicopters had been shot down. That is to say, Williams attempted to manufacture a section of the news that was otherwise entirely true except for a little portion. Williams apologized to the audience for the erroneous information. When a journalist reports fake or erroneous news to the public, it raises ethical concerns. It raises concerns about the journalistic work's reliability.

Whether or not to believe what the media says. Williams, on the other hand, was fortunate to have a slew of prominent personalities on his side. Piers Morgan and Steve Burke, the CEO of NBC, were among those who defended him. They beg the audience to give him another opportunity in life. It is unavoidable for any human being to make mistakes. Brian was suspended for six months without pay, despite the fact that it was a major error that needed to be learned from. However, he was brought back six months later.

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## **1.6 ADVERSARIAL JOURNALISM**

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Adversarial journalism is a type of journalism in which the journalist employs a combative or opposing manner of reporting. Reporters who are extremely antagonistic to a person, a political party, or any institution reflect this in their reporting, isolating listeners from their news. This has the potential to destroy public trust. No journalist, it has been noticed, accepts their hostile worldview. According to a survey done in the 1990s, British journalists are more likely than American journalists to deny having an adversarial attitude toward politicians and public institutions. (Franklin, Hammer, Hanna, Kinsey, & Richardson, 2005). However, it goes without saying that practically every country follows the same journalistic practices.

One such instance occurred during Nixon's administration in the United States. Two journalists, Woodward and Bernstein, disclosed the Watergate scandal in 1972-1973, and became immensely renowned during that time, especially after a film about the affair, 'All the President's Men,' was published. The scandal's reportage helped bring down Nixon's presidency, and the two journalists acquired a great deal of fame and respect for their reporting.

The Iranian hostage crisis, which lasted from 1979 to 1981, demonstrated the impact of satellite-based global communication technology on politics and diplomacy. And the journalists were seen to be unwittingly acting as terrorists' tools. At the time, Time accurately represented the evolving journalistic stance. The populace viewed the journalists as rude, cynical, and almost anti-patriotic.. (Weaver & Wilhoit, 2020).

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## **1.7 BALANCED JOURNALISM**

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Being objective in the presentation of news is what balanced journalism entails. It necessitates a fair representation of current events. However, in journalistic practice, the focus is on a single aspect of news representation

in order to manipulate the audience. Balance and bias are two distinct terms with distinct meanings, but they coexist in news presentation discourse. A journalistic approach must be unbiased and objective in order to be ethical, and accuracy can only be claimed if the data is balanced. The reporter may not want to be impartial in certain situations. Racism, for example, is not considered morally ethical in the western world's enlighten democracies. 'Incitement to racial hatred' is a legal term used in some countries to describe morally unethical anti-racist behavior. A legal action is taken against such inappropriate deeds. (Guy Starkey, 2017).

According to the Guardian news portal the foundation of good journalism is objectivity, and reputable news organisations take pride in their ability to avoid bias. This is admirable, as robust discussion is required for a healthy media and, as a result, an informed society. When the weight of scientific evidence clearly points in one direction, however, covering both "sides" equally may result in misleading coverage. The BBC was admonished in 2011 for paying "undue attention to marginal viewpoints" on matters like man-made climate change, among other things, and was a high-profile example of this. Despite mounting evidence that human activity is affecting climate change, the study found that certain BBC programmes were subjected to an "overly rigid application of editorial guidelines on climate neutrality."

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## **1.8 CARTOONS IN JOURNALISM**

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Cartoons in Print media became popular in the nineteenth century via the magazine 'Punch' that provided the setting for satirical cartoons. However, it is noteworthy that the culture of cartoons in newspapers was introduced in the 18th century in the editorial form. Just like the editorials are in written form the same page was seen with cartoon illustrations on a daily basis. Cartoons gave a more elaborated version of the news story supporting the written form of news. The comical aspect of the humorous cartoons comes from the unique perspective they provide on the daily lives of the newspaper's readers.

The satirical cartoons especially began explicitly on politicians in broadsheets. Before this, the culture of cartoons was followed by the tabloids and they were not political in nature. The broadsheet's circulation was seen to increase with this new culture alongside serious news in the 19th century. The presence of cartoons in print media is however contradictory in three ways; they are exaggerated, they are essentially graphic in verbal medium and also they play on reader's emotions. The editorials on the other side work on the grounds of accuracy and fact based. One such example could be of a popular cartoonist in the guardian, Steve Bell caricatured the politician John Major. It was the topic in buzz, especially when he illustrated him on the whole two side pages as soon as he declared to be the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He drew John's cartoon wearing his pants outside of his trousers, and proceeded to flaunt his motif to its full potential. Such imagery could prove as retentive in the public's mind. (Franklin, Hammer, Hanna, Kinsey & Richardson, 2005).

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## 1.9 CENSORSHIP

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Censorship is a method of formally controlling or suppressing any form of media expression that can undermine the state's order. Censorship was first instituted in Rome in 443 BC, and later in China in 300 AD. Traditionally, the government checks newspapers, magazines, television broadcasts, and, more recently, the internet and cinema to redact the content that is dubious. In the interest of law and order, the government regulates media expression. This government instability not only restricts journalists' freedom of speech and expression, but it also distorts viewers' right to knowledge. (Irum Abbasi, 2015). Censorship stems from a variety of religious, political, and military motivations. Censorship is seen as a potent tool for suppressing the transmission of information and restricting the personal rights of journalists and reporters. For example, in 1798, the United States allowed a decent guy to be imprisoned for writing, printing, or distributing anti-federal news. The US government granted this authority under the Alien and Sedition Act. Journalists' freedom of speech and expression appears to be maintained today. However, in today's era of digitization, it has become easier for the government to regulate and control the flow of information. Furthermore, self-censorship, official withholding, government and corporate coercion, and linguistic choice have made censorship even easier than before. (Zelizer & Allan, 2010).

### Check your Progress:

1. Define censorship.

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2. What is the importance of cartoons in journalism?

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3. Define balanced journalism?

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## 1.10 LET'S SUM UP

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The regulation of flow and information remains a crucial part of the debate when it comes to Indian media. Since the dawn of the media, the idea of regulation has been at the forefront of understanding the approaches to a better society. Areas like censorship remain a crucial area but it is also necessary to understand the challenges with respect to balanced and fair

news. How does the accuracy of news get affected by mobile journalism? As time goes by, we may see these approaches getting challenged by newer mediums. The flow of information is always an ever revolving structure.

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## 1.11 QUESTIONS

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1. Does the Indian media regulate the flow of information? Elaborate.
2. How censorship curtails freedom of speech and expression?
3. Explain the trend of cartoons and caricature in the media?
4. Do you think the media disseminate balanced news information?
5. Media uses a combative style of reporting distorting the balanced representation of news. Explain.
6. Explain Accuracy in media with respect to case study on Brian Williams.
7. Mobile journalism emerged out of the field of journalism as a boon for citizen journalism. Explain with a case study.

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## 1.12 REFERENCES

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- <https://books.google.co.in/books?id=kl6iw6HiDlC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

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# WHAT IS CRITICISM, THE ESSENCE OF CRITICISM AND WHY CRITIQUE THE MASS MEDIA

## Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objective
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 What is Criticism?
- 2.3 Media Criticism: The Essence of Criticism.
- 2.4 Media Criticism: Why Critique the Mass Media.
- 2.5 Let's Sum Up
- 2.6 Questions
- 2.7 References

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## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Definition of Criticism
- The Essence of Criticism
- The importance of an unbiased and subjective approach to criticism
- Framework for Critiques
- Reasons for critiquing Mass Media

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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A media environment extraordinarily surrounds our worlds. We use smartphones, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, emails, messaging, and video content on a daily basis to sustain our lives and their activities. As consumers, the world is constantly surrounded by choices of digital and conventional media channels to provide its audience content, twenty-four hours a day. While some might argue the consumption, we often club our consumption with television, reading a newspaper, or book while watching television, or watching a show on our phones as we text our peers. The volume of information surrounding us is indeed an overwhelming reality of our lives.

Human Beings are known to sustain art and performances all through their lives. Our life is incomplete without the consumption of these forms. We have been doing this through various media channels like video and audio channels, print and digital publications and social media to name a few. Like every profession assesses its contribution, the responsibility to

understand, comprehend and learn through various mediums is essential. The industry is bound by the responsibility to derive methods for assessing the performance of its members. As professionals, it is the duty of the ones leading the group to understand and apply the methods put forth and apply and assess their work and that of their colleagues, competitors and others alike. In Media, however, this is no different. These assessments and acts of examining the quality are what constitute the common practice of criticism. Oftentimes, the connotations of the word „Criticism“ are misunderstood in common language.

In layman conversation, as one mentions the word criticism, it is adhered to as being criticized, embarking on an unpleasant and negative series of occurrences for an event, platform or person. It is considered a practice that solely focuses on the extermination of the mentioned subject or practice. Rather criticism is a constructive tool that better allows the consumer to look at and only acquire information or consume media content that is required of them. In the present age, Media Criticism offers a varied, critical approach to discourses in fields through sources such as the radio, television and the Internet.

This unit will help you understand the theoretical concepts of Media Criticism. It will help you describe and introduce you to the nature and scope of the field. It will help you differentiate between various Mass Media channels. It will introduce you to the concept of criticism, its origin and media criticism along with its importance. It will also give you an insight into the essence of criticism and the ways it can be utilized to enhance the quality of the said media content. The unit sheds light on how a critic can utilize their skills and add value to the existing media content. The unit also explains five things a critic should keep in mind while demonstrating their opinion to their audiences. Apart from that, you will conclude the reasons and importance of critiquing Mass Media, allowing you to build a holistic perspective that contributes to modelling the values, behaviours and cultural significance of our society.

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## **2.2 WHAT IS CRITICISM?**

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The ideal reflection of a society can be derived from the consumption of art and culture. Jerome Stolnitz states that we analyze art to understand the compositions better and along with that to pass judgment on the value they hold. The word Criticism finds its origins in the Greek word, *krinein*, meaning to comprehend or to judge. This, in turn, attests that both comprehension and judgment are essential tasks in the critical process. These processes allow the person to comprehend defects and look for spaces created in the artistic spaces. However, a critic recognizes what is termed defective elements and then constructively suggests ways the flaws can be rectified, ultimately enhancing the value of the art being consumed by people.

Jerry McNeeley states, "Criticism is a carefully considered judgment of the merits and faults of a work of art with the purpose of improving and stimulating interest." Criticism can therefore be termed as a thorough

comprehension of art, aiming to include the responsibility by formulating positive and negative comments on the specific content being consumed or being interacted with to ultimately increase its value. A professional critic makes it a point to assure that the „judgment“ for the work ultimately enhances and becomes the hallmark of valid and constructed comments adding value. Genuine criticism is known to further expand and upgrade the audience“s attentiveness, enhancing the market for the product.

Media criticism, on the other hand, can be described as a set of methods providing an insight into uses, effects, and practices associated with media, into the meanings, perceptions, biases, with the messages created, into cultures that produce and consume the messages, follow the ideologies and establish themselves as products and producers of the content.

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### **2.3 MEDIA CRITICISM: THE ESSENCE OF CRITICISM**

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Keeping in mind what we discussed criticism to be, constructive assessments and constant appraisals form the baseline for a critic to look at the piece of information being delivered to them. The term, however, has been used with a negative connotation in the past and the tasks and responsibilities of the involved individual are often misunderstood. The essence of criticism can be mapped with Caren Deming“s statement. He said, "critics must demonstrate the willingness to meet works and their audiences on their own terms: the willingness to understand the forces compelling creators and the gatekeepers making decisions."

Using media to produce and consume various messages on television, radio, smartphones, the Internet, books, and one-on-one interactions, we create and cultivate Media Literacy in our environments. Often, we come across thoughts that help us understand that when we truly understand ways how media can shape messages and identities, we learn better about the decisions we take to frame and write messages. Once we acquire the ability to see how content can harm and shape ideas, and emotions and present it to the rest, we truly become aware and careful of how and what we consume through media.

With every professional“s fundamental responsibility and ability to derive tools to assess the performance of those around them, as critics, it is essential that they understand and constantly apply similar rules and methods to their creations along with those members they assess. This holds true for stalwarts and young members of the industry. It is, however, necessary that the critic or the professional believes in the worth of the said medium or product. A piece of art cannot be put to its audience if the creator does not believe in its value. Similarly, only bringing out the negative aspects cannot be termed a criticism. A professional will always provide a more comprehensive understanding by acknowledging the good and the mendable parts of the media they consume with the sole motivation to add value to the product.

Even though it isn't necessarily required for a critic to have extensively worked in the industry for long years, their assessments and exposure to the art definitely allow them to build a more comprehensive, unbiased and subjective view no matter the medium. This careful consideration of subjective rectification, a suggestion with a singular focus to bring out the best in the art being consumed forms the essence of criticism. It is essential for the professional to understand the scope and the longevity of the product.

To explain this concept, this example sets out best. The best way to validate an edifice to meet the current expectation is to remodel them. In this process, the current establishment undergoes scrutiny and an in-depth analysis of what needs to be removed and what can be kept. With a central focus to bring out the best from the space and the edifice, the quality of the remodelling cannot be compromised. This tearing down and building up process thus is done for the sake of the structure's rectification. Hence, it is essential the critic understands and believes in the capability of the media product as they term ways it could be rectified for a better reach and growth for its audience.

**Check your progress:**

1. Define Media Criticism and write about its importance for enhancing the value of the media product.

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2. Write about the importance of cultivating a comprehensive, unbiased and subjective eye for a media critic with examples.

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3. Using examples, explain in brief the essence of criticism.

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## **2.4 MEDIA CRITICISM: WHY CRITIC THE MASS MEDIA?**

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So far we have understood what criticism is, the essence of criticism and the importance of cultivating an unbiased and subjective eye for critiquing media content. This section will elaborate upon the importance and reason for critiquing the mass media. Let's take a more detailed look. Richard Blackmur labels the difficulty and responsibility as "the critic's burden."

In Blackmur's words, the responsibility encompasses "making bridges between the society and the arts".

Before we get to that, it is essential to define what comprises Mass Media. Conventionally, the electronic media (radio, television, film, and recorded music), print media (newspapers, magazines) and popular artefacts, experiences, practices, and processes can be termed Mass Media. Economically and politically driven to cause science and technological development, these, like several other domains of human life, are bound to the use of language. For a mass media critic, it is essential they approach these from several angles keeping in mind institutions, workplaces, communicative practices, cultural products, social activities, aesthetic forms, and historical developments. It is also essential they remember that these are correctly used to represent and shape the prevalent socio-cultural values. (Spitulnik, D. (1993))

As essential as it is for the professional to map out the mediums they would interact and review, it is fundamental that we understand that they form the bridge for carrying criticism from an author to media decision-makers and to the media audiences. In order to focus on this properly a critic In order to focus on this properly, a critic undergoes "a structured method or principled procedure to test the proposed interpretations as attested by Monroe Beardsley.

Stephenson Smith categorizes these into five steps. He states through observation of the working methods of the great critics, the complete process of criticism, for any work of art should encompass each of the five basic steps as follows:

- Impressions
- Analysis
- Interpretation
- Orientation
- Valuation

Even though there is no such order that an individual critic should follow, it is essential they comprise two or more of these to derive a more logical comprehension of the said media content. It is left upon the critic to intermingle, omit or utilize the steps to the best of their capabilities in order to come to form an opinion. This allows the audience to view the critical process categorized into a working method rather than blindly following a set of rules. Smith states, "But we should not estimate one work in terms of another. This yields a false analogy between critical methods and the older scientific practice of classification."

By saying that he so notifies that working critiquing within a framework allows the critic to better argue and put their case forward. An individual requires a baseline or a common ground to work from and the framework offers that. On the other hand, he also believes that one work cannot be

compared to another without transposing expectations, hence it is essential for critics to know the origins and sources of the content they might be critiquing. It is essential to carefully critique so as to enhance the value and bridge gaps between the audience and the content being consumed by them.

**Check your progress:**

1. Define “the critic’s burden” and write about its importance.

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2. What comprises Mass Media according to you and why?

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3. Using examples, reasons for critiquing Mass Media.

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## **2.5 LET’S SUM UP**

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Human life is incomplete without the consumption of content through various sources of Mass Media. The assessments and acts of examining the quality are known as the criticism. Media Criticism offers a varied, critical approach to discourses in fields through sources such as the radio, television, literature and the Internet. The word Criticism originated from the Greek word, krinein, meaning to comprehend or to judge. With careful comprehension and judgment as essential tasks in the critical process, it is a platform for a person to see defects and voids in the art spaces and recognize their prevalent potential. These spaces and voids are recognized by critics. They recognize missing elements and then suggest ways they can be rectified, enhancing the value of the content for its audience.

Mass Media comprises electronic media (radio, television, film, and recorded music), print media (newspapers, magazines), the Internet, practices and processes in a society an individual resides in. This, in turn, using language, gives the economically and politically driven society to cause science and technological development in several other domains of human life. Media criticism has gained popularity through forums, blogs, groups, and messages on social media networks. The spaces allow professional critics to coexist with the amateur critics giving them an opportunity to express their opinions and criticism of the quality of an article or a film to name a few. It is, however, difficult to point out if their

voices are being heard, it is essential that we notice that with the advancement of social media spaces, the emergence of people who possess the means and ability to critique has found like-minded spaces to let out their opinions to a much senior group of folks. (Bakanov R.P)

As a critic, it is essential to understand and delve deeper into the essence of criticism. With a central focus on bringing out the unseen, a critic functions on the willingness to understand creators and gatekeepers, ultimately for their audience. Even though a critic is not required to possess an extensive degree in criticism, their work and contribution to the industry allow audiences to build on their assessments and exposure to obtain a subjective view of the content being discussed. It is essential for the professional to understand the scope and the longevity of the product. This careful consideration of subjective rectification brings out the best forming the essence of criticism.

Keeping in mind the importance of a comprehensive, unbiased and subjective eye for critiquing media content, a critique should follow a framework or baseline to acquaint themselves with the context. Taking inspiration from Stephenson Smith, a critic follows a process to encompass five basic steps to place forth their critique to its audience, stakeholders and creators alike. These include:

- Apprehension of the work through impressions.
- Analysis to bring in perspective and correct unbridled impressionism.
- Interpretation of the work for the reader of the criticism.
- Orientation to its place in the history of similar works.
- Valuation or determining the peculiar and general essence of the work.

The framework allows the critic to form a context and a base for their argument in front of the audience and stakeholders. To conclude, there are several reasons behind the importance of critiquing Mass Media. These spaces allow you to build a holistic perspective, present you with an opportunity to delve deeper into the subject and allow you to argue and research your opinions through a linear common ground. It is an essential task of a critic to present a view that enhances and brings forth the spaces between the content of consumption. It is essential to note that, only negative commentary will never form a critique for any forms of art or content being presented to the audience. Criticism is a constructive tool with the sole purpose to enhance, see and bring value to an object, practice or various forms of art.

The role of critics has been prevalent in streams of management, economics, sociology and information sciences, apart from media. (Debenedetti, S. (2006)) Media criticism and its relationship to the cultural industries are not alien. The process to tackle critical discourse by evaluating cultural products, the professional evaluation and multiple roles

played by critics have indeed contributed to the advancements in the society. These contributions have played an essential role in modelling the values, behaviours and cultural significance of the society we inhabit.

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## 2.6 QUESTIONS

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1. What is Criticism? Talk about its origin and importance.
2. Discuss in detail the essence of criticism?
3. Why is it essential for critics to understand their responsibility while critiquing media content?
4. Elaborate on Caren Deming's statement "Critics must demonstrate the willingness to meet works and their audiences on their own terms".
5. Write short notes on:
  - a) Stephenson Smith's five steps for critics to keep in mind.
  - b) Explain the importance of cultivating a structure in critique.
  - c) Explain the reasons for critiquing Mass Media.
  - d) Explain "the critic's burden".

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## 2.7 REFERENCES

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## **CRITICAL FUNCTIONS, AESTHETICS AND ETHICS OF MASS MEDIA**

### **Unit Structure**

- 3.0 Objective
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Functions of Mass Media
- 3.3 Mass Media as a critic
  - 3.3.1 Mass Media as a Critic of Society
  - 3.3.2 Mass Media as a Critic of Itself
- 3.4 Mass media ethics
  - 3.4.1 Ethical Codes
  - 3.4.2 Media Ethics and Media Criticism
- 3.5 Media aesthetics
- 3.6 Conclusion
- 3.7 Summary and Key Points
- 3.8 Questions
- 3.9 References

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### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

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At the end of this module, you will learn:

- The basic functions of mass media
- The capacity of mass media to perform the role of a critic
- Ethical codes to which mass media are typically required to adhere
- The intersection of aesthetics with functions and ethics of mass media
- The importance of role of mass media functions and ethics in the process of critiquing

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Mass media, by definition, have the potential to reach large audiences. Since they are pivoted on technological apparatus which make it possible to communicate with, and consequently, impact, the lives of many people at once, mass media's capacities are vast and formidable. Thus, it is essential to establish mechanisms by which it becomes possible to understand how its potential can be harnessed. If we are to appropriately channel the prowess of mass media, we must examine some of the basic functions that it can perform, and outline a code of ethics to which it is required to adhere. Since the term "mass media" implies a wide array of

channels, including broadcast (films, radio, television, for example), print (books, comics, magazines, and so on) and internet technologies, to name a few, it is obvious that its purposes are multifaceted, and that it is tasked with fulfilling a range of social, cultural, political and economic functions. However, some of its basic functions remain common across its many incarnations. In this module, we will examine these functions and responsibilities, so as to equip ourselves with a gross yardstick which we might use to gauge the proficiency and reliability with which mass media is channeling its capacities.

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## 3.2 FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA

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In the contemporary world, mass media function as a bridge with which the individual relates to society. Mass communication technologies are mediators not only in the sense that they are “media” as we conventionally understand the term, but also in the sense that they double up as nodal locations or important intersections in the connections between people, places, and times.

Several theorists and practitioners have attempted to arrive at a classification of the functions that mass media perform. Broadly, however, mass media can be seen to perform four major functions: surveillance, interpretation-correlation, social transmission and entertainment. The first three of these functions were first enumerated in 1948 by American social scientist and communication theorist Harold Lasswell.

(Making Connections with Other Material: Harold Lasswell also famously put forth a model of communication which continues to shape how we think about the mechanism of mass media. He postulated, that in order to study communication, we must answer the questions: "Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) What Channel (with) What Effect". This is a model which has significant epistemic value as we begin the task of media criticism: it is useful to ask, when analysing any communication situation, who the players are and to whom they are addressing themselves. In the context of this module, if we know the functions and ethics of media, and how they influence the aesthetic of the message, we are better equipped to answer the questions “what?” and “with what effect?” Lasswell himself used this framework to mount a credible and influential critique of propaganda in America and Europe during World War I.)

Important Note: There is a qualitative difference between the terms “function” and “duty”: the latter is necessarily a value judgement on what a particular thing ought to do, while the former is a term used to outline what a particular thing does or has the capacity to do.

### **Surveillance:**

Mass media, most commonly, enable audiences to monitor their environment. It performs this function by providing data, of varying depth and complexity, about the social, political, physical, and cultural climate. Not only does mass media provide the information by which people can

survey the world, but also functions as a tool that can enable authorities to keep a watch on the people, and prescribe norms for behaviour, especially during crises.

For instance, when extreme weather events such as hurricanes or cyclones are expected, mass media are used not only to warn citizens about impending danger, but are also used by local authorities to prescribe restrictions that will ensure fewer casualties. Mass media also performed this function during the COVID-19 pandemic: it outlined the risks associated with contracting the disease and also became a channel through which central and state authorities communicated the restrictions on public movement that were being placed to combat the spread of the virus.

### **Information/Co-relation:**

Mass media, through its various arms, teaches audiences how to organise information into a coherent mental picture. It has the capacity to instruct audiences on how to make connections between disparate events, and provide them with a framework by which they may interpret the significance of these events (This function is closely tied with mass media's agenda setting effect: by choosing to focus on certain events, it tells audiences what to think about, and with what to link these events.)

For example, mass media frequently correlate extreme weather events with climate change, and lack of global political will to act on the warning signals. While it is clear that news media most commonly acts as agents of surveillance and information, it is important to acknowledge that these functions are also performed by various other media, including fiction and documentary cinema, (consider, for instance, a film such as Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zamin* (1953) which informed audiences about the plight of farmers during the 1950s, represented the urban-rural divide in India, and connected these with problems of inequitable distribution of resources) and fiction and non-fiction books (consider Giriraj Kishore's *Girmitiya Saga*, a fictionalised account of Gandhi's time in South Africa), among other forms of media.

### **Social and Cultural Transmission:**

The verb transmit refers to the act of passing something on from one person to another. Mass media has the capacity to transmit social and cultural values, and enable them to spread from one person to another. Relatedly, it also has the capacity to make a person feel connected to others, and enhance social bonding.

Mass media messages can influence societal rules, and modulate what is considered "acceptable" in society. Consider, for instance, a film such as *Acchut Kanya*, which attempted to shed light on the inhumanity of the practise of caste discrimination and untouchability, and exhorted Indians to change their attitudes.

Media can also bring people together. This is especially evident in the wake of digital technology, particularly social media and mobile phones.

## **Entertainment:**

Mass media also provide audiences with amusement and enjoyment. Since entertainment is subjective, and its definitions are constantly evolving, mass media have proliferated to provide various kinds of entertainment to diverse audiences. Consider the various options available for audiences who enjoy keeping a tab on current affairs: newspapers and online magazines which range from apps such as In Shorts, which release a constant stream of short, quick snippets of information to platforms such as fifty two, which feature in-depth, long-form pieces.

Closely tied to its capacity to entertain is also the mass media's propensity to enable audiences to escape their everyday realities momentarily, or to view their everyday lives in a new light, through the lens of the media that they consume. Some of the most effective and powerful poetry coerces readers to see objects, creatures, people or social phenomena in a new light. Consider the influential poems which you might have studied growing up, including poems such as William Blake's "The Tyger" which uses evocative and unusual metaphors to describe the titular animal's glory, or Rabindranath Tagore's "Let My Country Awake" which redefines the idea of "freedom".

Not only is this made possible by films, web-series, television shows and comics, but also through immersive video games which encourage players to adopt and develop online versions of themselves.

## **Pause To Ask:**

Do, and should, all media perform all of these functions with equal rigour? Which functions become foregrounded in the context of novels, for instance? Which functions are performed by outdoor media such as billboards?

It is the critic's job to outline which functions are being performed by the media message they are analysing, and to gauge whether the message is able to foreground the right function. The primary function of news media, for instance, is it to enable surveillance and inform audiences, albeit in an engaging manner. However, if it begins to compromise on its basic functions in the quest to entertain, the critic must be able to outline the disparity at play.

## **Learning Interlude 1 Part I:**

Consider the last film that you saw, or the last news article that you read: What are the various functions that it performs as a media message, and how effectively does it do so?

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What do you mean by social and cultural transmission?

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What do you mean by surveillance?

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### **3.3 MASS MEDIA AS A CRITIC**

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Implicit in each of the functions outlined above, is the role of mass media as a critic. It has the capacity to provide judgment on the merits and demerits, the pros and cons, or positive and negative ramifications of a situation, event or phenomenon.

#### **3.3.1 Mass Media as a Critic of Society:**

As it enables audiences to perform the task of surveillance, it also has the capacity to keep an eye on social, political and cultural authorities and hold them accountable for their decisions and actions. It can provide audiences with a thorough accounting of the benefits and demerits of policy so that they may be able to negotiate their everyday lives with greater ease.

As it teaches audiences to make connections between multiple occurrences, mass media has the capacity to provide us with cogent and well-formed analyses that not only critique policy, but also social rules. To pick up the thread of the example with which we began, reportage around extreme weather events can, and often does, offer a critique of policy measures implemented to mitigate the impact of these events.

Similarly, mass media messages have the potential to probe contemporary society for attitudes and behaviors which need to shift, and for pointing out fault lines which cause communities to rupture. For instance, government-sponsored media messaging has attempted to counter the prevalent neglect associated with menstrual hygiene and maternal care.

Mass media, in their ability to signal what audiences perceive as entertainment, indicate to us the future pathway that a society is likely to take. Notable film theorist Siegfried Kracauer, for instance, argued that Germany's trajectory during World War II could have been predicted, or seen as imminent, by a thorough analysis of cinema produced by the Weimar Republic.

