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MORAL DEVELOPMENT, CONTENT ANALYSIS AND THE MORAL/VALUE DIMENSIONS OF TELEVISION DRAMA: A METHODOLOGICAL INQUIRY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro ED.D. 1980

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MORAL DEVELOPMENT, CONTENT ANALYSIS AND THE MORAL/VALUE DIMENSIONS OF TELEVISION DRAMA: A METHODOLOGICAL INQUIRY

by

Charles William Russo, Jr.

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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The assumption presented in this study is that there are significant moral dimensions in commercial television programing. A concern for these dimensions has appeared as aspects of empirical and interpretive studies in the television literature, but there has been a paucity of systematic studies in this area. The purpose of this study is threefold: to discern and describe the content and quality of the moral/value dimensions in selected television episodes, to evaluate a methodology for such an examination, and to provide a model for future investigations in this area. The generic methodology adopted for this study is content analysis, a qualitative approach which permits the researcher to determine the characteristics of a phenomenon, the forms it assumes, and the variations it displays. The methodology requires the establishment of a coding system to categorize the content of the phenomenon studied. The three-level/six-stage moral reasoning schema developed by Lawrence Kohlberg was utilized to categorize reasoning judgments, and a moral/value questions schema was specially designed for this study to categorize those external factors and relationships which influence behavior, to describe the generator of the dilemma/conflict, and to interpret the moral nature of the resolution.

An analysis of an episode from The Waltons, Little House on the Prairie, and The Paper Chase was conducted, and the results were reported in a case study format. Two rater-reliability studies, one for each category schema, were conducted to confirm that the application of the schema was properly accomplished. The results of these studies supported the original application of the schema.

The case studies demonstrate that there are rich moral/value dimensions contained in television programs, that the Kohlberg schema and the specially designed moral/value questions are useful coding devices, and that the content analysis methodology is a useful procedure to discern and describe these dimensions. This study is a methodological inquiry, and therefore no attempt was made to generalize the results garnered to all television programming; however, the study supports the suggestion that further research in this area ought to be productive and informative. A discussion of the significance of this study and the implications of its result as pertinent to television script-writers, parents and viewing public, and to educators for policy recommendations in their respective professional and personal areas of concern is presented in the final chapter.

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CHAPTER I

TELEVISION AND VALUES

Introduction

The public school systems and the commercial television networks are two institutions which consume a large portion of time in the lives of children. It seems reasonable to posit that both institutions exert a considerable influence on the intellectual, social, and moral development of children. It can be argued that schools are publicly financed institutions constituted as agents to serve the developmental needs of children, whereas the commercial television networks are profit-motivated enterprises which function as an entertainment medium. Irrespective of their purpose or priorities, it is clear that these two institutions influence the moral/value development of their clientele, and have been the foci of considerable concern, criticism, commentary, and research.

Many educators have specified that there is a need to discern the moral dimensions inherent in the operation of the schools, and to discover what influence the school experience exerts on the moral development of children. Purpel and Ryan (1976) argue, "the schools simply cannot avoid being involved in the moral life of students. . . . For the educator, it comes with the territory" (p. 9).

My own dissertation interest will focus on ways in which the moral/value dimensions, which I believe are depicted in many television programs, can be discerned, described, and analyzed. There is a paucity of literature, either research or commentary, in this area; when the question has been addressed, it has often appeared as an analogy to studies which have focused on other concerns. I believe, as in the school experience, the implicit and explicit moral/value dimensions depicted or implied in television programing "comes with the territory," and is a concern which deserves further investigation and inquiry.

There are several methodologies in the educational literature which have been developed to explore the question of moral/value education. Two primary approaches are values clarification (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1978) and the cognitive moral/developmental schema (Kohlberg, 1969, 1971, 1972). Delattre and Bennett (1979) describe several basic premises inherent in these approaches. These are that values education should avoid indoctrination; that society itself promotes a questioning attitude toward the traditional ideals of the society; that beliefs are influenced by a variety of outside forces--e.g., family, ethnic background, religious training, peer groups and television; that "since some people have not thought their values through . . . they are often unclear about and inconsistent in their beliefs [and] they do not know why they believe what

they believe" (p. 39); and finally, that values and beliefs may be discovered through self-examination and discussion, particularly discussion with peers. It would seem possible to adopt some of the concepts employed in this literature to inquire into the moral/value dimensions of television programing.

My purpose is twofold. First, I want to focus on gaining some insight and data into the moral content of television programs, to discern its existence and its quality. Second, I want to address the question of an appropriate conceptual framework and methodology for this type of investigation. I see my own efforts as a way to provide some insight into the moral value dimensions depicted on television, and to move toward suggestion of a framework which might serve as a model for future investigation in this area. This dissertation is an exploration into ways of discerning the moral nature of the programs presented on commercial television. In particular, this study utilizes content analysis as the basic methodology with heavy reliance on the work of Lawrence Kohlberg.

The first chapter of this dissertation is an examination of some of the current literature on commercial television programing, particularly as that literature focuses on children, and as it is suggestive of the influence of television on the moral/value development of the viewer. There does exist a substantial body of literature devoted to

a description of the nature and impact of television programs. The professional literature in this area has been thoroughly reviewed by several authors, and an effort to review the entire literature would be both massive and repetitive. The purpose here is to point to several of the well-known secondary sources and to specify their general conclusions. The primary sources selected for inclusion in this chapter are relevant to the relationship of television to children, particularly as that relationship influences their moral/value development.

This chapter is organized into three main sections. First, are those research studies which focus on the impact of the medium on the viewer; and second, are those studies which focus on the moral/value dimensions depicted in television programs. A discussion and conclusions section follows these sections. Chapter II provides an explanation of the generic form of content analysis as a research methodology. In addition, the models of content analysis used to discern the moral content of television programs are presented. Chapter III is a series of case studies in which the moral/value dimensions depicted in three selected television episodes are examined. The purpose of Chapter IV is twofold: first, to offer some insight into the moral/value dimensions depicted in the programs analyzed and second, to offer an evaluation of the content analysis methodology to examine these dimensions.

Selected Review of the Literature

A substantial portion of the commentary and research on television pertains to the impact of television on children (Atkins, Murray, & Nayman, 1971). A large portion of this research has attempted to discern ways in which the viewing of television affects the development of children's attitudes and perceptions about the world (Comstock, 1975a). Siegal (1977) has enunciated this concern when she says,

> I believe that [television] has profound implications for our social system, including our socialization of the young. . . . Although the media men would have us think that their electronic wonder is simply a method of entertaining the public and selling soap to them, as behavioral scientists we ought to be thinking of television as a teacher, a source of information, a form of cultural transmission, an agency for socializing the young, a technique of displaying behavior that children will observe and imitate. (p. 176)

The sources summarized and discussed in this section offer a broad perspective on the large body of literature related to the effects of television on viewers, particularly on children.

Liebert, Neale, and Davidson (1973) provide a useful summary of the major research efforts related to children and commercial television. Irrespective of its heavy focus on aggression, the summary of the various research efforts is sufficiently detailed to provide an explanation of the kinds of research and the approaches possible to address several types of research questions; these approaches include field studies, clinical studies, and observational studies. The authors explain the various research approaches,

their methodologies and design characteristics, their respective strengths and weaknesses, and the types of statistical analyses possible.

Lesser (1977) offers a detailed summary of the major studies concerning children and television. His book is particularly useful, for he discusses at length the various psychological theories which form the basis for much of the research in this area. His discussion highlights both the strengths and the weaknesses of each of the major psychological and theoretical bases, and the experimental methodologies used. He notes that modeling theory has been particularly influential in determining the climate of opinion surrounding the potential effects of the mass media, and he criticizes the design characteristics of those laboratory experiments which have attempted to establish a correlation between viewing violence on television and aggressive behavior. He says,

> the experiments are artificial; children may be responding to the demand characteristics of the tasks, the experimental measures do not appear to define genuine aggression, and brief experimental exposures to televised aggression probably have little relevance to the real-life conditions of television watching. (p. 26)

Kaplan and Singer (1976), in addition to their extensive bibliography on the topic of television and aggression, have developed a category system to organize this large body of research. The three categories, activation, catharsis, and null effect, dominate the various approaches

to the research on television as an agent which influences aggressive behavior. The activation concept suggests that violence on television activates or induces the viewer to behave more aggressively. An explanation of the causality for this activation process, according to the authors' schema, is dependent on the nature of behavior as defined according to the psychological stance adopted by the researcher. There are three such stances within the activation category: the social learning and imitation position, which assumes some mental process of association between what is observed and later exhibited as imitative behavior; the classical conditioning position, which assumes a nonrational stimulus-response causality of behavior; and finally, the more loosely defined general arousal version, which suggests that viewing violence causes an individual to reach an emotionally aroused state which in turn leads to an increased level of activity and the possibility that the individual will commit an aggressive act.

In addition to the activation category, the authors report on studies which support the catharsis concept. This position is essentially the opposite of the activation position; the catharsis concept is based on the assumption that in specified subgroups of the population the level of aggression is lowered after viewing violence. The third category, the null position, suggests that violence on

television is not demonstrated to have a significant effect on aggressive or antisocial behavior.

The authors relate several specific behavior theories, e.g., stimulus/response and cognitive/developmental, to each of the categories in their schema, and they present theoretical arguments both for and against each position. The majority of the studies they have summarized into the activation category with a social learning/imitation construct because a major portion of the studies on television and aggression fall into this category.

Researchers have recently turned their attention to the possibility that positive influences may be exerted on children through the use of commercial television. The basic assumption underlying these efforts is that television has a dismal record concerning the depiction of violence and mayhem in its programs. One means to change that record is to use television for depictions of positive social values and behaviors. These studies indicate that positive values are generally transmitted through so-called "prosocial behavior" programs.

Bar-Tal (1976) has offered a definition of "prosocial" as those behaviors which generally refer to the qualities of altruism, generosity, sharing and helping, as well as behaviors which benefit another person without anticipation of reward. Mussen and Eisenberg (1977) define prosocial behavior in terms of generosity, sympathy, giving of material or

psychological assistance to those in distress, and participating in activities designed to improve the general welfare by reducing social injustices and inequalities. They review three main theories upon which much of the research in this area has been based. These theories are: classical psychoanalytic, particularly Freudian theory; social learning theory with an emphasis on modeling theory; and cognitive/developmental theory as developed by Piaget and expanded by Kohlberg.

The development and production of the Sesame Street program (Lesser, 1974) and Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids (Cosby, 1976) have attempted to employ television programing to transmit prosocial values. Common messages found in these programs include: be kind to animals, it is nice to share, and policemen are friends. Utilizing prior research on aggression (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961) and on prosocial programs, Friedrich and Stein (1973) conducted a series of observations with preschool children enrolled in a nine-week nursery school program. The children were divided into three groups and exposed to a series of three types of television programs: aggressive cartoons(Batman and Superman), prosocial programs (Misterogers Neighborhood), and neutral programs. The children who were shown the aggressive programs displayed interpersonal aggression levels higher than the group medium, and declines in tolerance of delay and rule obedience. Those children exposed to the prosocial

programs "showed increases in task persistence, and they tended to increase in rule obedience and tolerance of delay" (p. 57). The conclusion supported by this study is that aggressive programs influence aggressive behavior and prosocial programs influence prosocial behavior. It should be pointed out, however, that the research on violence and the recent research on prosocial influence are based on similar assumptions. The efforts to prove adverse effects were either inconclusive or open to some doubt. It seems questionable, therefore, to expect to prove prosocial effects based on the same set of assumptions.

In addition to the large number of empirical studies concerning television, there is also a substantial body of interpretive work on the topic. These writings have generally attempted to utilize the empirical studies as a base for interpreting the social and moral meanings of television programs. As in the empirical literature, there is an explicit recognition that television is a social and cultural agent of influence. There is also an implicit assumption that a portion of this cultural transmission contains a moral/value dimension. The sources summarized and discussed in the remainder of this section offer a perspective on the literature which is suggestive of the moral/value dimensions of television. Waters (1977) summarized some of the implicit and explicit assumptions related to children and television: that television tends to produce aggressive behavior among the young, it preempts

the traditional development of childhood including such activities as reading and outdoor play, and it prematurely jades and renders passé the normal childhood experiences. Television is accused of stifling creative imagination, fantasy, and spontaneous play; it instills an attitude of passive spectatorship and a withdrawal from direct involvement in real life experiences; and, it produces a low tolerance for any frustration in the learning process and quickly discourages children from any activity that promises less than instant gratification.

Wertham (1974), a clinical psychiatrist, summarizes many of the arguments both in defense of and condemnation against television. These arguments include, among others, that well-adjusted children are not harmed and conversely that only predisposed or emotionally disturbed children are affected; it is the families' responsibility to shield the child; the mass media give the public what it wants; violence is part of reality--therefore, television violence helps children cope with reality; viewing violence is a cathartic release which inhibits violent/aggressive behavior; there is no proof that there is a relationship between watching violence and violent, aggressive behavior; attempts to critique mass-media violence will lead to censorship and interfere with civil liberties; there is violence in classic literature and fairy tales, and the use of violence as a theme on television is not different from other acceptable

media presentations; good triumphs in the end--therefore, the effect can only be salutary; and, children know that mass media violence is not real. Wertham argues that social values are inculcated by television and that the depiction of violence blunts sensitivity and leads to a false image of human relationships. This desensitization works to disarm the child's capacity for sympathy and moral appreciation of society's values.

The physical structure of the medium acts as a control over the content of programs which in turn projects a moral/value dimension to the viewer (Adler, 1976). Primary among these demands is the tremendous amount of time which must be filled. The medium has an insatiable appetite for program material. Secondly, the continuous broadcasting of material creates a flow and a continuity. There are no individual works, but rather each individual program tends to interact with those around it and to become part of a continuous flow of stereotyped characters, typical plots, and controlling conventions. This continuity inhibits excellence in individual programs because a program of unusual quality would stand out and reveal the banality of the remaining programs. The result is the viewer does not have an opportunity to consider the moral/value implications of individual programs.

An essential element of the nature of television is the requirement for simplicity; the characteristics of the

medium itself favor or mold the content to its simplest level. Domestic settings are often presented because they are the most familiar and uncomplicated background, and thus do not distract from the development of the plot. Moreover, complex story lines are avoided. The small screen size presents a low picture resolution and thus does not allow for visual complexity. The standard half-hour or one-hour format acts as a controlling device on plot development and forces the writers to accept certain conventions of plot development. This time demand also requires that only the essential elements of the plot be presented; therefore, there is not enough time to devote to complex plot or character development in most programs. As a result, characters and plots tend to be stereotyped and simplistic. Furthermore, the medium's requirement for large amounts of material creates a factory approach which results in a reliance on formulas and visual conventions for plot development. Finally, the mass appeal of the medium means that program material must appeal to an enormous audience, and that this mass audience represents wide variations in education, class, ages, geographic locale, and interests. The material therefore must appeal to the "lowest common denominator" of taste in order to generate the widest appeal to a broad audience.

The simplisitc plot and character development presents a distorted image of reality, and the banal stereotypes and

the conventions utilized to resolve dilemmas may influence the viewer's understanding of the processes necessary to effect an appropriate resolution. The "lowest common denominator" approach tends to homogenize the society's thinking and values.