As they deliver our everyday lives to us in new and potentially amusing ways, they can enlighten audiences about the many things that they may have taken for granted, or things which they might not have noticed

before. In doing so, they offer a critique of our established ways of seeing. For instance, a film such as Sai Paranjpye's *Sparsh* gestures towards the ways in which society tends to see blind people, and teaches audiences to reexamine their attitudes towards physical disability.

### **Learning Interlude 1- Part II:**

Reexamine the film or news article that you previously reflected upon: as it performs certain functions, does it also, in parallel, offer a critique of society? How does it do so?

### **3.3.2 Mass Media as a Critic of Itself:**

Mass media also displays an ability to critique itself. This most frequently manifests as one kind of media critiquing another. For instance, newspapers and magazine carry film reviews. Several voluntary organizations, such as The Hoot, regularly publish criticism and analysis of news media. Academic publications often take up the task of unpacking the significance of media's entrenched systems of representation. Consider, for instance, books such as Kalpana Sharma and Ammu Joseph's edited collection *Whose News?*, which analyses media's perception and presentation of women's issues by focusing on five issues related to Indian women between 1979 and 1988.

Sometimes, media also demonstrate a capacity for self-reflexivity, in which they reflect on their role in society. This is evident in films which detail the world of cinema, such as *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, *Guddi*, *Luck By Chance*, or *Om Shanti Om*. Books such as Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* also reflect on the impact of reading, and the need to read.

As mass media begin to critically reflect on their role in society, they attempt to arrive at a code of ethics to which they must adhere as they go about crafting messages.

### **Pause To Ask:**

- A. When the media publicly reflect on their capacity to shape and change society, and the proficiency and ethicality with which they perform these tasks, how does it impact their credibility in the eyes of audiences? Do the media strategically perform this act in the public domain so as to build their image?
- B. How much does an individual perspective, or their way of looking at mass media, determine what they will see as the most important functions of mass media?

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## **3.4 MASS MEDIA ETHICS**

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Considering the potential of mass media, it becomes essential to arrive at a framework of guiding principles that will enable practitioners to determine if they are harnessing the capacities of media. Depending on what theorists see as most relevant to the idea of rightness or correctness, they arrive at principles of good practice of mass media. These principles of practice are

frequently referred to as media ethics. Ethics can be loosely defined as moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conduct of an activity. Ethics is a branch of philosophy which “involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior”. Media ethics is a form of applied ethics: questions of goodness and rightness with which ethics has grappled with for centuries are transposed to mass media to arrive at a set of good practices, or most optimum ways in which to channel the capacities of mass media.

Mass media are expected to remain cognizant of the impact they can have, and thus adhere to a code of ethics which enable them to perform their functions. Questions of ethics are important in the context of media criticism: they provide critics with a yardstick by which they may measure a media message's attention to and awareness of the impact it can have on audiences, and on the social and political landscape at large.

### **3.4.1 Ethical Codes:**

In the context of mass media, ethics are not only derived from individuals' capacity to honestly and truthfully discern right from wrong, but are also institutionalised. Various organisations prescribe a basic code of ethics which the media must follow as they disseminate messages among the public.

Several attempts have been made to arrive at a universal code of ethics for mass media, but theorists, practitioners and social scientists have, time and again, acknowledged the difficulty of arriving at a single framework. They argue that ethical considerations, or ideas of good and correct, would vary depending on political, social and cultural dynamics. However, a report of the MacBride Commission, famously titled *Many Voices One World*, attempted to outline the objectives that should guide the preparation of any code of ethics of mass media.

- (a) to protect the consumer - readers, listeners, viewers, or the public in general;
- (b) to protect and inspire the working journalist, broadcaster or others directly concerned with the gathering, writing, processing, and presenting news and opinions;
- (c) to guide editors and others who take full legal responsibility for what is published and broadcast;
- (d) to define the responsibilities of proprietors, shareholders and governments who are in a position of absolute control over any particular form of mass media communications activity;
- (e) to deal with issues of advertisers and others who buy into the services of the media.

The report, which was written in 1980 by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under the aegis of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, also

outlined the main problems associated with mass media: concentration of the media, commercialization of the media, and unequal access to information and communication. It maintained that practices and policies which allow these phenomena to go unchecked are by themselves unethical.

Ethical codes have also been laid out by organisations such as the Press Council of India and Society for Professional Journalists (SPJ).

### **3.4.2 Media Ethics and Media Criticism:**

It is the role of the media critic to determine if the media are performing their tasks ethically. In addition, an important aspect of media criticism is an understanding of the various standards that can be applied as we arrive at a model for the most ethical way of representation: for instance, should any oppressed community be depicted as they are being treated in society; as they should be, or aspire to be; or as they are when they resist oppression? (Relatedly: How different would the representations that answer each of these questions be?)

Meanwhile, it is important that media critics themselves internalise a code of ethics as they perform their act of criticism and analysis. It is essential that any critique of media messages also adheres to basic ethicality, and that it truthfully and accurately points out the characteristics of a message.

#### **Learning Interlude 2:**

Based on the five objectives outlined by the MacBride Commission Report, derive a basic code of ethics that you will attempt to follow as you work on your Media Criticism assignments.

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## **3.5 MEDIA AESTHETICS**

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The process of using mass media technologies with an attention to the specific functions that a medium is capable of performing and the guidance of a code of ethics, leads to the media message acquiring a certain shape and form. Consider, for instance, the reportage of serious sex crimes in print or broadcast media: as they attempt to fulfil their primary function, which is to inform audiences and critique society, and navigate with a code of ethics (as well as legal obligations) which state that they must minimise harm to the victim, media outlets report the crimes, but conceal the identity of the victim. Thus, the form and shape that reportage takes is influenced by the functions that media hope to carry out, and by a code of ethics. In other words, working through the questions of function and ethics enable us to arrive at a basic idea of “good taste” which shapes media messages.

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy which deals with questions of taste and beauty. It also attempts to reflect critically on the nature and provenance of art. The term “aesthetic” is also used to refer to a set of principles underlying the work of a particular artist, artistic movement or technology. For instance, when theorists invoke a “modernist aesthetic”



they refer to a set of principles that guided and shaped art and ideas of beauty in the wake of modernity, or theorists such as Lev Manovich, who explicate the characteristics and nature of digital media, allude to a “cinematic aesthetic” which they believe has influenced the aesthetics of emerging media, such as video games and music videos. Ethics and aesthetics are closely tied to each other: while the former attempts to arrive at a judgement of goodness in the context of behaviours or activities, the latter aims to understand goodness and beauty in the context of art and taste.

A part of the task of media criticism is to explicate the aesthetic of media messages, and to attempt to examine the guiding principles which its makers might have followed in the process of shaping the message. A media critic must ideally attempt to trace and locate the aesthetic of the message they are analysing, and critically evaluate the aesthetic. For instance, several Indian film theorists have traced back the aesthetic of popular Indian cinema in the 1940s-50s to the aesthetic of the paintings of Raja Ravi Verma and traditional folk art such as Pattachitra, the narrative aesthetic of Hindu mythology, and the storytelling aesthetic of Dastangoi. In doing so, they arrive at a deeper understanding of the aesthetic of Indian cinema, and are able to critically evaluate its impact.

**Pause to ask:**

As remarked upon above, aesthetics is also closely tied to the idea of “good taste”. However, it is important to ask, who gets to differentiate “good” taste from “bad”? Who are the arbiters of “taste” in any society?

**Learning Interlude 3:**

Turn to a print advertisement which captures your interest: what are the guiding principles that you think have shaped the message of the advertisement? Are these guiding principles derived from an idea of the functions it must serve and ethics to which it must adhere? Is the advertisement “beautiful”? What makes it/ doesn’t make it so?

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What do you mean by ethical codes

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Mass media is a critique of itself- Discuss

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## 3.6 CONCLUSION

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In order for any task of media criticism to be logically consistent and coherent, it is essential that the critic has a yardstick, or a basic framework which they apply to media messages in order to evaluate them. An awareness of the functions of mass media and its own capacity to critique, enables media critics to gauge the effectiveness of a media message. A knowledge of ethical frameworks enables media critics to determine if the media message holds itself accountable and adheres to basic standards of good practices. An awareness of aesthetics enables media critics to understand how the media message has been shaped, and how questions of functional and ethical value have been translated into a certain form and shape.

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## 3.7 SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

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Since mass media's capacities are large, we establish mechanisms by which it becomes possible to understand how its potential can be harnessed. It is possible to create these mechanisms by examining functions and responsibilities of mass media.

Mass media can be seen to perform four major functions: surveillance, interpretation-correlation, social transmission and entertainment.

Implicit in each of these functions is mass media's role as a critic of society, and of itself.

Mass media are expected to remain cognizant of the impact they can have, and thus adhere to a code of ethics which enable them to perform their functions.

It is the role of the media critic to determine if the media are performing their tasks ethically.

It is also important that media critics follow a code of ethics as they perform their act of criticism and analysis.

The process of using mass media technologies with an attention to the specific functions that a medium is capable of performing and the guidance of a code of ethics, leads to the media message acquiring a certain shape and form.

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy which deals with questions of taste and beauty. It also attempts to reflect critically on the nature and provenance of art. The term "aesthetic" is also used to refer to a set of principles underlying the work of a particular artist, artistic movement or technology.

A part of the task of media criticism is to explicate the aesthetic of media messages, and to attempt to examine the guiding principles which its makers might have followed in the process of shaping the message.

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### 3.8 QUESTIONS

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1. What are the basic functions of mass media? How does mass media perform the role of a critic as it discharges these functions?
2. Is the mass media capable of critiquing itself? How does it do so? Explain with examples.
3. What is the purpose of ethical codes? How are they relevant to the task of media criticism?
4. What are the objectives that any ethical code of mass media must attempt to fulfil?
5. What is the role of aesthetics in the task of the media critic?

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# CRITICISM AND THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

## Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Introduction
  - 4.1.1 Constructive Criticism
  - 4.1.2 The Communication Process
- 4.2 Criticism: The Communication Process
  - 4.2.1 Process Perspective
  - 4.2.2 Originator Criticism
  - 4.2.3 Message Criticism
  - 4.2.4 Medium Criticism
  - 4.2.5 Receiver Criticism
- 4.3 Let's Sum Up
- 4.4 Questions
- 4.5 References

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## 4.0 OBJECTIVE

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To study the meaning of criticism:

- To study the communication process in criticism
- To understand the importance of criticism in media

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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### 4.1.1 Constructive Criticism:

The word criticism is derived from a Greek word, krinein, which means to comprehend or to judge. It is important to note that comprehension and judgment are essential tasks for critical analysis. Using communication and a structured approach, however, a critic uses clear, direct, honest, and sustainable solutions to implement fewer changes to the content and enhance its value. The critic's feedback highlights and allows stakeholders, owners, creators and the audience to make positive improvements, providing a vision to look at the art being delivered to them.

### 4.1.2 The Communication Process:

As part of society, human beings transfer their messages (both verbally and non-verbally) through the process of communication. This communication is an end-to-end process that involves signs and symbols

across gender, cultures, biases and connotations through various mediums to reach their audiences on the other end. Before we get into understanding discourses and the importance of constructive criticism, it is essential we shed light on the process of communication involved. The communication process is as follows:

Sender - (Encoding) - Message - (Medium) - Receiver - (Decoding) - Feedback

### **1. Sender:**

The sender is the initiator of the process. Using several signs and symbols, they are responsible for sending a message. They are also known as the „encoder.“

### **2. Encoding:**

The process of encoding allows the sender to organize messages using words, gestures, and tone of the voice keeping in mind the audience or the receiver.

### **3. Message:**

The message is essentially the information being transferred. This message is constructed using style, language, length and tone, keeping in mind the target audience.

### **4. Medium:**

The medium is the channel used by the sender to transfer the message. They can be verbal or non-verbal in nature. Several other channels could be phone calls, fax, emails, memos, etc. The medium is carefully chosen to keep in mind the nature of the message, the location of the audience, the urgency of the message and the situation inhabited by the person for whom the message has been constructed.

### **5. Receiver:**

The person at the receiving end for whom the message has been composed is termed the receiver. They use their intellect to decipher signs and symbols sent to them to interpret the message.

### **6. Decoding:**

The process that allows the receiver to interpret the message transferred to the receiver by the sender is termed decoding. If decoded correctly, as intended by the sender, shows the message has been conveyed and interpreted correctly.

### **7. Feedback:**

The last step in the recurring communication chain is the receiver's response to the message sent to them. This is termed feedback and its nature can be both verbal and non-verbal. The verbal feedback allows

more room to obtain further information whereas the non-verbal feedback can be received in the form of a head nod or facial expressions.

This unit will introduce you to the criticism and discourses in the communication process. It will give you an insight, allowing you to delve deeper into the barriers faced by the audience and the critic. Towards the end, you would have a clearer perspective and a fresh vision to look at art and other prevalent content in the media.

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## **4.2 CRITICISM: THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

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So far we have understood the criticism, constructive criticism, the critic and their importance in the process to deliver an unbiased opinion and the communication. We understand the importance of the sender, message, receiver and feedback and the importance of bringing out a clearer perspective. We shall now delve into the more details and orientations for mass media criticism through this process and its barriers.

### **4.2.1 Process Perspective:**

Time and again we have discussed the communication process consists of a chain involving a sender, a message, the medium and the receiver. The process is fundamentally responsible for human communication. The approach was first recognized by Aristotle when he pointed out that the motive of the speaker and the psychology of the audience is as important as the message. He mentioned how the message is shaped by its intention, rhetorical structure, and the verbal medium. Lasswell's Communication Model, given by Harold Lasswell in 1948 simplifies the communication model into "who, said what, in what channel, to whom, and with what effect." Not too late, the communicators of the electronic media have utilized electromagnetic tools to widen the verbal and visual medium's reach and quality over the years. It is important to keep in mind that the meaningfulness of an individual's critical contribution should not be judged on their occupation, but rather on the implications of the event.

A person's environment (in this case a critic's background) plays a remarkable role in the process and elements they use to communicate their ideas and concepts. The advent of electronic media has given the creators a space to concentrate on the message and the medium. Hence, a presenter is always too careful and accurate with their scripts, ideas and messages to be delivered correctly to the audience. However, the media buyer focuses, researches and chooses the networks and channels to run their campaigns during the commercial breaks with a calculated consideration. It is essential for the person concerned to be well-aware of what, how, why and when can be conveyed to their respective audiences.

It is for the originator or the client to keep in mind the interest of the audience and not lose sight of the critical and communicative process in the search of superficial words and cunning time placements to bring out their products and services to their end consumer.

### 4.2.2 Originator Criticism:

Once we have understood the communication process, it is important to understand the originator and the criticism surrounding them. These originators can further be divided into two broad groups: the ones commissioning the work (clients, directors and programmers) and those creating projects with respect to the orders given by the former. In electronic media, the two groups combine the attributes of initiation and design of the media content.

To give you an example, several cable networks appoint originators that produce their own programs and others use the medium to only transmit the content created by others. In multiple instances, it becomes difficult to separate the two but this difficulty gives rise to gaining critical attention. Questions like “the program didn’t do well because the story did not live up to the expectation of the audience or because the network kept interfering with crucial decisions of casting, delivery and direction” become prevalent topics of discussion for critical discourse. To explain the scenario, the latter becomes the fault of the network as an originator and the former shows troubles with the network’s role as a medium.

Jeremy Tunstall, the British Sociologist uses the term communicators in place of originators and non-clerical workers. He states they are people who select, shape and package stories to transmit them to the end audience. He puts a special emphasis on communicators being responsible for preparing content for transmission and not carrying out the transfer of the content themselves. Their tasks involve obtaining, describing and transcribing information for the medium. This decision-making allows their performance to be monitored through the originator's criticism. This approach of “originator as a group” is recognized in auteur criticism too. It began in the 1950s when several French film critics argued that despite the constraints of the studios they worked for, several Hollywood film directors forged unique styles in their films. However, originator criticism has an overriding purpose. Eliseo Vivas said the criticism should enlighten the true nature of the artist’s creation. This allows the artist to do better, worse or different than has been intended. Naturally, the discourse between the intent and the end result is said to be larger in groups than in an individual effort. It is important for a critic to possess a perception that detects the focus of the concept, content or idea has either been retained or lost in the group effort.

As critics and media professionals, it is both important for folks to be more in line with the peculiarities of the process and their failures and the critique should be discussed before taking it to the public eye, catching the audience’s attention. This function is important to consumer understanding of the media content and also to sensitizing creators to new possibilities and existing struggles.

### Check your progress:

1. Define Constructive Criticism and its importance.

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2. Explain in brief the Lasswell's Communication Model.

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3. Explain Originator's Criticism with examples.

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#### 4.2.3 Message Criticism:

With originator criticism, a critic deciphers and presents an idea of the content based on their background and exposure. However, the subject of criticism is closely always linked with the evaluation of the message being delivered to the audience. It is crucial to examine beyond what has been put into the message by the originator. Theodore Meyer Greene explains this through the concept of a „re-creative criticism“ to examine these messages. This involves careful articulation of recreating the said work through correct interpretation for communication. In simpler words, the critique of a show, an idea or a concept being delivered to the end audience either colleagues or large audiences should reflect the central theme of the content as presented or intended by the producers, originators or clients of the show.

Several communication theorists argue the “author expression” is only a part of the message analysis. What needs to be understood is the audience's investment in those messages being delivered. Hence, media messages are also considered polysemic in nature. They are capable of producing multiple meanings, sometimes even contradictory. It means the decoding power for the messages relies on the hands of the receiver. John Fiske, a media scholar and cultural theorist states, “the success of a program also depends on the polysemic nature of its content put forth by their creators.” He states this to attest that polysemy gives different subcultures a platform to form their opinions and meanings based on their social relationships and cultural environment.”

For a critic to indulge, it is essential they remember audiences are capable of deriving their own messages from content. With thoughtful criticism, the stakeholders are reminded of the fragility of their control over message and meaning. It is important for them to attempt to restrict content to



elements and structures that bring about meanings exclusively as intended. It is on them to narrow meaning options, what can and often needs to be left out, and ways to arrange elements to include in their respective program. Then through a selection of a medium, they can target the audiences to acquire a response to the content. It is, however, crucial that they remember that message criticism emphasizes receivers will not react to the content as wanted, expected, or even as feared!

#### **4.2.4 Medium Criticism:**

As the stories go, the messengers bearing bad news who had to face death in the royal clan have been prevalent in our worlds too. The place of the messengers has been taken by the media channels in today's times. Several acts of destroying television sets, bombarding the internet with opposed opinions, and in several cases, court hearings about stories in the media have given us a glimpse of medium criticism. For decades, television sets (and now smartphones) have been blamed for problems, disruptions and struggles caused in the society we inhabit. This single-sided, negative commentary puts the medium in a light that completely ignores other aspects of the communication process.

The medium criticism ignores essential components of the communication process and is often perceived to be incredibly negative. This has led to a fear and media scholars Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton pointed out three key reasons for them in 1948.

- The pervasiveness and manipulation of power have led people to believe that they possess no control or restraint over the media.
- Influential economic interest groups utilizing the media channels have to ensure the continuance of economic and social growth, resulting in minimizing social criticism and deterioration of critical thinking skills in the audience.
- While aiming to target larger audiences, the media has potentially caused a deterioration of artistic tastes and cultural standards.

Their emphasis on widespread attitudes toward the media channels carrying these messages gave us an insight into what causes medium criticism. Hence, medium criticism provides and sustains one of four critical standpoints providing an understanding of the communication process.

#### **4.2.5 Receiver Criticism:**

The receiver's criticism has often been mapped as the effect caused due to the message conveyed by the originator. But as we found out, media content is largely polysemic in nature, part of receiver criticism involves the polysemic reinterpretations of the message by various compositions of the audience. As individuals and critics in the world of information, it is essential we understand people are active consumers of content. As Elayne Rapping states, we are active and diverse consumers of a show, with our

own experiences, understanding and response to the content, with varied attention levels and moods.

Hence, receiver criticism hints at the uses and gratifications of consumers. Often it attempts to assess whether the gratifications were achieved and points towards the originator-assisting function to determine their audiences. To give you an example, a producer begins by assessing and determining their target audience. Then they move forward to put forth a snippet of their idea to its audience to acquire their feedback. In several instances, they produce elements with assumed interests from a stipulated audience in mind to gauge their reactions. Professor James Andrews provides three key receiver variables to segment the audiences.

- **Knowledge:** This involves an assessment of the target audience's familiarity with the intended message and people.
- **Group identification:** These are variables such as age, sex, lifestyle, location, literacy and demographic structures to determine the audience.
- **Receptivity:** The third variable is a reflection and an amalgamation of the first two. The knowledge that a consumer brings to the message and the values they use to negotiate determine their appropriateness and relevance to the topic at hand.

The critic possesses every right to accept the audience when critiquing. They still are bound to face several discourses between the public and the elite. It is only natural that professionals, stakeholders and critics are probable of making a mistake by making assumptions of the public expectation, taste and vision are less than it actually is. It is however essential to remember the quality of the professional output will improve swiftly with the increased perceptiveness of the receivers. But as professional critics it is also a reminder to respect does not mean surrendering the chance of awareness.

Ralph Smith's statements correctly sum up our discussion. He attests that a reputable critic's final aim is not to arouse violent responses from the industry professionals and strong support from their handful of readers; it is but to involve the originator and receiver in a cooperative critical endeavour."

**Check your progress:**

1. "The success of a program also depends on the polysemic nature of its content put forth by their creators." Explain.

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2. Mention three key reasons put forward by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton to understand medium criticism.

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3. Elaborate on three key receiver variables stated by Professor James Andrews to segment the audiences.

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### **4.3 LET'S SUM UP**

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Communication forms an essential part of human life. With careful consideration, we spend our lives communicating using verbal and non-verbal cues. Our communication runs between the sender, message, receiver, and feedback to be deciphered and transferred constantly. This communication allows the critic to invent clear and honest solutions to implement changes to the content, enhancing the value. This feedback allows the creators to make improvements and provides a clearer vision for the content.

Lasswell's Communication Model simplifies the process into “who, said what, in what channel, to whom, and with what effect.” It is essential to be reminded that a person’s background largely influences their perceptions, ideas and contexts. The originator is responsible for keeping in mind the essentials of a thought, idea or concept that do not get lost in the pursuit of words and phrases. Therefore a critic should remember and be able to distinguish between discrepancies caused by the network or that of the originator group.

Media messages are polysemic in nature and it is of utmost importance that the audience’s investment in the messages is mapped by the critic. This polysemy gives people from varied cultures and backgrounds a space to interpret the media messages based on their exposure to the world of relationships, customs and the traditional environment they inhabit. As stated, consumers are active and never passive in nature. The diverse approach of the program is usually a reflection of experiences, responses and extended attention levels and moods. It tackled the idea of uses and gratifications of consumers and goes a step to analyze the former is achieved by the audience. As a critic, it is essential to remember discourses in communication and how various channels are and can be perceived to add value to the existing content for its stakeholders and the audience.

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## 4.4 QUESTIONS

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1. What is constructive criticism and its importance?
2. Explain the communication process in detail with examples.
3. Explain Lasswell's Communication Model given by Harold Lasswell.
4. Elaborate on Theodore Meyer Greene's concept of a „re-creative criticism“.
5. Write short notes on:
  - a) Polysemic nature of media messages.
  - b) Three key reasons by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton in medium criticism.
  - c) Three receiver variables to segment the audiences
  - d) Elaborate on originator criticism with examples.

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## **KNOWLEDGE PROCESSING FUNCTION OF MASS MEDIA**

### **Unit Structure**

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Knowledge Processing
  - 5.1.1 Empirical and Normative Outlooks
  - 5.1.2 The Empiricism View
  - 5.1.3 The Normative View
- 5.2 The Four Ways of Knowing
  - 5.2.1 The Scientist's Approach
  - 5.2.2 The Mystic Approach
  - 5.2.3 The Rhetorician Approach
  - 5.2.4 The Perceptual Triad
- 5.3 The Planes Combined
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Questions
- 5.6 References

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### **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- How Knowledge processing take place in the target audience?
- What are the four ways of knowing?

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### **5.1 KNOWLEDGE PROCESSING**

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So far, we've looked at the basic characteristics and functions of media criticism, as well as how it's applied to different aspects of the communication process. We'll now look at knowledge acquisition as a way to look at electronic media criticism. In this unit we will be taking into consideration the following question:

How do individuals and audiences learn and comprehend information?

How would you classify their understanding processes?

When evaluating the potential of a radio/television product, how can media criticism take these inequalities in knowledge into account?

### 5.1.1 Empirical And Normative Outlooks:

In order to comprehend and judge phenomena, including electronic media material, we must endeavor to reconcile two opposing viewpoints i.e.

A. empirical and

B. normative.

Empiricism can stand on its own as a method of comprehending something objectively.

However, in critique, normativism builds on this initial understanding to determine whether the programmatic something in question is "good" or "poor" on a qualitative level.

### 5.1.2 The Empiricism View:

Empirical technique is essentially a two-stage descriptive process. The empiricist gathers as much relevant detail as possible through observation, then explains it by evaluating how the details are in agreement.

Let's take an example to understand the concept. The radio station Big FM constantly broadcasts fifty-four minutes of music each hour. Its nearest competition, which follows a similar concept, lasts only 41 minutes. Further investigation of the two stations reveals that neither broadcasts news except in the morning drivetime and neither employs foreground (talky) disc jockeys. Finally, we pinpoint what appears to be the primary cause of their numerical music disparity: Big FM broadcasts only four minutes of advertisements each hour, whereas the competition broadcasts fifteen!

Following the collection of facts, empiricists must attempt to explain the reason(s) for them. "We prefer to treat you better," Big FM assures its listeners. "We play more music because we like to treat you better." To the general public, this may appear to be a reasonable and agreeable explanation. However, serious empiricists/critics (especially those at competing facilities) do not take it at face value; they conduct additional surveys to see whether other elements are present.

Big FM is able to attract less than one-fourth of the target listeners that its main competitor is able to reach, according to ratings books. As a result, while charging substantially less for airtime, Big FM has a hard time selling even four minutes per hour. In contrast, the rival has no trouble obtaining sponsors for the full fifteen minutes of its "availability." In other words, Big FM plays more music not because it cares about its listeners, but because the tunes are filling time that the station can't sell to advertisers.

In this case the empiricists didn't take Big FM's public claim that "we prefer to treat you better" at face value. Instead, we examined

the situation more closely to gain a better understanding of the problem. The empiricists acquired all of the information (the first stage of empiricism) and then proceeded to describe their relationship to one another (the second stage of empiricism).

Any attentive media practitioner begins as an empiricist, probing under the surface in order to reach the "carefully weighed judgment" that excellent critique necessitates.

One aspect of getting such a conclusion is the description of observable events. However, description without the eventual revelation of the determining conditions that have led the described entity to be what it is serves little purpose.

Accepting Big FM's assertion that its "more music" is a listener-serving gift would not reveal the truth about the station's persistent unpopularity or allow us to figure out what's causing it. Is the layout sloppy, with abrupt transitions between elements? Is the station's reception poor? Any professional who wishes to compete in the market under scrutiny should ask these and other questions.

People considering a career in radio/television must be diligent empiricists/critics, if only to preserve their own interests.

In the words of Robert Lewis Shayon, such a critic will "Self-deprecation, needle, challenge, despise, and provoke are all things that he does to himself. He must constantly ask oneself, "So what?" He must stimulate, deny, question, refuse, and oppose."

Most of the critics who have achieved distinction and whose names have endured have been those who sought to delve beneath the pleasing "aesthetic surface" of art, rather than bask in the pleasing "aesthetic surface" of human life and objective reality, from Greek and Roman times to the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and down to the modern period.

To apply this to our circumstance, the "aesthetic surface" of Big FM's more-music format may or may not be attractive in and of itself; nonetheless, we must empirically go deeper in either instance. Why do so few listeners choose the station if the sound is pleasant to an expert programmer? What needs to be altered if it isn't enjoyable? And why hasn't this adjustment already been implemented?

If the critic/professional is to succeed in the knowledge-processing role, sustained empirical observation and its second-stage quest for answers must go hand in hand. This work is just as important for valid external criticism as it is for inside industry critique.

For a moment, imagine the disservice that the ill-conceived in this review would do to listeners and other stations in the BIG FM market.

The critic clearly ends at the limits of whatever first impression he collects. He has taken the station's explanation for its biggest claim to fame at its value and relays it without question—without looking for other facts or explanations. He unwittingly encourages his audience to support a station based on a condition that stems from its failure rather than its success, and then attempts to impose the same business-defective technique on other outlets in the market. Also note that this critic has mentioned nothing about the tracks performed on Big FM in terms of selection, arrangement, or flow. In a quantitative sense, the reader only learns that there is "more" music.

The critic here believes that fewer advertising equals better programming. (His underlying normative belief is this.) But he hasn't done enough research into the Big FM scenario to know whether its on-air output supports this claim. On the other hand, the critic has failed to transmit the nature of his findings to his audience assuming he did undertake such a study.

Assume What influence the column has in this market? What might his piece's consequences be?

For starters, more people would 'look into' Big FM. These people will tune in more frequently if the station is well-programmed and they enjoy what they hear. This will boost the station's ratings and force it to take one of two actions: either increase the amount of advertisements each hour or significantly raise the rates for the four minutes it presently sells. The first method would force Big FM to abandon the feature that drew these new listeners in the first place. They may, in turn, leave the station.

Raising its rate card to the point where four minutes of advertising generates the same revenue as twelve or fourteen minutes on rival stations, on the other hand, will put Big FM's pricing out of reach for many potential advertisers. It will be more difficult to sell time today than it was previously! This strategy may put pressure on other stations to raise their fees to reestablish their relative value to advertisers, potentially driving some local sponsors away from radio and into other media.

But what if Big FM isn't programmed correctly? What if the music is haphazardly chosen, with abrupt and jarring transitions between format elements?

The Critic has led his audience to a lower-value event for no other reason than that they will be able to enjoy the bad quality with fewer interruptions! More observant music listeners will notice this poor deal on their own and seek out other channels. However, the less sophisticated—those who might most benefit from a critic's advice—might accept Big FM on its own terms and miss out on better service on competing sites.



In conclusion, The critic has failed in general and as an empiricist in particular because he did not thoroughly observe nor fully evaluate his evidence.

Empiricism, by definition, is a scientific endeavour; it is critical to our profession's ability to translate the intangibles of our airtime product into salable audiences or pay-per-view replies.

As Len Ang points out about television,

We can witness a rising reliance on empirical stocks of information obtained by scientific methods within television organizations. Empirical science, and the authority of the knowledge created by it, has become vital to control and regulate institutional behavior. The growing importance of audience measurement in practically all television institutions across the world is merely one indicator of scientifically-based rhetoric's elevated position.

### **5.1.3 The Normative View:**

The normative approach, which opposes empiricism, aims to establish criteria or benchmarks by which to evaluate or judge anything. Whereas empiricism is more scientific and objective, normativism is more humanities-based and subjective, according to certain theorists.

Or, to put it another way, as Stephen Littlejohn puts it,

“The humanities strive to develop individuality whereas science strives to standardize observation. The humanities strive to understand individual human responses, whereas science aims to diminish human disparities in what is observed.”

With his individual evaluation that a radio format's value (the standard by which it should be measured) is exactly related to how few ads it contains, the critic in the above example tacitly illustrates the normative approach. Critic's subjective normative attitude, on the other hand, is as shallow as his objective empirical performance because he neither declared nor justifies his position.

There a lot of normative standards to choose from. But, regardless of the standard chosen, it can only be used properly once we have engaged the empirical perspective in order to fully appreciate the thing in question. We may conclude that normativism isn't appropriate in particular operational situations.

Former FCC Commissioner Lee Loevinger offered an instance to highlight the normative outlook's limitations:

“It's illogical to criticize a camel for having a hump while raising a horse for having a straight back, or to criticize a horse for needing frequent water breaks while raising a camel for being able to go without it.” These features are simply realities of life that should not

be used to justify praise or criticism. Normative standards are meaningless in certain situations, and the only appropriate course of action is to observe and understand. We may decide what to do with camels and horses when we watch and grasp their nature [empiricism].

If we want to fairly judge the value of a work, we must use the normative perspective. Only by applying some yardstick, whether artistic, philosophical, sociological, or (as in the instance of the photocopier marketer) pecuniary, can valuation be determined.

In conclusion, both empirical and normative viewpoints are critical in the promotion and understanding of our profession and its products—but only when they are used in conjunction.

The deliberate advancement through these three knowledge-processing phases is what makes good electronic media criticism possible:

Here's what it's called. [First Stage of Empiricism]

Here's why: [Stage Two of Empiricism]

Here's whether or not that's a good thing. [Normativism]

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## **5.2 THE FOUR WAYS OF KNOWING**

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All of our factual and normative information is gathered in a number of ways. Robert Rutherford Smith argues in his insightful *Beyond the Wasteland* that a critic's comprehension is actually a synthesis of three distinct viewpoints. This assemblage and its three comments, taken together, form what he refers to as "the methods of knowing."

Now let's discuss the Four approaches in detail:

### **5.2.1 The Scientist's Approach:**

The scientist's way of knowing, the first of Smith's ways of knowing, is totally empirical in nature. It entails the collection and explanation of evidence.

As a technique of establishing fact, a scientist looks for evidence—ideally, quantitative data.

A rating, for example, in the electronic media is supposedly an objective, empirical measurement of programme or station popularity at a given time, as opposed to the popularity of all other life pursuits to which a consumer might otherwise attend.

A share, on the other hand, is a measure of how popular a programme or station is in comparison to other programmes or stations in the same medium.

In other terms, the share refers to the percentage of the active radio or television audience that prefers your station to others.

The scientific formulae for calculating ratings and shares are as follows:

$$\text{Rating} = \frac{\text{Number of people using your station}}{\text{Total number of people surveyed}}$$

$$\text{Share} = \frac{\text{Number of people using your station}}{\text{Surveyed people using the medium}}$$

Individual listeners, or PURs (persons using radio) are commonly used to gauge radio. Television, on the other hand, has traditionally been concerned with people watching television at home (HUTs).

However, none of these empirical, scientific calculations have revealed why people choose to watch what they do.

We're simply inferring that they did watch a particular show based on data manipulation. Scientific evidence is rapidly emerging that audience estimations based on ratings are not accurate gauges of actual cognition.

Russell Neuman, an M.I.T. researcher, pointed out in 1984 that "Under typical circumstances, researchers discovered that the average viewer's eyes were on the TV only 65 percent of the time a decade earlier. Recent research reveals that 30 to 50 percent of 'watching' time is spent on competing activities such as eating, talking on the phone, reading, and playing."

In the multichannel television environment of the 1990s, researcher Ien Ang tempered the importance of ratings for advertisers:

"In the new television landscape what exactly 'happiness' in people's homes when they watch television has become increasingly ambiguous. It can no longer be assumed—as in traditional ratings discourse—that turning on the television equals watching, that watching entails paying attention to the screen, that watching a program entails watching the commercials inserted in it, and that watching the commercials leads to actually chasing the products advertised. As a result, 'viewing behaviour' loses its useful one-dimensionality: measuring it will never be the same again."

A television show is not a chemistry lab, and a family room is not a test tube. Consumers' use of electronic media is far from a controlled and predictable activity.

But it's precisely because of this that our career is so much more exciting!

### 5.2.2 The Mystic Approach:

The second method of knowing, according to Robert Smith, is based on a fundamentally normative perspective. Truth is more important to the mystic than data assimilation. So much the better if scientific facts can back up this truth. Physical statistics, on the other hand, are not superior to such unquantifiable powers as faith, belief, and spiritual vision according to the mystic approach.

The Critic's mystical conviction that Big FM was a preferred station since it broadcasted less ads seemed to be at odds with scientific ratings that indicated the station's main competitor drew more than four times as many listeners. As a result, Critic's value determination disagreed with empirical evidence.

On the surface, this does not prove that he is incorrect; rather, it illustrates that his belief/preference differs significantly from that of listeners who chose the same music on a different station.

However, as a critic, he should have tried to figure out why there was such a disparity. (Perhaps Big FM has a lower coverage pattern or a promotional budget that is insufficient.) However, by limiting himself to a metaphysical perspective, the critic has avoided seeking scientific evidence to support his thesis that fewer advertisements equals better radio. As a result, he has been unable to obtain or articulate a comprehensive comprehension of his subject.

#### **To give you another example, consider the following:**

Consumer crusader who only believe in the mystical method of knowing would not feel required to prove a correlation between the usage of firearms in television plots and the prevalence of armed robberies.

They simply "know" what the former causes the latter, and no empirical data base could persuade them differently.

Those of us who work in the electronic media have mystical sides of your own.

Marvin Kalb, former NBA and CBS news anchor, recently told a gathering of student broadcasters...

"I believe that television has a negative impact on the mind, verging on brain damage. I believe it has an impact on how we read, how much we read, and if reality is something that can be absorbed through a rectangle or something for more complex."

Kalb has the right to his ideas, and his illustrious experience in broadcast journalism lends credence to them. However, as journalists, we must remind ourselves (and maybe our audience) that such remarks are only personal viewpoints with which we can freely

agree or disagree. They aren't anything close to verified fact at this stage in our research capacity.

The mystic's path calls forth deep-seated *перонал* or philosophical principles. The fact that these values' objective validity can not be established empirically does not make them any less genuine or profound for the who accept them.

They are two fundamentally distinct methods of gaining knowledge. It is not always possible for human cognition to predict when they will collide.

### **5.2.3 The Rhetorician Approach:**

The mystic's path is normative, whereas the scientist's path is founded on empiricism. The manner of the rhetorician, Robert Smith's third knowledge processor, is both normative and empirical. It is focused on winning debates.

These debates can be won based on a belief framework, by mentioning the quantitative results of scientific study, or by combining both of these approaches.

When we work as rhetoricians, the most crucial factor is that a favourable choice be reached, presumably using legitimate means.

"A message using verbal and often visual symbols that are deliberately chosen to persuade an audience whose members have the ability to modify their views or behaviours as a result of experiencing the message," Karen and Donald Rybacki describe it as rhetorical communication.

The practise of rhetoric, according to Professors Young, Becker, and Pike, is "primarily concerned with a creative process that includes all of the choices a writer makes from his earliest tentative explorations of a problem... through choices in arrangement and strategy for a particular audience, to the final editing of the final draught."

Young, Becker, and Pike refer to the "creative choice process," which entails comparing the relative strengths of scientific and mystical approaches to determine which will be more effective in persuading a certain audience (a target universe, as mass communicators often label it).

The evidence of the rhetorical argument were divided into three categories by Aristotle: *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.

The appeal to reason and the objective appraisal of facts is known as *logos*. For your purposes, we can compare it to the scientist's approach. By contrast, *pathos* elicits an emotional, often value-laden response from our audience, which is generally associated with the mystical. Meanwhile, *ethos* is concerned with the message's originator's legitimacy. This involves the professionalism with which the commercial

or programme appears to have been produced in the electronic media. Audiences typically associate poor production values with a less appealing or trustworthy business.

Aristotle clearly distinguishes these three proofs, but Howard Ziff points out that "he never argues that they may be thought of as independent of each other." "Any rhetoric contains all three attractions."

Ziff returns to Aristotle to show that there are three basic sorts of persuasive discourse that can be utilized to achieve the rhetorical aims of a programme (or an advertisement): forensic or judicial, demonstrative or epideictic, and deliberative or political.

The demonstrative/epideictic discourse, on the other hand, is focused on the present, "concerning public occasions of praise and blame, celebrating or condemning... the ritual that validates daily existence."

Finally, the objective of deliberative/political speech is to energize the audience to do a specific action or hold a particular viewpoint. Deliberative/political rhetoric emphasizes the future, whereas Aristotle's forensic/judicial technique focuses on the past and his demonstrative/epideictic approach deals with the present.

"Aristotelian examination of a television drama might swiftly expose that rather than being a present-oriented, epideictic celebration of life, it is in fact, political and deliberative, proposing attitudes and acts, a type of subtle exhortation," Ziff explains.

### **Check your progress:**

1. Define the scientist approach of knowledge

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2. Explain in brief the mystic approach

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3. Explain rhetorician approach.

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### **5.2.4 The Perceptual Triad:**

Another approach to knowledge processing focuses on determining the degree at which a receiver comes to terms with a message rather than approaches for critical examination.

This receiver-oriented technique was adopted by the great American composer Aaron Copland in his division of the three musical planes to which a listener can attend:

- (1) the sensual plane,
- (2) the expressive plane, and
- (3) the sheerly musical plane.

#### **1. The Sensuous Plane:**

The sensual plane entails searching out a stimulus for the sheer pleasure of hearing, seeing, or experiencing a visceral sensation. According to Copland, the receivers become engrossed in the phenomenon "without thinking, without considering it in any manner." "While doing anything else, one puts on the radio and loses themselves in the sound. The result is a brainless but appealing state of mind."

At this level, the receiver's objective linked with attention is to escape, to avoid reality, and to indulge in uncritically conscious imagination or semiconscious daydream.

Not all sensuous-oriented stuff is false or shallow.

The key point to consider is whether the sensuous elements are being presented honestly as such or as relevant enhancers of the expressive (meaning) plane.

Or, on the other hand, are they being used to disguise shoddy scripting or a lack of thematic coherence?

Sensuous-level cues that have been purposefully chosen to enhance our enjoyment of this plane are both engaging and legitimate. They lose their legitimacy when compelled to masquerade as meaning.

#### **2. The Expressive Plane:**

Copland's expressive plane, on the other hand, is expressly concerned with this complex subject of meaning—what he refers to as "the meaning beneath the sensuous notes."

The expressive embodies the meaning beneath the electrical effects and productional patterns we utilize in radio and television.

As a result, we are travelling underneath the sensuous surface when we engage the expressive plane. We want to see if the programme topic has long-term value in addition to immediate delight.

Theodore Meyer Greene, an aesthetics expert, described it like way:

“The less reflective the agent, the more the poignancy of each immediate experience will determine his evaluations; the more thoughtful he is, the more he will tend to evaluate his experiences and their objects in a broader frame of reference, i.e., in terms of their ultimate importance for himself and his fellow men. Emotion [the sensual] and expression [the expressive] are both necessary for proper judgement.”

Many of our viewers will be "less introspective" as a result of the complexity of electronic media and their accessibility to all sectors of the public. They lack the necessary training to comprehend radio and television on a higher expressive plane.

When Robert Edmonds examines the richness of what he calls intra-artistic and extra-artistic senses in cinematic compositions, he perceives a similar situation: Expertise in film

We can accurately name the perceptions of organizational arrangements within the film intra-artistic because they happen in terms of aesthetic aspects and structures. We can term the extra-artistic associations that will be produced in us extra-artistic because they are outside of the film's essentially aesthetic or dramatic aspects, even though they may have been encouraged by them. These associations serve as the foundation for what the film "means" to us. The more associations we have, the more meaning we will derive from the film.

As previously said, the more associations—or meaning—that our listeners and viewers can be led to understand in a piece of electronic media content, the longer that information and its attractiveness will linger with them.

### **3. The Productional/Technical Plane:**

In radio/television, Copland's third level, the "sheerly musical," consists of the productional elements that carry and structure the presentation. These aspects include not just the recording and manipulation of sound, lighting, and angle of vision, but also the abilities and techniques brought to the property by writers, performers, directors, and technicians. The deftness of these tricks will go unnoticed by the audience, but people conditioned to anticipate "network quality production values" in everything they see will notice their absence or mismanagement.



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### 5.3 THE PLANES COMBINED

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When we take on the role of critic, it is our job to assist both our colleagues and our audiences in gaining a more complete comprehension of a work. When communicating with customers, the emphasis should be on helping them comprehend the productional/technical limits and challenges that we encounter, as well as sensitizing them to the richness of expressive plane meaning that can be present in a well-honed radio/television project.

**Check your progress:**

1. Discuss the importance of the technical plane.

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2. Explain the meaning of expressive plane.

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3. Explain the sensuous plane.

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### 5.4 SUMMARY

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- The three levels of Copland, the four methods of knowing of Robert Rutherford Smith, and the corresponding empirical and normative perspectives all attempt to describe how knowledge is gathered, prioritized, and assessed.
- Professionals in the electronic media who are aware of the many methods in which listeners and viewers absorb programme content are in a far better position to communicate. They will be able to better identify the possibilities available to them in order to fit the various 'knowledge intake' habits of various audiences.
- "Sophistication in more than one method to knowing can drive the development and convincing testing of inventive solutions to challenges," writes media historian Samuel Becker.

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## 5.5 QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the empirical method of knowledge processing.
2. Discuss in detail the Normative view of criticism.
3. Explain in detail the Four approaches to process knowledge.
4. Write short notes on:
  - a. Sensuous Plane
  - b. Rhetorician Approach
  - c. Mystic way of processing knowledge
  - d. Describe in brief about the Perceptual Triad.

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## **TONAL AND TALENT INGREDIENTS, STAGE MOLDING INGREDIENTS**

### **Unit Structure**

- 6.0 Objective
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Tonal and Talent Ingredients
  - 6.2.1 The Musical Ingredient
  - 6.2.2 The On-Stage Talent Ingredient
    - 6.2.2.1 Radio People
    - 6.2.2.2 Electronic Newspaper
    - 6.2.2.3 Other television personalities
  - 6.2.3 An On-Stage Curtain Line
- 6.3 Stage-Molding Ingredients
  - 6.3.1 Aural Transitions and Volume
  - 6.3.2 The Television Stage
  - 6.3.3 Light and Shadow
- 6.4 Let's Sum Up
- 6.5 Questions
- 6.6 References

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### **6.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Tonal and talent ingredients and ways they help analyze critique
- Aspects of an on-stage talent ingredient
- Performance levels for people on radio and television
- Effect of volume on the overall outcome of a content
- Importance of light and shadow in capturing and amplifying the mood of the content

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Learning about criticism involves building a careful eye to attest to the content you consume, the pictures you see, the music you listen to, and everything that keeps you consumed. Critics need to be aware of their surroundings and how they consume art and media content. It becomes a bigger responsibility to build a structure around something as cohesive and

subjective as a piece that has the scope of bringing up multiple meanings and interpretations.

This unit will introduce you to the tonal and talent ingredients to help you better understand ways you can critique subjective content. In addition, it will delve deeper into music and stage ingredients to help you get a better look. The unit also specially focuses on various stage-moulding components and sheds light on aural transitions, light and shadow and television as a stage. By the end of the chapter, you will have a better vision and a clearer understanding of the importance of maintaining, focusing and noticing a tone, talent and various stages-moulding ingredients to study media content as a critic.

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## 6.2 TONAL AND TALENT INGREDIENTS

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### 6.2.1 The Musical Ingredient:

As a critic, it is difficult to use music as a programmatic tool to critique the use of music in a scenario. To help you better understand that statement, composer Richard Wagner mentions that “the problem is that music begins where speech leaves off.” Therefore, using only words to evaluate tonal progressions indeed is a questionable stance to uphold.

Aesthetics scholar DeWitt Parker explains this discourse by mentioning, “Music is a language understood by all. One of the major reasons behind this is the expression of music holds an amalgamation of all known emotions to us humans. However, it still is a language that no two people understand in the same way because every individual experiences the said expression and translates it in their unique way. Adding to the same thought, Roy Dickinson Welch states, “Even though the emotions suggested in a composition may be clear to most listeners, it is next to impossible to describe these in words that are commonly accepted by all.”

While we discuss the polysemic nature of music, it is important to remember that we are still focused on learning to evaluate music with contextual effectiveness in electronic media. Establishing this structure will allow us to further delve deeper into drawing conclusions about whether it is working or if the framework needs alterations. In addition, it will further help us understand if indeed the music appropriately fits the specific situation it has been certainly assigned to. According to William Allman, recent scientific research suggests that the mental mechanisms that process music are deeply entwined with the brain’s other essential functions, including perception, memory, and even language.

Nonetheless, music in and of itself is the most artificial of the arts, asserts Theodore Meyer Greene, because its primary medium, i.e., the system of tones based on any given scale, as well as its generic forms, have meaning only in a musical context. That is, this meaning attaches itself to them only by association and convention. As media professionals, we do not have to critique music as music, we can concentrate on whether the musical choices in a given programmatic context are optimal ones. Specifically,

this task calls for scrutiny of four interdependent attributes: clarity, execution, continuity, and aptness of the task.

### **6.2.2 The On-Stage Talent Ingredient:**

As in the previous section, we learned that critiquing music depends on the choices. This leads us to know one more important aspect of music and that it can be either overt or subtle. But learning about the concept of on-stage talent is always at the front and centre of the audience's perception.

These ingredients have a high level of visibility to the audience, which makes their basic functions well recognized. The on-stage talents include professionals like disc jockeys, hosts, reports, commentators, actors and actresses who, via radio or television, hope to establish direct contact with the consumers. Because the consumption in this context is highly reliable in expression and tone, it is a stress to the performer to deliver the message most profoundly to reach the audience correctly. Thus what we are about to learn in this section is the key implications of the on-stage performance and how these are needed for our professional assessment.

#### **6.2.2.1 Radio People:**

Learning about the radio people consists of professionals who work with their talents, subject to be understood just by tones and delivery of voices. Stressing upon the formats given to the radio firsts it is clear that program hosts (most importantly disc jockeys and talk show personalities) are applicable to attain these two objectives: Firstly, while performing, they should accomplish a personal touch and personal communication with the listener. They should also be able to establish a personal intimacy with the audience. Secondly, they must maximally exploit and blend in with all the elements of the format in which they work.

Keeping these two necessary changes in mind, we need to focus on one aspect that portrays great value for the critique to observe. The need to regulate the amount and type of talk to meet formative requirements is paramount if a host is eligible to stay in an appropriate on-air control of the specific situation that the station program executives design.

#### **6.2.2.2 Electronic Newspaper:**

Electronic newsmen are presenters who just do not deal with having a personal connection with the audience. But they also have to establish an inviolable connection with their audience, keeping their tone and facial expressions and appearances in the frame. These are just like packaging the reality into digestible shows. Consequently, there are obvious similarities between news talent personalities and radio entertainment personalities. This is a clear matter of fact as news is usually sub-categorized into the entertainment industry. Being a subcategory of the entertainment oriented environment, news presenters are generally needed to have pleasing visuals. In addition, they are supposed to be pleasing in aural appearances to make inherently pleasant events palatable for the public. Den Menaker's 1972 observation is an apt statement on this. Even

though, at that time, he was speaking only of male news personnel at the „big three“ television networks, the viewing still mirrors a standard often applied to on-air newscasters of both sexes.

He observed that most of the players presenting in the three troupes were aurally elegant, physically fit, and attractive. He also highlighted that even if the person is qualified enough to be a professional, he is ugly, obese or has a squeaky voice. He won't be able to meet the non-journalistic requirements of a network correspondence job. This is because the competition for ratings or one assumes that it must lead the three organizations to seek reports who do inherit with stage appeal.

Later, after fifteen years, Elayne Rapping hypothesized why such attributes are of similar importance at the local facilities. She talked about how local news teams that have young, bright, attractive and charming journalists on board are not journalists at all. Instead, they are performers paid to impersonate friends we all wanted to have at one point but all too often lacked. As a result, they lack in our increasingly segmented and impersonal words. Further media scholars Dennis Davis and Stanley Baran took this observation ahead and amplified it when they stated that, getting news from local television, people claim to be eyewitnesses by implying that the news received from their end is just like "hearing it from a friend".

The happy and informal news format while presenting ensures the viewers that the newscasters are friendly people. That the news cast by the presenter is, in fact, viewed as gossip by the people who find the news attractive. This further assures them that they are receiving the news from a friend and not just from some professionals working for a remote bureaucracy.

David and Baran also focused on not emphasizing visual handsomeness. As in their research, they mention professors Rebecca Rubin and Micheal McHugh found that to develop rewarding relationships, the television personalities needed to be socially attractive. They just don't need to be socially attractive, but they also have to maintain a social image in the context of interacting. This would suggest that the consumers watching social personalities are more interested in the ones who are attractive as social or work partners and not just are attractive physically. To give this point a little more understanding, the most obvious example of this phenomenon is the television weather person. In a news team, the weather people are usually the homiest and informal people. The community loves them, and people always choose them and even sometimes news channels are chosen particularly by the audience because of the weather person.

### **6.2.2.3 Other television personalities:**

We know about the radio and news presenters' connection with the audience. The same goes for other television personalities as well. We cannot be sure of our scrutiny of the on-stage talent ingredient without examining a game show host or television actors. They have characteristics similar to the standards which can be further used to

evaluate the radio jackets and news channel presenters. Thus, this comes to a point which establishes that the mentors must have a strong sense of friendly communication. In their case, moreover, the communication must attain a connection and personal touch with the home viewer, but it should also be the same way with the on-stage contestant and a studio audience.

To conclude, television puts more weight towards spoken words. With more emphasis on the words, it automatically lessens the importance of reactions and the effectiveness of the shots, which are the most basic elements of the filming performances. It further encourages a more naturalistic feel to the delivery of the content and needs the emotional curves to be shorter as the immediate intent of the performance should have a substantial effect on the viewer.

### **6.2.3 An On-Stage Curtain Line:**

So far, talking about electronic media, we have seen that intimacy and intensity are two essential criteria for defining a performer's success. This leads us to envision that it is no surprise that radio and television are in close proximity to the public. They are very close to the public and are significantly involved in their day-to-day lives. People on these platforms share their bedrooms, cars, and media like a walkman.

Going through the level these people share with the public, at no point it is inevitable that these people need to have a warm and enveloping recognition if they want to secure a favourable outcome from their performances. This leads us to what the talk show host Phil Tower reminded us, and his perception was „ours is a business of ratings“. If you are a performer with a strong bond, then the public and your beloved listeners will feel a kinship with you. They will be able to have a connection and personal touch to what you have to say and what you ultimately do. And when they feel this kind of connection, your position in the market strengthens, and your bond becomes more assertive.

To summarize it takes immense skills and efforts for performers to achieve the intimacy and powerful connection to their consumers. It is far more about being a talented person in the industry because that seems more manageable. When you are a TV talent, it is like you are no more less than a meat. You can talk all the time in the third person where the public has questions like, “Can we make his face a little more rounder than it is now?” Although being talented and attractive can seem more effortless if you can establish a personal connection with the audience and the outcomes of your personality are in favour of you.

### **Check your progress:**

1. Explain the Musical Ingredients.

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2. Explain on-stage curtain lines with your own examples.

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3. Using examples, explain in brief about Electronic Newspapers.

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## **6.3 STAGE-MOLDING INGREDIENTS**

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The stage is a vast criterion for a critique to know and analyze someone's performance. Having different forms of categories of what is consumed, it is hard for a critic to know the final outcome until all the ingredients are taken action upon. If we talk about music and talent, then they are criteria understood by people only after the information passed by the performer or the performance is filtered through the camera or the microphone. These cameras and microphones are technical instruments that shape the television and radio staging. These are some of the important aspects of the performances as what they see or hear are the width, height and depth of the electronic proscenium (active Staging Area), which will determine what will be displayed to the audience.

### **6.3.1 Aural Transitions And Volume:**

When we talk about the aural transition and volume aspect of the visuals, it is as important as the visuals themselves. For example, if we talk about the radio, how we shift the sound from one point to another is important. It reflects the intention of the direction of what the audience is supposed to feel and hear. This helps in maintaining the attention of the audience just like the shot sequencing in the television.

Understanding this from a deeper perspective, when we pause the shot for a bit of time. But for the same thing, if we pause the sound for a longer time, it will be perceived as "dead air". And eventually, when the audience encounters a little inappropriate abruptness in the sound, it opens up a blatant invitation to a listener to tune or punch through the channel.

To conceptualize the detailed changes in the shot for both television and radio carry a communicative potential and communicative risk. Putting light on the recent years, audio transitions are not just an essential aspect of the radio industry. It has also taken an important outline in the television industry. Previously it was assumed that sound and picture were supposed to be always fading in and out in tandem. But now, the directors of dramatic programs stagger their viewers at the time of the entries trying to stimulate curtains' psychological and physiological effects.



On this, Herbert Zettl showed that sound waves, in particular, have three critical functions to be played for the television:

1. To be able to supply the required essential information which can be additional as well
2. To accomplish to secure the aesthetic energy and establish the required mood.
3. To provide a supplement for the rhythmic structure of the screening event.