Harvey (1977) develops the concept of dramatic themes which distort reality. She notes that television is a highly visual medium and accordingly television writers find the use of action, particularly violence, an easy and convenient device to hold the viewer's attention. She says,

> writers of action/adventure programs churn out seemingly endless variations on the same basic theme: aggression by villain brings about achievement of immediate objectives; hero pursues villain; hero and villain are pitted against each other in a grand finale brawl or shoot-out; hero overcomes villain and is rewarded for a job well done. (p. 24)

She notes that comparisons of television crime and real-life crime show major dissimilarities. First, most real crimes involve money and property, the so-called "white collar" crimes, rather than the overrepresented violent crimes. Second, law enforcement efforts are severely distorted in television depictions. For example, real life policepersons rarely fire their weapons. In addition to blunting the viewers' sensitivity to violence, Harvey notes that the distortions of reality also present a fallacious picture of the real world. The image depicted is that the world is a dangerous and hostile place, and that interpersonal

violence is to be expected. Further, the methods utilized by law enforcement agencies are also violent; however, the use of violence by "the good guys" is acceptable in television drama.

Arons and Katsh (1977) are attorneys and professors of legal studies who examined the question of the use of violence by law enforcement officers. They conducted an analysis of police crime shows to determine how the police perform on television in relation to the requirements of the Constitution and the protection of the legal rights of defendants. Their major thesis is that these shows depict police violating the Constitutional protections of citizens. They quote drama dialogues and describe actions which violate these Constitutional protections. The implication of their study is that it is acceptable for the police to use violence and/or force to roust a suspect as long as they get the information required to solve the crime. Bryan and Walbek (1970) also note that televised violence by heroes is not punished but rather, it is justified by moral pronouncements about the rectitude of aggressing for "good" reasons. In their analysis, they suggest that children who watch televised heroes pronounce virtuous statements as they break the law or perpetrate aggressive actions are in fact teaching the observer how to be brutal and what to verbalize. This latter point is reflected in a number of studies which have addressed the question

of how children perceive television drama, that is, what cognitive process children employ to decipher the medium's message. Much of this research is based on the theories of Piaget (Case, 1973; Wadsworth, 1971), who posits that there is a difference between adults' and young children's intellectual processes and perceptions. Leifer and Roberts (1972) and Collins (1970) suggest that even though television violence is usually negatively sanctioned, the villain is caught and punished, young children may not have the cognitive capacity to follow the plot development; rather, they may fragment the plot into discrete and unrelated segments. As a result, the violence depicted in television programs would exert an independent effect on the young viewer, irrespective of the later consequences to the malefactor.

The viewers' cognitive capacity to understand advertisements (Ward, 1972) also influences their attitudes toward and belief in the veracity of commercial messages (Sheikh & Prasad, 1974) and relates to the inculcation of a sense of materialism. Liebert (1977) suggests that advertisements foster a belief in "things" and the act of consumption as more valued than people. Bever, Smith, Bengen and Johnson (1975) are economists and business researchers who examined the question of children's capacity to understand and to evaluate the information in television commercials. They conducted a series of interviews with forty-eight children between the ages of five and twelve

years old from a cross section of middle- and working-class families. Their interviews were designed to examine the information-processing skills children develop at different age levels and their ability to evaluate this information; and also, to discover if learning to deal with commercials has any harmful effect on children's attitudes towards business and society.

The authors identified three stages which relate to children's perceptions of and reactions towards commercials. The first stage is early childhood indifference, including five- and six-year-olds, in which children have difficulty making the distinction between make-believe and lying. These children showed no skepticism about the commercials and thus were vulnerable to misleading advertising. Part of this confusion is related to the child's acceptance of the authority of the adult spokesperson in the advertisement. The second stage the authors label middle childhood conflict, which includes children from seven to ten years old. During this period the child is able to distinguish between make-believe and lying, but is unable to make useful operational judgments about these concepts in his own life. These children are vulnerable to the advertising message; however, in this group there is the beginning of some skepticism concerning the adult authority figure. In this group there exists an ambivalence between the growing mistrust these children are developing and a belief in the

commercial messages. The final stage is identified as the late childhood cynicism of eleven- and twelve-year-olds. In this stage the child has made certain accommodations to the adult world and its values, and has acquired the requisite cognitive skills to process the information contained within the advertisements in relation to the real world. It is also at this age that the child is able to apply moral judgments, to make the distinction between fantasy and reality, and to understand the relationship of advertising to the economic system. The authors note that their research supports the cognitive/developmental theories of Piaget, including that "children grow by testing their own models of reality in specific circumstances and then modifying those impressions according to their experiences" (p. 118).

Television and Moral/Values

In comparison to the substantial amount of literature on television in areas such as effects on viewers, advertising, violence and prosocial educational programs, there is a paucity of material which directly and explicitly discerns and describes the content of a moral/value dimension in programs.

Liebert and Poulous(1976) have reviewed the literature on television violence and moral development. The research results which they have quoted are generally based on the

observational theory of learning and correlation studies. Their work attempts to focus directly on the question of moral development, or at least on the impact which television has on the moral outlook and attitudes of children in relation to their television-viewing habits. The authors note that Piaget and Kohlberg have maintained the theoretical position that for young children and less mature adults moral judgments are based on outcomes rather than on the intention behind the act. The end result of the action, the outcome, is considered rather than the thought processes which initiated the act. This theoretical point is critical to the theories of Piaget and to Kohlberg. The application of these theories to television viewing is that television programs often depict violent behavior as a means to achieve an acceptable goal; i.e., the "good guys" often use violent or antisocial actions to achieve their goal. The implication, in relation to Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories, is that the less mature person will focus on the action rather than on the intention and thus television depictions of violence and antisocial behavior will teach the viewer that such action is acceptable and morally right.

Adler (1975) and McQuail (1969) have both reviewed the literature on the medium as a social and cultural force which influences mass audiences. In general, these studies support the conclusions that first, mass programing homogenizes society's thinking and values (Williams, 1975; Jacobs, 1959);

second, that individuals are becoming removed from direct contact with reality and dependent upon technologies such as television in lieu of personal experience (Ellul, 1964); and third, that television watching is a passive experience which deteriorates active, individual thinking (Mander, 1978; Winn, 1977). These social and cultural analyses suggest that television has initiated a shift in some basic perceptions and values attributed to the American society; for example, the free enterprise system which extols hard work and individual effort as the routes to success, or the pioneer explorer spirit to solve problems.

Rabinowitz (1975) has examined the values depicted in situation comedies, particularly All in the Family and The Mary Tyler Moore Show. She suggests that despite the controversial subjects these series have addressed, and the liberal"modern"stance adopted and supported by some of the characters, they have appealed to large numbers of viewers because they ultimately support and extol such traditional virtues as success, ambition, and competition. She says the appeal of All in the Family is based on "its vivid, visual demonstration of the abiding attractiveness of the familiar as opposed to the strange, the old virtues, as opposed to the new nonsense" (p. 70). Novak's (1975) analysis, however, presents a different conclusion. He argues that television programing contains a class bias, values the liberalism of progress and capitalism, supports

an ultimate optimism and a questioning attitude toward traditional authorities, institutions, and values. Both of these authors examined and cited examples from the same program series to support their conclusions. Part of the difficulty, in addition to the opposing conclusions, is that these commentators have neither expressed a theoretical framework upon which their observations are based, nor have they utilized a convenient measurement device to categorize the findings and to support their conclusions.

Ryan (1976) avoided this difficulty by placing his research within Kohlberg's schema of cognitive moral development, a theoretical framework which will be a central part of this dissertation and which will be discussed in Chapter II. Ryan states that Kohlberg's model will not directly explain what television is doing to the morals and moral thinking of the viewer, but could provide a useful tool to understand what and how television communicates to the viewer in the moral realm. He suggests that a large majority of television entertainment programs, particularly the drama programs, are composed of human beings struggling with some moral problem, and that in the process of watching these programs the viewer is involved at some cognitive level in these moral problems. The viewer is exposed to the character's dilemma of choosing or solving his moral options.

In his paper he examined one program, an episode of the now defunct Kung Fu, with three questions in mind. He states these questions as:

> First, are the dilemmas presented moral in nature and how prominent are these dilemmas? Second, is each character in the episode clearly at a particular stage of moral thinking? Third, how does this TV program act as a moral educator, teaching about the rightness and wrongness of behavior and can Kohlberg's Cognitive-Developmental Theory help answer this question? (p. 119)

The main character, Caine, is a Chinese-American who has been educated in the Zen-Buddhist tradition at a Chinese monastery. In the program he travels in the "frontier days of the old West," in the traditional role of a moral educator. This program lends itself well to the attempted analysis for there is little doubt that it presents moral dilemmas. Despite Caine's expertise in the martial arts and some use of violence, his primary method of dealing with the dilemmas presented is to base his actions on some intellectually reasoned, morally acceptable rule or guide to behavior.

Discussion and Conclusion

Television exerts an influence on the intellectual, social, and moral development of the viewer; the depiction of implicit and explicit moral/value dimensions in television programs "comes with the territory." The first purpose of this dissertation is to discern the existence

of a moral dimension in programs. There is a paucity of studies which directly explore this dimension, although many studies have dealt with it implicitly or indirectly. A variety of design methodologies (Libert, Neale, & Davidson, 1973) and psychological theories (Lesser, 1977) have been employed in the empirical studies. A primary purpose of these studies has been an attempt to establish a relationship between television programing and viewer behavior. Two categories of such attempts which have been the focus of considerable research are television violence (Kaplan & Singer, 1976) and prosocial programing (Mussen & Eisenberg, 1977). Although these researchers' primary concern has generally been to demonstrate some degree of causality, the concern for the moral/value dimensions emerges from the notion that these themes will have an adverse effect on the viewer and that the viewer will accept these depictions as appropriate. These researchers tend to assume an a priori moral/value posture concerning the programs' content. For example, the use of aggression/violence to accomplish a goal is considered morally improper behavior, whereas being kind to animals and sharing are considered appropriate. By implication, the assumption concerning the content of programs in these empirical studies does suggest the existence of a moral/value dimension in television, but the value considerations are not examined systematically.

The second group of studies in this section, categorized as interpretive articles, also establishes the moral/value dimensions of television programs. These authors have attempted to demonstrate that television functions as an agent which transmits social and cultural values. Often their primary concern is that television transmits negative social and cultural values and/or desensitizes the viewers' capacity for moral appreciation of appropriate societal values. There are also two substantive differences between this group of studies and the empirical studies. First, these authors seem to offer a more clearly defined definition of their own conception of appropriate values; for example, the condemnation of advertisements is based on the negative value that it promotes materialism in lieu of valuing individuals. Second, these studies constitute a shift away from heavy reliance on observational learning themes and the utilization of other frameworks such as cognitive developmental learning theory.

Despite the wealth of research existing on the topic of television, there has been a dearth of attention focused directly on determining the moral/value dimensions depicted in commercial television programs. The Rabinowitz (1975) and Novack (1975) articles demonstrate that investigations in this area have suffered on a number of important methodological points; in particular, there has not been

a specific, systematic, and empirically sound method to directly investigate this aspect. Ryan (1976) avoided this difficulty by utilizing the Kohlberg schema as a categorization schema to code the moral content of television.

My intention in this dissertation is to carry this initial effort forward and to develop this approach. My second goal, therefore, is to employ and evaluate a methodology to discern and describe the moral dimensions of television programs. Chapter II establishes some of the essential differences between quantitative and qualitative research procedures, and posits that the qualitative methodology is an appropriate approach to explore this dimension. A form of the qualitative methodology is content analysis. The discussion defines content analysis and explains the kinds of questions which this methodology is able to address, and what outcomes the researcher is able to expect from its employment. Two forms of content analysis, the Kohlberg scheme and an instrument which I have specifically designed for this study, which I have termed "Moral/Value Questions," are also explained. The last section of the chapter offers a rationale for and the outcome of two rater reliabilities studies which were conducted to support the appropriate application of these two schemas.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, METHODS, AND PROCEDURES

Concerns and Focus

A variety of concerns have been researched and analyzed in the substantial literature on television. There are, however, few studies which have systematically focused on the moral/value dimensions contained in television programing. This dimension has emerged as a correlative concern in the empirical and interpretive studies. Essentially, the concern has centered on the notion that the viewer will accept as appropriate and will emulate program depictions. There has been a dearth of studies based on a systematic theoretical framework to explore this dimension. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate an approach to this area which might serve as a less ambiguous method to discern and describe the moral/value dimensions in commercial television drama programs. The following discussion is designed to specify some of the methodological concerns, inherent strengths and shortcomings, appropriate application of and reasonable expected outcomes from different types of studies, and to support the decision for the methodological approach adopted in this dissertation. The basic distinction I will use is that between quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

Kerlinger (1973) has offered an operational definition of quantitative (his term is "scientific") research as a "systematic, controlled, empirical, and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena" (p. 11). Much of the quantitative research on television has centered on the impact of television, particularly the relationship between depictions of violence in programs and its effects on viewer behavior. The attractiveness of this approach to examining a research problem is that it is possible to design a "systematic, controlled and empirical" study, and that such studies have offered useful insight into the probable impact of the relationships of programs to viewers. There are, however, some difficulties associated with this methodology when applied to television research. One of these is that there is a distinction which must be made between an empirical relationship and causation. Although a statistical relationship may suggest an effect, causation cannot be inferred from correlation. An inferential statistical procedure may prove to be reliable; that is, several studies may achieve similar or replicable results. The multiple environmental factors which may affect behavior are difficult to control for in television research, and make such attempts to measure statistically the outcomes of these variables a complex undertaking.

It is possible, however, that the studies may fail to support the concept of validity. The question of validity is based on the concept that the research study actually measures what it is designed to measure. The concept of validity may not be based on the assumption that what appears to be logical or evident is valid; the point of this inferential leap is the threshold of ambiguity and distortion. Witness for example, the conflicting outcomes of the report by the U.S. Surgeon General on Television and Violence (Atkins, Murray, & Nayman, 1971).

Comstock (1975b) noted these complexities and suggested that the research on television violence and aggressive behavior will quietly prove less interesting to researchers, and that they will turn away from this methodology to investigate other concerns and to seek other approaches. The nature of the moral/value dimension of television programs is one such concern, and a qualitative methodology may prove useful in this effort.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis is different from quantitative in the nature of the questions which the analyst asks. Lofland (1971) defines qualitative analysis in operational terms as the search to determine the characteristics of the phenomenon, the forms it assumes, and the variations it displays. Qualitative analysis is applied to the question

of delineating focus, kinds and types of phenomena, and of documenting in detail those things which exist. It is important to note that the goal of a qualitative analysis is not judgmental in the sense that it specifies that certain elements are different, and therefore carry some status as more valuable or precious than other elements. The goal of qualitative analysis is to discern and to specify the differences which do exist. Essentially, such an interpretative approach requires the researcher to observe and to note all incidents, and to attempt to draw inferences from the mundane as well as the extraordinary occurrences observed. These types of analyses are informative and often interesting and insightful. They may, however, suffer from a lack of empirical or scientific rigor since they are limited to the individual author's interpretation and insight. Although valuable as useful guides to understanding a powerful phenomenon such as television, they lack those facets which usually characterize quantitative research. These include agreed-upon units and methods of measurement, and the ability to replicate the findings by a second, independent analyst.

The difficulty here is the opposite of the quantitative method in that the qualitative analysis may possibly be valid; however, it often does not meet the criteria for or definition of reliability. Second, the researcher bases his inferences on a set of assumptions which often may be

ill-defined; that is, there is not a clearly stated theoretical framework upon which the work is based. Despite these shortcomings, this type of research has found favor in a variety of the behavioral sciences including, but not limited to, anthropology and sociology.