There is also an important aspect to look after that it is not suggested that television should use blaring voices to grab the attention of the viewers. This can make viewers uninterested, resulting in them leaving the screening in the middle of changing the channel. Nor can they lower the volume, which they think can hold the audience's attention well. Instead, they can keep the volume of the video on a relativity level where directing the shots in and out of the viewers keeps the mood of the content. This will keep the audience hooked and keep the consumers at the moment.

### **6.3.2 The Television Stage:**

As we have seen, the radio relies solely on the volume. It relies on the manipulation of the same. Same way, television depends on several different things. First, they have the advantage of relying on visuals for the audience, where the audience can be focused on the perception they are trying to portray and finally, the combination of the sounds and the pictures.

### **6.3.3 Light and Shadow:**

Implementing television, light and shadow are the most primary elements. In the picture world, we can, at a point, have no picture at all. We can consider the light, which plays a vital role in forming the picture. It is just an essential commodity required for the proper functioning of the cameras. This is where Herbert Zettl has referred to this property of lighting the subject as *otan* or „light for simple visibility“. Solely a *Notan* approach would have only allowed light to play an objective and passive role in the production. It has the entire burden of accomplishing the mood and meaning that would come from the on-stage moulding elements. Further, a light design which involved *Notan* would likely be able to reinforce the two-dimension of the television screen. This will further also involve the characters and camera shot selections to do all the work of the screening of the scene and emulating the sculpting. Apart from *Notan* there is *chiaroscuro* lighting as well. It is not only concerned with simple illumination, but it also focuses on how the light is determined. It also highlights how light can be cast because of the shadow.

**Check your progress:**

1. Explain Herbert Zettl's three functions of sound waves.

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2. Explain the importance of volume and why is it essential for visuals.

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3. Talk about the importance of light and shadow on stage.

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## **6.4 LET'S SUM UP**

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So far, we have seen that learning about criticism is all about finding an eye for the attestation of the content you are consuming. It is all about carefully analyzing the content you are hearing and seeing. To examine that, you have to know a few of the elements that have been structured in detail in the previous sections of this chapter. Further here, you will find a precise list of the elements and how they contribute to the same.

Talking about tonal and talented ingredients, they look effortless and small to pay attention to when they play a vital role in the whole picture. Let it be music, on-stage talent, or on stage curtain line. IT is all about paying attention to the small details irrespective of their being available to you in any form. Like sound, it is a small entity of what we visualize in front of us. It sets the mood and keeps the audience hooked to the profile of what they are watching. In every aspect, it tells about what is going on the screen and in radio stations, it is the only prospect to know how much connection one has with the audience. Coming to light, it is the basic perspective for us to be able to communicate with the help of a camera. It is the way we see what has been captured, or we can say we can capture anything in the first place.

Keeping the stage in mind, it works differently for different roles and perspectives. To briefly, if it is for a radio jockey, it is important to mind the tone. To establish the connection, one needs to have a personal connection or intensity with the audience. Similarly, if it is for television, it will be necessary for one to be physically attractive and have control over the facial expressions as the audience might connect with them based on that.

**Conclusion:**

To conclude, overall, there are different perspectives and necessary molds for a critique to encounter before being able to know the tangible outcome of a content. However, keeping these small things in mind, they will be able to know their subject better and find adequate information and knowledge to critique the subject.

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**6.5 QUESTIONS**


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1. What are tonal and talent ingredients?
2. How do tonal and talent ingredients help in criticism?
3. What are the major aspects of on-stage talent ingredients?
4. Explain how performance levels are different for people on radio and television?
5. Mention different criterias essential to a strong bond with the audience through radio and television?
6. How does the volume affect the overall outcome of any content?
7. Explain “dead air?”
8. According to Herbert Zettl, what are the three crucial functions of sound waves?
9. Mention the importance of light and shadow in capturing the subject and amplifying the mood of the content on screen.

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# BUSINESS GRATIFICATIONS, AUDIENCE GRATIFICATIONS

## Unit Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 The Business aspects of Media
  - 7.2.1 Art as a product
  - 7.2.2 The Business of Art
  - 7.2.3 Media as a Combination of art and business
  - 7.2.4 Quality vs Quantity in Digital Age
  - 7.2.5 Getting the best output within a limited budget
- 7.3 Audience Gratification
  - 7.3.1 Manoranjan – Entertainment
  - 7.3.2 Early Studies of audience gratification
- 7.4 Creating for the audience
  - 7.4.1 Various kinds of needs of Audience
  - 7.4.2 Audience might seek more
- 7.5 Let's sum up
- 7.6 Questions
- 7.7 References

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## 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding what is gratification
- Learning about how the media business operates financially
- The Importance of audience and their needs
- Creating a balance between Audience and Business Needs and Gratification

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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Media is a creative field but at the same time it's a multi-billion-dollar industry as well, Thus the business aspect is as important as the creativity. Understanding of what the Media Producers as business men seek to achieve is a must. A Business is something which identifies a problem and offer a unique solution for it. No business runs without the customers in this case the audience – the receiver of the media, hence the understanding

of what the audience wants is another crucial subject. But first look at the meaning of the word gratification.

Gratification is the pleasure, attained specially from fulfilment and satisfaction of a desire.

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## **7.2 THE BUSINESS ASPECTS OF MEDIA**

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We tend to study the Business aspects or the producer's side of this is because business considerations are the key initiators of the media's originator/receiver process. If someone practices media as a hobby for example a Youtuber – the creator of media content creates videos for self-gratification, here the primary motive is not money but the views or likes are the gratifying currency, The more views the happier and motivated the creator is, but to keep creating content one needs to be consistent, and to maintain this consistency financial backing and time is required, the person must have some source of income be it from outside or from the content itself. Some might argue that if someone is creating content not for money, is a dubious notion as work of art has always been a commodity, as he/she is spending money and time to create a piece of content. Remember time is money. (Unable to generate fame and money the creator gradually stops creating as there is no gratification anymore) Once the financial aspect come to play the creator now becomes a business man, seeking constant attention from its audience, which in return provide gratification. Previously we have been studying about the Business gratification in Traditional or Electronic media. But the arrival of Digital media has opened up an enormous range of possibilities and made this subject even interesting. The line between the provider and the user has been blurred.

### **7.2.1 Art as a product:**

Art has always been dependent on commerce. A piece of art is something that can be bought and sold. George Boas – An Art Critic, “Observed how artistry changes in response to economic demand and also how the works of art themselves changes”. For example – During the financial crisis in Italy the works of art adapted to the economic situation, giving birth to Italian neo-realism Movement. Let's take a very contemporary example – have you noticed how the wedding video industry has evolved in India, it is fascinating to see how once the photographers, videographers had to adjust according to the couples and their families, but now the couple has to follow the “Wedding Filmmaker”. In India weddings are the events in which people open heartedly and spend a lot of money. Families, be it poor or rich, are spending a lot of money on wedding videos or “Cinematic Videos”. Here the photographers or videographers make a good deal of income in a short period of time and thus, this economic demand has proliferated the wedding videos business. A lot of Photographers and videographers have left their previous art genre and switched to weddings. Purely for monetary and economic gains.

### **7.2.2 The Business of Art:**

The reconciliation of Art and Business has always been a tough task, Carl Grabo – A Scholar suggested that the agreement of both the fields has been difficult traditionally with fine art as well as the electronic media. Though it might have been true but in the digital age it has become relatively easier. Print and Electronic media required a lot of equipment and infrastructure, such as for printing a large factory and heavy machinery, raw material, storage and transport facilities. For television and radio requires a Stations, Networks, cable systems, and production studios and highly skilled labour or employees. Which are extremely expensive enterprises and to function and maintain it requires a constant stream of funds, these organisations must rely on either a substantial government subsidy or the profit motive. Even for Digital Media one can start producing content with what they already have such as a smartphone, but again as we discussed in our Youtuber Example for the continuity of content generation monetary backing is a must. Though the cost of equipment and infrastructure is drastically low and there is no barrier to entry but still to maintain consistency funds are required. (Whatever scale of business it is, doesn't matter). To start a business is not a tough task but to maintain and grow it with consistency, that too with substantial profit margins is extremely difficult. To neglect the financial aspects is to ignore a fundamental reality with every form of art, in varying degrees, must take a hold off.

### **7.2.3 Media as a Combination of art and business:**

Media is a unique combination of business and art, it is both art and commodity that is created for the audience's consumption. Although economics sets the parameters, media as a subject can never be studied in isolation because it's also a cultural industry. It borrows a lot of things from the culture where it is being manufactured, sold and consumed. Print and electronic media are bound or region-specific, leaving Television, Radio and newspaper are mostly regional and limited to a city, town, or similar geographical radius. Digital media breaks these barriers of geographical proximity. As we learned that to run a business one needs funds and sometimes corporate takeovers of media organizations bring non-media business interests to control the media. Now the debate is how to produce quality content while keeping economic profit in mind. As ABC's Programming chief Robert Iger stated "I would love to put together a schedule that is Absolute high-quality, but we are in a business to make money. Simultaneously, I'd love to produce shows that are high-quality and make money, but the two of those aren't necessarily mutually inclusive. It's a balance that one has to strike" (Orlik, 2000). This is a very well said answer. As a media business it is as important to generate high quality content as the profits. But like any other business there is risk, if today I am making a good piece of content which is conceptually brilliant and technically perfect, still there is no certainty that it will generate a lot of profits as there are multiple aspects involved. Now the question arises, is there any or no relationship between the quality of art and its profitability? The answer is yes, quality does matter because it can extend

the life of the piece of content. As Advertising executive Paul Schulman observes in regards to electronic media “A quality show will last longer with low ratings than a show without quality. Quality aspects do increase longevity of a program by giving it multiple shots or chances in another time period. For example, if we talk about the movie “Lunch Box” which did not do very well in theaters but it became a hit on the internet. But if the content lacks quality it might get a second chance”. It is true for other media forms also.

#### **7.2.4 Quality Vs Quantity in Digital Age:**

Let’s take the example of some good content creators (like Peter McKinnon and Casey Neistat) who have been making YouTube Videos since a long time, what they found is good quality videos have higher shelf life. Although YouTube or other digital media platforms are algorithm based and it values quantity of content more than the quality. They knew what type of content shoots up the algorithm but they still attempted to make quality content, why you may think? It would be lie if someone says that they don’t want views, fame or money. The Problem with making quality content is it demand more time, efforts and money. But as a business person you must be strategic not tactical, if you want to build a long lasting and sustainable business. When many content creators started using compact cameras for vlogging and video shooting, these guys went off the way and used heavy cameras to create videos, even for vlogs. They have been producing 4K resolution videos without vulgarity, foul language and without making fun of or insulting anyone. 4k Resolution videos take a lot of space (A lot of hard drives) and editing time increases drastically but it is the cost of doing business. But all cost and efforts gradually paid off (Extrinsic Evaluation) they aware of the digital converge, when the audience will watch YouTube videos on Tv and Big screens with family and friends, this is where 4K Quality videos strike, they were producing 4K resolution video from last 5 years and we are sure that for at least 5 years ahead these videos will still have qualitative relevance. As well as if watching a video on TV with your family most of you would not watch videos with abusive and foul language. as a Youtuber may self I have always followed these pioneers and made 4K videos with clear content and now that I have reputed clients for whom I create content, I can proudly show any of my videos without any hesitation. Even the brands won’t hesitate for an association with me, my channel or my company. This is completely my personal opinion based on my experience and it might not be suitable or relevant for others.

#### **7.2.5 Getting the best output within a limited budget:**

Especially if we talk about bigger media productions because a lot of investments and payments are involved, Film Productions and Television production requires a lot of funding, with that funding comes responsibilities to pay back the producer or financiers. As NBC executive Grant Tinker explains ““The pressures that come down from the top make it more difficult for entertainment people than it was for the executives even a few years ago” (Orlik, 2000) There are cost pressures and quality

pressures as well, with limited time the productions and studio have to create as best quality as they can. Because most of the higher authorities are not concerned about that quality as much as the return on investment. TV productions, be it news, serials or reality shows are one of the most hectic tasks, usually it is continuous shoot schedules as to create content daily, here it gets very difficult to maintain the quality as there is financial pressures clubbed with time or deadline pressures, no matter what the show must go on. Hence to maintain the balance and fill the channel with content for the whole day every day, some critically acclaimed, less popular and less expensive shows are also produced where the audience is relatively low. Also, by doing this the network also attracts a more niche or upscale audience that will in return attract prestige advertisers. Some producers and executives believe that the program's quality must be in accordance with the cost and audience delivery. This notion of quality and cost depicts that quality cannot exist independently of the cost associated and its consideration. It might not be true in every situation but its valid in most cases. Every form of media be it print, electronic, films rely heavily on advertising, these advertising revenues fuels and boosts the production and the quality of the content. Hence the productions strive to gain the attention of the advertisers. What the advertiser seeks is the reach and to how many people, the advertised piece or their brand name reach to. Some Advertisers even depend on the rise of product sales but it is a difficult aspect to analyze, because no advertising no matter how good it is can guarantee sales (As there are various marketing aspects involved). what it can be sure of is the amount of reach the brand will get. This is because it all depends on the flip side of the coin – The audience or the consumers. This brings us to the topic of what gratifies the audience.

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## **7.3 AUDIENCE GRATIFICATION**

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The knowledge of the data about the reach of the show, and patrons of the show, helps in analyzing the popularity of the content and also for the justification of the advertising rates. But the numbers are objective and do not reveal the reason why the audience is watching the content. What is there that is giving pressure to the audience, what's the need of the audience that it is seeking to satisfy.

### **7.3.1 Manoranjan - Entertainment:**

What are the factors which are leading to this satisfaction, what is it that the audience finds interesting, is it the story or the characters? As we all know media is the entertainment industry, in Hindi it's called "Manoranjan" now if we break this word, we get Man and Ranjan, Where Man means your mind and Ranjan means to make happy, hence entertainment itself means to make the mind happy. In other words, to gratify our mind. By this notion of Gratification, it is thus a prime focus of study what makes the minds of the audience happy. Well on the surface it may look very simple but gratification is a very personal and a subjective matter.



### 7.3.2 Early Studies of audience gratification:

In the past there have been some studies and theories which tried to evaluate the gratifications, the most prominent is uses and gratification theory by professor Elihu Katz in 1959. This theory has become even more relevant in contemporary times, as it suggests that the audience actively seeks gratification from the media. Here the audience decided on what they wanted to consume. In this digital age, every person with a smart phone or internet can seek and find and satisfy their needs. The information and content are just a few clicks away. This theory does not see the audience as passive, consuming whatever that is being provided by the media. This theory suggests that the audience are rational agents and they are aware of the process, the audience themselves participate in the process of the media consumption. With digitization the media is becoming even more interactive. Today the audience can even demand the producers, creator or provider of the content on what they want to read, listen and watch. If looked from this angle the audience seek quality as a commodity for which they invest their time and money. It not only helps the audience to achieve the gratification but also the producer of the content to comprehend the gratification of the target audience and thus strive to serve good quality content to them.

#### Check your progress:

1. Explain what is business gratification?

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2. What are the challenges in media business?

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3. Explain “Art as a Commodity”.

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## 7.4 CREATING FOR THE AUDIENCE

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Audience Gratification as a prime focus for creation, it is important to understand that no one is going to pay us to produce a piece of content we personally enjoy or wish for. Sometimes there might be conflict of opinion internally. As one popular Youtuber Matty Happonja analyzed, why his viewership declined. He admits that he was self-centered and made content what he personally liked. But gradually he realized that his content

did not add value for his audience. Yes, it is said to do what you love, but more importantly if you are producing something for someone else then know what they like. Sometimes the producer, creator or film maker gets flown with the idea that whatever they create is going to be liked by the audience. Today the producer needs to build a rapport with the audience, and take time to understand why the audience is spending their precious time and what they are seeking for. The one who understands this can crack the algorithm, TVT or box office collections. As the line between creator and consumer is getting blurred. Hence to win over the digital audience the media professionals have to think like or even become the audience.

#### **7.4.1 Various kinds of needs of Audience:**

Elihu Katz and his colleagues identified fourteen “important needs” and its thirty-five subcategories. But if we club it with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, we get some interesting results, here we can bifurcate it into Five major categories.

- Cognitive needs
- Affective needs
- Personal Integrative needs
- Social Integrative needs
- Tension free needs

#### **Cognitive needs:**

(Information/Surveillance) People use media for acquiring knowledge, information etc. Among the audience some of them have intellectual needs to acquire knowledge, we know that each and every person has a different need, for example, some people watch shows like KBC, in order to gain knowledge and information, some watch news channels to satisfy this need for information and being aware of the world. In the digital sphere, the search engine allows the users to browse for any topic within no time. The Audience who majorly rely on the Media have to make a trade off. Firstly, they get a wider view of the world, this view can be instantaneous but, on the flipside, this wider view can be a step back from reality. What they actually see is a perspective for something which the media is showing, it is more of representation than reality. When the audiences believe or are led to believe that the tiny piece the media shows is complete reality this becomes problematic.

#### **Affective needs:**

(Entertainment) It includes all kinds of emotions, pleasure and other moods of the people. People use various kinds of media like OTT platforms, TV or films to satisfy their emotional needs. This is the most common uses and gratification the audience seeks from the mass media. A lot of time people watch some shows or movies just to get away from

getting bored, just for enjoyment. For example, you may watch a movie like “Welcome” or “Dhamaal” just to get comic relief and to have a good laugh. But sometimes there are movies or shows that are closer to one’s heart and they just enjoy watching it, as it appeals to their emotions and affectivity.

### **Personal Integrative needs:**

(Personal Enrichment and Development) This is the self-esteem need. People use the media to reassure their status, gain credibility and stability. so, people watch content and assure themselves that they have a status in society for e.g. people get to improve their status by watching, listening or reading premium subscriptions. On the other hand, if we look at it from producers and media’s point of view it is more about giving the audience what it needs rather than what it wants. but some audiences are not so eager to enrich themselves as they see media as a recreation rather than developmental. Even the audience's taste is a constantly changing phenomenon which gets even difficult to understand in a country like India with such a diverse population. There are varying affinities and demographics which are important to understand when attempting to target Personal Enrichment Needs.

### **Social Integrative needs:**

(Companionship) It encompasses the need to socialize with family, friends and relations in the society. For social interaction in contemporary times people do not seem to have social gatherings on weekends, instead they do such social interaction using media like the social networking sites like myspace, Facebook, Instagram to satisfy their need. Media has always been a conversation builder, it provokes conversations, and it provides a shared cultural experience. You may not watch the particular serial or show regularly but because your friend is watching, you also start watching so that you have common topics for discussion, and not be left out of the conversation. For example, Game of Thrones or the show “Friends”. The audience not only seek to fit into the social groups, but also make the media itself their companion, although the audience cannot relate directly to the media but they get attached to the personae or characters in the show or movies. The audience can resonate with the characters, sympathize with them in difficulties and be happy in their happiness. Media analyst Paul Schulman asserts that "a good show is when you want to keep inviting those characters into your home on a regular basis. That's chemistry." This is an important need to be understood by every content creator especially for people like social media vloggers.

### **Tension free needs:**

(Escapism/Catharsis) People sometimes use the media as a means of escapism and to relieve tension. The audience seek relaxation by watching their favorite show, listening to old songs on radio which provides relaxation from all the tension of the real world. Some have a habit of watching comedy sitcoms every night so that their day ends on a tension

free note. It is important to be noted that these needs are personal in nature, and the means to satisfy these needs are personal and subjective. Sometimes there is pressure to flee reality's troubles towards a pleasurable space. For example, the rise of Cinema during the World Wars. Media professionals strive to probe the conditions that prompt a target audience to seek escapism and the troublesome elements that eventually allows them to find escapism, tension release without mentally absenting themselves from the media. Sometime Escapism also leads to nostalgia for example the 90's kids often listen to the 90's song, some watch old episodes of shows like, "Doremon", "Sara Bhai VS Sara Bhai" and "Tarak Mehta ka Ulta Chasma" to escape the worries of reality and to go back to the good times.

#### **7.4.2 Audience might seek more:**

While understanding these needs one should know that, audience consumption of media might often be motivated by a combination of two or more of their use and gratification needs. The sender or the producer of the content may not be completely aware of the variety of gratifications cues that has been infused into the content. Often even the audience may not be able to identify the prime gratifications they are seeking or consuming from a given media and its content. Keeping this in mind the producer needs to target the combinations of these needs which are appealing to the specific audience it wants to cater, plus the kind of message which the audience is most likely to perceive. As Denis McQuail States "What is central for mass communication is not message-making or sending and not even the messages themselves, but the choice, reception and manner of response of the audience"(Orlik, 2000)". from this point of view, it puts the audience's needs in supreme priority.

#### **Check your progress:**

1. Explain what are the needs of audiences?

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2. How do you think the audiences seek different kinds of needs?

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3. Explain audience gratification?

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## **7.5 LET'S SUM UP**

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There are many more factors which are there in terms of audience gratifications, consumer is a very power centric term, they can make or break the value of the art and also business as whole. Also there needs to be a fine understanding of the business to run or manage a media production company. Creating a balance between Business gratifications with respect to audience gratification is a difficult task, to build a profitable and consumer's admired business or show, should be the greatest gratification of all.

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## **7.6 QUESTIONS**

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1. What are the financial constraints in media business
2. Explain the business of Art
3. Explain business gratification and its challenges in digital age with examples
4. Explain the Uses and Gratification theory
5. Explain the various kinds of needs of audiences.

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## REALITY PROGRAMMING

### Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Understanding the concept of reality programming
  - 8.2.1 Scripted or Non-scripted
  - 8.2.2 News related reality terms
  - 8.2.3 Tabloid and Trash
  - 8.2.4 Shock TV and Keyhole TV
  - 8.2.5 Reality Programming in India
- 8.3 Reality Programming in contemporary times
  - 8.3.1 Business gratification in reality programming
  - 8.3.2 Reality Genres
  - 8.3.3 Digital Convergence
  - 8.3.4 Inclusiveness
- 8.4 Reality Production
  - 8.4.1 Production stage
  - 8.4.2 Post Production in Reality Programming
- 8.5 Let's sum up
- 8.6 Questions
- 8.7 References

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding what is reality programming
- Learning about the production of reality programming
- Learning about various forms and genres of reality programming

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### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the Previous unit we learn about Audience gratification and the difference between their entertainment gratification and information gratification. But there is a splice that occurs in these two functions called reality programming. Reality Programming is a multivalent term, that means it signifies a variety of things to different audiences. For some it's positive but for a lot of people these things are negative. The Negative aspects associated with it are cheapness, distortion, dishonesty and untruth. Reality Programming has traditionally been associated with electronic media. Which is comparatively inexpensive than other types of

shows, serials etc. although it is not inexpensive as a unit but in comparison to others, it's slightly. By definition, reality programming is essentially unscripted, and captures real people rather than actors and concentrates on real-life events.

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## **8.2 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF REALITY PROGRAMMING**

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It is mostly or meant to be non-fictional by definition, as it is recorded programs which are sometimes pre-scripted and sometimes unscripted. It pretends to depict real people in real life situations for at least partly entertainment purposes. Reality television evolved from Radio game shows and talent shows. From then reality programming has come through a long way today it includes unscripted dramas, lifestyle change shows, talent hunt shows. I was fortunate enough to work for the pioneers, who brought the concept of reality shows to Indian Television. Since then, there have been more than hundred reality shows which aired on various channels in India. Thus, we will look at the concepts, transformation aspects and most importantly how reality programming is programmed and its technicalities.

### **8.2.1 Scripted or Non-scripted:**

Reality shows often have a host or anchor, who narrates the story or establishes what's going to happen. Reality programming is characterized as a real-life event rather than an imagination of the producer. Traditionally and technically, production wise all reality programming shows are pre-recorded. But with the digital convergence this aspect is gradually changing, although the show might or might not be pre-scripted but it can be streamed live, in real time. This type of programming is more transparent but the chances of errors are extremely high as well as there is no retake or post edit which can be done. Presenting real people in real life scenarios, are curtailing conditions of the audience, so that they feel connected to the reality programme. Most of these audiences strive to gratify their need for entertainment. If we look at hard core news programming which are also similar in format which might be presented in an entertaining way but are information centric and deliver serious information. Although today there are some channels which even sensationalize serious information and indulge in yellow journalism to add entertainment factor to the programme.

### **8.2.2 News related reality terms:**

There are some news-related reality terminologies that need to be understood, such as infotainment, which is a sum of Information + Entertainment. This type of programming includes the presentation of soft news topics keeping in mind the entertainment values for the audience. A soft news consists of things of interest, which has less impact on you, for example a travel, eatery show, you might be interested in watching new food items or places to eat but it might not have a major effect on your life on the other hand hard news directly impacts your world. Shows which

have higher sensational aspects than informative ones in infotainment can be known as tabloid television. “Sensational news is coverage of unexpected events; these events have some inherent entertainment value” as explained by Hofstetter and Dozier.

### **8.2.3 Tabloid and Trash:**

If we dive into the aspects of reality programming, we get to understand the way it gets produced, particularly the production and shoot. It might be situated at real locations, or in a studio, or uses hidden cameras. Essentially reality programming is supposed to be capturing everything as it happens. Technically and production wise often that might not be the case. Tabloid programs often focus on extraordinary things that mean to ordinary people to add spice and entertainment. The idea is to do something unpredictable to generate curiosity in the audience. Another sin associated with reality television which contains non-news factors, known as “Trash TV”, Trash TV might be attention grabbing but does not include both soft news or hard news. Where there is certainly nothing “new” but how it finds a way to distort the truth. Trash TV is mostly non-reputable since it includes lewdness, lust and lechery. Trash is thus not similar to Tabloid programming. As trash does not fall under the category of Infotainment, as there is absolutely no information but entertainment exclusively, but even that entertainment breeds entirely on downgrading people rather than human insight. These programs exploit, debase and disrespect the subject, person or people rather than covering them, and thus it degrades itself as trash. Few years ago, our professor asked our class to write about a popular road style trash reality show. What are our opinions on it? Everyone started writing about the show, critiquing it and grilled the show, and at the end the professor said, whatever you have written, stop behaving like it. Well, it was just a technique to calm the class and to tell them how not to behave. That day we realized that sometimes unconsciously how “trashy” we behave and get entertained. Thus, as a media professional if we are asked to make or work for a tabloid or trash TV. Then keep two things in mind – Is this label an actual signifier of the show’s content. Do the people who applied for the show are aware and understand the implications and consequences of it (what’s going to happen to or with them). Sometimes there is a very thin line between a tabloid and trash. Hence there is another way of differentiating tabloid and trash, by applying a standard of significance, A threshold which itself becomes the line of differentiation. As S. Elizabeth Bird states, “A tabloids may provide a great deal of 'trivia' that is regarded by their audiences as 'important information,' such as human interest (lifestyle reality shows) and stories of celebrities which given viable lessons of life “ (orlik, 2000). These tabloids produce some insight that is eventually beneficial to the audience. Whereas trash on the other hand is nothing but quantified glimpses of miserable abnormality of the people in that program. There is absolutely no life lesson or insights. It only caters to momentary voyeuristic thrills. Hence in simple terms, if the viewers gain some insights and learn something about real people and events, that is infotainment. If the show or programming is added with spice (Masala) to sensationalize it, it is a tabloid form of infotainment. Whereas if the



audience is just exposed to the exploitation or humiliation of humans, with whom they don't identify with, the program is trash.

#### **8.2.4 Shock Tv and Keyhole TV:**

##### **Shock TV:**

“Shock” is an extreme variation of trash phenomenon, it bypasses the entertainment and works on sheer offensiveness of its subject to grab attention of the viewers. Hence shock programming is considered odious by many advertisers and agencies. Thus, it is mostly limited to off hours on lower scaled stations and channels.

##### **Keyhole TV:**

It is a show which uses a “hidden camera’ or personal camera, like a spy, that captures popular or ordinary people in embarrassing, absurd or laughable situations. This type of content is also being used by digital content creators, like prank videos and spy cam videos. For example, “Just for Laugh Gags”. Sometimes, Keyhole has the potential to bring out minor insights of human flaws. Although keyhole programming may be foolish, but it is rarely harmful, offensive or sexually exploitative. It leans more towards family fare with which the majority of advertisers and agencies feel comfortable with. The difference between keyhole and trash is Keyhole TV teases its subjects without ridiculing or downgrading them. Some RJ's tease their listeners with keyhole or prank phone calls which are mostly funny and unharmed, but few of them even use shock tactics that sometimes draw FCC sanctions. As radio does not offer visual content, it does not alter the difference between soft news, tabloid, keyhole, trash and shock that we can analyze in TV.

#### **8.2.5 Reality Programming in India:**

Reality Programming specially in Indian context might sometimes use multiple programming formats in a single show, for example an infotainment shows sometimes get deviated into tabloid or in some cases even trash or shock. Sometimes it is done intentionally, sometimes it happens apparently and unknowingly on sets, but at the end of the day the editor and the producer have the control over what will actual get published. Hence if it's edited, then it cannot be unconscious.

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### **8.3 REALITY PROGRAMMING IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES**

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If we talk about reality on digital media, often it is a user generated content or made by non-media professionals, although the nature of digital media usually might appear board and open minded, it still lacks on proper guidelines, hence it can often backfire, as well as virality of the digital media makes the improper use of it extremely dangerous. There are a lot of creators who make offensive, abusive content on real people in real situations. Like prank videos and spy videos. Sometimes these videos fall under the categories of keyhole, trash and shock. Hence while making

these, one should be aware of the consequences of it, as it may defame someone without their consent. Hence even if one shoots a video like that should take the consent of the subject before uploading and publishing it, otherwise it might fall under punishable offense or even crime. Putting a hidden camera in someone's personal space is a crime itself. Hence an innocent mistake can also lead to a criminal offense. As there are limited guidelines about producing these types of content, even there are less laws to protect the convicted. Even silly mistakes like driving a bike without a helmet, what one essentially is doing is creating evidence against themselves.

### **8.3.1 Business gratification in reality programming:**

Now let us look at reality programming from a business gratification perspective, the production cost of television and radio reality programming is less or often half the cost of the normal 30 min serial cost. Hence the overall budget of the show is lesser in comparison, but sometimes it's not the case, some reality shows invite celebrity guests, sometimes multiple guests which eventually increases the production cost drastically. Often these celebrities come for the programming as a barter for the promotion of their movies/songs or shows. Some of the reality shows get very basic ratings and TVT. Achieving audience figures might not ensure financial successes, because the shows content also matters, even "Trash" and "Shock" TV programs guarantee higher audience viewership, but gradually decline as the advertisers start stepping back due to the increasing shock or trash value required to retain the audience numbers.

### **8.3.2 Reality Genres:**

Majority of the reality shows fit into these categories and genres:

1. News Featurettes
2. Single-Theme Magazines
3. Daily Syndicated News Magazines
4. Talk Shows
5. Game Show
6. Court Shows
7. Criminal Posters
8. Video Verite
9. Keyhole Shows
10. Pseudo sports
11. Business Development Show
12. Skill Enhancing show

### 8.3.3 Digital Convergence:

Digital convergence in Contemporary reality shows is playing a prominent role, for example Shark tank India 2021-2022 has gained a lot of critical acclamations and appreciation from the audience as well as the critics. The show became extremely popular and was a financial success even before it went on air, as the advertised brand’s owners were part of the show, as well as it also attracted other major sponsors like Upgrad and Flipkart. The Show not only gained audience views on just TV but also on digital platforms such as sonyLiv app as well as its short videos or snippets on YouTube as well.

### 8.3.4 Inclusiveness:

The Digital convergence is killing the exclusiveness of the content of TV, which might have negative impact but if we see it from the other angle, it is actually helping the show and attracting greater audience. The people who were unable to watch their favourite shows at the particular time it is scheduled to air on TV, can watch that show at a time which is to their own convenience, even they can pause and resume and watch the show in pieces or watch it in a stretch, as the time and interest allows, and thus it is a win-win situation for both business gratification as well as audience gratification. This has also increased the demand of the content, as the concept of binge watching is on the rise, Binge watching is watching a serial, show or series, episode after episode in continuation. As the digital media has made us impatient overall, many of the viewers try to binge watch their favourite shows. As business point of view these shows are not just helping the producers make money through TV but also from the premium subscriptions of the apps and OTT platforms. The popularity of show gives the viewers something to talk about, and “Memers” makes it more interesting by taking a piece of the content and giving it another perspective (mostly in a funny way). Which eventually promotes the show. The presence of digital media platforms is increasing rapidly and is being recognized by major producers as well. Just think about, how many competitive shows are asking the Audience to download an App for voting and supporting. One of the most popular prime time reality shows – “The Kapil Sharma Show” has even started a segment called Post ka Post mortem which includes social media posts of celebrities and the funny comments on it.

### Check your progress:

1. What is Reality programming?

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2. What are Trash and Tabloids?

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3. Explain reality Programming in the digital age.

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## **8.4 REALITY PRODUCTION**

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How reality programming is produced, like any other program production reality shows are also divided into various production departments. Each department has various sub categories. The production structure depends on program to program. But there are few basic departments that have to be there in any production, and we will look at a general reality production's departments, positions, roles and tasks. First of all, there is a pre-production team which is further divided into three segments, The scripting and story, producers' team, and marketing team. The Scripting team starts working on an idea and concept, and tries to develop a narrative or format. This team is usually different from the writing team of serials and daily soap shows. Because many times the show is not completely scripted, this team attempts to shape the concept into a story and gives the show a structure or frame of reference. It can be seen as live scripting, where the script changes simultaneously in the direction the show is going. Then the production team starts looking for the set's designers, studios, locations, plan auditions, judges, talents and whatever might be required for the shoot. The marketing team then prepares a sales pitch and starts pitching to get advertisers and sponsors. This team negotiates with the advertisers or agency to get the best deal and at least enough funds to start the production of the show. Sometimes some advertisers also join in during or even after the production stage. Production stage is where the real action begins

Reality in reality programming, although reality as a concept is often a subjective matter, but there is always a "Reality team" in reality shows, this team captures the reality aspect of a subject, person or contestant. They try to bring out the background story of the person, this team goes and shoots in the real places or hires local freelance video shoots if the hometown of the contestant or participant is far.

### **8.4.1 Production stage:**

Then there is the production manager and his team. This is the most laborious job, as to manage logistics, contestants and their food and accommodation, transport, to smallest props. The production manager is allocated with limited daily, weekly or monthly budgets, in which they have to manage everything. This team has to arrive earliest at the set to manage the situation and leave the Set last, to check if everything is wind up or not. The job does not end here, the production manager has to collect all the recorded data of the shoot and deliver it to the editors, where the

production manager has to make sure that the data has been transferred to the system, and can be emptied and used on the next day or next shoot day.

Then there is a creative team which looks at all the creative aspects, such as what can be added and scripting spontaneously according to the situation, what will be the theme of the episode and what type of costume will be required. Costumes, Hair and makeup, art and some other departments are the same as for films.

Camera and Direction Department. Usually there are multiple cameras used in reality programming, in a typical talent hunt reality show there are about 8 to 10 cameras, which run simultaneously, from which 5-6 camera's get recorded in a storage system. Because most of the show is recorded live on the set, and usually there are no retakes, hence there has to be multiple cameras from multiple angles. Alongside the director sits a switcher, who has a very big screen or a tv, where he sees the live footage from all the 10 cameras and selects which 5 camera angles and shots looks the best. You may think why not record data from all the camera's, it is possible but it consumes almost double the storage and it gets difficult for the editor to work on 10 different timelines. Hence this process is also called live editing, where the basic camera shots are selected live backstage and even there are colour correctors in that dark room who match the exposure and the colours of all ten cameras then and there. The Main seat at the centre is always reserved for the Director, with whom the timesheet writer sits, often it takes more than 3 hours to shoot a single episode of the show, but what the final episode which airs on the TV is of about 45-50mins with ad break links, now the timecode writer notes the real time, as well as time on the timeline on the screen, and also writes the peak points of the show, note if something interesting is happening. It helps the editors to understand what they have to give emphasis on. There is someone from the creative team, who checks the continuity. Like movies often the program is not shot in a sequenced manner as shown on air. Most episodes are shot on a single shoot day. As to cut the cost of booking the studios for multiple days. The shoot happens in continuity usually for about 15 hours to 18 hours, off course with meal breaks. The Director is the important person on set, Here the director sits backstage in a dark room, where only few technical people can enter. without his permission nothing can be moved on the set, when the camera is rolling. The Director has a mic by which he gives instructions to everyone on the set, from art department, contestant to judges and even the audience as to when to smile or clap. He monitors the footage from all the cameras, commands the switcher to select the best angles and shots. But if you are working in any department, there margin of error is extremely low, one mistake and you can be out. As the reality programming happens live, and if by anyone's mistake something goes wrong it is difficult to be rectified, and even retakes require time which again will increase the cost of studio rent, staff and judges' fees.

### 8.4.2 Post Production in Reality Programming:

Post-production department saves the data in a centralized server where multiple editors can work on the same show, simultaneously. Usually these editors work on different episodes. This department is headed by the senior editor who is responsible for delivering the final output on a given deadline. As discussed, earlier Tv editing has to be quick and on short deadlines, most of the editors work on shifts, often individual editors work in multiple shifts and even sleep at the editing rooms or places, to reduce the time to travel back and forth from home. The editing department syncs all the footage from different recorded cameras with the processed audio. Then it goes through the typical editing process. The editor has the power to switch the sequence of the show. Then the final episodes are delivered to the channel for publishing.

#### Check your progress:

1. Discuss the production stage in detail

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2. Explain reality production

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3. Explain reality programming and post production

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## 8.5 LET'S SUM UP

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Reality programming has faced significant criticism along with its rise in popularity. Critics argue that reality programming do not precisely reflect reality, be it indirectly where the subjects, person, or contestant being placed in staged situations, or directly, its deceptive, it misleading the audience through the use of editing, participants being trained to act as told, storylines created before the actual time, scenes being designed and staged. Few of these programs are accused of being biased towards the favourite participant or underdog to win. Reality programming is often criticised for, that it is intended to humiliate, downgrade or exploit participants, and even glamorize vulgarity.

In Indian reality shows, in 2000's to about mid 2010's, the reality shows became popular for becoming brutal, the judges used to thrash the participant or contestant for making mistakes. Which had a potential to

scar them for life and bring their morale down. Sometimes comic characters are purposely invited to insult them and to be made fun of, but these characters are made aware of and usually paid well for it. But when it is real exploitation then it becomes a problem. Especially in Children's reality programming, this was a serious criticism and issue. But from about half a decade the producers realized this type of brutality was seen negatively by the audience and the advertiser. So now, if you observe, the comments by the judges are mostly positive and well planned and stated.

It is important as a media professional or critic of media to understand that any kind of media, be it films, shows or even reality programming is just a representation rather than reality.

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## **8.6 QUESTIONS**

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1. Are all reality programs scripted? Explain.
2. Explain the Shock Tv and Keyhole Tv with examples.
3. What is Business gratification in reality programming?
4. Explain the Production Process of reality Tv.
5. Explain the process of Postproduction in Reality Programming.

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## **8.7 REFERENCES**

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## DEPICTION ANALYSIS

### Unit Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Depiction and Representation
  - 9.2.1 Variation in Depiction and its cultivation
  - 9.2.2 Questions and Depiction Derived lessons
- 9.3 Actions and Consequences
  - 9.3.1 Sexual Consequences
  - 9.3.2 Violence Consequences
  - 9.3.3 Programming for children
  - 9.3.4 Feeling of Deprivation
- 9.4 Hegemony
  - 9.4.1 Hegemony in digital media
- 9.5 Let's sum up
- 9.6 Questions
- 9.7 References

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding what is Depiction
- Learning about actions and consequences
- How hegemony play a major role in depiction

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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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As we studied in the previous chapter, reality programming filters reality into an entertainment centric matter or patterns, which provide the audience with a narrow view of their world, which is an augmented vision. It may be sensationalized and often change to unusual. From these glimpses of media, the audience retain the correct or flawed lessons about reality, of what other people are doing in their life. Not just reality programming but almost all types of programming teach something to the audience in some or the other ways. Before diving into the topic, let us understand the definition of depiction. "Depiction is defined as a representation in words or images of someone or something."



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## 9.2 DEPICTION AND REPRESENTATION

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Again, every content of media is a representation, be it in a literary form or visual form. Representation of people, it can be real people, fictional characters or even an object. Early representation studies and theories looked at literary forms of art, then further got extended to aesthetics of paintings and crafts. The modern theories of representation deal with the social and cultural aspects of depictions. When we depict something or someone, we induce some personality or human characteristic to them. Even in the advertising the product is given a personality to connect to its target audience and build a rapport with them, the process of adding personality is nothing but looking at objects or characters as a person, or a human being, by which the audience can connect, relate and socialize with it. "People talk with People" rather than gadgets or objects. For example, you don't talk to your I-phone or Google, you converse with Siri or Alexa, which is basically a female assistant. Hence it is important to understand the depiction and analyze what its implications are. Sometimes the media producers might not intentionally add the instructions for its audience. But the audience might pick or gain information about. In other words, the content producers encode a message which contains some depictions, these depictions contain some information which is decoded by the audience. Here the process of meaning creation happens inside the viewer's mind. The producer might depict something but the information or that's being retrieved from it might not be from the producer itself.

### 9.2.1 Variation in Depiction and its cultivation:

There is a lot of variations and diversity in depiction and its cultivation, generally electronic media producer does not mean to set out or infuse some lessons for the audience, their whole interest is rather on generating a piece of content that will be grab the eye/attention of the audience which will eventually be financially viable, that the content gets created on the limited budget that is set and get proper viewership count, that eventually converts into profit making.

There are mandated children programming on almost every type of media, where the content of media should have educational and informational values for the children, it is often abided by the law and in the form of Acts. It is basically designed to implant some information about the culture or the society which they live in and provide a life lesson. Which fills up the educational and informational needs. Often there are restrictions involved when it comes to programming and content made for kids. But it is not just limited to children's programming. Every piece of media that is received by the audience carries a possible diversity of teachings and educational values that may get implanted deeply in the minds of the audience. By this school of thought, every viewer is a student and every piece of content is a teacher. Often these curious students take up a lesson which the programme did not intend to convey. Various diverse audience groups will get engaged on varied levels or in different arenas of meaning, as it depends on their social status, experience, and interests. The Cultivation effect of these contents affects more to the

audience who are constantly engaged with it. In this process of cultivation, the viewer brings a lot of personal aspects to work.

### 9.2.2 Questions and Depiction Derived lessons:

Now the questions that arises by which depiction-derived lessons spring is as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of our actual physical world? What we have, don't have or wish to have? This is basically a reality check of our primary surrounding and environment. It includes materialistic and non-materialistic things.
2. What is society like? how people act or behave in our society. Society itself is an extremely vast and diverse concept. This society is formed by people who are the members of the society and in return often the society dictates how the members or people of the society behave. Society includes a lot of aspects, such as physical location, proximity, demographic, psychographics and behavioural aspects.
3. What are the impact and consequence of our action? This question is of great important, desire and interests are mostly within a person's mind, but behaviour and actions are both psychological and physical phenomenon. The actions can produce impact and consequences. So before looking it inversely let us understand the actions first, actions are usually in accordance to the society. One acts according to its society. If we do something good, is there a positive reinforcement? Or if we do something bad will there be a punishment or any consequences? The good or bad, reinforcement or punishment is taken from the previous question, what is society like. For example – in some societies teasing someone might be seen as bad and wrong, whereas in others it might be reinforced and encouraged.
4. What are our responsibilities toward our society? mass communication is criticized for bringing a sense of exclusion rather than participation. Mass communication is a medium which is larger audience centric, where the individual needs of people and society are downsized for the greater good of mass. Traditionally the electronic media has been divergent in nature, and proliferates depictions from a vast variety of societies. Some societies are depicted as exclusive and there are higher barriers to entry or participation. But with digital convergence this is eventually changing at certain levels, as what once looked as exclusion is changing to participation. When a person becomes a part of a society they have to behave, act and take responsibilities towards the society. The aim is the betterment of society. For example, it can protect members of society from harmful content. Hence along with its impact and consequence of the actions, the acts of responsibilities are also important.

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## 9.3 ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

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There are various consequences which flow through our actions. such as, Sexual Consequences, Media and television in particular became a medium for sex education, as the influence of religion and family unit strayed far away from sexual topics.

### 9.3.1 Sexual Consequences:

Media took the role of sex educator, although the media did not intend this position, but was appointed anyways. The medium is often cursed for giving negative depiction of sex. As Diana Workman States that "rather than enlightening the audience, television serves to more deeply entrench discomfort about sex and contributes to continued ignorance in society about love, sex, and responsibility." She also discovered that in television particularly, there were number of time sexual intercourse was suggested, but also even more time range of "discouraged sexual practices were suggested". The HIV/AIDS crisis is not often raised for discussion beyond news and occasional public service advertising. More common sexual related topics are sexual relationships troubles with worries about pregnancy and STDs, rather than safe sex, contraception and its methods and implications, and education, which are barely discussed.

These media depictions print fear and negatively about sex and its consequences in the audience's mind. But with the digital media this discomfort factor is slowly decreasing, as the audience are getting more exposure to sexually inclined content. Also, digital media is catering mostly in personalised way, to individuals that shyness factor of watching a sexually informative content in front of family members are not there. But still there are perspectives involved, many a time it is depicted if a man or a boy have sex before marriage is raised and encouraged by the peers and "society". Whereas if a female does that is depicted negatively. Although the media reflects reality it often also teaches some negative lessons. It is not limited to sexual consequences, but it is relatable to inter-caste, inter-religion marriages, Age difference between the partners, etc.

### 9.3.2 Violence Consequences:

Violence Consequences, Sex and violence becomes synonyms in the media and specially television language. Real world violence is bloody, dirty and painful as it leads to misery and does not solve the problems rather makes it worse. But it is seen that the media often becomes a scapegoat and is blamed for its violence. But if we closely think about it, it's just the opposite, it's already too antiseptic. Traditionally the problem with TV violence was that it was not violent enough. Due to the strict guidelines which these mediums follows; a lot of violent content gets filtered out. Just like peel/skin of the fruits, which are peeled out which often contain roughage and nutritious values. Similarly, the violence in the media might contain important lessons. Even this is getting changed gradually with time and digital rise. As the viewers are getting exposed to unfiltered violence and even the audience are actively watching contents

like these. But when it comes to the children watching violent content on TV, the parents and the society get very protective. To some extent this is valid and expected as we know about the BooBoo Doll experience and the potential of media to influence behaviour. But if we see it from another point of view, watching these content can make the kids aware of the implications and consequences of violence. Thus, there are some key questions that need to be understood and answered. First being that – is there adequate warning by the producer, so that everyone in the distribution chain such as advertiser, network, station, theatre, and consumer can decide to accept or reject the content? [Under Congressional pressure, the broadcast networks initiated a more formalized on-air warning system in the Fall of 1993.] and there are various bodies and networks which follow various formalization systems for broadcasting, distribution and consumption of these contents. Secondly, Is the violence lacking any valid reason or purpose and which can lead to harmful effects. In simple words, is the violence important for the narrative, plot or the script and are there major consequences, like unambiguous and sure shot reaction to this violence. The third question that needs to be answered is, does the content portray violence as a desirable (irreplaceable) consequence or solution to a problem. If yes, then legitimization of these content gets more difficult. As there will be a lack of options. The Fourth question is, is there only punishment for depicting acts of violence without any good reason, or are such acts encouraged or rewarded? The fifth question is quite interesting, are heroes/protagonists and villains/antagonists clearly differentiated and portrayed precisely, so that the consequences happening to those characters can be easily measured and justified. In many contemporary movies the line between the protagonist and antagonist are getting blurred, some movies depict the story from the villain's point of view, most commonly in the marvel movies, the character of "Thanos" (An Alien , who wants to vanish half population of every creature) is shown that he wants to create a balance in universe and for that matter all the villains of all the spiderman movies in the latest movie spiderman - no way home (every villain has story about why they became bad and seeking redemption). Even in the movie Joker, that background story of the Joker tries to justify the violence that he creates and even gratify that violence. Now the last question remains, is there no consequences or punishment, or if the protagonist and antagonists are not clearly defined. So is there some other higher purpose to be catered through the use of violence in the plot, script or narrative.

Even in News programming, the consequences of violence and related events are important considerations. The shorter, crispier and increased infotainment oriented the news become, the more difficult it is to go beyond the event to establish its impact. Ironically the most sensationalize news programming the more popular the channels are in India.

### **9.3.3 Programming for children:**

When we talk about programming for children, we can not forget Anime, Cartoons. Although the narrative of the cartoon programs aims to serve good values, the depictions often are problematic. The lessons which the

kids are learning subconsciously is also a very important factor, as the children won't challenge the depiction, but might internalize information which the depiction is released. For example, in most of the cartoons (specially) in India, a small boy will be shown as heroic, fighting bad guys, saving his friend, asking girls to step backwards. This can be problematic as the programming is disseminating that when there is danger, girls need to be protected. On the other hand if we see Girl (female) characters are usually depicted as beautiful, fragile and waiting to be saved. From a very small age the girls are made to internalize that if they are not slim and beautiful not one will get attracted to them, and in tough times, they won't be capable to protect themselves

#### **9.3.4 Feeling of Deprivation:**

As Marshall McLuhan explained, "a refrigerator can be a revolutionary symbol of deprivation to people who have no refrigerators' ". This has become more relevant in today's context, where most of the social media is breeding on. The unending greed of the audience/users which can never be satisfied. In social media posts, the users upload something that is socially desirable, that if the other person sees, will make him want it. It is making the users so materialistic that the happiness of having a material is short spanned, downsized by the recognition or appreciation received for the achievement or purchased from others. If we dive deeper into it, the audience, user or consumer whatever you may call, we all are just merging with the algorithm. As the digital media premise on the user data, which includes personal information, insights and data. Data is a strong thing but remember it is a quantitative term. Hence it can bring us down to mere numbers. Coming back to the topic of feeling of deprivation, social media will do its best to make sure that you feel deprived and use the medium more to fill up that feeling of deprivation, then once the algorithm spots what it is that you feel deprived of, then it will start selling you the same thing. What we need to understand is, it is not a gratifying solution or a goal but a process, a loop in which the user keeps falling repeatedly. For example, if you upload a picture with your new smartphone, someone in your friend list wanted to buy the same phone but was unable to purchase it due to some reason. hence feel deprived. Even for you it will be a short-term gratification because after a short span of time, you will look at someone else's picture and feel deprived yourself. The deprivation might not be only about physical things but psychological, emotional, love and feeling of compassion and anything.

As Terry Williams explains that many poor children learn they are poor by watching television, "At first the kids are appalled," he reports. "These kids get irritated and angry at the idea of being poor. We cannot neglect the fact that the content is mostly made with respect to business gratification. The program seeks advertisers, the advertisers seek customers, the customers seek gratification from the program as well as advertised products. Hence the media is directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally selling something to someone. The commodity can be an object, idea or political ideology.

**Check your progress:**

1. Describe Depiction?

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2. What are the questions that arise by which depiction-derived lessons spring?

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3. Describe Sexual Consequences.

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**9.4 HEGEMONY**

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As John Fiske defined hegemony (control by one country, organization, system, etc. over other countries, etc. within a particular group) “as the process by which the subordinates are led to consent to the system that subordinates them”. This critical school of thought is influenced by Marxism, where the capitalist/bourgeoisie (media producers) controls the proletariat or workers (viewers), this eventually becomes a system. This is gained when the „consent“ to perceive the social system and its routine embodiments as „common sense. The process is to normalize something that the audience won’t even feel the necessity to challenge it. This social system leads to generalization, for example how we perceive if someone is rich, might be by looks, personality or surname. Character Surname’s like Oberoi or Kapoor are depicted as rich in the Indian Tv and movies. This generalized depiction often leads to stereotypes. Hegemonic portrayals often present contradictory social lessons, which varies on which audience is reading or watching the program content. If we see it from the Marxist point of view, the media as an industry is a capitalistic system, which is driven by economic and financial structures. Hence it does its best to gain maximum capital output. Like SWIFT which is a financial network across 200 countries which is led and controlled by America and the European Union, major publishing, broadcasting, studios, media organizations and labels are owned by American and European countries. Thus, the concept of western lifestyle as the modern way (correct way) of living is so proliferated through media, that many people worldwide feel deprived of the glorified life in the west. Weaker countries look up to these countries as savior of the world, as depicted in the movies. But if we see it historically, we might find it contrary. The frequent depiction of the

physical pristine yet frustratingly unachievable life-style that bluntly

taunts and teases the audience. These depictions create needs and wants in the audience, which is difficult and, in some cases, unattainable. If we see it from the other side, most of the content writers live there, and the directors and producers find it financially viable and climatically easier to shoot there.

#### **9.4.1 Hegemony in digital media:**

Hegemony in digital media - If we look at major social media networks which again belong to or owned by the hegemonic system. These organizations are in for making money, although sometimes it might disguise users as user generated content. Intentionally or unintentionally most audiences fall for this. In a digital world where users are the content creator and consumer, which makes them subordinate to the system which is created by the subordinate itself, but actually might be controlled by superior hegemony. In simple words, the users themselves become both the subordinate and the system on a particular level. For example, a user might trend a fashion style which becomes a fad and extremely common. But from where does the primary user get influenced? On the surface it might look that user generated content is beyond boundaries or limitations but even in that there are guidelines to be followed. For example – YouTube has a special consent form that needs to be filled before you upload a video, which the user has to fill in according to laws for YouTube. If the creator does not abide by the rules, the content might get taken out, or the channel might get banned. This is not limited to YouTube but for that instance all the social media sites. This is to understand that there is a superior non-superficial supervision. Also, there are all additional laws, rules and ethics of the place from which the creator belongs. Straying away from it might get the creator in mild-serious troubles. The proximity of the native place and the kind of society for which the content is created is of huge prominence. What is society like? A person can fear small towns or metro cities if they don't have firsthand experience and have seen unchallenged negative media depictions. Similarly, it can be the case with transgenders as well, without any actual personal experience, sometimes people believe or create an opinion based on the depiction or representations put forth by the media. Though there might be some relevance to depiction of media, its depiction might contain the values experienced by media producers or writers, it might have been taught by the elders (from their own experience) but it does not depict whole reality, just a brief part of it. But it often leads to stereotypes. Most of the audience do not question or challenge the depictions in films and televisions, hence it can sometimes mislead. This phenomenon is more of a social teaching rather than a physical environment, actual world, experiential one. Here the content becomes a social learning medium. Although in terms of digital media the users somewhat are aware and as the medium is interactive, the viewer can question, challenge or even suggest the representations, depictions and portrayals.

**Check your progress:**

1. Discuss hegemony according to John Fiske

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2. Explain the meaning of hegemony and media

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3. Explain the feeling of deprivation from Marshall McLuhan’s point of view.

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**9.5 LET’S SUM UP**

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To sum it up, media acts as a teacher, departing social lessons through its depictions. These Depictions are analyzed in the minds of the audience, where a lot of factors affect the analysis. All this process happens in various societies according to which the members take actions, these actions generate impact and consequence. Which are thus analyzed by the funnel of society itself. And thus, reward or punish the actions accordingly. In return these aspects will again be followed by the society and reflected in the media depictions. There needs to be content which causes mutation to this process.

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**9.6 QUESTIONS**

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1. Explain Depiction in Media.
2. What is the difference between depiction and representation?
3. What are Violence Consequences?
4. How does programming for children affect children?
5. Explain Hegemony in the digital age with suitable examples.



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## 9.7 REFERENCES

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## STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

### Unit Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Symbols and Archetype
- 10.3 Ritual, Mystique and Myth
- 10.4 Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis
  - 10.4.1 How synthesis is generated?
- 10.5 Semiotics
- 10.6 Let's sum up
- 10.7 Questions
- 10.8 References

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Application of Symbols and Archetype in electronic media
- Analysis of ritual, mystique and myth
- Usage of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in electronic media
- Semiotics

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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According to media theorists, radio and television do not truly reflect reality, but rather shape and control it into structured patterns for effective transmission. With this in mind, let's take a look at some of the shaping technologies that produce these electronic content layouts. However, as we saw in the previous chapter with our depiction analysis, we must understand right away that the structures and meanings assumed by producers may be miscoded or even counter code by audience members using their own frames of reference and perceptual knowledge.