Methodology Adopted

This dissertation is based on the concept that it is possible to use a form of qualitative analysis to examine the moral/value dimensions of commercial television while minimizing the inherent shortcomings, such as the lack of measurement rigor and the inability to replicate results, in this type of analysis. The purpose of this study is two-fold: first, to gain some insight into the existence and quality of the moral content of television and second, to evaluate a conceptual framework and methodology for this type of investigation. This effort is designed to reduce some of the inherent ambiguity in both quantitative and qualitative studies and second, to suggest an alternative framework for future investigations in this area.

The research design utilized in this study is an adaptation of the content analysis approach. The term "content analysis" is a generic description of a type of research approach which has been utilized to examine various forms of communication. The general theoretical assumption underlying this type of investigation is that

it is possible to discover the implications of the message in terms of its audience and the purpose of the message originator by directly examining the content of the communication.

There are several general procedures and considerations which must be resolved for each investigation which is based on the content analysis approach. The general procedures utilized in the content analysis methodology have been described by Holsti (1968) and Berelson (1952). One of the major considerations necessary to conduct such an analysis is the construction of an appropriate categorization system, and a unit of analysis to classify and to describe the content of the communication. Two such systems have been adopted for use in this study based on the moral reasoning stage schema developed by Kohlberg (1969) and a basic approach to qualitative analysis developed by Lofland (1971).

Content Analysis

An inherent assumption of content analysis is that the communication process is an intrinsic part of all social interaction. Holsti (1968) and Berelson (1952) have offered definitions, theoretical assumptions, explanations of the methods employed, and shortcomings of the content analysis research procedure. Content analysis is defined as "a multipurpose research method developed specifically

for investigating a broad spectrum of problems in which the content of communications serves as the basis of inference" (Holsti, 1968, p. 597). Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18). This second definition contains three points which require further explanation. Objectivity means that the analysis has been based on explicitly formulated rules which allow replication of results. Systematic refers to the requirement that the inclusion or exclusion of content be based upon consistently applied criteria of selection. Finally, a major area of disagreement among users of content analysis is whether the analysis must be limited to manifest content or surface meanings. This point is particularly crucial when attempts are made to draw inferences from the content data about causes and effects; that is, inferences about the motives of the sender of the message and the effects of the communication upon the recipient. A broader definition of the research procedure, not limited to the manifest content, permits the investigator to draw inferences about causes and effects of the content and structure of communication messages.

Although the content analysis research design is used as a means to examine a communication, the hypotheses under investigation often include other elements of the

communication. One of these is the criterion of generality which is defined as an attempt to support a hypothesis and to draw theoretical relevance for the findings. The classic and powerful formulation of this question is: "Who says what, to whom, how, why, and with what effect?" Holsti comments that the major application of this technique is to describe the attributes of the message or the "what" question. Intermessage analysis of the "what" question includes the examination of a message from a single source compared over time, in different situations, and across various audiences. Conversely, internal analysis of a message is based upon the covariation of two or more variables within a single or set of messages. The "what" question may also be examined against some a priori standard or noncontent indices of the investigator's preference. Two extensive television studies which have attempted to answer the "what" question using content analysis are the Ontario Report of the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry (1976) and Winick, Williamson, Chuzmir, and Winick (1973) who conducted an extensive and detailed content analysis of advertisements on television. The former report consisted of a number of individual studies similar to the U. S. Surgeon General's report, and focused on such questions as the number of violent incidents within a given time period and the types of formats and characterizations depicted. The latter

focused on an analysis of types of commercials and the character depictions presented.

The "how" question has been used in propaganda and values analyses to study the personality and beliefs of the message originator. The question addressed here is: How is the message constructed and, by inference, how does the message reflect the goals, beliefs, and values of the originator? An example of this type of application is an analysis by Rokeach (1973) who examined two values, equality and freedom, expressed in four conflicting political ideologies (socialism, capitalism, communism, and fascism) in an effort to determine the beliefs of several major authors who represented and espoused each of these political orientations.

The "to whom" question is used as a device to draw inferences about the audience of a message. Such research is conducted under the assumption that the originator casts his message in the idiom of the audience. Three interrelated inferences may be drawn from such studies: that authors write differently for dissimilar audiences, that such materials shape the values and predispositions of the audience, and that different messages reflect similarities/differences among audience members. The basic hypothesis of this last inference is that correlations across messages are norm-referenced to widely held audience values. Similarities across messages can be used

to identify widely held values. This is a question pertinent to this study and addresses the question of generality. Due to the limited number of programs analyzed in this study, the question of generality is not supported. There is a need for further, more detailed studies of the wide variety of programs available for analysis. Although not supported in this dissertation, the contention is that the requirement for generality would be satisfied if more programs were analyzed.

The "why" question has been used to make inferences about values, intentions, and strategies of both communicators and audiences. It is discussed here as a means to support the selection of programs chosen for analysis in this study. Holsti correctly points out that the selection of materials may, and often does, affect the conclusions of the study. He states that it is exceedingly difficult to insure that the selection of materials accurately represents and reflects the values held by the audience or the intentions of the originator. "A partial solution to the problem is to rely on materials which meet the criterion of popularity" (p. 636). In line with this reasoning, the assumption held for this study is that a successful television program must be attuned to the personalities and values of the audience. A second solution to this problem involves the selection of "materials which explicitly perform the function of transmitting and

instilling social norms" (p. 636) such as folktales, children's readers, youth manuals, songs, and textbooks. When these studies are performed within the "why" rubric, there would seem to be an underlying assumption that these materials are deliberately designed to influence the viewer. It seems reasonable to contend and it has been argued elsewhere, particularly in the literature on television and prosocial behavior, that television does perform such a function.

The "with what effect" question is the most difficult and troubling of the six questions and is often a major weakness of the content analysis methodology. Holsti (1968) says, "any direct inference as to the effects from content is at best tenuous" (p. 639). The decoding habits as well as the predispositions of individual members of the audience are two major factors which inhibit attempts to make such direct inferences. The stated purpose, however, in this dissertation is not to establish a correlation between content and effects, but rather to discern and to describe the moral/value dimensions depicted.

In addition to the definition of content analysis and the theoretical assumptions underlying this method of research as reflected in the six questions enumerated above, Holsti offers an explanation of the procedures employed in content analysis research. These procedures include the following topics: decoding content data, units

of analysis, systems of enumeration, sampling, reliability, and validity. The application of these topics to this dissertation is discussed later in this chapter. The selection and definition of categories into which content units are classified is central to and is often the most troubling and time-consuming aspect of a content analysis research design. For it is the standardization of categories which permits replication and accumulation of findings across studies. "Content analysis stands or falls by its categories" (Berelson, 1952, p. 147). Two schemas have been used in this dissertation to satisfy this question. They are the application of the moral reasoning stage schema (Kohlberg, 1978) and an adaptation of the qualitative analysis methodology (Lofland, 1971). Explanations of Kohlberg's theory and Lofland's mode of analysis are presented in the next two sections.

Kohlberg's Schema

Lawrence Kohlberg has utilized the cognitive developmental theoretical framework to construct a six-stage developmental model of moral reasoning. In contrast to other frameworks such as stimulus-response, maturational and associationistic theories of learning and development, the cognitive/developmental approach is based upon the assumption that the process of human development involves a basic transformation of cognitive structures in a

hierarchical sequence, and that these reintegrations are the result of a process of interaction between the individual and his environment. Development must be perceived in terms of organizational wholes or systems of mental relations which are the result of the individual's organismic structuring tendencies and his interaction with the environment. Structure as defined by Kohlberg (1978) "refers to the general characteristics of shape, pattern or organization of response" (p. 3). Cognitive structure is the set of rules used by the individual for processing information or for connecting experienced events. Changes in structure from lower to higher stages are accomplished when there is a qualitative reintegration or transformation of the existing structure from one stage to the next higher stage in the hierarchy. This qualitatively different new pattern or form is related to Lofland's (1971) definition of the term "qualitative." Although the stages are presented in a hierarchical format from lower to higher, the term qualitative refers to the form or pattern of the structure itself. That higher stages are more complex does not imply that they are more precious than the earlier, less complex stages.

The differences among structural stages refer to observable patterns of thought revealed through the verbal products of the individual. It is from this content that the existence of the structure is revealed. There is

an important distinction, however, between content and structure. Content refers to what behavior the individual says he thinks is right. Moral stages refer to moral judgments; that is, to prescriptive judgments of what is right or good rather than to either cognitive reasoning or moral behavior. These are judgments of values and issues, not of the individual's own imagined or actual behavior in a given situation. To identify moral stages is to penetrate through the individual's personality, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs and to discern the reasoning and justifications which direct them. Kohlberg has constructed a categorization system to describe each stage as well as a procedure containing a set of rules and a series of models termed "criterion judgments" to guide the analysis of moral judgments. These criterion judgments and rules of application are contained in a "scoring manual" published by the Center for Moral Education, Harvard University.

Kohlberg's model of moral stages consists of three levels, each one contains two stages for a total of six stages. The three levels, each with a brief explanation, are presented in Table 1. The six stages are presented and explained in further detail at the Appendix.

This three-level/six-stage category schema offers one possible solution for the inherent difficulty in utilizing content analysis to adequately distinguish coding units

Table 1

Three Levels of Moral Judgment

A. Preconventional Level

1. What is right? Right is usually following the rules. The rules, however, are literal. They are not understood in terms of the expectations of a society or of a notion of a good person. Bad is a label applied to an act without considering a person's motive. What is right is limited to following concrete rules or orders with power and punishment behind them; it is not defined in terms of the expectations and welfare of others. Where right is not a matter of obeying concrete rules or commands, it is a matter of serving interests of the self or those close to the self.
2. Reasons for upholding right: Reasons include self-interest, avoidance of punishment, deference to power, avoiding physical harm to others, and exchange of favors.
3. Social perspective: Right and good are seen from the point of view of one individual looking at other individuals or at the physical dimensions and consequences of rules and actions.

B. Conventional Level

1. What is right? Right means conforming to and upholding the rules, roles, and expectations of society at large, or conforming to the roles and expectations of a smaller group, like one's religious or political denomination. "Conforming to and upholding" rules and roles means more than just obedience, it means the inner motivation corresponding to the rules.
2. Reason for upholding right: Reasons include approval and general social opinion, loyalty to persons and groups, the welfare of others and of society.

C. Post-Conventional or Principled Level

1. What is right? Right is defined by general or universal human rights, values or principles which society and the individual should uphold. While it is usually right to uphold the law because the law does protect human rights, violations of the law are justified where the law is not protecting human rights.

2. Reasons for upholding right: Reasons are essentially defined by a "social contract," by the notion that by living in society you have made a generalized commitment to respect and uphold the rights of others (and the laws this entails) or by "principle," by commitment to moral principles which it is believed any moral person would perceive as rationally valid.
3. Social perspective: The perspective is prior to society. It is that of a rational individual defining values and principles prior to society or as a basis for defining a good society and committing himself to society.

One way of understanding the three levels is to think of them as three different types of relationship between the self and society's rules and expectations. From this point of view, a person at the preconventional level is one for whom rules and social expectations are something external to the self. A conventional person has achieved a socially normative appreciation of the rules and expectations of others, especially authorities, and identifies the self with the occupants of social or societal role relationships. The principled person has differentiated self from normative roles and defines values in terms of self-constructed reflective principles.

Note: From Kohlberg, L., Colby, A., Gibbs, J., Speicher-Dubin, B., & Power C. Assessing moral stages: A manual Part I (Preliminary ed.).Cambridge:Harvard Univ., July 1978, pp. 16-17.
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to describe and classify the content of the moral dimensions depicted in television programs. Because Kohlberg's theoretical construct is intentionally limited to analyses of the moral reasoning process and provides only an indirect method of analysis for moral behavior, values, and beliefs, it has an inherent weakness as a useful device for this study. The television medium depicts actions and behaviors of individuals in given situations. Also, the character's personality, values, and beliefs are usually developed through the use of dialogue in television dramas. These dialogues and behaviors are the content of the dramas; therefore, a second system to code or classify this content is necessary. Two parallel modes of analysis of the moral dimension depicted--first the moral reasoning process and second the values expressed and behaviors exhibited--would provide more detailed insight into the moral dimensions of the programs. An approach to construct this second category system has been suggested by Lofland (1971).

Lofland's Qualitative Analysis

Lofland (1971) offers a set of foci to order the examination of a phenomenon; of these, four will be used in this study. These are: acts, which are temporarily brief occurrences; activities, which are significant elements of persons' involvements; meanings, which are the verbal

productions of participants and which define and depict their action; and finally, relationships, which are the simultaneous consideration of the interpersonal relationships of several persons. Using these foci, Lofland delineates two types or modes of analysis which are useful; they are: static analysis and phase analysis.

Static analysis isolates and describes only single types of persons or single behaviors (acts), incidents of behavior (activities), verbal productions by the individual (meanings), and membership in groups or types of persons in a hierarchy or alliance and acceptable accommodations among members (relationships). Phase analysis differs from static analysis in the form of the analysis rather than the content or elements which are analyzed. The effort in phase analysis is to discern typical stages through which the members exist and/or pass in the process of culminating a particular activity.

While acts and activities are essentially descriptive in both static and phase analysis, with the exception that the form of the analysis occurs through time, meanings and relationships are somewhat different between the two modes in that they must rely on the observer's insight and capacity to articulate the phenomenon under study. In the phase analysis mode of meanings, the observer must transcend static depictions in favor of understanding and

describing the set of changes in the member's conception of an activity and the experiences these activities provide for him. In effect, the observer constructs types and phases which describe changes, conceptions, and experiences and which lend meaning to and motivate the actor. The best test of the observer's constructions is their recognizability to the participants, or failing that, their recognizability to other observers. In the phase analysis mode of relationships, the observer is required to focus upon the sequential stages and/or phases of interchange between two or more actors.

Lofland's approach to the construction of a category system has been utilized for this study to develop three broad questions to examine the moral/value dimensions depicted in commercial television programs. While Kohlberg's scheme is useful to discern the moral reasoning process depicted, these three questions are designed to provide broader insight into the moral behaviors, values, and beliefs depicted. The three "Moral/Value Questions" focus on the characters portrayed and their relationships to each other and their environment, the nature of the value conflicts which are reflected in the critical incidents developed in the drama, and finally, the basis for and the moral nature of the resolution of the conflict. These questions are summarized in Table 2. The first question examines the characters and their relationships first, to

Table 2

Moral/Value Questions

A. Characters and Relationships

1. What are the character relationships: e.g., age, sex, position (social/family)?
2. What are the settings: e.g., family, school, workplace?
3. What are the locales: e.g., geographical and time frame?

B. Moral/Value Dimensions

1. What are the major values depicted: e.g., equality, freedom, community, justice, love?
2. What are the value conflicts/dilemmas depicted: e.g., authority vs. freedom, autonomy vs. dependency, conformity vs. individuality, institutional values vs. social or personal principles?

C. Generator and Moral Nature of the Resolution

1. What is the originator of the resolution: e.g., new insight by one or more of the characters, outside intervention, rationalization or change/development by the individual?
2. What is the basis of the resolution: e.g., the triumph of a universal value, a fair conclusion for all parties involved, the triumph of one character over another, the triumph by an individual over adversity?

each other and second, to their environment. For example, does age, sex, family relationships, geographical locale, or time period significantly alter the beliefs expressed or behaviors displayed by the characters? This question is related to Lofland's static activities construct and is designed to focus on how the significant elements of the persons' involvements affect their beliefs and behaviors.

The second question is designed to offer insight into those values held by the characters which motivate their behaviors. The purpose here is to focus on those values such as equality, love, justice, freedom, and community which are considered to be universal values and which, when in conflict, constitute dilemmas for the characters. The dramatic device utilized to depict these dilemmas may be termed "value conflicts." These value conflicts relate to Lofland's concept of meanings and they relate to those lines of dialogue or verbal productions in which the characters express their values/beliefs and, when in conflict with the values/beliefs of other characters, serve to establish the conflict/dilemma. A static analysis format is useful to characterize those lines of dialogue in which actors define or depict their own actions. Because the values/beliefs of the characters are usually in a state of transition in an effort to resolve the dilemma, a phase type analysis is required to establish or define the nature of this change process. The effort here is to

focus particular attention on the nature of the value conflicts and moral dilemmas that are reflected in these programs. This is of special importance because moral issues and dramatic tensions are based on the conflict of ideas, personalities, values, and traditions.

In addition to the essential moral nature of the conflict, the moral message of the resolution will also be examined. This final question focuses on identifying the cause or generator of the resolution, and on the moral nature of the resolution itself. The initiator of the resolution may be external, e.g., the environment, some outside individual or some unexpected occurrence; or it may be internal to one or more of the characters, e.g., a change in the rationalization process or capacity of the individual. Essentially the resolution is evidenced by some type of change. This change is related to Lofland's phase relationships construct which suggests that a relationship between two characters may contribute to a change in either or both. The concept of change is also related to Kohlberg's construct of the transformation and reintegration of the structure of the individual's reasoning process. The character's attempt to resolve the value conflict by rationalizing the dilemma leads him to qualitatively restructure his reasoning process, which in turn results in a change in his reasoning stage.

This final question is also designed to focus on the moral nature or message of the resolution. For example, is the resolution a fair conclusion for all parties involved, or does it reflect a triumph by one individual over another or over adversity? The purpose here is to begin to address the content analysis question "to whom." An analysis of the moral nature of the resolution may offer some insight into the network programers' perception of the values and beliefs held by the viewers. Furthermore, if Holsti's (1968) assumption that the popularity of a message reflects the values of the recipient, then the popularity of a program, the size of its audience, may reflect the generally accepted values of the viewers.

In the preceding sections of this chapter, a distinction between quantitative studies and qualitative analyses was drawn, and an explanation of the kinds of questions the content analysis procedure is designed to address was outlined. The two formats of the content analysis procedure which have been used in this study, the Kohlberg schema and the moral/value questions based on Lofland's qualitative analysis, were explained. The two methods of analysis were complementary in this study, and they provided broader insight into the moral/value dimensions than would have been possible if only one were used.

The remainder of this chapter is presented in two parts. The first section includes a discussion of the

general procedures and decisions necessary to adopt the Kohlberg moral schema, the procedures to adapt the Lofland qualitative analysis and to construct the moral/value questions, and a brief discussion of the procedural steps necessary to apply these two tools of analysis. The second section is a discussion of the reasons underlying and the procedures for conducting two rater reliability studies, and the results of these studies.

General Procedures

This dissertation was designed to explore two important concerns: first, to develop some insight into the moral/value dimensions depicted in selected commercial television programs and second, to examine the usefulness of the two schemas selected for such an examination. Rest (1976) has reported a variety of applications of Kohlberg's model of cognitive moral development in the educational framework, and Ryan (1976) applied the Kohlberg schema to analyze the moral dimensions in one television program. The former article specified some of the general problem areas and difficulties inherent in the practical application of Kohlberg's schema to examine some of the moral dimensions of commercial television programs. A major problem area which is explicit in the Rest article and implicit in the Ryan article is that the use of the Kohlberg schema is limited to the examination of the moral reasoning capabilities of an individual through the analysis of his

judgments/statements. There are no provisions in the Kohlberg schema to examine either those factors which influence an individual's rationalization process or his behavior in a particular set of circumstances. Kohlberg (1978) has specified that the schema is confined to the analysis of judgments, a restriction that acts to limit an analysis of the moral dimensions of television programs since these moral dilemmas are developed from the conflicts among the characters' interactions in particular circumstances. The Kohlberg schema by itself does not provide a useful vehicle to comprehensively examine these elements of a dramatic program. The moral/value questions were developed, therefore, to provide an additional analytic tool to supplement the Kohlberg schema and to examine those environmental factors and character interactions which influence the individual's rationalization process and behavior. Lofland's (1976) modes--static versus phase, and his foci--acts, activities, meanings, and relationships, are a basis for the moral/value questions developed for this study. His modes and foci, however, are a generalized format which requires the establishment of a specific set of questions to focus this analysis. The actual procedures employed to construct these questions are discussed in the next section.

In an effort to focus this investigation, several parameters were established. The programs selected for

analysis have been limited to so-called "family dramas." The reasons for this decision included the following assumptions: that these programs are commonly viewed by a wide range of age groups; that they have been developed by the networks in response to reactions against depictions of violence and what has often been classified as "the standard fare"; that they are presented by the networks as a realistic portrayal of American life; and finally, that these programs seem to contain a strong moral message. For these reasons, the selected programs offered a fertile and productive format for this study. Because they are popular in terms of the large number of viewers and since they are presented as realistic portrayals of life, they serve a dual function. First, they have the potential to exert a considerable impact as a socialization agent on the viewer; second, their popularity would seem to imply that viewers accept these portrayals as true and respond favorably to a particular perception of acceptable behavior by loyally watching a series. The choice of this type of program was made based on Holsti's (1968) contention that popularity is an acceptable selection criterion.

Categories such as educational programs, news and documentaries, cartoons, situation comedies, soap operas, police shows, westerns, and advertisements were eliminated, not because they did not contain a moral dimension, but because it was necessary to pare the study to manageable proportions.

Moreover, some of these programs and characters often seemed to be developed from hackneyed formulas or banal stereotypes, and thus might prove a less fertile area for this study. No attempt was made in this dissertation, therefore, to generalize the data developed and the interpretations garnered to all types of television programs.

Selection Procedures

Once it was decided to use the Kohlberg schema and a second form of the content analysis methodology, and to limit the programs for analysis to family dramas, the next two decisions were: how to establish a suitable category system to develop the moral/value questions and what specific programs to select for analysis.

In order to establish the specific set of questions found in Table 2, an informal pilot study was conducted. A class of junior and senior college students in the Department of Education at a southern university were assigned to choose and watch one of six television programs in a given week--Family, The Waltons, Eight Is Enough, Little House on the Prairie, The Paper Chase, and Lou Grant--and to report their interpretations in an essay format. The students were asked to discern and discuss what values the major characters expressed and what factors influenced the characters' behaviors in the episode. These instructions

were intentionally general and ambiguous in an effort to avoid either influencing or inhibiting their perceptions. The purpose of this procedure was to generate some insight into the possible moral/value dimensions which might be prevalent in television programs. These essays were assorted according to their constituent themes, and several general categories or areas of concern seemed to emerge. These areas of concern were used to generate the three categories and questions for the study. It is important to note that the intention underlying the development of these questions is limited to use for this dissertation, and there is no intention to suggest that the questions are either all-inclusive or that a modification of these questions might not be appropriate or valuable. The questions represent one means to adapt the content analysis methodology, and it is the methodology itself rather than the specific questions which are pertinent for this study.

The second question--which programs to analyze--was somewhat more difficult to deal with, and the reasons underlying the selection of these particular series were somewhat arbitrary. Since the focus of this study is a methodological inquiry rather than a statistical research procedure, I decided that it would not be necessary to adhere to a strict random selection procedure to choose the episodes for analysis. This decision was made after considering Holsti's (1968) warning that the selection of

materials for analysis often may affect the conclusions of the study. As specified earlier, however, there is no intention here to generalize the results to all television programing, but rather to limit the inferences made to developing some insight into the nature of some of the moral/value dimensions of television programs and to evaluate the usefulness of the two schemas as analytic tools utilized in this study. This decision was made after I analyzed several programs and attempted first, to compare the moral-reasoning levels of specific series characters across several episodes and second, to compare the moral reasoning levels depicted in various series. I soon discovered several problem areas which would develop from such an approach. First, this approach would require the assumption that there are moral/value dimensions in television programs and second, it would shift the focus from the initial purpose to evaluate the analytic tools and would focus instead on a comparison of the moral/value dimensions depicted. Such an approach would either require a massive undertaking to analyze a large number of programs, or the results would be too superficial to be useful. The decision to limit the analysis to three program episodes was based on the belief that it would be possible to achieve the goals of the study by concentrating on a few programs, and by developing as detailed an analysis of these episodes as possible.

Analysis Procedures

Once the episodes for analysis were selected a verbatim script was typed from the original audio tape, and these scripts were utilized to execute the analysis. The process of transcribing the episodes was a useful means to become familiar with the entire episode. Although the results of the application of the two schemas are interrelated, and the analysis of each may have to some extent influenced the other, the intention was to apply each schema separately.

As a first step in the Kohlberg analysis, every line of dialogue was surveyed and either eliminated from further consideration because it seemed to contain no moral/value dimension or retained and scored according to the Kohlberg schema. On several occasions, it was not possible to score a particular line of dialogue according to a particular stage; in these instances, the line was either linked to a related line which could be scored according to a particular stage, or the line was categorized according to the more general Kohlberg level category. Upon completion of this process, a "global score" was determined for each major character in the episode. The global score is defined by Kohlberg (1976) as the predominant stage of reasoning by an individual. After the global score was determined for each character, a complete review of the entire script was conducted to first, insure that all lines were correctly

included or excluded and second, to verify that all lines scored according to a particular stage were correctly scored and either supported or refuted the global score and third, to attempt to stage score those lines of dialogue which had been scored according to the more general level category. This last process proved both useful and informative as it was necessary to modify some of the original judgments as the entire analysis took form, and the analytic process itself helped to generate new insight into the levels/stages of particular lines of dialogue.

Essentially, the moral/value questions portion of the study was conducted using the same procedures, except each line of dialogue was either eliminated or retained and categorized according to one of the three main question categories; and rather than a global score, the lines were assorted to support a general overall interpretation of the motives and behaviors of the individual characters. Upon completion of this step, the entire script was re-evaluated to insure that all lines were correctly included or excluded, and to support or to modify the interpretations generated. Again, this second reprocessing of the dialogue was useful as it provided additional insight into the relationships of lines of dialogue and meanings of particular lines to support the general interpretation. Finally, during the actual process of writing the case study reports, the data were re-analyzed

and some modifications of the original judgments were made. The writing process proved useful to clarify some judgments particularly in the moral/value questions portion of the analyses.

One variation to the procedure described above was adopted for the analysis of the episode of The Waltons. Since I have not been formally trained to score moral stages using the Kohlberg schema I was somewhat reluctant to accept my own scoring administration without some type of verification process. In an attempt to expand and to supplement, as well as to validate all of the analyses, two rater reliability studies were devised and conducted. The reasoning underlying these studies, the methods of conducting them, and the results garnered from them are presented in the following section. The only procedural change to the one described above is that in lieu of an audio recording a video recording of The Waltons was taped for use by the co-raters.

Rater Reliability Studies

The application of the Kohlberg schema and the moral/value questions are interrelated in this dissertation and are designed to offer a broader insight into the moral/value dimensions of television drama than might have been possible if only one of the schemas had been employed. To support the analyses performed in this study, two rater reliability studies were devised and conducted. The basic

procedures used for both studies were essentially similar; however, each study focused on only one of the modes of analysis.

Purpose

The goals of these two rater reliability studies are two-fold: first, to support the accuracy of the application of the schema and second,to gain additional observer insight into the moral/value dimensions depicted in the episodes analyzed. The general definition of reliability refers to the concept of consistency; there are two distinct kinds of consistency. The first is concerned with the evaluation of the measurement device itself, and the second is concerned with the application of the measurement device. It is important to understand that these two studies are limited to support the accuracy of the application of the two schemas, and they are not intended to verify either the reliability or the validity of either of the devices per se. Kohlberg (1969) has conducted reliability/validity studies to support his schema and there is no intention or need to replicate his efforts here.

The Kohlberg Scoring Manual (1973) provides detailed, step-by-step instructions to aid the accomplishment of consistent scoring results. The purpose of the Kohlberg portion of the rater reliability study was to verify

that the application of the schema was properly accomplished. One simple, yet acceptable (Kerlinger, 1973) mathematical expression to establish the reliability of the observations is to determine a percentage of agreement between judges. Kohlberg's numbered stages provide a convenient means to develop such a percentage. It is important to note, however, that the presentation of the data in a mathematical format is not intended to suggest that there is a statistical significance attributed to the results. In order to establish a statistical significance in the strict sense of that phrase, it would be necessary to generate data from a number of raters and programs. Regrettably, there is not readily available a sufficiently large pool of experts who have been formally trained to apply the Kohlberg schema to score moral/value judgments, and an attempt to analyze a large number of programs was not the purpose of this dissertation. A simple percentage calculation of agreement, therefore, serves only to add some credence to support the belief that indeed the application of the Kohlberg schema was performed in a satisfactory manner.

My concern in the moral/value questions study was somewhat different than the purpose underlying the Kohlberg portion of the study. Since I had developed the questions, it seemed reasonable to assume that I would

be able to apply them properly. I was not confident, however, that a second observer would be able first, to understand my interpretation of the questions or second, to be able to apply them. If this had in fact been the case, then the usefulness of the moral/value questions would have been jeopardized. Lofland (1971) suggested that one test of the usefulness of the category system is its recognizability to a second observer. Kerlinger (1973) said that if the categories themselves are clearly defined and if the observer understands the construction of the categories, then it is reasonable to expect that their application should provide minimal difficulty.

No attempt was made to apply a statistical procedure or mathematical manipulation to compare the interpretations garnered from the moral/value questions since there are no numbered stages or categories built into this schema. The comparison of results, therefore, was presented in an expository format in lieu of a percentage expression of results. It is important to note that there was no intention here to promote these particular moral/value questions as a definitive measurement device and it was neither necessary nor appropriate to attempt to validate these particular questions. The results of this effort served only to add some support to the belief that the schema was understandable and recognizable to a second observer, and that the second observer was

able to apply the schema and generate essentially similar interpretations. The intention of both of these studies was limited to Lofland's (1971) suggestion that one test of the schemas' constructions was their recognizability to other observers. That a second observer would be able to recognize the constructions, apply them, and garner sufficiently similar results was the purpose of this portion of the study.

The final purpose of these two studies is less directly related to the standard question of reliability. Nevertheless, the goal is important to the overall usefulness of the entire study. That purpose was to gain additional observer insight into the moral/value dimensions depicted in the programs. This stated purpose raised a dilemma concerning the reliability of the observer, the schema used, and the study itself. If the raters provided substantively different interpretations then two conclusions might be that either the two schemas were not sufficiently broad to provide an adequate observational device or that their original application were faulty. If the raters provided no additional insight, however, then two conclusions might be that either the raters were not performing their task satisfactorily or that the schemas themselves possessed some intrinsic defect which resulted in a constant error. Such a constant error in either direction would threaten the validity of the schema and the reliability of

the analysis process. In fact, neither extreme occurred, and thus additional credence to support the accuracy of the application of the two schema was offered.