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### 10.2 SYMBOLS AND ARCHETYPE

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Individual units that can be isolated or merged to carry and incorporate meaning are the primary building blocks for any codes. Symbols are the traditional name for these components. Symbols "reflect a common core of interest, need, and experience" among humans

The verbal and visual symbol grammars are the most common. All human connection, as Joshua Meyrowitz points out, requires two forms of

symbols: verbal communication and graphic emotions. Expressions are more direct and unclear, more natural but less clear than linguistic claims, like photos without subtitles. Expressions originate from a person's mouth; they reveal how they "truly feel" and what they're like. However, a contract cannot be formed on a wink and a smile. The meanings of expressions are frequently lost unless words are employed to clarify them. When a society's range of experience is limited, words are less necessary.

In contrast to verbal grammar, pictorial grammar necessitates less receiver expertise. However, it lacks the certainty of meaning that most verbal languages provide. As a result, with predominantly graphic media like television, the chances of misinterpretation grow. As the media profession expands into the worldwide economy, it is important to pay close attention to what the camera-captured photos may imply. We can change the language words in a soundtrack, but the original graphic meanings will remain the same. To North American audiences, a picture of someone offering flowers to a woman, for example, may imply a kind gesture. However, as advertising expert Florence Friedman points out, it is a metaphor for death in some Arab countries. "Television viewing is a complicated, multidimensional symbolic experience," Professors Lembo and Tucker remind us, and one whose meaning can hardly be taken for granted because of the range of its pictorial interpretation.

Symbols, whether verbal or graphical, can also be classified as personal, societal, or archetypal.



**Fig: 1** Courtesy: National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia

With reference to the above figure Juan Valdez (the owner of the Juan Valdez Café) as a social icon. The meaning of social symbols is perhaps most constant within the culture in which they were created. When symbols crossover cultures and eras while maintaining their basic meaning, they are called archetypes. Many social symbols, in fact, are based on underlying, long-lasting archetypes, which are subsequently given more distinctive interpretations by each society.

Take, for example, the concept of comedy. An ancient Greek publication, the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, "sets forth all the crucial information concerning comedy in approximately a page and a half," according to Northrop Frye. The *Tractatus*, according to Frye, offers three types of comedic characters:

1. The alazons, or imposters, who claim to be more than they are, "but they are more often characterised by a lack of self-knowledge than by hypocrisy."
2. The eirons, or self-deprecatory, who make themselves invulnerable by criticising themselves before others may take advantage of the situation. "A hero, who is an eiron figure because the writer tends to play him down and make him fairly neutral and unformed in character, is important to this category."
3. The buffoons, or bomolochoi, "whose role is to raise the festive mood rather than add to the plot. This character is established with comic habits such as malapropism (use of an inaccurate term in place of a homophones word, resulting in a nonsensical, sometimes funny utterance) or foreign accents."

Aristotle adds a fourth category to the three categories mentioned in the *Tractatus*:

4. The agroikos, who, depending on the situation, can be aggressive, unsophisticated, or serious. Also, variation can be seen in the character as a miserly, arrogant, or humourless character whose job is that of the refuser of celebration, the spoilsport who seeks to stop the enjoyment. The simple, even rustic characters who, in their purity, typically reflect the simplistic idea are known as unsophisticated types. The third type of agroikos behaviour is of a character from a circus who is a straight guy who enables the humour to bounce off him, thus to speak.

Situation comedies and humorous advertising both reflect these stereotypes. Brad is the classic eiron in the following *Time Magazine* commercial, for example, whose identity is of a sad model for anyone who refuses to read *Time*. Alazon Phyllis boosts her own self-esteem by boasting about how much she's sacrificing for him by making that decision. As she criticizes the depths to which this literary hunger has brought her, Phyllis gradually changes into a surly agroikos. Time can bask in Phyl's overpraise without appearing arrogant thanks to this hilarious exaggeration.

(Background SFX: Restaurant Clatter)

Brad : What's the occasion, Phyllis? This is our favourite restaurant.

Phyl : Brad, I have a very important message for you.

Brad : No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no

Phyl : This is the most difficult thing I've ever had to do.

Brad : Oh no!

Phyl : Believe me when I say that this is the best option for both of us.

Brad : Hey, you met Mom and everything.

Phyl : Brad, you know how you've always disliked the fact that I'm funny, bright, and urbane?

Brad : Oh no, I'm sorry, but I don't have any more.

Phyl : And how stupid did you feel because I was so well informed about the issues that touch our lives on a daily basis?

Brad : It was fantastic. I enjoyed. Stupid!

Phyl : Well, I know how to address the problem.

Brad : Phyl, don't say anything.

Yes, Phyl. I've decided to stop reading TIME magazine.

Brad : Ohhhhh, (utterly blank). What?

Phyl : Yes, Brad. TIME, and only TIME, gave me the appealing personality that you avoided.

Brad : TIME?

Phyl : Every week, I flew there and drank from the depths of its thriving literary basin.

Brad : Do you mean TIME magazine?

Phyl : It's been a week since I've had it.

Brad : Do you mean the monthly magazine TIME?

Phyl : Ask about the latest developments in business, medicine, religion, art, and education.

Brad : What's going on, Phyl?

Phyl : I'm not sure, I don't have the slightest idea!

Brad : Oh, Phillies, you mean....

Phyl : Yes! I'm the same empty-headed dimwit you are if I don't have TIME.

Brad : (hurriedly) Oh, I adore you.

(Courtesy: Dick Orkin)

Of all, these hilarious archetypal symbols aren't just for advertising. They can also help comedians get momentum. This is likely most evident in group comedies like *Cheers*; an American comedy series, which seem to mimic Frye's observations of ancient Greek dramatic theory almost exactly. Consider the numerous exchanges between Cliff, the know-it-all mailman, and Norm, the tubby accountant who openly acknowledges his own weaknesses and failures. "The plethora of hilarious situations in which one character blissfully address [Cliff] while another makes sarcastic asides to the audience [Norm] reveal the contest of eiron and alazon in its purest form, as well as show that the audience is sympathetic to the eiron side," Frye says.

To put it another way, viewers prefer eiron Norm than alazon Cliff. Frye's description of their interaction was written more than thirty years before *Cheers* was created, yet it's still relevant because both it and the series are founded on the same persistent set of archetypal symbols (refer fig. 2).

*Cheers* proprietor and hero-figure Sam Malone portrays a different aspect of the eiron role, as he criticizes his lack of knowledge while his rigorously "unformed" character leaves him open for annoyingly overpowering proddings from barmaid Diane and subsequently manager Rebecca. In the same way that Norm balances Cliff, Diane and her replacement, Rebecca, play alazons to Sam's eiron.

Dr. Frasier Crane, the blabbering and pretentious psychotherapist, was an *agroikos* "killjoy refuser of festivity" at the start of his career. However, as his character expanded, his inability to recognize his own lack of self-awareness became the topic of longer humorous plot lines. Lilith, a fellow psychologist (and later spouse), became a regular attendee. Frasier's prior *agroikos* role was taken over by Lilith, who gave it both 'grumpy' and 'serious' qualities.



**Fig: 2 (Cheers embodiments of ancient Greek archetypes. (Illustration by Scott Huver)**

**Courtesy: Electronic Media Criticism: Applied Perspectives:**

Coach was, of course, an *agroikos*, however of an unsophisticated (second) kind. After the death of the actor who played him, Woody was brought in to replace him, and he added the "hayseed" element. Carla, the spunky waitress in *Cheers*, is another *agroikos* figure who takes surliness to new heights. Carla, on the other hand, may be the show's most complex character, since her "fun-stopping" (or stomping) *agroikos* rampages are sometimes countered by nostalgic confessions of *eiron*-like identity.

However, there are no *bomolochoi* among *Cheers* regulars because such clown figures are simply meant to "increase the spirit of celebration rather than add to the storyline," according to the definition. Instead, *bomolochoi* enter and exit the bar as minor or random characters who exist simply to stir the regular ensemble's interplay, such as Carla's *apelike* ex-husband, Nick Tortelli. Indeed, as *Chicago Tribune* writer Clifford Terry pointed out in his review, when the *Cheers* creators sought to create a spinoff series centered on Nick, his inherent buffoon didn't prove of much influence.

The second series *Frasier*, on the other hand, was a huge success. As previously stated, unlike Nick Tortelli, the title role character had been developed into a far more robust comedy archetype before the sequel was attempted. The same creators who failed with *The Tortellis* were successful with *Frasier* because they started with a far richer symbolic focus.

Irrespective of the knowledge of archetypal symbols among audiences, producers, or reviewers, they work. Indeed, the most effective show creators maybe those who are so sensitive to art that they intuitively understand and use archetypes without stopping to know about or study them. Because they adhere to humanity's underlying (even subconscious)

archetypal assumptions, some social symbols appear more significant and effective. The better all media professionals can learn to understand broad archetypal traits, the greater chance we have of predicting why a project's premise or cast of people is gelling or not as production progresses.

When an archetype is misused, whether purposefully or unintentionally, the results can be disastrous in terms of communication. When a radio/television message is allowed to crossover cultures without sufficient symbolic examination, this is a specific threat. For example, Pepsi and Cola's existence glorifying tagline, "Come Alive—You're in the Pepsi Generation" slogan was translated in Taiwan as the more literal archetypal promise: "Pepsi-Cola Will Bring Your Ancestors Back from the Dead." More tragically, Adolph Hitler's Nazi swastika was a distorted societal symbol of an archetypal emblem that embodies the mystic life energy in Indian and Japanese cultures, as well as among southwestern Native Americans. This emblem was termed a gammadion (four Greek gamma symbols radiating from a common center). The early Christian church similarly employed this symbol to represent Christ as its center. As a result, even if the archetype reappears, the social structures that surround it might alter or even subvert its meaning. Electronic media practitioners, on the other hand, rarely have to deal with issues of this magnitude. Nonetheless, archetypes as recurrent meaning patterns must be acknowledged because, as Frye puts it, "we could almost characterize popular literature, perhaps in a rather circular sense, as literature that provides an excellent view of archetypes."

It makes no difference whether this popular (mass) literature is distributed in print or through electronic means, except that television is likely to have a greater influence. In reality, as Rose Goldsen puts it: Television today has a virtual monopoly on any artistic or symbolic expressions that have a chance to be widely spread across society. All of the visuals, tales, ballads, chants, songs, and stories that come over that screen are show-and-tell components of social reality that become familiar to everyone.

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### **10.3 RITUAL, MYSTIQUE AND MYTH**

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Despite the fact that these three phenomena as stated by Goldsen in the above are interconnected, we will explore them separately in order to better comprehend their roles in radio and television programming.

#### **Ritual:**

We've just looked at how social and archetypal symbols convey or imply meaning to the general public. Until they are submerged in a ritual—what Robert Rutherford Smith refers to as "an act or set of acts, which brings about an acceptable resolution of the problem with which the program deals," these symbols are without a storyline. Despite the fact that the term ritual may appear to be limited to church services, Professor Quentin Schultze points out that it has a broader meaning mentioned below:



The necessity of public ritual is shared by secular television programming and religious devotion. Before "participation" is truly possible, both a church service and a television program require prescribed forms of ritual. A fully unique presentation could not be enjoyed or understood in the same way that a completely unfamiliar deity could not be worshipped in a foreign religious ceremony. Television, like the mass, is structured in certain ways to allow believers to enter into genuine connection. To assure a community experience, television creates its own rituals.

The same may be said for radio formats. The "hot clock" of the audio service is, in the end, a ritualistic allotment of an hour that accustoms us to when our 'community' demands for news, weather, musical celebration, traffic updates, or simulated dialogue will be met. The format that successfully pays tribute to its target listeners' life cycles is the format whose ritual embodies what Northrop Frye refers to as "magic": When we look at ritual, we see a naturalistic imitation with a strong element of what we term magic. Magic appears to begin as a voluntary effort to reestablish a lost connection to the natural cycle. A defining trait of human ritual is the idea of deliberate recapturing of something no longer owned. Ritual establishes a calendar... The magical element in ritual, on the other hand, is obviously geared toward a cosmos in which a foolish and indifferent nature is no longer the container of human society, but rather is contained by it, and must rain or shine at the pleasure of man.

In other words, a well-programmed radio station provides us the feeling of being in charge of our day, not just through the delivery of coping knowledge, but also through the stress release provided by lifestyle-responsive music and feature progressions. Formats are rites. And "rituals," according to perceptual psychologist Rudolf Arnheim, "not only express what individuals feel but also encourage them to feel the way the circumstance requires" - whether it's the forced rush of morning drivetime or the laziness of a Sunday afternoon.

On television, we've all seen the news anchor who greets us, then goes on to reveal a slew of tragedies before 'redeeming' us with a joyful good-bye at the end of the show. The 'reality' ritual of a game show or sporting event follows this pattern, beginning with the "natural" difficulty of human and situational barriers to overcome and ending when someone or some team wins in their mission and is crowned to compete in a new contest later.

Similarly, the soap opera's ritual of taking us across the week and then magically halting time until Monday through a significant Friday event is similar to the sitcom's (comedy show) ability to connect together problem discoveries and solutions over time in comfortable and funny half-hour patterns. On the other hand, according to Horace Newcomb, the difference between soap opera and sitcom rituals is that " "While the situation comedy is forced to repeat itself in every episode of every series, changing only in the actual' situation' that triggers the action, the soap opera will grow and change. They get up, married, and have children, and their troubles are constantly relevant to their circumstances."

It's worth noting that, since Newcomb's observation was made two decades ago, certain later comedies, such as *Cheers*, *The Cosby Show*, and *Murphy Brown*, have incorporated problem-solving rituals fuelled by character transformation.

The most appreciated series is the one that ritualistically handles its challenges in the most involved, engaging method. This holds true for both newscasts and the stories they contain, as well as fictional programs. Professor David Altheide, for example, has identified a ritual he terms "Formats for Crisis." "Any topic that is to be legitimized by widespread media coverage must be presented as something fresh, catastrophic, with an immediate impact, and as a crisis," Altheide writes, "but this must be done in a familiar [ritualistic] fashion." Altheide's crisis ritual is divided into the following seven stages:

1. A visual representation of a certain event is chosen.
2. The event will be set in contrast to the existing quo, signaling a change.
3. It will be argued that the event or change it is supposed to represent is significant for a substantial number of individuals, possibly 10% of the population.
4. Immediate victims will be presented, and they will frequently be interviewed, expressing their anguish or sorrow.
5. The blame will be assigned.
6. A graphic representation of a metaphor, such as a wave, will be used to convey symbolic significance to the entire situation.
7. Previous crises of a comparable nature are rarely appraised for their long-term consequences. Each "crisis" is presented as if it were occurring for the first time, with no historical context.

The use of Altheide's "Formats for Crisis" ritual in the coverage of basketball sensation Ervin "Magic" Johnson's announcement that he had tested HIV-positive is notable. Despite the fact that a virus and a medical diagnosis are not visually appealing, there was virtually unlimited footage of Johnson's athletic prowess to illustrate the story

- (1). The tragedy contrasted with long-held notions that AIDS-related illnesses were primarily an issue for drug users, lgbtq people, and celebrities in the 'arts' world
- (2). Even macho jocks were now at risk: they and, indirectly, their millions of adoring fans were learning that AIDS could affect them or their team
- (3). Interviews with Johnson, his basketball teammates, and his fans revealed sadness, guilt, and mourning

- (4). Johnson's immorality was blamed, as was the unknown lady who may have infected him, the professional sports industry for turning its stars into reckless sex idols, and the government and medical community for not doing enough to combat the disease
- (5). Soaring 'freeze-frames' of the now-grounded athlete's past on-court heroics figuratively encompassed the entire situation
- (6). However, past coverage of the AIDS problem was hardly mentioned, unless it was to imply that the earlier tales were really a minor and less reputable foreshadowing of the "true" crisis now symbolized in Magic's illness
- (7). According to Victor Turner, one of ritual's key functions is to serve as a constant commentator on society, a dynamic process that must be interpreted as part of a symbolic cultural fabric. If the ritual is defective, as in the coverage of the Magic Johnson story, it's possible that the ritual is merely telling the cultural fabric's flaws.

**Check your progress:**

1. Describe Ritual?

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2. What do you mean by mystique?

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3. What is the "Format of Crisis"?

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**Mystique:**

A ritual, perfect or not, gains mystique if we believe in the ritual's change device. To put it another way, if the audience believes the ritual's problem-solving pattern will work, the ritual is raised to the status of a mystical experience. "Stories do not only describe issues," writes Barry Brummett, "they also suggest methods and means to solve the difficulties insofar as they follow a discursive pattern that individuals might follow in reality." The critic's [or media professional's] responsibility is therefore to connect speech that embodies the formal story to the difficulties of an audience, demonstrating how the anecdotal form equips a culture for living in that scenario.

As a result, losing faith in one media myth can have a severe impact on our overall belief in radio and television. This is why the late 1950s radio payola scandals and their television equivalent quiz-show riggings were so damaging to the industry, at least in the short term. When the general public discovered that the music they heard was influenced by bribes and that their quiz-show winners had cheated to win, all the rituals on the air were suddenly jeopardized. Broadcasting's damage management measures appeared to be working, as evidenced by public hearings and public firings. Nonetheless, some media historians contend that the internet's mystique has never entirely recovered from these shady findings.

Commercials have also suffered from a loss of mystique. One of the most famous was a Volvo ad from 1990 in which a "monster" truck was depicted crushing an entire row of automobiles save the Volvo, whose roof remained rigid. Volvo had a well-deserved safety mystique for a long time, and this spot, based on an actual event at a New England fairground, was designed to be a graphic mystical reiteration. Unfortunately, during the commercial's filming in Texas, someone believed that adding extra support beams to the featured Volvo's roof would be a good idea in case retakes were required. However, this move was never made public, and when the Texas attorney general's office found out, it sparked a nationwide scandal. Volvo sacked its advertising firm and began the long process of restoring its legitimate safety reputation, which should never have been harmed.

### **Myth:**

A ritual becomes a myth when it is so meaningful and convincing that it can be retold indefinitely. Radio and television, like any other medium for human communication, will eventually carry these myths. Indeed, as Douglas Kellner points out, our media can create their own mythologies. Images and stories on television create new myths for ordinary concerns. Myths are essentially stories that explain, instruct, and justify customs and institutions; they are lived and influence cognition and behavior. Myths address the most important aspects of human life, allowing individuals to cope with death, violence, love, sex, labor, and social conflict. Myths connect symbols, formulas, plots, and people in a predictable, appealing, and satisfying pattern.

Unlike science's strict rules, we can rearrange the symbols that make up a story without changing its core substance. The myth's core premise remains more or less consistent regardless of the individual referents we use to illustrate it.

Myths, like the symbols from which they are built, can be classified into three types based on their scope. Claude Levi-Strauss, a structuralist, divides myths into three categories: universal, culturally specific, and subcultural myths.

1. Universal myths are based on universal human experiences from all societies and eras. Stories about life cycles and seasons, quests and pilgrimages, destinies, and rites of passage are among them.

2. American myths of uncompromising honesty or need to tame the frontier, for example, are culture-specific myths that connect to the heroes and evolution of a given community. "The legendary hero in American culture must frequently leave society alone or with one or a few others, in order to fulfil the moral good in the wilderness, at sea, or on the fringes of settled civilization," writes Robert Bellah.
3. Finally, subcultural myths include the stories of a single-family or location. These could include stories about how our forefathers arrived in America, or legends about regional/occupational heroes like Paul Bunyon (lumbering), Casey Jones (railroading), or Johnny Appleseed (farming) (horticulture).

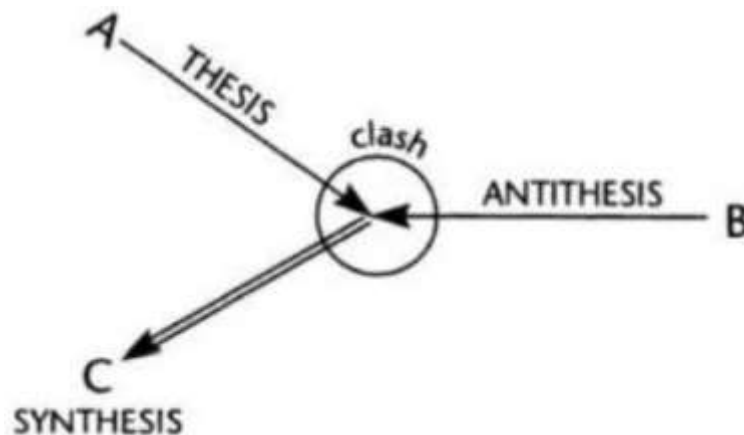
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## 10.4 THESIS, ANTITHESIS AND SYNTHESIS

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Examining how a creator interposes two opposites to form a new fusion is another way of understanding how symbols are molded into ritual and mythic constructions. The philosophical works of Plato, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Hegel are typically credited with the concept of these two opposites (the thesis and the antithesis) and their ensuing combination (the synthesis). Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* was the most explicit elaboration of this theory. In the science and order of thought, these three entities were interrelated, according to Fichte. "Just as no antithesis can exist without synthesis, and no synthesis can exist without antithesis," he said, "so neither can exist without a thesis—an absolute positing."

### 10.4.1 How synthesis is generated?



**Figure: 3**

First, a thesis is presented; however, it will be criticized; it will be contradicted by opponents who assert its polar opposite, an antithesis; and, in the midst of this conflict, a synthesis, that is, a kind of unification of opposites, a compromise or unification on a higher level, is achieved. By transcending the two original opposing positions, the synthesis absorbs them; it reduces them to components of itself, denying, elevating, and maintaining them.

Surprisingly, the procedure is also applicable to literature (written or electronic). "Traditional storytelling begins with a state of equilibrium that is disrupted: the plot explores the effects of this disruption through the final resolution, which restores a new and possibly different equilibrium," writes John Fiske.

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## 10.5 SEMIOTICS

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Semiotics outline a considerably more contemporary approach to message structure analysis. The word refers to the study of sign systems and was coined by American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Much of the foundational theory that has deepened scholarly attention to this area over the previous three decades was offered by Peirce and Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. However, it is important to note that this enthusiasm has not been shared by radio and television professionals.

**In any case, the basic unit of semiotic inspection can be summed up as follows:**

Signifier + Signified = SIGN

The greater the scholarly desire to establish some conventional screen through which this meaning may be filtered and analyzed, the more electronic media content builds sign upon a sign to (sometimes unwittingly) generate greater complexities of meaning. However, this procedure may overlook the reality that creating radio/television material is more of an art than a science. "In allowing more than one meaning, artistic signs differ from scientific signs, where the aim is always that one sign should have only one meaning," writes DeWitt Parker. "The concept that it is possible to reduce language to sign language, to make one word signify one thing," maintains Frye, "is a delusion," both visually and linguistically.

Several European intellectuals began using semiotic techniques to popular culture discourses in the 1960s. Umberto Eco was a fan of James Bond novels and Superman comics. Christian Metz attempted to decipher Hollywood films semiotically. A group of American thinkers then adapted these efforts to the study of television content.

These cues can be audio, visual, or verbal once we've progressed beyond Saussure's solely linguistic purview. As a result, the semiotic analysis of electronic media is far more complicated than that of printed media. Because television, for example, employs multiple sign systems at once, a semiotic study of even a 30-second commercial could take several pages.

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## 10.6 LET'S SUM UP

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Individual units that can be isolated or merged to carry and incorporate meaning are the primary building blocks for any codes. Symbols are the traditional name for these components. Symbols "reflect a common core of interest, need, and experience" among humans, according to Karyn and Donald Rybacki. "Nothing more or less than structuring notions by which

people build perceptions about their interaction with the world," Hal Himmelstein adds. As a result, according to Theodore Meyer Greene, any particular symbol is "totally the product of human artifice." "It has no natural or logical basis; the meaning of a pure symbol is assigned arbitrarily by individual fiat or social convention."

The verbal and visual symbol grammars are the most common. All human connection, as Joshua Meyrowitz points out, requires two forms of symbols: verbal communication and graphic emotions. Expressions are more direct and unclear, more natural but less clear than linguistic claims, like photos without subtitles. Expressions originate from a person's mouth; they reveal how they "truly feel" and what they're like. The meanings of expressions are frequently lost unless words are employed to clarify them. When a society's range of experience is limited, words are less necessary. In contrast to verbal grammar, pictorial grammar necessitates less receiver expertise. However, it lacks the certainty of meaning that most verbal languages provide. As a result, with predominantly graphic media like television, the chances of misinterpretation grow. As the media profession expands into the worldwide economy, it is important to pay close attention to what the camera-captured photos may imply. We can change the language words in a soundtrack, but the original graphic meanings will remain the same. To North American audiences, a picture of someone offering flowers to a woman, for example, may imply a kind gesture. However, as advertising expert Florence Friedman points out, it is a metaphor for death in some Arab countries. Symbols, whether verbal or graphical, can also be classified as personal, societal, or archetypal.

**Check your progress:**

1. Describe Depiction?

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2. What are the questions that arise by which depiction-derived lessons spring?

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3. Describe the two forms of symbol?.

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An ancient Greek publication, the Tractatus Coislinianus, "sets forth all the crucial information concerning comedy in approximately a page and a half," according to Northrop Frye. The Tractatus, according to Frye, offers

three types of comedic characters: The alazons, the eirons, the buffoons, or bomolochoi. Aristotle adds a fourth category to the three categories mentioned in the Tractatus; The agroikos.

**Altheide's crisis ritual is divided into the following seven stages:**

1. A visual representation of a certain event is chosen.
2. The event will be set in contrast to the existing quo, signaling a change.
3. It will be argued that the event or change it is supposed to represent is significant for a substantial number of individuals, possibly 10% of the population.
4. Immediate victims will be presented, and they will frequently be interviewed, expressing their anguish or sorrow.
5. The blame will be assigned.
6. A graphic representation of a metaphor, such as a wave, will be used to convey symbolic significance to the entire situation.
7. Previous crises of a comparable nature are rarely appraised for their long-term consequences. Each "crisis" is presented as if it were occurring for the first time, with no historical context.

A ritual, perfect or not, gains mystique if we believe in the ritual's change device. To put it another way, if the audience believes the ritual's problem-solving pattern will work, the ritual is raised to the status of a mystical experience. "Stories do not only describe issues," writes Barry Brummett, "they also suggest methods and means to solve the difficulties insofar as they follow a discursive pattern that individuals might follow in reality." The critic's [or media professional's] responsibility is therefore to connect speech that embodies the formal story to the difficulties of an audience, demonstrating how the anecdotal form equips a culture for living in that scenario.

A ritual becomes a myth when it is so meaningful and convincing that it can be retold indefinitely. Radio and television, like any other medium for human communication, will eventually carry these myths. Indeed, as Douglas Kellner points out, our media can create their own mythologies. Images and stories on television create new myths for ordinary concerns. Myths are essentially stories that explain, instruct, and justify customs and institutions; they are lived and influence cognition and behavior. Myths address the most important aspects of human life, allowing individuals to cope with death, violence, love, sex, labor, and social conflict. Myths connect symbols, formulas, plots, and people in a predictable, appealing, and satisfying pattern.

Examining how a creator interposes two opposites to form a new fusion is another way of understanding how symbols are molded into ritual and mythic constructions. The philosophical works of Plato, Immanuel Kant,



and Georg Hegel are typically credited with the concept of these two opposites (the thesis and the antithesis) and their ensuing combination (the synthesis). First, a thesis is presented; however, it will be criticized; it will be contradicted by opponents who assert its polar opposite, an antithesis; and, in the midst of this conflict, a synthesis, that is, a kind of unification of opposites, a compromise or unification on a higher level, is achieved. By transcending the two original opposing positions, the synthesis absorbs them; it reduces them to components of itself, denying, elevating, and maintaining them.

**Check your progress:**

1. When does a ritual become a myth?

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2. What are the seven stages of crisis ritual?

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3. Describe Sexual Consequences.

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**Conclusion:**

Semiotics outline a considerably more contemporary approach to message structure analysis. The word refers to the study of sign systems and was coined by American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Much of the foundational theory that has deepened scholarly attention to this area over the previous three decades was offered by Peirce and Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. In any case, the basic unit of semiotic inspection can be summed up as follows:

$$\text{Signifier} + \text{Signified} = \text{SIGN}$$

These cues can be audio, visual, or verbal once we've progressed beyond Saussure's solely linguistic purview. As a result, the semiotic analysis of electronic media is far more complicated than that of printed media. Because television, for example, employs multiple sign systems at once, a semiotic study of even a 30-second commercial could take several pages.

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## 10.7 QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the types of comedic characters designed by Frye and Aristotle with an appropriate example.
2. What are symbols and archetypes and how can they be interpreted with respect to electronic media?
3. Symbolic representation in advertising is subject to cultural change. Take your stand.
4. Explain the role of ritual, mystique and myth in radio and television programming.
5. Write short notes on:
  - a. Semiotics
  - b. How synthesis is generated?
  - c. Ritual
  - d. Symbolic representation in television

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## **PROBING ETHICS AND VALUES**

### **Unit Structure**

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Ethics, Values, And Morality Defined
  - 11.2.1 What are Ethics?
  - 11.2.2 What are Values?
  - 11.2.3 What is Morality?
- 11.3 The Media as Values Suppliers
- 11.4 Media Access and Freedom of Expression
- 11.5 The Media Professional's Moral Duties
- 11.6 Summary
- 11.7 Questions
- 11.8 References

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### **11.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- What are media ethics and values?
- How does the media act as a value supplier?
- What are the moral duties of media professional?

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### **11.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The nature of critical choice demonstrates that literary criticism is closely related to ethics, and the character of criticism arises in its critical choices. Critics are involved in the process of making decisions and researching how those decisions affect the lives of fellow critics, writers, students, and readers, as well as our definitions of literature and human nature. To criticize in the context of ethics broadens the scope of literary criticism. Its surroundings are no longer solely literary, nor are they entirely political, because politics and ethics, while associated, do not represent the same goals. Critiquing ethically places the critic in a unique arena of action: the field of human behavior and beliefs about humans.

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### **11.2 ETHICS, VALUES AND MORALITY DEFINED**

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#### **11.2.1 What Are Ethics?**

Ethics refers to all of the methods in which people undertake the fundamentally important social and moral task of judging the

rightness or wrongness of other people's behavior, both their own and others'. Literary art refers to linguistic systems that are intended to elicit artistic, imaginative, emotional, and ethical reactions rather than being used for practical or instrumental objectives. Narratives, poetry, chants, songs, movie scripts, TV scripts, and other literary works are all examples of artistic structures of language. The question for ethical criticism is whether there is room for illuminating and successful debates regarding the interplay of ethics and literary experience. Yes, there have been more than 2000 years of yes responses to this issue, but these yes answers, despite being sometimes inspiring, eloquent, and touching tributes to critics' profound involvement with numerous texts, are rarely analytical in mode and rarely convincing as arguments. There have been nearly 130 years of "no" responses to this issue, but they are unconvincing, to say the least, and inconsistent enough to give one intellectual whiplash.

People with certain agendas may be able to talk themselves out of ethics as an abstract concept or as an academic or intellectual topic of discussion – this is what postmodern theorists who saw ethics as a tool of oppression attempted – but they never manage to live their way around ethics, and most of the time (to their ethical credit if not to their intellectual consistency) they do not even try. Honesty matters – not just peripherally, but centrally – in all areas of actual life for postmodernists, as it does for the rest of us (even if it does not count, curiously, in postmodern theory). Because ethics is an evolved adaptation that served the survival interests of individuals among our ancient ancestors who realized – behaviorally if not consciously – that a person's chances of survival were greater if everyone in the tribe observed certain injunctions about right and wrong, such as fairness in the distribution of resources, honesty in discussions about the adjudication of internal group conflicts, and compassion toward tribal members.

In other words, ethics matters because the rights and wrongs of everyday life exist, and they don't exist only because we haven't yet developed the mental or social sophistication to stop letting them matter. They are significant not only because they have assisted us in surviving, but also because the rights and wrongs of daily life have a greater impact on the quality of our lives than any other factor. Nothing is more important to us than whether other people treat us with honesty or deception, kindness or cruelty, stinginess or generosity, compassion or callousness, contempt or charity, fairness or unfairness, respect or disrespect, and whether they acknowledge, apologize for, or offer restitution for any violations of these ethical standards they may have committed against us in everyday life. These norms are not only important for our own quality of life, but they also have a reciprocity requirement. Not just how others treat us, but also how we treat others is important to us.

The persistence with which we cling on to some basic ethical standards despite the regularity with which they are broken exemplifies the strong claim of ethics on human beings. Cheating and deception are both frequent, but when our friends, family members, bosses, or politicians who represent us turn out to be cheaters and deceivers, we are astonished, furious, hurt, and outraged. The fact that cheating and deception are so frequent does not make us immune to being the target of such immoral activity. Friends who lie to us are cut off, and we vote politicians out of office or send them to prison for cheating. We may dismiss ethics as an antiquated set of moralistic precepts, but when a spouse betrays, a child lies, or a friend steals, ethics becomes relevant.

The inevitability of ethics explains why, despite their best efforts to avoid it in their discussions of literary art, New Critics and postmodernists keep bringing it up again and again, like dieters who find themselves sneaking desserts late at night right in the middle of their most determined efforts to lose weight. Human beings are built to enjoy sweetness and to evaluate their interactions with one another using ethical norms. Ethics is fundamental, not optional. Ethics is at the heart of sociability and is derived from its nature and requirements. This is not to say that all humans in all cultures have the same ethical standards for all human interactions; rather, what is less essential than differences in ethical standards is the reality that ethical standards are central to human interactions in all civilizations. As I put it in *Shaped By Stories*.

Every culture uses stories to fill in the educational gaps left by firsthand experience. Poetry has always been the first light-giver to ignorance, as Philip Sidney observed so long ago. The ethical visions of stories illuminate our ignorance by providing information that goes beyond mere description. The main issue in life for humans isn't choosing on the one "correct" way to describe the universe, because the truth is that we may live quite happily as ardent believers in a variety of (and sometimes massive) descriptive inaccuracies. You can live as full and happy a life believing that the world is flat as you can believing that it is round, but if you can't read other people's ethical dispositions, you won't be able to live a complete and happy life.— It won't matter if you believe your world is flat or round if you can't tell whether other people are likely to help you or hurt you, deceive you or tell you the truth, hate you or love you, be kind or unkind to you, be generous or stingy with you, and so on. The fundamental challenge in life is deciding how to judge things, and this is a problem that tales' ethical visions repeatedly assist us in thinking about in deeper ways than we would if we had to rely just on our own firsthand experience.

Human beings are as much made for art, including literary art, as they are for ethics. Both are universal human traits. Without ethics and art, there are no cultures, and both are contemporaneous with

the development of modern humans. Denis Dutton's book *The Art Instinct* is a vivid depiction of the very long span of evolutionary time during which adaptive forces and natural and sexual selection mechanisms formed human behaviour and dispositions. Only in the context of such a vast period of time can the evolution of the human brain into what we may term a "narrative brain" make sense. According to Dutton,

The Pleistocene epoch, in which we developed the appetites, intellectual characteristics, emotional dispositions, and personality qualities that distinguish us from our hominid forebears and make us who we are, lasted 80,000 years... A small amount of pressure applied over hundreds of generations can deeply embed physical and psychological features in any species' mind.

The Neanderthals vanished in 30 generations, or 1000 years, leading to the strong hypothesis that, over the 1.6 million years of the Pleistocene, the socially cohesive functioning and imaginatively stimulating effects of telling stories and poem making became indelible features of human consciousness through the slowly evolving brain functions of the survivors, our forefathers, whose survival was in part the result of just those experimental social psychology cohesive functions. Dutton draws on the work of two of the most well-known evolutionary psychologists, John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, to make the compelling argument that...

Tooby and Cosmides argue that our imaginative lives are fundamental to our humanity, integrated into our nature by evolution. Where Kant claimed that a suspension of interest in the existence of an object was necessary for a proper imaginative response to art, Tooby and Cosmides argue that our imaginative lives are fundamental to our humanity, integrated into our nature by evolution. For them, narrative art is an enhanced, functionally adaptive extension of the mental abilities that distinguish humanity from other animals. Making fiction is an advanced adaptation. Imagination provided human beings one of their biggest developed cognitive benefits by allowing us to confront the world not just as naive realists who respond directly to imminent threats or opportunities (the general condition of other animals), but also as supposition-makers and thought-experimenters. It appears as if humans have evolved specific cognitive machinery that permits us to enter and engage in imagined worlds, according to Tooby and Cosmides.

### **11.2.2 What Are Values?**

Values are personal or organisational rather than societal, and they differ greatly from one individual to the next and from one firm to the next.

Someone's ideals may dictate that they feel obligated to care for their elderly parents themselves, while another may feel obligated

only to guarantee that their parents receive care – whether through in-home visits or living in a care facility. Neither of these points of view is legally mandated, and both are ethical. Each person's beliefs may be diametrically opposed to the other's. Their value system directs their personal inclinations.

Values do not always have to be positive. They are a reflection of the individual, and the degree to which that individual is moral or not determines their set of values. When someone's sense of values appears to be skewed, it's sometimes assumed that they "without" values or are amoral - however their lack of values is a reflection of their value system. A bank manager, for example, who insists on little to no flexibility when it comes to calling in loans has a value system that requires he does everything he can to keep his organisation successful. If that means evicting a family of four with a new newborn or leaving a woman in her 80s without a house, so be it. Being the most successful bank manager is how he determines whether or not he is being his best self.

It all boils down to your values, regardless of your political beliefs. It all comes down to your ideals, whether you're a follower of the left or right, Christian or atheist. All of these principles may be ethical in the eyes of society, but they are subjective and personal. Values are essentially what you can live with yourself doing or not doing; they are whatever allows you to respect yourself in the morning, and this varies from person to person.

### **11.2.3 What is Morality?**

Some thinkers, such as George Santayana, divide values into moral and aesthetic components. "Moral ideals are almost invariably negative and distant," Santayana claims.

"Morality is concerned with avoiding evil and pursuing good; aesthetics is concerned exclusively with pleasure." As a result, this definition assumes that aesthetic worth exists independently of ethical considerations; that beauty perception is amoral, or outside the purview of ethical evaluation.

Because of the open public nature of electronic media, all but a few restricted access 'paid TV' services must produce and schedule programmes with mainstream social morality in mind. In reality, we can never limit our scope merely to the 'aesthetic gratification' that Santayana speaks to.

The purpose of ethical consideration is transvaluation, or the ability to examine contemporary societal values with the detached perspective of someone who can compare them to a culture's unlimited vision of possibilities.

The primary purpose of electronic media practitioners is rarely to promote a specific ethical construct. Most of the time, they're just

attempting to come up with a (programme or commercial) tale that will hold an audience's attention. Producers can appear to be oblivious that a values statement is present in their film until they are confronted with a bombardment of protests from a special interest group or the network's standards and practices department.

As a result of these clashes, creators are more reluctant to craft messages that may be seen as very value-laden. Overall, I believe that most of what appears to be values on television is the consequence of advertisers and viewers not wanting to offend each other. The network's censorship department is likely to have a greater impact on promoting rather than reinforcing those norms; indeed, it may accomplish both at the same time. The desire for material prosperity may be fueled by the awareness that it will not offer the happiness or fulfilment that it promises. As the pleasure and necessity of breaching them is experienced, family morality norms may be sustained.

**Check your progress:**

1. Describe transvaluation.

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2. What are ethics?

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3. Discuss the term “Morality”?

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**11.3 THE MEDIA AS VALUE SUPPLIERS**

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There has been much discussion and brainstorming on specific values and ethical principles, as well as a range of techniques to address media standards, whether it was radio and television, film, theater, the arts, print, or now the revolutionary social and digital media and the internet. Values as we see them may differ from those of an individual or a society, and they may be absolute or relative, but their acceptance serves as the foundation for ethical behavior in a society. Also, keep in mind that, while primary values may have foundational values, it is physiological values, which are



more subjective than objective, that impact individuals and society as a whole, and the media alone plays a key part in defining them.

I could see that journalistic ethics do tend to dominate media ethics, almost to the exclusion of other sectors, which is likely correct, because the issue of news manipulation by both governments and companies through censorship and ownership may only be the tip of the iceberg, as there have been more subtle techniques of manipulation, both voluntary and involuntary, across the globe. Ironically, and much to the displeasure of the majority, those being controlled may not even be aware of it. If I may remind you, the continuation of a free press, which remains the strongest guarantee of a free society, is critical to our freedom. Obviously, we must keep an eye out to ensure that the truth is never compromised on the foundation of principles. Fortunately, our founding fathers entrenched these ideals in the Constitution, but it is the truth that shall prevail even in the public interest - a term that has been frequently exploited and misused and can range from public morals to law and order, and from military secrets to treasonous action.

We must remember that privacy is a fundamental right that constantly clashes with the Constitution's guarantees of liberty, free speech, and expression. With the advent of new media, entertainment and the depiction of violence and sex that ranges from sensationalization to extreme fantasy and compromises, both in terms of ethics and the truth, has now arisen as one of the key challenges. Every day, we see paparazzi scandals, rape episodes, and even fauxtography and morphing events that gravely undermine an individual's privacy on digital media, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, or the newer applications on the increase. We must remember that privacy is a fundamental right that constantly clashes with the Constitution's guarantees of liberty, free speech, and expression. With the advent of new media, entertainment and the depiction of violence and sex that ranges from sensationalization to extreme fantasy and compromises, both in terms of ethics and the truth, has now arisen as one of the key challenges. Every day, we see paparazzi scandals, rape episodes, and even fauxtography and morphing events that gravely undermine an individual's privacy on digital media, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, or the newer applications on the increase.

No wonder, the audio visual media's shock and awe value may always breach ethics and be in contradiction with the law of the land, as social and digital media have now surpassed even the undercover and investigative reporters who kept law enforcement agencies on pins and needles until recently. Because of the clash between our beliefs and ethics and the perception and secrecy of news sources, enforcing a code of ethics is a difficult task for either the Censor Board or the Press Council. Let us not forget that the Central Board of Film Certification's release of a circular alerting the no-go words and phrases sparked an ugly fight among

the Board's members. Advertising and product placement in entertainment and news media, where enormous sums of money may be exchanged to affect attitudes and establish stereotypes, is a contentious activity that is still mostly unregulated. Through the unfavorable portrayal of women, race, and income, negative views, as well as stereotypes of tastes and taboos in the name of artistic freedom, may promote socially unacceptable conduct.

It's a bit of an irony that a popular Hindi newspaper, Dainik Bhaskar, has declared "no negative news on Mondays." Let us remember that normative ethics is often about moral ideals, and that in the name of art, the media may defy established rules in order to shock the audience and increase TRP ratings. If we follow Hetherington's comments, "everything is news if it threatens peace and prosperity," we can see that the boundary between news and views no longer exists, even in our national media. This is more evident than ever before, as during prime time on television, on a station such as 'Times Now,' where at times, even with Arnab Goswami anchoring the show, viewers find it difficult to understand the issues at hand, let alone the news or the points of view at stake. In their rush for more viewers in these extremely competitive days, overzealous anchors go overboard and turn the very important problems at hand into a yelling war between the invited parties. We always end up listening simply to the anchor's ideas and assertions, surrounded by a steady band of specialists and political adversaries whose sole purpose is to defend the indefensible. As a result, we typically wind up propped up or vegetating in front of our televisions, enabling ourselves to be inundated with a lot of noise. Many TV news panel discussions have reminded me of Shakespeare's famous remark from Macbeth: "full of sound and fury.....signifying nothing."

It was recently shown in a value Orientation survey, also known as the Schwartz Value Survey, that media exposure – print, visual, and internet – is directly linked to people' and society's value orientation. In their Worlds Value Survey, political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Wetzel constructed a scatter plot with values ranging from traditional to more rational on the Y Axis, and survival values to self expression and life quality on the X Axis. Surprisingly, India and South Asia were in the middle of the graph, with the United States at the bottom and the protestant globe on the diagonal top, whilst the Confucian world was on the Y Axis and the Latin American world was closer to the X axis. As a result, the media in democracies has a critical relationship with the state that evolves over time while being well-established and constitutionally protected. Yes, ethical norms, regulations, and ratings may aid in the exercise of freedom by individual journalists and the general public, but constant monitoring is required for the society's and country's health. 'Eternal vigilance is the price of democracy,' said Professor Harold Lasky. As a result, I'd want to point out that good governance by representatives in a democratic state must be transparent and

accountable, and that only a vigilant fourth estate can ensure this. Let us also remember that while values change over time and differ throughout communities and cultures, the fundamental values and ethics remain constant.

I watched Karan Thapar's interview with Justice Markandey Katju, Chairman of the Press Council of India, with considerable interest. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the detrimental role of the media in India. He claimed that the media was anti-people, in an obvious reference to several episodes of paid news; he also believed that the media was dividing people along communal and religious lines by sensationalising news such as the desecration of places of worship; and, most importantly, he claimed that the media was promoting superstitions, in an oblique reference to several television channels promoting astrology and "vaastu," which does not promote a scientific temper in society. 'Men will never be free until the last ruler is strangled with the cord of the last priest,' he remarked, quoting Diderot. Yes, India is undoubtedly in a period of transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society, as well as from a feudal to a modern progressive state, in which we require enlightened men of the highest integrity and intellect, such as Thomas Paine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who reformed the Western world.

We can argue a code of ethics indefinitely and establish a new Regulatory Authority, but as a community, we must never forget what Edmund Burke said: "All that is required for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing."

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## **11.4 MEDIA ACCESS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

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Actually, this concept of media access is made up of two parts:

- (1) a person's right to receive a broad variety of media services, as we just described; and
- (2) a person's right to post personal messages on those services so that he or she can freely communicate with others.

Some political parties own newspapers and even television stations, which are utilized as party mouthpieces to inform the audience about their campaign concerns. When the media is owned by private companies rather than the government, the issue of equal access for parties and candidates arises, and it may need to be regulated. Non-discrimination is the acceptable international standard in this regard. If political advertising is permitted, private media outlets should charge all parties and candidates the same fees. Some countries outright prohibit political advertising; in others, such a prohibition has been considered as an unjustifiable restriction on the right to free speech and expression. Paid political advertising, on the other

hand, should always be marked as such and should never be misconstrued as news or editorial coverage.

Access to the media by parties and candidates may be regulated in a country's law covering the media or public information rather than in the election law. Media law may only provide general statements on access and delegate authority for promulgating the specifics of implementation to an administrative body such as a specialized media commission. Political Parties and candidate access to the media may be governed by a country's media or public information law rather than the election law. Media legislation may simply make general statements about access and delegate jurisdiction to an administrative entity, such as a designated media commission, to promulgate the specifics of execution. The criterion of fair treatment and media access has been lowered. If state-owned or controlled media can favour a political party or candidate in apparent news coverage, political coverage, forums, or editorials, media access and freedom of expression are threatened. Biased coverage or preferential treatment in state media should be banned by law, with fines and correction processes in place.

A democratic election is impossible to hold if the electoral legal framework restricts or mutes campaign speeches and free expression. Too often, in a country in transition to democracy, the legal framework censors campaign speeches by imposing sanctions against public speaking that "defames" or "insults" another person or political rival, which could include criticism of the government, a government official, or an electoral candidate. Such provisions may not only be found in the electoral code or media (public information) law but may also be included in general constitutional, civil, criminal and administrative laws. Any law regulating defamation of character or reputation should be limited to the civil law. Any provision, regardless of the legal source, that imposes disqualification or imprisonment or monetary fines for criticizing or "defaming" the government, another candidate or a political party may be subject to abuse. Limitations on free expression violate international human rights law. Such provisions may be found in general constitutional, civil, criminal, and administrative laws, as well as the electoral code and media (public information) law. Any legislation governing character or reputation defamation should be limited to civil law. Any clause that sanctions disqualification, jail, or monetary fines for criticising or "defaming" the government, another candidate, or a political party, regardless of its legal source, may be abused. Limiting freedom of expression is against international human rights law. Furthermore, such regulations may be in violation of a country's constitution's free speech safeguards.

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## **11.5 THE MEDIA PROFESSIONAL'S MORAL DUTIES**

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“GIRL RAPED OR MUSLIM KILLED A HINDU” These are the headlines we come across on a regular basis!

What is the necessity of constructing these headlines? We can frame these headlines in a different way that is decency-preserving, so it is the need of the hour to debate this matter!

Jim Morrison stated it best: "Whoever controls the media, controls the mentality."

The media plays a huge role in our lives and has an impact on almost every element of our life. Because the media has the ability to influence our thinking, it has a significant impact on our lives. So, who is it that is in charge of persuading people and presenting them with information? As a result, the answer to this question is 'Journalists.'

A journalist is someone who gathers, writes, or delivers news or other current information to the general public.

### **Responsibilities Of Media Professionals:**

**Ethical responsibility:** Journalists must attempt to offer a balanced and truthful interpretation of the information they cover.

**Legal responsibility:** Journalists must observe the law, particularly when it comes to protecting people's privacy and confidentiality. They must also be aware of the laws governing libel and invasion of privacy.

**Social responsibility:** They must cover all aspects that are required to be covered, and as part of their social obligation, they must involve strong people and have good communication skills in order to deliver the best news to the public.

**Fairness and accuracy:** They have the highest responsibility to offer truthful and transparent news to everyone.

The press must stop publishing erroneous, unfounded, graceless, deceptive, or distorted information. Unfounded rumors and assumptions should not be presented as facts. Journalists have a responsibility to disclose wrongdoings that come to their attention; such exposes must be backed up by incontrovertible facts and evidence.

**Verification Prior Publication:** Before releasing the article or report, they should double-check its factual accuracy and make any necessary corrections in the report. A footnote to that effect may be written to the report in the case of a lack or absence of response.

**Public Interest and Public Bodies:** They have the right to highlight examples of corruption and irregularities in public agencies as custodians of the public interest, but such material should be based on proper evidence and published after due inquiries and verification from the relevant sources.

**Check your progress:**

1. Describe responsibility of media professionals

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2. What are the moral duties of media professionals?

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3. Describe media access.

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**11.6 SUMMARY**

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- Ethics refers to all of the means by which people judge the rightness or wrongness of other people's behaviour, both their own and others', which is a fundamentally important social and moral duty.
- Personal or organisational values, rather than societal values, range widely from one person to the next and from one company to the next.
- Morality is concerned with the avoidance of evil and the pursuit of good; aesthetics is solely concerned with pleasure.
- Actually, there are two components to the concept of media access: (1) a person's right to receive a wide range of media services, as we just explained; and (2) a person's right to post personal messages on such services so that he or she can freely communicate with others.
- The media has a major influence on our lives and affects practically every aspect of our lives. The media has a huge impact on our lives since it has the capacity to influence our thoughts.

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**11.7 QUESTIONS**

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1. What are the responsibilities of a media professional?
2. How does the media act as a value supplier?

3. Distinguish between values and morality
4. What are ethics?

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## **11.8 REFERENCES**

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## AESTHETICS AND ART

### Unit Structure

- 12.0 Objective
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Media Criticism: What are Aesthetics?
- 12.3 Commerce and Art
  - 12.3.1 Bottom-Line Preeminence
  - 12.3.2 Quality on the Balance Sheet
  - 12.3.3 Creators and the Business Process
  - 12.3.4 Audience Gratifications
- 12.4 Consumer Overview
- 12.5 Let's Sum Up
- 12.6 Questions
- 12.7 References

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to understand:

- Media Criticism
- Importance of aesthetics in criticism
- Different elements of aesthetics
- Relationship between business and art
- Consumer overview and their elements

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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Learning about art is a vast and unending topic as it deals with different perspectives and unique approaches. But tracking it down to a more straightforward form, we can say that it is a precise interaction between the elements and principles of helping artists to portray their imagination and outlining a framework for the viewers. It is a highly diverse range of what human activity is engaged in being creative and performing imaginative and technical skills.

Art can be categorized by knowing different ways of performing it. It can be drawings, paintings, performing on live shows, expressing emotions on screen or communicating the most profound words that are hard to understand by saying with the most prominent hand gestures. It is a vast pool of defining what art would mean to us. Though the meaning and definition of art have changed over the years, its bottom line would remain



the same, i.e. expressing the imaginative and creative skills that stem from human agency to creation; apart from just creating art, other aspects of the outline help us determine the meaning or understanding of the art itself. Certain guides or aesthetic judgements allow us to interpret the intention of the creation and further formalize the concept of art by knowing solely how it is made and in which form it was made.

On the other hand, it is a tool that helps us analyze the beauty of art. As art is a unique creation in itself by humans, aesthetics helps us to know the purpose or intent of what we can call something beautiful. It is a philosophical discipline, and if that is followed, one would be able to analyze the beauty's meaning and the intent. It not only focuses on finding the beauty in art but also is a way to distinguish between two works. It not only finds the responses to the value but also brings out the core intentions and the reflection of the creator's mind.

Now, as we have a gist of learning about art and aesthetics, the next part of knowing all better is how we can analyze or set boundaries for ourselves to know the ultimate meaning of the content produced. For this, we have to find the critique in ourselves and learn about the outline of finding the meaning in the art.

Criticism is defined by the way we see and perceive things. We are critics who continuously judge and consume content around us and can differentiate between two scenarios. Let it be literature, paintings, performances or films, and we can always understand the subject with the help of our understanding and some subtle elements that are already available in the aspects shown to us. Criticism is not only a judgment that we create ourselves for a better understanding of the subject, but it is also a review based on evidence that seeks to persuade others.

Media criticism is the most distinctive way to examine how the media works. With the help of media criticism, it is possible to explore the given media content based on “qualitative” methodologies. The messages hosted by the media to be portrayed highly depend upon the medium they are created in. It is hard to cover all the examining possibilities, but media criticism gives you a systematic means of analyzing a variety of perspectives.

Creating art is essential, as it has been part of human civilization from where we cannot remember. Its existence has made different aspects of our life meaningful, and now we can organize our thoughts and analyze them carefully and even be able to understand the imaginative world an artist takes us to. Although art is one of the essential aspects, it also consists of different ways to analyze it, and that is when the critique in us comes into the picture. And through media criticism, we now know the different perspectives of outlining the meaning of the art. This is important to see the piece's role and even provide it with an open approach to knowing and understanding different perspectives.

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## 12.2 MEDIA CRITICISM: WHAT ARE AESTHETICS?

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Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that deals with educating the rarity of the subject. Why are certain things good and beautiful? It is often used to judge the taste of the subject and examine the aesthetic value of the same.

Aesthetics in media are different types of methods that one uses to determine the value of a subject. It is analyzing machinery that helps us reach the creator's ideology and what he wanted to portray from creating. There are different subcategories of aesthetics for movies. It can be the technology, sound, point of view, landscape and literature, sensibility and relevance. Not to mention that every subject is bound to have its aesthetic criteria as they are likely to be unique. This further leads to work for the critic as one needs to be aware of using the methodology for judging the subject as every one of them is different.

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## 12.3 COMMERCE AND ART

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The combination of business and art was not an easy thing. As we discussed in the introduction, art is a very vast topic to cover. A critic needs to be particular about the prospects one would depend upon to judge whether a piece is good enough. Even though there are enough methods to survey the progress and advancements of the critic required in art and aesthetics over time, some people still object to entering these things into the marketplace.

It is to object to the sign making factors, taking it into practice for media criticism. As George Boas observed, it is no surprise that the work of art has been a commodity for the longest time and the critics of this have to observe not only the economic demand but also how the art changes itself over time. According to the advisor scholar Carl Grabo, there has always been an evident distance between art and business. It was never easy for art to be involved in the industry, and neither was it perceived very well in the past. And as it was out of the question in the past, it is a narrow aspect now as well for a relatively homogenous audience, which further brings us to it is a challenge in the electronic art and its varied perceiving audience and public as well.

As argued by Professor Eileen Meehan, television is not a solely reducible entity. Instead, it is a complex combination of the working industry and the artistic formation. Over time, it has proven to be a commodity created and manufactured, to be specific. It is a platform that walks simultaneously with the ideology of consumption and viewership of what the vision created needs to be interpreted. While we are working towards finding a meeting end for recognizing economics as the set parameter, we should also realize that television is a very peculiar industry that inherits a cultural bandwidth by default. This highlights that it contains a reprocess of the symbolic “Stuff” from where further dreams and ideologies are born.

### 12.3.1 Bottom-Line Preeminence:

The broadcasting channels in the west began without an idea that the channels would sustain by offering quality programming, keeping in mind the public interests and what captivated them. However, with time, the polysemy of ideas and what was regarded as „public interest“ was immeasurable and different. This gave rise to a common understanding that there should be enough content that allowed the folks associated with the business to pay their bills and keep the show going. With time, this vision has become more complicated with the advent of takeovers from more prominent business owners in the industry responsible for taking under control the broadcasts, cables, and studios previously accessible to a relatively more minor group. To explain this better, Robert Iger, ABC’s Programming Chief, states, “I would be delighted to put together a schedule that is 100 per cent high-quality, but in a business to make money, several things need to be taken into consideration.” He concludes by stating, “Higher bouts of quality and making money aren't necessarily mutually inclusive achievements, and it is an essential balance that needs to be figured out by the one’s running the business.”