Procedures

The procedures employed in both rater reliability studies were essentially similar; however, the two studies were not conducted simultaneously. The program utilized for both studies was the episode of The Waltons which is described and analyzed in the following chapter. The episode was videotaped and a verbatim script was prepared for each of the raters. Both raters selected were doctoral candidates at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. The rater who performed the Kohlberg analysis had attended the Kohlberg Moral State Scoring Training Seminar conducted by the Center for Moral Education at Harvard University, and was an experienced moral-stage scorer. The dissertation interest area of the rater who performed the moral/value questions analysis is the moral/values depicted in children's literature.

A brief explanation of the dissertation topic and the purpose of each of the reliability studies was provided to each rater prior to their analyses. In addition to the script, each rater was provided with a copy of either Table 1 and the Appendix or Table 2 to use as a guide.

The raters were instructed to watch the program and to focus their attention on the father, Jim Bob, and Elizabeth; however, they were invited to comment also on the other characters as they deemed appropriate. Finally, they were instructed to identify on the script those lines of dialogue which keyed their interpretation. This final step was included to serve as a means to examine directly the reliability results in two ways: first, to determine if the dialogue identified by the rater as those which keyed his/her analysis were the same as the passages which keyed the original analysis and second, to determine if the passages which keyed the raters' analyses and the original analysis did in fact result in the same conclusions. An informal discussion session followed each of the studies in which the raters were given the opportunity to elaborate their findings.

Results: Kohlberg Analysis

Thirty statements/lines of dialogue which keyed the analysis of the levels/stages of moral reasoning depicted by the three main characters were identified. The co-rater identified twenty such statements during the reliability procedure. The percentage of agreement between the two raters in identifying lines of dialogue which contain a moral/value construction was sixty percent. Although this percentage of agreement may initially suggest an unsatisfactorily low relationship, it must be

appreciated that the co-rater spent less than two and one-half hours involved with the project. This time included the initial briefing, sixty minutes watching the video tape, a short period to read and score the script, and the informal discussion period following the procedure. Given the short time period involved and the magnitude of the effort, the percentage of agreement results were substantially higher than originally expected and adequate to satisfy the intended purpose. A more important result of the analysis was that of the twenty statements jointly identified as containing a moral/value content; nineteen lines of dialogue were scored at the same stage. The percentage of agreement between the two raters in stage scoring these lines of dialogue was ninety-five percent. This result exceeded the original expectation and strongly verified that the original application of the Kohlberg schema was accomplished correctly. There was agreement in the assignment of the global score for each of the three main characters in the episode; however, there was one important difference between my own and the co-rater's scoring of the father, John Walton. I originally scored four of the father's statements at stage four-B, whereas the co-rater scored these four statements as stage five. In the informal discussion period which followed the procedure, the co-rater pointed out that several years have passed

since he attended the Moral Stage Scoring Training Seminar and that the four-B stage is a recent addition to the Kohlberg schema.

Results: Moral/Value Questions

The moral/value questions schema is somewhat less sophisticated and more ambiguous than the Kohlberg schema in that there are no numbered categories or stages assigned to these questions. Comparison of the results of the interpretations garnered from my original observation and the co-rater's observation was considerably more complex than the Kohlberg analysis, and it was not possible to perform a mathematical manipulation to achieve a percentage of agreement score. This co-rater's effort was limited to approximately two and one-half hours for the entire procedure, a limiting factor which may have affected her analysis. Finally, the co-rater chose to identify blocks of dialogue and whole scenes rather than specific lines of dialogue to key her analysis. Given the time limitation, that the moral/value questions schema was introduced to her immediately before the start of the procedure, that she was not familiar with it, and the ambiguity concerning the definition of the meaning of specific value terms all worked to influence the results. Irrespective of these factors and difficulties, the results garnered from the co-rater's efforts generally supported and confirmed the original analysis.

There were no appreciable differences in the identification of the characters and their relationships to each other; the relationships, setting, locale, and time frame were easily identified. The meanings of and influences on the characters' behaviors were also easily agreed upon. The co-rater had not watched prior programs in the series and was not familiar with those prior events which exerted a considerable influence on the behaviors of the characters in this episode, however. Even though some of these events were briefly mentioned within this episode, it was reasonable to expect, and in fact did occur, that the co-rater failed to emphasize these factors as influencing the characters and their relationships. The co-rater also did not consider the change in time frame from earlier episodes set in the Depression years and the current episode set during World War II which influenced the family and the community structure. She did emphasize the relationship and influence of the community values on the behaviors of the characters.

The differences in interpretation in the second category of questions concerning the definition of the major values and the value conflicts/dilemmas depicted were a matter of terminology rather than substantive differences in interpretations. My original interpretation tended to categorize most of the conflicts/dilemmas as a question of authority versus freedom. The co-rater tended to term

the conflicts as a question of autonomy versus dependency. Clearly both of these bipoles were closely related in this episode, and the differences in terminology suggested only minor differences in emphasis. Similarly, my original analysis tended to focus on the value of freedom; the co-rater focused on the values held by members of the community. This difference may be viewed as a matter of perspective; that is, my original analysis focused on the characters and their personal struggles and motivations, whereas the co-rater focused on the community as a factor which influenced and restricted the desires of the characters. The informal discussion which followed the procedure was devoted primarily to a discussion of these differences and was helpful in that it provided an opportunity to elaborate the reasons for our respective interpretations, to offer each other some additional insight into the interpretations, and both to resolve and to agree that the differences were matters of terminology and emphasis rather than substantive differences in interpretations.

There were minor differences in interpretations in the third category of questions in identifying the generator of and moral nature of the resolution. We both identified the car accident, Jim Bob's fight with his friend Tinker, and his final meeting with his father as generators of the action and the resolution; and essentially, that a change in perspective by Elizabeth and Jim Bob was the

basis for the resolution of the episode. There were, however, some differences in the interpretations of the meaning of the resolution itself. We agreed that the conflict between Elizabeth and Jim Bob was generated by the fact that both had attempted to accept different authority sources external to the family and the community; Jim Bob accepted and relied on the authority of the Bible and his religion, whereas Elizabeth accepted the authority of scientific knowledge and research. My analysis of the resolution emphasized that both characters had changed, emotionally matured, and intellectually developed as a result of the association with and examination of these authorities through the events of the episode. The co-rater emphasized that both Jim Bob and Elizabeth returned to the normal family routine and accepted the structure of the family and the community. The differences in the interpretations of the final question--the nature of the resolution--were substantive rather than a matter of emphasis. The informal discussion period provided an opportunity to share ideas and explain our respective interpretations. Additional insight was garnered and basic agreement was established. The results of the co-rater's analysis generally supported and confirmed the original analysis.

CHAPTER III

THE MORAL/VALUE DIMENSIONS OF TELEVISION DRAMA: THREE CASE STUDIES

Introduction

This chapter contains detailed analyses of the moral dimensions in three television programs: Little House on the Prairie, The Paper Chase, and The Waltons. Each analysis is presented in three parts: first, a summary of the events in the episode; second, an analysis of the moral dimensions utilizing Kohlberg's schema; and third, an analysis based on the Moral/Value Questions. Although the analysis is integrated, this format has been adopted as an organizational device.

Several basic considerations have been accepted as given limits in each part of these analyses and should be understood and retained by the reader. First, the episodes are summarized to include only the basic events and dialogue necessary for understanding. Dramatic devices such as scenery, background music, costumes, facial expressions, physical actions, and tone of voice, among others, all support the development of the drama, its mood, and the viewers' understanding of the characters' behavior and thinking. Closely related to these dramatic devices are those aesthetic factors such as the dress,

bearing, manner of speech and behavior exhibited by the characters. These elements influence the viewers' perceptions of the characters, and furthermore they are often used by the series writers to elicit sympathy for or approval of the characters' behaviors. Both categories of these dramatic devices have been considered and have influenced the analysis, but systematic descriptions of them will not be included in this paper unless these factors directly relate to or support either the Kohlberg or Moral/Value Questions analysis.

Second, despite an attempt to limit the Kohlberg analysis to the particular episode under consideration, there is an expectancy factor which may have influenced these analyses. As part of the preparation to write this paper I have viewed and analyzed several of the programs in these series prior to the episode presented here and the characters have become known to me. It seems reasonable to assume that the behaviors and reactions of these characters in any single situation will, if the series is to maintain some coherence to the viewer, remain fairly consistent. Although I have attempted to limit the analyses to the particular episode, this expectancy factor may have influenced the analyses.

An important correlative concern for the presentation and analysis involves a basic assumption in the Kohlberg theory. Kohlberg (1975) posits that generally about half

of an individual's statements will be identified at one particular stage of moral reasoning. The remaining fifty percent of an individual's statements will include both the next higher and the next lower stage of moral reasoning. The developmental process is an inherent assumption of the Kohlberg schema, and moral reasoning capabilities are not a static entity for the individual as s/he progresses through the stage hierarchy. A researcher who utilizes the Kohlberg schema, therefore, may expect to discern and identify different stages of moral reasoning displayed by any one individual. The fifty percent principle is not supported by the analysis of these television programs. This may be the result of those time demands of the medium which limit the scope of the writers' character development and depictions. In some instances, however, there have been some differences among the moral reasoning stages displayed by the individual characters. The analysis presented here has been focused on the predominant stage depicted, and on those occasions when a transition from one stage to the next higher stage has occurred; particularly when some external factor has influenced the character's reasoning, that transition has been noted and included in the analysis.

Lastly, the moral/value questions may be open to some interpretations different from the analysis presented here.

There are several possible reasons that the reader may infer a different interpretation. Primary among these is that interpretations may often vary a great deal depending on the orientation and expectations of the reader.

Little House on the Prairie, NBC-TV

"The Winoka Warriors"

The series, The Little House on the Prairie, is set in the Dakota Territory in the early 1880s. The main characters are Charles Ingalls, his wife Caroline, and their three daughters, Mary, Laura, and Carrie. There are also several townspeople and neighbors who have continuing roles. When the series originated, the Ingalls family lived and worked on a farm near the small community of Walnut Cove; however, when the eldest daughter became blind, Charles accepted a position with a hotel saloon and moved the family into the city of Winoka so Mary would be able to receive medical treatment and attend a school for blind children. The family occupied rooms in the rear of the hotel near the saloon, and throughout the episode they made several unfavorable references to the rowdy noise and the city life style in comparison to their former quiet life on the farm.

Episode Summary

In this episode, "The Winoka Warriors," two story lines are developed concurrently. In the first, Charles

befriends Albert, a young orphan, and attempts to persuade him to give up his shoeshine job and "street" existence, as well as his housing under the hotel porch, in favor of a room in the hotel attic. Charles offers Albert twenty-five cents per week, in addition to the room, if he will return to school. Charles's attempt to influence Albert to return to school, as well as his discussions with Laura about her school work and the books she is currently reading, reveal that he and the family members place great emphasis on formal schooling.

Albert is obviously a bright and "street wise" youngster. At school he quickly demonstrates his facility with mathematics and tells the teacher, "You have to count fast when shooting craps." Clearly, Albert considers school a waste of his time, and when Charles argues that he can attain his goals by going to school he counters with, "Mr. Standish went to school. He is rich, but it made him mean."

Standish is a local businessman and community leader who represents one segment of the community's society. This group is engaged in commerce and the accumulation of personal wealth through business arrangements, investments, and speculation; they are the bankers and shop owners who utilize currency to conduct their business transactions. The second major group represented in the episode is the farmers and employees in the various stores and shops.

They are engaged in the production of goods and services, and they earn their living through their physical effort. They often barter their products or trade their time and effort among each other to accomplish needed tasks and to obtain goods.

The division between these two segments in the community is represented by the three schools in Winoka. Albert, the two Ingalls girls, and the children of the farmers and shop employees attend the livery school, which is housed in the livery stable. Children of the wealthy and socially prominent members of the community attend the second school. The third is the school for the blind which Mary Ingalls attends. In addition to the obvious differences between the first two schools and the groups they represent, the method of support for the blind school is also indicative of the social differences in the community. The business leaders contribute money as an indication of their espoused commitment to the needs of the community; the money is a salve to their social conscience whereupon they promptly dismiss and forget the school. Whereas, the farmers and the employees contribute both food and their time and effort to complete needed projects for the school which demonstrates their personal interest in the needs and success of the school and the blind children.

Early in the episode, the viewer learns that the wealthy school has fielded the "Dakota Dragons," a state

champion football team. In a chance street meeting, Albert chides members of the team because they wear school jackets, ties, and caps. Taunts are exchanged and Albert challenges them to a football game against the nonexistent livery school team. A twenty-five-cent wager is struck on the game and word of the impending contest spreads throughout the community. Several brief scenes depict preparation activities such as banner making and cheer leading practice. The discussions among the various characters reveal that support for the contenders is split according to the two major social groups in the community.

Albert quickly sets about organizing a football team among the members of the livery school. Luke Hoskins, the son of the town blacksmith, is the largest boy in the livery school and is the mainstay of their newly organized team. He is also, quite obviously, a dull student. This, nevertheless, does not prevent the wealthy and influential Mr. Standish from giving Luke a scholarship to the wealthy school enabling him to play for the Dakota Dragons. Standish supports the wealthy school team and his gift to Luke is an attempt to utilize his money to influence the outcome of the game.

When Albert learns that Standish has given Luke free tuition and has characterized him as a "bright young man," he realizes that his hopes for victory in the game, as well as his twenty-five-cent wager, are in jeopardy. He is,

however, quick to assess the real reason for Standish's gift, that Luke will play for the Dakota Dragons, and on the day of the game he concocts a ruse of his own. Just before the game, Albert goes to Luke's home and tells him that the location of the game has been changed to Henderson, a town some miles away, and he sends him off thus effectively eliminating him from the game. Upon his arrival in Henderson, Luke discovers the ploy, realizes he has been duped, and returns to Winoka in time to play the last few minutes of the game.

The second story line in this episode is developed around Tom Carlin, a physically large boy who has been blinded recently by the measles, and who attends the school for the blind with Mary Ingalls. Tom is deeply depressed because his father, a farmer, has rejected him due to his blindness. The father believes that Tom is helpless, that he cannot work on the farm, and that he will require constant protective supervision; the father believes he has neither the time nor the will to devote to Tom. As a result, Tom considers himself useless and his attendance at school a waste of time. Mary attempts to encourage Tom,and she also tells her father about his plight.

Adam Kendall, the principal of the blind school who is himself blind, also makes several attempts throughout the episode to encourage Tom in his work at school and,

with the assistance of Charles, to reconcile Tom and his father both to each other and to Tom's blindness. When Luke leaves the livery school to accept the Standish scholarship, Charles suggests to Adam that Tom transfer to the livery school and play for the livery school team. Adam agrees to this tactic as an attempt to break Tom from his depression and to convince him of his own capabilities and self-worth. Reluctantly, Tom agrees to try. The team develops a "wedge" formation with Tom as the point man and the remainder of the team members guiding him. During a pregame practice, Tom stumbles and falls several times and wants to give up the effort. Adam and Charles exchange conspiratorial glances and begin to demean Tom for his cowardice and his handicap. This reverse-psychology stratagem works; Tom is angered, he resumes practice, and plays in the game.

During the game the livery school team, now named the Winoka Warriors, maintains the lead until Luke Hoskins returns and quickly ties the score with one minute remaining to play. Albert hastily devises a scheme to break the tie and win the game. While the team sets the defense, Tom heaves Albert, who is clutching the ball, over the goalpost for the winning points. Despite outrage and arguments from the opposition, the umpires decide that there is no rule against this maneuver. Thus the "first forward pass of a human" is allowed, the Winoka Warriors win the

game, and Albert wins his twenty-five-cent wager. Tom and his father, who has been watching the game, are reconciled and they determine to work together henceforth to overcome Tom's handicap.

Several other characters are depicted in this episode who strengthen the moral dilemmas and value themes as well as delineate the differences in social status among the members of the community. They are the Garvey family which includes Nelse, the father, a friend of Charles Ingalls, and owner of a general store who trades with and befriends the employees and farmers, and who helps to coach the livery school team. Others are Harriet, the mother, a friend of Standish and a social climber who chides Nelse for his friendship with Charles, his business methods, and the support and help he gives to the livery school team; and their two children, Willie and Nellie. One scene reveals a split within the family which reflects the differences between the community social groups. Nellie mimics her mother's attitudes and behaviors, whereas Willie adopts his father's perspective during a family discussion about the upcoming football game. Willie Garvey is a small, timid boy dominated by his mother's ambition for social status. He attends the rich school and is forced by his mother to play for the Dakota Dragons. All of his friends attend the livery school and he is unhappy because he cannot play on their team. Because he is small he is relegated

to sitting on the bench for the Dakota Dragons. In a particularly revealing statement concerning the differences in social status among the townspeople, he says that everyone on the livery school team plays no matter what size he is because their team needs every player. This concept reflects the attitude of the farmers who believe that in a joint effort everyone helps to the extent of his individual capabilities.

Kohlberg Analysis

Several of the characters in this episode demonstrate various levels/stages of moral reasoning according to the Kohlberg schema. The main characters and their predominant level of moral reasoning are: Charles Ingalls at stage four, conventional level; Adam Kendall, at stages four, four-B, and five, conventional and post-conventional levels; Tom and his father at stage three, conventional level; and Harriet Garvey, Mr. Standish, and Albert at stage two, preconventional level.

Charles Ingalls and Adam Kendall. Unlike other episodes in this series, Charles and the Ingalls family have relatively small, supporting roles in this story, and therefore the opportunity for analysis of their moral reasoning stages is somewhat limited. In the series generally, and in this episode particularly, both Charles and Adam portray authority figures. Together and singly,

they are represented as mentors within their individual spheres of influence. Each is either a father figure or teacher and in occupying these positions they act as experienced and knowing, high-minded moral guides. Both Charles and Adam seem to demonstrate the conventional moral reasoning level, particularly at stage four. In several scenes they reveal that they both value education and schooling as a means to achieve success, which they define in terms of the individual's self-worth as a contributing member of the community. Their consideration of the individual in terms of his place in the system is stage four reasoning. For both of them the value of an individual is measured against his value and contribution to the stability and growth of the community's social system rather than in such self-serving terms as the personal accumulation of monetary wealth and material possessions as typified by the reasoning of Standish and Mrs. Garvey.

Adam also appears to reason at Kohlberg's stage four-B, particularly in his confrontation with Tom's father. He attempts to convince the father that Tom's life is not wasted because of his blindness, and that he will be able to succeed if he is given both the opportunity and the motivation to work toward a worthwhile goal. His argument is based on the requirement that the father follow his conscience and that he become aware that there exists first,

the possibility of relative differences among social standards or second, that at least there is the existence of a life style other than farming for Tom. He says that Tom is not a "freak" and he has not committed some "unforgivable sin" for which his blindness is punishment. The argument that an individual has the obligation to follow his own conscience is the transitional four-B stage between the conventional and postconventional levels.

Portions of Adam's argument also reflect a stage five, postconventional level of moral reasoning. He seems to have generalized his beliefs concerning individuals, and his argument that each individual has his own self-worth prior to the society's perspective or definition of self-worth is a stage five, postconventional level statement. Whereas Charles's emphasis is in terms of the individual's value to the social system,and therefore his reasoning is at stage four. The difference between a generalized commitment demonstrated by Adam at stage five and Charles at stage four is based on the concept of how the individual views himself in relation to society and how he defines or measures his worth to the society. While Adam views the individual as possessing self-worth as defined by his own individual terms prior to society, Charles believes that the individual ought to measure his self-worth in terms of his individual capabilities and his capacity to contribute to the social system (stage four) rather than in terms of fulfilling the roles and expectations of the society

(stage three, which is Tom's perspective) or in terms of his own internalized standards of self-worth prior to the society's standards (stage five).

Tom and his father. Because of his individualistic perspective during the episode, and until their reconciliation at the conclusion, Tom's father seems to reason at stage two, the preconventional level. He wants to serve his own interests and sees Tom's blindness as a liability against the success of his farm. He is also ashamed of his son's inability to work as a farmer, and he is unable to accept Tom in a different role. He says, "I can't stand to look at my son. God forgive me." Later, in their reconciliation at the end of the program he does accept his son and seems to have made a transition to the stage-three, conventional level. He has supplanted his personal interest and concern for his farm, and begins to focus his concern on his son's feelings and to establish a mutual trust relationship with his son.

Initially, Tom is depressed and unwilling to continue in school because his blindness has limited his capacity to work on the farm and therefore has diminished him as a valuable person to his father. He sees his inability to work on the farm as an important role failure and therefore he is unwilling to attempt any other efforts. His role as a "good son" has been jeopardized; this is stage-three reasoning. At the conclusion of the game Tom is

exuberant with his success and tells his father, "We can do it if we work together, Pa." In an emotional response the father says, "God gave me back my son. I know we can, Son. Let's go home." Tom has regained his father's acceptance and love, and he is able to meet and to satisfy his father's role expectations; this is also stage three reasoning. Their appreciation and concern for the feelings of each other and their willingness to work to meet the roles and expectations of each other place them at stage three of mutual interpersonal expectations and interpersonal conformity

Harriet Garvey, Mr. Standish, and Albert. Willie's mother, Harriet Garvey, vocalizes one of the main value themes/dilemmas developed in this episode. That value is the difference between winning versus the means utilized to achieve a goal. She says, "winning is fun, losing is exercise." She nags her husband because he helps to coach the opposition livery school, and she forces her son to attend the school for wealthy children and to play for the Dakota Dragons. In her ambition and striving for social status, she fails to discern either Nelse's motives or Willie's unhappiness. After vociferously arguing against the final play of the game she says, "We could have won if they had thrown my Willie." She is willing to play by the rules of the game and once the umpires declare the maneuver is legal, she is annoyed that their team did not think to

execute it. She is operating at stage two of Kohlberg's schema. In her singlemindedness to achieve her own ends, to achieve status, she blindly adheres to rules and fails to appreciate the motivations or interests of either her husband or her son.

Although Mr. Standish has few lines of dialogue the viewer sees by his actions--giving Luke the free tuition and calling him a "bright young man" which he obviously isn't--that he utilizes his wealth to serve his own self-interest. He supports the wealthy school team and works to help them win this game through his monetary power to influence its outcome. The reasoning underlying the behaviors of both Mrs. Garvey and Mr. Standish is a desire to serve their own self-image and self-interest. They both measure the consequences of their actions against the rules as they perceive them. There is no rule against Mr. Standish giving Luke a scholarship and therefore he reasons he may serve his own desire by doing so. This is an egocentric perspective at stage two. When the umpires declare there is no rule against the final play of the game, Mrs. Garvey accepts her loss in terms of the rules of the game as interpreted by the superior authority of the umpire. The reasoning of both of these individuals is characterized by Kohlberg as instrumental reasoning.

Albert is a more likeable character to the viewer than either Mrs. Garvey or Mr. Standish; however, he also

reasons at Kohlberg's stage two. His acceptance of the room in the attic, the twenty-five cents per week in return for attending school, and his ruse to decoy Luke out of town during the game are all motivated by his monetary self-interest. Unlike Garvey and Standish who are concerned with established rules, Albert's reasoning is based on his own perceptions of what constitutes making fair deals, and he is particularly concerned with the terms of concrete exchanges. His agreement with Charles is rationalized as a fair deal in terms of the money. Because of Standish's ploy of purloining Luke for his own team, Albert justifies his ruse as a fair return for Standish; he rationalizes that one dishonest ploy deserves another, particularly if the result is his winning his wager.

Moral/Value Analysis

Characters and relationships. The locale and time frame of this series have provided its writers two continuing themes; both are reflected in this episode. The first, based on the locale, is the value concept that the individual must possess the will to succeed over adversity. The sparsely populated region requires that the individual must be self-reliant to survive and succeed in a mean harsh environment. This attitude is particularly evident in Tom's reaction toward his blindness; the handicap has limited his capabilities and has reduced his self-reliance. The second theme, based on the time frame,

is a value concept related to the nature of the individual's standing in the community. The time after the Civil War was one of economic and social instability; this is evident in the relationship between the community leaders who are mostly shop owners and administrators versus those who earn their living by farming. During this period of social change, farming is seen as an older and less valued way of life. The city is growing and the city dwellers are in the forefront of social change. One of their implied goals is the accumulation of money and with it the achievement of social standing in the community. Since they conduct their business on the monetary exchange system, they have an exact measure of their wealth. Conversely, the farmers base their livelihood on the production of foodstuffs and conduct their business by bartering goods and services among themselves. Since they have a less exact means to measure wealth, and since their mean existence is essentially at the sustenance level, they do not accumulate wealth, they do not have an exact measure of their wealth, and they are viewed as socially inferior by their city contemporaries. Despite this condemnation they do value friendship, hard work, self-worth/reliance, and trust among their members as important ingredients to their personal happiness and livelihood.

Charles Ingalls, Adam Kendall, and Mr. Standish are father, teacher, and community leader and thus are, by

virtue of their positions, examples of the appropriate moral/value standards for the segments of the community which they represent. They also represent the divisions which exist in the social status of the community members.

Moral/value dimensions. The two story lines, Albert's maneuvers to win the football game and Tom's desire to regain his father's acceptance, serve as dramatic devices to depict and examine the two value questions developed in this episode. The primary value dimension basically focuses on the familiar "means/ends" dilemma, i.e., does the end justify the means? In this episode the question is developed in the conflict between the two social groups' goal of winning the football game and the means the protagonists utilize to achieve that goal. Charles Ingalls and Harriet Garvey deliver the definitive lines of dialogue and they represent the two opposing positions on this question.

Mrs. Garvey's statement "winning is fun, losing is exercise" seems to paraphrase the now famous dictum, "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing" versus Charles's statement, "Get out and try; it's how you play" is a paraphrase of the notion that "winning isn't everything, it's how you play the game." These two dictates are in direct conflict. The more important portion of this value dimension is the question: what constitutes fair play or what is a just approach to resolve a conflict

situation? For Albert and Standish the answer is simple; they value success and achievement and they are interested in winning irrespective of the cost or the means.

Standish's behavior is an obvious misuse of monetary wealth; however, for the viewer, Albert's questionable tactics are not as easily categorized or judged. Neither Charles nor Adam comments on or offers guidance to Albert, or to the viewer, concerning the ruses which he has concocted to win the game and his wager. It is not clear if either of them knew about Albert's diversion of Luke away from the game; however, they both witnessed the "first forward pass of a human" and neither of the two commented on this questionable maneuver. Their failure to be aware of the first or comment on the second ruse may suggest several interpretations. First, that Charles and Adam knew of the ruses but failed to realize the implications of Albert's behavior in terms of the means/ends dilemma. As mentors and moral guides they may have been caught up in the excitement of winning the game and may have lost sight of the fact that Albert utilized at least questionable means to win the game. If this in fact were the case, then neither Charles nor Adam is the powerful moral guide which their position would seem to suggest.

A second possibility is that the series writers failed to deal with the question of these tactics as a fair means

to accomplish a desired goal. If the writers intended to represent Charles and Adam as moral guides, then their failure to have these characters deal with this question represents a major shortcoming in presenting the moral implications of the tactics. The writers have left the viewer in a quandary, first to understand some of the basic value dimensions underlying the various characters' behaviors and second, to begin to resolve or to judge the value questions raised in this episode.

It is important to note that both Albert and Standish operate at the same stage of moral reasoning; yet to the viewer, Albert is a more likeable character than is Standish. He is an orphan and his background places him in a questionable social status, he is a young child and physically attractive, he is an intelligent, quick-witted survivor, and although he is experienced and "street wise", he is not a rowdy ruffian. There is a potential decency in his character and as a victim of circumstances he elicits sympathy from the viewer. Conversely, Standish is unattractive to the viewer because he is overbearing, pretentious, hypocritical, and physically effete. In several scenes, particularly in his dealings with the children, he is almost the stereotyped silent-movie villain who elicits boos and hisses from the audience. The writers have constructed a stereotypical "good guys/bad guys" dichotomy and have asked

the viewer to accept Albert but not Standish. Despite the difference in their character depictions, which tend to cloud the basic issue, they both use questionable or only marginally fair methods. Standish uses his monetary power and Albert uses his wit to influence the outcome of the game in favor of their conflicting personal ambitions.

Closely related to the means/ends value dimension and the concept of fairness, the second major value dimension depicted in this episode is the concept that the individual bases the definition of his self-worth on his will and motivation to be self-reliant versus the achievement of social status based on monetary wealth and material possessions. Tom's blindness and his social standing are external antecedents, acts of fate the writers have constructed, which have influenced his attitude and behavior. Like Albert, he is at a disadvantaged position; however, his effort and method to overcome his physical limitation are based on an acceptable means to achieve his goal. With the encouragement of Charles and Adam, and through hard work and determination, Tom wins his father's acceptance and restores his own self-confidence and self-worth as a capable and self-reliant individual. Albert, who must survive in this economic and social environment as an orphan, lives by his wits and he is perceptive enough to realize his own position and to understand the monetary

motivations of the community leaders and shop owners. His shoeshine business and his attempts to manipulate others via the various ruses are a reflection of his understanding of the social system, as is his attempt to compete with them on their own terms. He is particularly aware of the hypocrisy of people like Standish and therefore, he experiences no qualms about using essentially dishonest means to achieve his own ends. Both Tom and Albert are in a disadvantaged position by virtue of either their physical limitations or social standing and both use essentially different means to accomplish their goals.

The concept that social position is a relative factor which influences behavior is evident also in the series writers' presentation of Charles Ingalls and Nelse Garvey. Charles and his family long for their simple, quiet life on the farm. They value schooling and friendships as a measure of individual self-worth and as a means to happiness. They find city life disagreeable and they disapprove of the rowdy behavior of the saloon habitués as well as the goals and behavior of the shop owners and community leaders. Yet they realize their lack of money and their need to exist in this environment. Mary's blindness is an act of fate and her need for medical attention and special education has placed the family in a socially inferior position. Not only have the members of the city society failed to appreciate their values and to admire them because of the

difficulties which they face, but they have also treated them as inferiors.

Nelse Garvey is in a particularly difficult situation because he represents the values and behaviors of both segments of the society. He owns one of the general stores in town and in his daily transactions he has learned to appreciate the difficulties which the farmers face and their stamina and will to overcome adversity. He admires the farmers and counts them as personal friends. He is, however, also faced with his wife Harriet's condemnation of his behavior. She does not see her husband's personal relationships with his customers as worthwhile or valuable, and she demeans his association with the farmers and fumes against his practice of dealing by barter and granting credit. She is particularly incensed when Nelse helps to coach the livery school team. Her measure of success is in terms of money and social status which are her routes to Standish and his social circle. She is impressed by wealth and wants to impress others with her material possessions. She sees her self-worth as an external entity measured in terms of material possessions, whereas Nelse and Charles measure their self-worth as an internal quality based on their friends and achievements. Harriet is willing to use dishonest means to achieve her goal, whereas Nelse and Charles believe in the values of hard work and determination as a means to achieve their goals.