### 12.3.2 Quality on the Balance Sheet:

Creating content that is going to reach your target audience is essential. As the creator, we are constantly forced to create subjects that are understandable by the community and can portray the correct version of the ideology one has in mind. But do you think with being able to understand the methods mentioned by the media critics, is it possible to have no relationship between the artistry of a show and how much profit a show is supposed to earn through that?

Stating to the observation of advertising executive Paul Schulman, the quality of a made show will last longer with lower ratings than being a show without having a profound amount of quality. Therefore, quality plays a vital role in the creation of the ideology. Keeping the quality contiguous is a critical aspect of creating something that will be able to keep the program’s life by allowing it to have a second chance. But if the show at any given point misses the mark on the quality, then there are very high chances that it will not go any further as audiences lose their interest, resulting in barely having to get a second chance.

On the other hand, according to laments of former MTM and NBC executive Grant Tinker, the pressure that comes from the top for keeping the boundaries and the inevitable need to meet the current trends and market makes it difficult for the executives. It is more difficult for the entertainment people. With the costs included in today's running industry for electronic media, the networks don't bother to reach out often to those quality loss leaders as previously they used to do.

However, coming to an agreed argument, the show is distributed. It is parted in ways like some executives maintain that a program's quality should not be compromised, and it should be a simultaneous function of

cost and audience delivery. This results in the thought of school that the co-existence of the quality and the independence of the budget is a question mark.

### 12.3.3 Creators and the Business Process:

Creativity and business have not been able to exist in one photo frame for a long time now. There has always been an independent existence to the ideology of creativity, and it has been somehow always distant from the business world.

There has always been a natural tension between the creators and their specific patrons. This is not only today's talk, but this comes into the picture from way behind. In this regard, Michelangelo and Mozart said no significant differences encountered by the major and minor artists today on the radio, whose labour is precarious scaffolding in the unstable castles of the electronic media like televisions.

### 12.3.4 Audience Gratifications:

The audience is always on the receiving end of the picture. Therefore, it is essential to understand that whatever is being created should have some relevance or, in particular, the maximum amount of significance with the receiving end. This is important as knowing that a certain number of viewers patronized the show was helpful in the justification of the advertising rates. The content creator is trying to put what they saw in their imaginative world into perspective. This becomes clear that the only way to know what they have to say is to read and analyze the ideology of the content that has been created. In the same way, it was not possible to read out the necessary indications of why these viewers were watching what was shown in the rating book. Or to be precisely what it was that satisfied them with the content.

#### Check your progress:

1. Why do you think the combination of commerce and arts was not an easy thing?

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2. How do you think we can reduce the distance between the creators and the business process?

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### 3. What is audience gratification?

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## **12.4 CONSUMER OVERVIEW**

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Overviewing the scenarios that the audience finds the breaking point to keep watching something, there are a few questions that are basic to ask:

- First, what is the particular aspect these viewers find enjoyable in the subject?
- Was the show structured in the basic premise or the locale?
- Third, was it the script, actors, or talent portrayed on the screen?
- Finally, what essential factor has led this to the audience's satisfaction?

Throwing further light on this, William Evans brought this observance that the conceptualisation of the audience needs to be seen as the gratification. This needs to be included in the primary aspect of the media process. Thus, the media consumers have various segments that can be used as indicators of what works for them. It is apparent that it will be different for every subject. It is entirely objective and subjective to other content and depends upon what these offering service in the aspect of social-psychological functions.

To view the surviving element from the part of the audience, the perspective to find the breaking point seems to be the quality of the program, which is not given by some high-brow or enlist ingredients. Further, being precise in analyzing the situation for different contents is not necessarily the matter of a critic or the viewer having conflicting areas because of which the definition of satisfying the consumer is not clear. Instead, it is the processing of different orientations and priorities that need to be defined before the content ideologies and the structural mindset of the viewer.

### **1. Entertainment:**

Time punctuation is supposedly believed to be one of the most apparent ingredients of the gratification that helps us survey what the public seeks from the electronic media. Listening to the radio gives us the soothing continuity to sometimes being erratic in our lives. Talking about broadcasting television, it is not just precisely being entertaining enough, but it is also about the way the entertainment provided by the particular source can blend with the expectations (temporal) of the viewers.

Contemplating both scenarios, some critics feel that the entertainment-styled program's mere presence should be widely an undeserving stage of

getting serious attention. But on the other hand, other experts simply disagree that the one function of mass-media communication is specifically only entertainment. On this, Charles Wright suggested that to provide respite to the individual, perhaps for the permit for him to continue is to be exposed to the news, interpretation and perspective. These are necessary for the individual to survive in the modern world.

## **2. Surveillance:**

Surveillance is the second viewer's gratification factor. This brings us to what Charges wright pointed out correctly; even when the subject is supposed to provide the entertainment factor, it is still essential for us to cope with the complexity of the information needed in contemporary life. According to Rubin and Windahl, The more salient we become to gather the information, the stronger we gain the motivation to seek the mediated information. To meet these needs, it becomes simultaneously essential for us to depend on the information medium. The greater the dependency is, the greater the likelihood for the media to become. Slowly at a pace, it also starts to affect cognitions, feelings and behaviour.

Not to mention for decades, it was believed by a variety of researchers that television is supposed to be one of the most popular mediums in meeting this gratification. But later, in 1987, an organization called Roper established a study stating that television is nothing but merely popular as an information provider and further has taken an exclusionary power.

## **3. Nostalgia:**

The term nostalgia is derived from a Greek word that reflects the meaning of home and pain. In the television world, it also directly courts to "looking back" on the programs. Defining escapism and nostalgia is the same as when we need to be in a pleasant environment. In simple terms, it is the opposite of what information/ surveillance needs. Even though everyone seems to be in the peak time where they need to be in the world at some point of the day, which forces them to have the contrary pressures. The data overload and the amount of real trouble lead them to find an escape to a more pleasant environment. With the factor of escapism and nostalgia, it is no longer the need for information but an ultimate withdrawal from the pressure. Further taking this in the case of electronic media, the withdrawal from the realities pressure may result in a counterproductive consumer retreat.

## **4. Companionship and Conversation Building:**

Moving on to conservation building is an aspect that is partially linked with escapism/ nostalgia. It is to be noted that companionship/ conservation is the fourth element of the gratification cluster. Companionship/conservation aims to highlight the fact that even when someone is craving nostalgia, at the same time, they can also cater to other viewers that feel the need for companionship. This highlights that even when audiences cannot communicate with the performer directly, they are still asked to interact with the viewers. This benefits the persona's wisdom,

and in the words of Donald Horton and Richard Wohl, it reflects the advice and sympathizes with their difficulties and forgives mistakes.

Parasocial interaction is also one of the aspects of companionship. It is further labelled as a one-sided interpersonal relationship one has with the audience that is established with the portraying electronic media members. Additionally, depending on their roles, they can be seen as a positive or a negative effect on the audience. This is the main reason that the companionship gratification is easily linked to the conservation building.

**5. Problem-solving:**

Problem-solving is the fifth gratification element, and it is one of the most catered by the commercials and the public service announcements. It is also highly liked by the program's promotional material (promos). Problem-solving has been taken as the most typical revelation by the television as they portray their products as an immense source of solving their issues. They are probably the only designed product that is fixed to resolve. These promos help determine the uncertainty of the problem of what to do after watching or listening later today, tomorrow or next week.

**6. Personal Enrichment and Development:**

The sixth and most prominent element of gratification is personal enrichment and development. Again, this aspect came into the picture for the viewers from the British Broadcasting Corporation's idea of using the television or the electronic media for the sole purpose of uplifting the viewers and their tastes, further focusing on the purpose of this in a simple way they wanted to create something which was not liked by the viewers but instead was needed by them.

**7. Catharsis:**

Tension is the seventh and final element of gratification, which is the most controversial because of its nature. It is encased in a radio. Television can only be beneficial if it is stimulated for experiencing relives. That means that this is only useful if it reduces tension, which would result in natural life aggression.

**Check your progress:**

1. Why do you think one needs companionship/conservation?

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2. How do you think personal enrichment and development helped people in real life?

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3. Why is catharsis/ tension the most controversial element of gratification?
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## 12.5 LET'S SUM UP

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So far now, we have seen the meaning and importance of art and aesthetics and how it is perceived. We have learned that critics use a specific methodology to judge the subject's beauty. This necessarily has the objective of understanding the creator's ideology and what he wanted to portray by creating the subject.

From the viewer's point of view, there are several gratification elements explained in the chapter in brief on which the perspective of the audience depends. The content is created for them to be understood and then is later analyzed on how they would be working ahead in the future, what works for which kind of audience and what does not. Finally, a critique should be aware that every detail's different aspects need to be addressed while judging a creator's work. It is subject to change with the work that which kind of elements of categories will work for him to reach the right results.

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## 1.6 QUESTIONS

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1. What is Media Criticism?
2. How is the aesthetic value of the subject necessary for a critic?
3. Why do you think an understanding methodology for the creation is essential?
4. Explain the seven functions of consumer overview.
5. What is escapism?
6. Why is the combination of art and business not an easy aspect of the industry?

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## COMPOSITE CRITICISM

### Unit Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Understanding the term composite criticism
  - 13.2.1 Basic Terms and Definitions
- 13.3 Understanding the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Appreciation
  - 13.3.1 Intrinsic Appreciation
  - 13.3.2 Extrinsic Appreciation
- 13.4 Understanding the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Evaluation
  - 13.4.1 Intrinsic Evaluation
  - 13.4.2 Extrinsic Evaluation
- 13.5 Creating the composite criticism
- 13.6 Let's sum up
- 13.7 Questions
- 13.8 References

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### 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding what is Composite Criticism
- Learning about work Appreciation and Evaluation
- Understanding the importance of a balanced criticism.

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### 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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Well, in this last chapter we will attempt to find a whole methodology by combining various perspectives of criticism, at least in part. It includes all the critical perspectives that we have studied in the previous units. The four-part schema, which we call Composite Criticism. Which traditionally roots in the writings of George Santayana and Jerome Stolnitz, which was further refined by professor Thomas Olsan who applied it to electronic media critiquing. We will study the traditional approach to these studies and will try to see if it is still relevant in the digital age or needs an upgrade. In short, composite criticism gives us the tools by which we can apply all the perspectives previously studied in a single operation. Where we can also analyse a work from quartet perspectives. Which again have a distinct relation to the four communication process components.

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## 13.2 UNDERSTANDING THE TERM COMPOSITE CRITICISM

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Composite Criticism assesses the value of the work, in the real-world context within which we must function as media professionals or content producers. In Composite Criticism we try to analyse the entire program rather than an episode. It is the collective sum of all the perspectives brought to action and then on that basis is critiqued. We will all understand what all has changed with the digital media. Early studies of composite criticism started in the 1990's when the electronic media was proliferating and mostly dealt with Television and radio programming. The Theoretic framework was based on the comprehension of Electronic Media. But the time has changed, so does the technology. Digital Media has brought a vast range of mediums, but at the same time the integration of all the media forms, and convergence. Now, what we are looking at is a more dynamic and strategic media, which is not only integrating the diverse media but also the content producers/sender, the Audience/receiver/ consumer, and the content itself in a unified form. We will also discuss the participatory media and Digital Composite.

### 13.2.1 Basic Terms and Definitions:

Composite criticism's four perspectives are segmented into intrinsic and extrinsic grouping and cross-divided into appreciation and evaluations activities. Intrinsic applies to the work itself and independently with the properties internal to it. Intrinsic focuses the work in Isolation, without any specific social, political and historical context.

Extrinsic on the other hand is the quiet opposite, it applies to the work within the environment in which it is produced or exhibited, analysing it as a communicating agent with senders and receivers.

Appreciation is the process of positively reinforcing the work's merits and "gratification potential," also the challenges and obstacles faced in the production.

Evaluation examines if the work's potential were completely exploited. It properly analyses by comparing the success and failures of the work, from its content, opportunities, implementation, execution and the final impact.

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## 13.3 UNDERSTANDING THE INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC APPRECIATION

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Now further by combining these perspectives in cross pattern, we get four processes which essentially gives rise to Composite Criticism. Intrinsic Appreciation, Extrinsic Appreciation, Intrinsic Evaluation and Extrinsic Evaluation. Examining all of these processes in depth, we can understand how all these procedures collectively give out value to the overall process of criticism. Such as the knowledgeable understanding and insightful comprehension, reinforcement ascertainment (positive/negative), and

resulting delicately contemplate judgment as a tool of sensibly evaluating the value of the given work under study.

### 13.3.1 Intrinsic Appreciation:

Intrinsic Appreciation focuses on the art as a medium of gratification creator, which includes all the pleasures and enjoyments generated by the work, as media professional, it is essential for us to know all the elements, materials and the ingredients of the project, how they are structured and the expressive potential of it. Through the use of any detection tools, but the goal of Intrinsic appreciation is entirely the comprehension of the “pleasure-success” retrieved from the work. This approach can also be called „the little kids“ perspective”. When a kid gets gratified after watching something or visiting their favourite place, they start hopping with excitement while reciting all the things from the delightful experience they had. It is the purest form of pleasure released and realised. Hence in intrinsic appreciation we don’t evaluate the work’s elements critically, it is more of description of fun features or in contemporary words “cool elements”, Neglecting the negative, unhappening, dull, boring and unpleasant experiences. This subjective matter does not contain a moral framework, there is no right and wrong, just seeking to recognize pleasure-potent procurement. Intrinsic appreciation makes us cherish and work without a moral code. This approach might be hard to swallow for pragmatic thinkers.

For example, the “the murder scene from the movie Psycho 1960”, you may dislike what happened in the scene but love the treatment. A well-constructed piece of art has the potential to move on emotions and makes you ponder about. Such paradoxes proliferate intrinsic appreciation. Yet it is difficult to accept for moralistic thinkers, from their perspective it is an uncontrolled hedonism, where the individual’s behaviour is determined by desire to increase pleasure and to decrease pain. It asserts that personal gratification is the absolute aim and personal dis-pleasures as the absolute evil without respect to others and their interests. Work is judged right or wrong solely on how it makes us feel individually. Well, this perspective has become extremely essential and relevant in contemporary times. Where we are surrounded by personalized gratification tools, mediums and content. Which is produced for masses but consumer individually. The moralists also criticize intrinsic appreciation as mere endorsement of the mass audience’s extreme vulgar (of the common) tastes, that is false judgement. But again, it’s the subject matter of perspective. Eric Severeid, CBS commentator, referred to these moralistically critical highbrows as wrote – “There has always been, a large section of intellectuals who are phobic, resistant and detest anything new. Especially if it’s for the mass of common people. As they don’t understand or even like common people. This is why they write about “humanity” and not about persons. They may not dislike a program or a show for its content but because it gives happiness, enjoyment, pleasure or gratification to the audience”.

This approach is an optimistic approach rather than contemptuous intellectualism, towards media for the masses. This approach permits the

media professionals to approach various forms of media work with initial positivity.

### **13.3.2 Extrinsic Appreciation:**

This Approach focuses on the sympathy factor for the work by trying to elaborate the circumstantial challenges with which it dealt with. Here the situation in which the project was made is given emphasis. It attempts that the sympathy for its circumstantial or situational issues will help to cover the shortcomings and weaknesses of the work. For example, when a documentary film making project is allotted to the students, the students don't just want to be evaluated by the professor on the basis of the work submitted on deadline but the situations, problems, efforts, cost, time constraints they went through. They try to ascertain all these factors to achieve sympathy of the professor and thus to get passed or receive good grades. Similarly in the professional media realm, extrinsic appreciation is already acknowledged as a necessary requirement to meet the basic/optimal level of profitability and fame. In this critical approach we analyse the work in terms of media business with respect to the productional and economic constraints of the business. Media firms are usually not interested in promoting people, things or causes. They are mostly focused towards generating the maximum profitability through advertising or other means. Sometimes these budget and financial aspects hinder the production of the program and thus directly or indirectly affect the creativity. Richard Cohen, CBS producer urges the audience to acknowledge that "When you compress the world into 22 minutes, you lose a lot. 22 Minutes is just a starting point". As we studied in reality programming to create a 45 mins show, there are serious time budget time constraints, and to sum and package everything in a 45 mins episode, and creating the show with multiple episodes with consistency. For example, if you are a YouTube Creator, you might want the best production quality and with just a smartphone or a basic DSLR, well this can be a good starting point but as you start creating multiple videos you might feel technical constraints and you have to invest in professional equipments which will be inherited with budget constraints and finally to maintain consistency to feed the ever-hungry algorithm, you will have to face time constraints. But all these efforts start to pay off when your family, friends, audience and clients (advertisers) start to take account (start extrinsic appreciation) of the effort and the pain you are taking to meet those requirements. This is a lengthy process and might take a long time, but the key is to be patient and consistent. This is applicable for other media forms too in various different scales. Extrinsic Appreciation might provide backing and support to the work, but as a media producer it should not become a regular excuse, one must find a way to give out the best with respect to all the constraints. This approach involves the study of the locational challenges, and even competition the work has to face, sometimes creatively better films are overshadowed by the mainstream masala commercial films (which might not be good). But might have a good star-cast and big production label, eventually resulting in better distribution and theatre bookings. The medium is also extremely important. A weak show in a popular channel might get more popularity

than a good show in a small channel. The timing of the release, publishing and airing are also extremely important considerations. The amount of advertiser and promotion available also affect the visibility of the show and to ascertain that the audience will find the content. John Fiske and John Hartley explain that “the media content is a human construct, and the job that it does is the consequence of human choice, cultural decisions and social pressures, the medium responds to the conditions within which it exists.” (Orlik, 2000) Extrinsic appreciation recognises these aspects as well. Here the audience as well as the producer both can increase their delight in a program, as both are aware of the making procedures, it is the artistic victory over its challenges. From a broad perspective, be it all forms of art extrinsic appreciation is curtailed in generating a realistic sympathy for the work. Extrinsic appreciation is a process that gives importance to contextual criticism. Art is a human creation, generated in the actual situations and conditions of human endeavours and caters to human demand (wants and needs). Such a contextual and sympathetic perspective is something that media producers require.

### **Check your progress:**

1. Explain the basic terms of Composite criticism?

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2. What is Intrinsic Appreciation?

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3. Explain Extrinsic Appreciation with suitable examples.

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## **13.4 UNDERSTANDING THE INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC EVALUATION**

Evaluation is a critical process which takes into account the intrinsic appreciation as well as extrinsic appreciation and compares the final results with its faults, it is a neutral perspective which includes both positive and negative recognitions, this critical process is evaluated on the basis of the relevant standards.

### **13.4.1 Intrinsic Evaluation:**

In Intrinsic evaluation, we analyse the media content (the entire program, film, video etc) in isolation. That is, to calculate its value without

acknowledging its constraints or the initial viewer's reactions. Thus, it helps to inform the audience of gratification potential in the content, which they are not aware of or might not have previously experienced. Usually, the appreciation of a common person is very insufficient and just a tip of the iceberg, limited to only obvious visible characteristics. Hence this approach of analysing with attention to the minute details of the work, might reveal some aspect of work, which might not exist or appear to a non-thinking appreciation.

Intrinsic evaluation is not just limited to the work within its genre, it tends to incorporate the judgement for work or project as a whole unit or unique property. As Jerome Stolnitz states, all intrinsic evaluation “respects the uniqueness of the particular work. Like aesthetic perception itself, it observes the distinctiveness of the work and what sets it apart from similar works. Criticism by default pre-assumes that the work can be classified into kinds and therefore subject to the criteria which measure goodness in each kind.” If we see in this way both the category(genre) or Unique work implications of intrinsic evaluation are relevant and mutually supportive. In this process we not only analyse what is different about a specific program but where this unique program standard excels in its own genre or category. For example, if we talk about The Kapil Sharma show, which is a unique program with various elements, it is centric to the person in who’s name the show is, but also consists of various characters which are uniquely written and performed, incorporates celebrities. And the content consists of the common man jokes, slice of life jokes and of course promotions. Though it is a unique concept and program delivered, still it falls under the category of comedy shows and also includes the element of talk show genre, like Koffee with Karan, which is a gossip show but again centric to the key person. But still The Kapil Sharma Show has created its own unique identity. In this digital era the intrinsic evaluation becomes even more elaborated as these shows or any other type of contents are not only competing or being evaluated in its particular genre or category but also the media itself, such as the Tv programs are also being published in OTT platforms, where there are even more diverse varieties and categories. Even films for instance are getting released in theatres, as well as online and after a while premiered on Tv. This media convergence opens a lot of scope of studies related to intrinsic evaluation. Intrinsic evaluation scrutinizes the content, its execution, as well as its stand or performance with respect to the media in which it is being published, aired or broadcasted. Interestingly all the three perspectives do not lead us to the same results.

There are two perspectives in the evaluation of a work of art, The tradition perspective primarily focusses of the “Quality of the work” but with further another perspective emerged “Quality of Execution”. Both of these terms might have a significant difference. As “Quality” Means a material, whereas Quality of execution means only form. For example, the movie Dunkirk exhibited the “quality of execution” as the cinematography and the direction was done extremely well.

### 13.4.2 Extrinsic Evaluation:

In extrinsic evaluation we focus on the effects of the work or content on the audience regardless of its gratification, constraints, merits and demerits. Thus, extrinsic evaluation can be schematic and mangling. As it ceases to recognise the work's pleasures and gratifications (intrinsic Appreciation) and the media creation process and its challenges (extrinsic appreciation) it also neglects the strengths and weakness of the work or program, its structuring, content and execution (intrinsic evaluation). Although these perspectives are also important, media professionals must have a greater vision and think beyond their monomania with self-preferences, struggles, processes and mediums. They must be bothered with the effects of the program, content or the media business on the audience and also the reversal that is the counter effect of the audience on the media workflow or activities. As Horace Newcomb states "the intentions of the originator of the communication are constantly refracted by the contexts of reception." In intrinsic appreciation, for example murder scene in Alfred Hitchcock's movie Psycho is admired for its treatment, although we may not like the act/event. But if we merely appreciate the work on the basis of the beauty of the work, neglect its entire range of meaning, and we achieve a partial comprehension of the works of art, it might mislead us and cause misconceptions about the event. In simple words, Criticism that just focuses particularly on intrinsic appreciation is just incomplete and not good enough as criticism which purely rely on extrinsic evaluation. But from the reversed side, this does not imply that extrinsic evaluation is better or it does not lack important elements of critique. Because the criticism should not consist only of critical elements. There are various elements, implications and implementations that can be used. For example, one methodology which largely give prominence to extrinsic evaluation is deception analysis, which focuses on the lessons and the meanings that the work itself professes to its audience. Extrinsic evaluation stands viable for business gratifications and audience gratifications. Even for probing and analysing the ethics and values, and message structures to understand the consumers/audience perceptions process and belief systems have been integrated/expanded or contradicted. With this there is another aspect of timeliness which demands special attention. Sometimes work's meanings are with respect to the time span, whereas in some cases the work remains ever green, regardless of years or decades, the work still holds relevance and context. For example, Mother India movie a classic movie which portrayed the India of 1950's has become outdated. But on the other hand, if we talk about the movie "Abhimaan" which was released 5 decades ago is still as relevant as it was during the time of the release, hence the story was reshaped in contemporary form in the movie "Aashiqui 2". Another aspect of the time factor deals with what kind of technology was available at that time, because the impact of the audience is also partially evaluated with respect to the tools used. For example, when YouTube was expanding its reach in India, creator Bhuvan Bam made the best use of his smartphone to make videos. Similarly, the Movie Jurassic part 1 was made when the VFX started emerging and the makers even used props and



techniques which ever not even VFX, but just an illusion of it. It was done so well, with all the physical conditions, that 2 decades later it has become a subject of study. But majority of the effects of timeliness has to do with how the audience preserve the work in comparison to other works with are simultaneously available. Sometimes in timeliness effects give out different meanings of the same work of art. Which can be analysed in accordance to time relevant contexts. A “Pro” content creator or producer learns to recognize and highlight the appealing human enduring in both contemporary and “evergreen” content. A work's success can be achieved through generations as reruns if the work has the potential to create a contemporary rapport with the target audience. For example, the TV show “Friends” still appeals to young Urban Indians. For example, the works of Shakespeare still resonate with the audiences and can be performed in contemporary attires and settings without losing on original narratives and impact. Let it be contemporary or vintage work, or a Tv series rerunning on OTT platforms, implementing extrinsic evaluation to analyse a work’s exposed meaning for and the impact of it on the audiences, makes a favourable condition for a successful programming/content generation.

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### **13.5 CREATING THE COMPOSITE CRITICISM**

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Now as we know that composite criticism is a diverse and vast matter, but it is not necessary means that the critique should necessarily be big, even small critique can enfold all the four composite criticism elements in preparing an understandable and extensive analysis of a certain piece of media content or the whole program also. It does not necessarily demand volumes to compose a composite critique, to cater the demands for a complete criticism.

When implying composite criticism, we responsibility tracks the path that we ourselves or other media producers walked on while creating the work under scrutiny. Hence, by cloning the creative process through the means of composite criticism, we more supposedly arrange the work in a precise and realistic perspective, for the target audience and ourselves as well.

To summarize, composite criticism fundamentally completes all criticism’s standard requirements as it acknowledges all four processes of communication perspectives. If we substitute the communication process elements with the composite criticism elements. We find that extrinsic appreciation gives prime attention to the originator and the medium by highlighting and sympathizing with the productional challenges faced by both originator and the medium. Extrinsic appreciation also reveals the interdependency issues, i.e., one of these implications might cause problems to the other one. (For example, amateur originators unable to exploit the full potential of the medium or the short deadlines of medium not giving sufficient time to the originator for preparation).

Extrinsic evaluation, focuses on the effects of the projection on the receiver, with the polysemic negotiation, that is the circulation of effects of audience reaction on last lasting message shaping.

Whereas intrinsic appreciation and intrinsic evaluation gives prominence to the gratification potential and pleasure producing capabilities of the message. Intrinsic perspective analyses both the content and its productional aspects which supports or hinder the attainment of its potential.

Composite Criticism thus gives us a pragmatic and critical frame of reference of how to examine various aspects and perspectives of criticism and can be applied in the real-world context, but this is not the end point rather It's just a starting point, there are many more complex process and approaches, specially is we talk about quantitative research.

**Check your progress:**

1. Describe composite criticism.

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2. What is extrinsic evaluation.

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3. Describe intrinsic evaluation.

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## **13.6 LET'S SUM UP**

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Finally, it is important to recognize that admissible criticism is a constructive tool, not a destructive material. For the common audience if we say that we are critiquing something, the first thing that comes to mind is "we are criticizing it, highlighting negative things and finding mistakes." Which is a misconception about criticism. Where the goal for criticism is to suggest improvement of the work quality, and create a benchmark so that the true potential of the work can be achieved. In simple terms, not to downgrade the work but to upgrade it. As the field of media changes itself very rapidly, thus in criticism of the media, there are no right answers but learning to ask the correct questions, in a way that is non biased, honest and open minded. With the contemporary developments in the field of media now further studies and criticism will look at strategic media and integrated media, (the convergence is and will play a major role, as our Tv now can be controlled by a smartphone, or a smart watch. This process and procedures will become even more complicated but simultaneously more interesting. "As the media is

becoming more inclusive it is demanding more and more participatory storytelling and narratives, the audience wants to merge with the content and become a part of the story or narrative. This will become a more experiential matter, with its own pros and flaws. This is where we have to start studying about the “Media Regime”. Which can not be studied in isolation, as it is a cultural production, which consists of value systems, norms and ethics. What we need to ask is “Is the media reforming society? Or is society reforming the media?” What is the role of the media in propagating a regime, is it just reinforcing the pre-existing regime or bringing out and establishing a new regime altogether?

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## **1.7 QUESTIONS**

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1. Explain the concept of composite criticism.
2. Explain intrinsic Appreciation in detail.
3. How does Extrinsic evaluation work?
4. Write a Composite Criticism on your favorite movie.
5. Explain why Composite criticism is required.

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## **1.8 REFERENCES**

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