The means/ends dilemma and the measure of self-worth questions are the two primary and closely related value dimensions presented in this episode. Underlying both of these dimensions is at least one important implicit assumption which is neither examined by the characters themselves nor seems to be important to the series writers since there are no lines of dialogue which raise the issue. The assumption which all of the characters accept and which serves to motivate their actions is the stress on achievement and success. This stress on achievement is present in all of the characters in various degrees and each of them measures his success in a variety of terms; i.e., victory, attainment, accomplishment, or achievement. For example, Albert totally commits his entire energy in this episode to winning the game (victory). These energies and his shoeshine business would suggest that he has been socialized into a success syndrome. Similarly, Harriet Garvey, in her singleminded striving for social status (attainment) is completely insensitive to either her son's or her husband's feelings. She almost equates the football game to a class struggle; it would seem she has determined that her team ought to win because her group is superior to the opposition and she views both her husband and son as traitors to her cause. Similarly, Tom has a specific goal; he wants to be accepted by his father and to work on the farm regardless of his handicap. For him

the tasks (accomplishment) of winning the game and working on the farm are a measure of his self-reliance and self-worth in a specific role. Both Charles and Adam have a more generalized concept of success. They view education and the will to exert a committed effort as the appropriate methods to reach a goal (achievement) which in turn is the measure of one's success. Unlike the others, Nelse Garvey is not overly concerned with success. He is quite content in his relationships with his friends and the conduct of his business and he does not seem to desire a change in his situation or to strive toward a specific goal.

Generator and moral nature of the resolution. There are two related resolutions in this episode. Throughout the program Charles and Adam work to reconcile Tom and his father to each other and to Tom's blindness by talking with and encouraging them. Tom's ability to successfully play and to help win the football game proves to the father that he is able to succeed despite his physical handicap; and the father gains new insight into his son's will to succeed and he resolves to accept his condition and to work with him on the farm. His success and his father's acceptance restore Tom's self-confidence and his sense of self-worth. Adam and Charles see the resolution of the conflict as a successful outcome of their efforts. Therefore, for these characters the moral nature of the outcome is based on the concept of hard work and motivation to succeed, and the

generator of the resolution is the effort of Charles and Adam to bring the two parties together as well as change Tom's father's perception of his son.

The second resolution occurs when the Winoka Warriors win the football game. Despite the two tactics initiated by Albert, the ploy to divert Luke away from the game and the unusual play of the "first forward pass of a human," the underdog Warriors do win the game. The nature of the resolution and the value dimensions depicted here seem to support the concept that human will and effort will overcome adversity, and that despite their inexperience and social status the street-wise rurals are winners over the nouveau riche urbanites. They can win over duplicity and deceit through the use of their own duplicity and deceit. The implication is that it is fair and just to use the opposition's tactics to defeat them on their terms.

Closely related and strengthening these concepts are the actions of Willie. He chafes because his mother doesn't allow him to play with the Warriors, and because of his size he must sit on the bench for the Dragons. He emphasizes that everyone on the livery school team plays in the game. The implication is that the talents and abilities of everyone on the team are appreciated and utilized for their contribution to the success of the joint effort. This concept is reflective of the outcome of the game and the attitude of the farmers and shop employees, and

it supports the resolution of the episode. That is, the concept of the help and contributions of effort which the farmers give each other at such times as harvest and various other times when group efforts are needed. This resolution is based on the notion that a group effort will succeed and all members of the group support and contribute to that success.

The Paper Chase, CBS-TV

Untitled Episode

The setting for the series The Paper Chase is a major eastern university law school and the time frame is the present. There are two main character roles in this series: Professor Charles Kingsfield, who teaches contract law at the university, and James Hart, a student from a small, midwestern community. Several students and university personnel have continuing roles in the series.

Episode Summary

In this episode, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Arlon Reynolds has been invited to campus to give an address as part of the week-long celebration for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the admission of women to the university law school. Reynolds is a personal friend and former classmate of Professor Charles Kingsfield. Prior to his formal speech he is invited to meet and answer questions on an informal basis with Kingsfield's contract

law class. Liz Logan, one of the female law students, asks Justice Reynolds, "Why in your thirty years on the Court, you've never once hired a female for the job of law clerk in your own office?" Kingsfield interrupts and does not allow Reynolds to answer. He had specified that questions would be limited to legal subjects and he interprets the question as both personal and disrespectful to the Justice, and he reprimands Logan for asking it. Word of the incident is spread through the student body. This confrontation generates a number of conflicts and issues which serve as a focus for the events in this episode.

Helen McMillian, from the National Office of Women's Law Lions, contacts Liz Logan and asks her to help organize the various campus women's groups to demand that Justice Reynolds answer Logan's question. Major organizational efforts and demonstrations are mounted, Kingsfield's class is boycotted by many students, a variety of issues are discussed and developed, various members of the university community are split into opposing sides of the issues, study patterns are disrupted, and during his address and before he is able to respond to Logan's question as he has promised to do, the Justice is heckled and shouted down from the podium by the demonstrators' chant, "We won't work till women clerk!" Reynolds leaves the undelivered text on the podium as he departs and James Hart

retrieves it and learns that Reynolds had intended to acknowledge that his failure to hire a female law clerk has been discriminatory.

In the course of the episode the major characters express and examine, on a variety of levels, both their individual rational beliefs and emotional feelings concerning the issues raised. Liz Logan at first is hesitant, confused, and frustrated by the response received to her question. Reluctantly she joins the demonstrators' effort and is quickly disenchanted by what she perceives as their unfair and counterproductive methods to achieve a worthy goal or at least to make a justifiable point. James Hart is frustrated and torn between his personal loyalty to his friends and his inability to clearly understand the issues raised or to influence the course of events. Professor Kingsfield maintains his position as a representative of the university; however, as a former student activist himself, he is sympathetic to the objection raised by and the goals of the demonstrators. He privately lectures both Reynolds and Logan in an attempt to adjudicate the conflict. Justice Reynolds attempts to resolve the difference between his publicly espoused social values--i.e., equal rights and opportunities for women--versus his personal behavior which reflects traditional and conventional values concerning the role of women in society and his own ability to interact with them in a professional setting. Finally, near

the conclusion of the episode, Kingsfield arranges a private meeting for Logan in his office with Reynolds where she "argues the rightness of her position." During the reception scheduled as the summary activity of the celebration week, at the conclusion of the episode, the viewer sees Logan and Reynolds dancing together and may be led to infer that they have either resolved their differences or, at least, have understood each other's position and behavior.

Kohlberg Analysis

Justice Reynolds. In several scenes references are made to Reynold's progressive judicial record on women's and minorities' rights. Kingsfield refers to Reynolds' "grand scale vision" of the Constitution. Classified on the Kohlberg schema, this level of moral reasoning may be deemed as postconventional since he goes beyond the stage of obeying laws and his sense of justice is based on a universal concept of the rights of individuals. In the part of the speech which he did deliver, Reynolds refers to the "sacred obligation" of the Supreme Court to guard and uphold the great principles of the Constitution. In his legal opinions, Reynolds has made a generalized commitment to respect and uphold the rights of others. As a member of the Supreme Court, he operates within the legal confines of the Constitution and appears to have an appreciation for

social order and the concept of a social contract. The "great principles" of the Constitution which he professes to follow and defend place him in Kohlberg's stage five. His failure, however, to appoint a woman to the position of law clerk in his office would indicate that, despite his legal opinions, his personal view of the role of women in society and either his inability or unwillingness to interact with a female in a professional setting does not coincide with his legal position. His personal behavior seems to reflect the acceptance of a social order which defines roles and rules for women as members of the society.

From the undelivered text of the speech which James Hart obtains, the viewer gains further insight into the conflict which has existed in the Justice's thinking, and that he had planned to acknowledge his discriminatory behavior. Near the end of the program, after his meeting with Logan, the viewer may infer he accepts her point that his behavior has not coincided with this public, legal position. It seems valid, therefore, to assume that Reynolds will make a transition in his behavior to correspond to his public, postconventional level thinking. He may have begun to bring his personal feelings and behavior in line with his publicly espoused beliefs.

Liz Logan. As the episode unfolds, Liz Logan reveals several stages of moral reasoning. She says her original

question was motivated by a general concern for the status of women in society; this general concern is stage-five moral reasoning. When members of her study group suggest that she apologize for embarrassing Reynolds in front of the class she responds, "For what? Uncovering a probable violation of a federal law by a Supreme Court Justice?" This is stage four reasoning which is defined as reliance upon and upholding the law. When the demonstrators adopt tactics which she disapproves of, Logan is angered. In an exchange with Helen McMillian concerning the tactics of Carley, who is one of the most vociferous of the organizers of the demonstration, she says,

> I understand when Carley goes further than what she agrees, or tries to drag me into something against my will. Carley has lied to me and tried to use me. I feel like the sorcerer's apprentice. I joined something I believed in and now it's getting out of control. I think we can make progress if we handle ourselves well.

These statements also reveal a conventional, stage-four level of thinking. At this stage right behavior for Liz is defined as acting to fulfill the duties or arrangements agreed upon in a contractual sense, and as contributing to the goals of the group by way of acting the roles which society or the group perceives as appropriate. The final statement, "if we handle ourselves well" is particularly revealing

in that she expects to gain acceptance from the social group by presenting the women's behavior as acceptable to society.

Logan is also in a transitional stage between the conventional and postconventional levels. Kohlberg defines this as stage four-B. At stage four-B the social standards have become internalized, that is, the individual is obligated to follow his conscience; however, the standards are not yet based on a universal concept of right behavior. In an exchange with Hart, she chides him for following Reynolds and Kingsfield "blindly" and for respecting them because of their positions in society. In a later exchange with Hart, she expands her reasons for following her conscience when she says,

> Hart, don't you realize that the Justice isn't perfect, and neither is Kingsfield? You see that guy up there on the podium and you say to yourself, "I want to be like him." You identify with him. But it's different for me. As a woman I don't see him as a hero I can become. I listen to what he says and if it makes sense.

The key to this statement is her belief in listening and determining if what is said makes "sense" to her. She is depending on her conscience to guide her decisions.

James Hart. Throughout the development of the episode, James Hart confers with the various protagonists in the drama and he generally fails in his attempt to separate the issues in his own mind, to influence the course

of events, or to persuade Logan to disassociate herself from the demonstrators. His reasoning is at the conventional, specifically the stage-three level. His main concern is that the events are polarizing his friends and disrupting the orderly progress of his study group and the general tranquility of the campus. At stage three he reasons that the people close to him should live up to their expected role as students. He says to Logan,

> It's you I am worried about. I mean you're polarizing the entire student body. Let alone the fact that we can't study, it's what it's doing to us all personally. It's not so much a matter of who's where [who is right], it's that we're divided.

At the conventional level his concern is for the loyalty of the members to the group. He admires Kingsfield and Reynolds because of their position, but more importantly, he deplores the disruption of the roles, expectations, and cohesiveness of his own group.

Carley and Kingsfield. Two other characters display two opposite ends of Kohlberg's moral reasoning schema. Both seem to serve as dramatic devices to stimulate events and to develop the plot. Carley, the shrill, stereotyped demonstrator who began the heckling demonstration which disrupted Reynold's speech and who is exuberant over the outcome, in an exchange with Helen McMillian and Liz Logan says, "We accomplished our purpose. Look, we forced a Justice of the Supreme Court off of the podium because he is a sexist." For her, the demonstration was more important

than either the issues raised or Reynold's attempt to offer an explanation. Her reasoning and her glee over the outcome of the demonstration reflect her preconventional level of reasoning. At stage two she is interested in serving her own needs. If her concern were for the advancement of the female group her reasoning would be at the conventional level; however, she is more interested in herself and her own ability to defy persons in a position of authority because she thinks they can not retaliate or punish her, as well as her own ability to influence and disrupt events. Her fear of punishment and self-interest motivated behavior are examples of a preconventional moral reasoning level.

The opposite end of Kohlberg's schema is demonstrated by Kingsfield's reasoning when he arranges the meeting between Logan and Reynolds in the privacy of his office, and when he privately admonishes Reynolds for his failure to appoint a female law clerk and then he publicly defends him to Logan and to the class. The viewer also learns that he has been recommending female law clerk candidates to Reynolds for fifteen years, and that he was one of the original protagonists in the attempt to gain admission of women to the law school thirty years ago. His public statements, his attempts to respect the sensibilities of individuals in private conversations, and his attempt to adjudicate the issues all seem to be based on stage-six

reasoning. It may be reasonable to assume from his statements about these events that these behaviors are motivated by a postconventional moral reasoning process. The stage six mode of reasoning is based on a belief in a universal perception of the rights and positions of individuals.

Moral/Value Analysis

Characters and relationships. In addition to the Kohlberg schema, the use of the moral/value content questions developed in Chapter II provides supplementary insights and comparisons into the events in this episode. The first series of questions is used to examine both characters and relationships. The time frame and law school setting provide the program writers the opportunity to deal with issues and conflicts of current public interest, and the characters' concern with and orientation toward the law focuses their attention on the legal aspects of the dilemmas raised. At the same time, however, there is also a strong emphasis on the personal relationships and emotional responses of the characters to the situation. For the students, a major focus of these personal relationships is their study group in which they must rely on each others' effort to resolve the legal cases which are part of their course work. There is a steadfast commitment to the task at hand, i.e., success in school, while at the same time close personal relationships have evolved from

the experience of working together in a highly charged, competitive academic atmosphere.

It is possible to consider three categories of individuals in this episode based on age, sex, and position. The first, according to age, consists of Professor Kingsfield and Justice Reynolds. They are former classmates and they share a warm, personal relationship which has extended over thirty years. This long-standing friendship allows both men to confer comfortably and candidly with each other, and at the same time they are able to respect each other's egos and to accept each other's shortcomings. The nature of this relationship is revealed in the scene in Kingsfield's office in which he admonishes Reynolds for his failure to accept a female law clerk and advises him to tour the campus to gain a sense of the changes in the university community.

The second category, position, consists of Kingsfield and Reynolds versus the students. Both of these men have arrived at the peak of their professional careers and are now in a positional relationship which seems to represent the established status quo which is in conflict to the students' demands for change. Yet, the viewer learns that Kingsfield was an activist in his student days at this same university and that he demonstrated just as the students are now similarly agitating for changes. Therefore, even though his position as professor would

seem to support the status quo, he is in fact sympathetic to the students' demands.

In addition to the categories of age and position, the students may also be separated into two other groups, first based on sex and second, on their perception of how the dilemma should be resolved. The male members of the group seem to support the current status; they respect both Kingsfield and Reynolds owing to their positions as Professor and Chief Justice. The males exude a smugness which suggests that the situation is an acceptable reflection of the roles of individuals in the society, and they are insensitive to the possibility that the women perceive themselves and their position differently. Their attitude seems to be that it may be appropriate for women to be lawyers, but if they choose this profession, they must accept both the values and behaviors of the men. That is, not only must women accept the male viewpoint but they must also exhibit the same male behavior patterns.

Conversely, the women perceive their position quite differently. They have chosen to enter a traditionally male profession and they are sensitive to what is for them an unfamiliar environment. There is a thin tradition for females in the legal profession and as a result there are few role models which the women are able to emulate. They are, therefore, particularly aware of the differences between their own position and the position of their male

peers. The longstanding dominance of males and the thin tradition of females in the profession inherently place the women in a prejudicial position which unfairly threatens them. Reynolds' failure to appoint a female law clerk is only one manifestation of this unfairness. They may be accepted as law students, but they are not accepted as women who are equally capable individuals. This attitude is bluntly expressed in an unpleasant confrontation between several minor characters in the local student pub.

It is also possible to categorize the students based on their perceptions of how the dilemma ought to be resolved; this procedure would place males and females in both groups. These two categories are first, those students who approach the problem from a rational viewpoint and second, those whose behavior is based on an emotional response. This latter group includes the males who smugly support the status quo and expect the females to accept the males' view and behavior and also it includes those radical females who expect to accomplish their goals through agitation and disruption. The former group are those males and females who approach the problem from a rational standpoint. They seem to have in common their method of dealing with the issues; however, their individual emphases, perceptions, and definitions of the issues differ based on their concept of the moral/value dimensions involved.

Moral/value dimensions. The second series of moral/value content questions is used to examine the moral/value dimensions raised in the episode. As the drama develops, a variety of these dimensions may be explored based on group differences of sex and position, and also on individual emphases, perceptions, and definitions of the issues. The major difference between groups based on sex, as well as the difference between their rational versus emotional response to the issues, may be interpreted to reflect a political power value dimension. The question for persons in both categories would seem to evolve from a concern for both individual and group power and position. That is, the appointment of an individual to the position of legal clerk to a Supreme Court Justice is an important step toward advancement and success in the legal profession. Accordingly, advancement and success in the profession produce power and position for both the individual and the group s/he may represent. The individual then may assume a position as role model for others in her group to follow.

The differences based on individual emphases and perceptions raise several moral/value dimensions. The main protagonists are Logan, Hart, Reynolds, and Kingsfield; each defines the issues based on somewhat different concepts of the moral value dimensions involved. As the demonstrators' organizational efforts escalate, Logan

increasingly becomes disenchanted with the course of events; however, she is confronted by a dilemma wherein she believes the point she has raised is a justified criticism concerning the treatment of potential female law clerk candidates versus her perception that the demonstrators' tactics are unfair to the Chief Justice. She values the concept of the equality of women. She perceives the need for fairness to an individual in conflict with fairness to a group of people. She attempts to resolve her desire to achieve a rational settlement for all concerned versus the radical and highly emotional approach adopted by the demonstrators.

Throughout the drama, James Hart attempts to resolve several conflicting loyalties and values in the dilemma. Among these are his personal friendship and concern for Logan, his admiration for both Kingsfield and Reynolds, his concern that the issues have forced his fellow classmates to polarize into opposing sides, and his feelings of helplessness to either influence or resolve the events as they occur. In one scene he confides to a friend that he "can't sort out the issues." His difficulty is that he is attempting to clarify and resolve his own emotional response to the issues via a rational approach. It is interesting to note that his conflicting loyalties and values are a reflection of a pertinent problem for practioners in the legal profession. That is, the law itself

ought to be precisely written and structured so that its application is fair and just. As is often the situation, however, the issues are not clearly defined, there are conflicting emotions and values, the elements of a case may be in a state of flux due to the dynamic nature of human interaction, and the law is difficult to administer in practical situations so that an equitable resolution is achieved.

Justice Reynolds, a courtly gentleman in both dress and demeanor, is both recognized and renowned for his liberal opinions and rulings on women and minority issues. Several references made by various characters throughout the drama establish his reputation and record for the viewer. In the privacy of his office, however, Kingsfield admonishes Reynolds for his failure to hire a female law clerk. Kingsfield says, "Look at you. Liberal for years. Preaching equal rights for women. Forgetting to practice it at home." Reynolds replies, "I'm used to men as clerks. I was one myself. It's what I am comfortable with. I assumed that my philosophy, my opinions on women's rights, would be enough." Later, Kingsfield tells Logan,

> Justice Reynolds is an honorable man. You've read his opinions. His vision has always been on a grand scale. Justice Reynolds is a gentleman of tradition. A Justice of the Supreme Court must order, and indeed command, his law clerks. In his civility, perhaps the Justice never considered it proper to order a woman about.

The description of Reynolds as a "man of tradition" does

not sustain his "grand vision" of the equality of women. He has failed to resolve the difference between his publicly espoused legal concept of the rights and equality of women to his personal, traditional values and behavior toward women. These traditional values include both a sense of convention--i.e. his unwillingness to "order about" a woman, and his personal taste--i.e. he is used to and comfortable with male clerks. The difference between Justice Reynolds' understanding and compassion for social action versus his traditional social and personal values is the primary dilemma depicted in this episode. Like Liz Logan and James Hart, who are potential members of the legal profession, Justice Reynolds, who is a practitioner in the profession, must also resolve conflicting loyalties and values. Their respective dilemmas are complex, but more importantly, their attempts to resolve these issues are both a compelling dramatic device to involve and hold the interest of the viewer in the episode and a forceful device to depict the complexity of the human dimensions and depth of the characters.

Unlike the other three, Professor Kingsfield does not seem to struggle with a moral/value dilemma; for him the difficulty is a practical matter of finding the means to resolve the conflict. Throughout the turmoil he maintains his sense of equilibrium based on his sure knowledge and understanding as reflected in his stage-six moral reasoning.

He carries on the business at hand; that is, he plays the role of adjudicator. It is appropriate that he assume this role. In one scene, where he is delivering a lecture to the class, he delineates the differences between contract law and criminal law. He says,

> Contract law is a positive force, it does not serve the human instinct of retribution, the desire to make a person suffer unreasonably for his wrongs. The aim of contract law is restoration, reformation, rebirth . . . to make the parties whole again, to restore them to the position they would have been in had the contract been carried out.

The implication of this reasoning for the conflict in this episode is that the law specifies equal opportunity for women and that the Justice has not fulfilled the law and therefore, a way must be found to satisfy the law and to make the parties whole as if the contract had been carried out. As an adjudicator to the disputing parties, Kingsfield appears to the viewer as both cold and impersonal, and in some ways he is both manipulative and calculating. As a result of his clear, legal understanding of the moral issue involved and his attempts to adjudicate the issue based on his concept of the purpose of contract law, he does not display his own human dimension and there is little depth to his character. As a member of the legal profession, it may be appropriate that he assume this idealized position as a judge; however, in this episode he serves only as a dramatic device to motivate the parties toward a resolution.

Generator and moral nature of the resolution. The final series of moral/value content questions is used to examine the generator and the moral nature of the resolution. An attempt to resolve the conflict is achieved through the intervention of Professor Kingsfield. He privately and separately lectures both Reynolds and Logan for their shortcomings in both reasoning and action, and he arranges for Logan and Reynolds to meet privately in his office. This meeting seems analogous to an "out of court" settlement and reflects Kingsfield's judicial maneuvering. The meeting itself is held off-stage; however, at the reception following the meeting the viewer sees Reynolds and Logan dancing together. The writers offer no stated resolution to the episode and the viewer may be lead to assume that if Reynolds and Logan have not resolved their difference, they have come to understand each others' position and behavior. Reynolds' visit to campus and his meeting with the students may have provided him the opportunity to begin to resolve the conflict between his traditional perceptions and behavior toward women and his legal concept of the equality of women. The viewer knows from his speech that Reynolds had planned to admit that his behavior had been discriminatory and may assume that he intends to appoint a female to the position of law clerk in his office.

Logan has also modified her perceptions of the Chief Justice. As a result of their meeting she may be able to appreciate his traditional values and perspective, and to understand the motives for his behavior. The key to this interpretation of the resolution is the willingness of both Logan and Reynolds to adopt the other's position and to reflect on their own behavior in terms of the other's perspective; that is, their meeting has given them the opportunity to examine their beliefs and behaviors from each other's viewpoint. The value reflected in this resolution would suggest that a solution to differences is possible through reasonable discourse and mutual understanding. If this interpretation of the outcome is accepted, it is possible to characterize Logan and Reynolds as similar in that they both demonstrate a capacity for understanding and compassion. Logan's disgust for the demonstrators' tactics and Reynolds' willingness to openly listen and to modify his behavior reflect their mutual empathy, goodwill, and personal compatibility toward each other as individuals.

A second, less progressive and optimistic conclusion may be inferred from the final scene. The viewer sees Logan and Reynolds smiling and talking together while dancing; however, their dialogue, like their meeting in Kingsfield's office, is not revealed. It is possible to view the dancing in terms of its sexual connotation and--more pertinent to the issues raised--as the male leading

and thereby dominating the female. It may be possible that Logan has succumbed to the force of Reynold's personality and charm. Several incidents support this conclusion. In an earlier scene one of the male students asks, "do you really think all of this fuss is going to make any difference?" The viewer knows that Kingsfield has been recommending female law clerk candidates to Reynolds for fifteen years and that Reynolds has never appointed one to the position in his office. The female demonstrators had accused Reynolds of "sidestepping the issue." The accusation may in fact be true. Perhaps Reynolds will leave the campus, take no action on the demonstrators' demands, and now that the confrontation is over, allow the issue to fade while he remains committed to his comfortable, traditional values and unchanged by the events of his visit to campus.

These two, and possibly other, interpretations are left to the viewer to ponder. The program writers have established the conflict and followed the characters' attempts to resolve the issues. The writers, however, do not provide a specific resolution; that task is left to the viewer. Perhaps the ambiguous conclusion to the episode is a reflection of the legal focus of the series in that in fact it is often difficult to determine a completely satisfactory conclusion to legal questions. Or perhaps the conclusion is a reflection of the writers' belief that

drama, like the reality it is supposed to depict, is often ambiguous and that meanings and outcomes are neither simple nor subject to a single interpretation. Irrespective of the interpretations drawn, the Kohlberg schema and the moral/value content questions provide a useful means to analyze the conflicts and the dilemmas raised by the issues.

The Waltons, CBS-TV

"The Burden"

This series is somewhat different from the other episodes analyzed for this dissertation in that these weekly episodes constitute a continuing and interwoven story line, and unlike other programs, this series is more than a group of unrelated single episodes about the same characters. Rather, the writers have constructed the episodes into a serialization format similar to a "soap opera" which requires the viewer to watch each week if s/he is to completely understand all of the characters' behaviors and reactions to current events. Several events in prior episodes relate directly to the one reported here and, therefore, a brief summary of the major developments in prior programs is presented.

Several of the major characters in the series have either departed the program or their roles have been considerably reduced. For the first several years after the series originated, the character John Boy Walton played a

central and major role in the lives of the family members. When the actor who played John Boy left the program, the script writers devised to send him to New York where currently he is pursuing his writing career. The family members often refer to him, reminisce about their past life together, and follow his career progress. The series/stories are supposedly written by him and therefore, although he is absent, he maintains a close connection to and influence on the family. As the oldest child he was a major figure in the series and he now serves as a role model for his younger brothers and sisters to emulate. Also, when the actor who played Grandpa Walton died, the writers explained his absence by having him die while working alone on Walton's Mountain and thus devised a major crisis for the family. References made by the characters in various episodes reveal that his presence is sorely missed. As the oldest member of the family and one of the original owners of Walton's Mountain he represented the connection with their past and with their home and land.

The three remaining adult characters in the series have had their roles substantially reduced. Grandma Walton had a stroke and because of her limited mobility she has relinquished her primary role as household manager. She appears in a few scenes, and when asked, she offers her advice to the family members; even though she is present, her influence and control over events have been substantially

reduced. In the episode immediately preceding the one analyzed here, mother Olivia Walton learned that she had contracted tuberculosis. She does not appear in this episode as she is now confined to and receiving treatment in a sanitarium. Her recent departure has upset the family routine and during this episode there is some conflict as the members attempt to assimilate her duties as the primary household manager and to adjust to her absence. Finally, father John Walton has abandoned his work as a farmer to pursue a new career. He had worked a small family sawmill on a part-time basis; however, the outbreak of World War II created an increased demand for lumber and he has taken advantage of the opportunity and has accepted employment with a Richmond construction firm. He is an organizer for the small sawmills in the area and this new job requires that he often travel away from home for several days at a time. His absences have required the family to assume some of his duties and he has less time to devote to the family members.

There have also been some major changes in the lives of the Walton children. After an unsuccessful attempt to work and live together in Richmond, the oldest sisters, Erin and Mary Ellen, have moved back home where they have assumed the duties as household managers in their mother's absence. Mary Ellen's husband, Curt, was killed during the Pearl Harbor attack and she is now a widow with a

small child. Ben and Jason also live at home. Ben has completed high school and he is now the full-time manager of his father's sawmill; Jason has also completed high school and is now studying music at a nearby college. Elizabeth and Jim Bob, the youngest children, still attend the local school and they have the primary roles in this episode.

Episode Summary

Several of the initial scenes in this episode reveal that the household routine has been unsettled and that the family members are attempting to cope with the changes in their family structure while at the same time attempting to pursue their own interests and projects. Elizabeth is devoting the majority of her time to a school science project on insects, and in the process she incurs the ire of her sisters. Not only are the sisters repulsed by the live insects she is keeping in the house, but also they are upset because she is not contributing her fair share of time and effort to the completion of the household chores. Several short scenes reveal that she is spending a considerable amount of time in the fields and woods collecting insects, she cajoles her brother Ben into building an ant farm for her, and she builds an elaborate trap to catch a luna moth.

The majority of this episode is devoted to Jim Bob who is experiencing a great deal of confusion and difficulty

in his attempts to cope with the changes in his family. He has agitated his family, his school class, and the general community by "whooping it up lately" with his wild and rowdy behavior. His teacher has complained to father John that he has not been doing his school work, and because he has "been such a smart aleck that nobody else can do theirs." In the opening scene the family members are concerned that he has missed supper and has failed to telephone them that he would not be home. When he walks in, Erin sarcastically calls him "the dare-devil of Walton's Mountain" and Ben asks him, "Tinker got you drinking the hard stuff yet?" Tinker is a hooligan and carouser; together he and Jim Bob have perpetrated practical pranks on community members and generally disrupted the community tranquility.

In the next scene, while driving through town, Jim Bob and Tinker narrowly miss hitting Cora Beth Godsey; in her haste to jump out of the way she falls and breaks the heel of her shoe. She says,

> James Robert, I have asked you repeatedly to slow that vehicle down when driving through our little community. Now I shall report to your father your reluctance to do so. One's life is simply not safe around here.

Cora Beth is related to Olivia Walton and although she is not a close family member, she is treated with respect and deference by the family. She and her husband Ike own the general store and they operate the local post office. She is in a position to talk to all of the community

members, she manages to know everyone's personal business, and she does not hesitate to wield her influence and express her displeasure by gossipping to her friends. Tinker refers to her as "that old battle ax."

Cora Beth reports the incident to John and when confronted, Jim Bob reluctantly apologizes to Cora Beth and attempts to excuse the incident by blaming the faulty brakes on his car. John demands that Jim Bob immediately repair the brakes which he reluctantly does; however, he fails to brace the jack before getting under the car, the jack buckles, and the car falls on him. Much commotion follows as the family members raise the car and pull him out dazed but unhurt. John says, "Somebody up there is watching out for you, Jim Bob." This event and the family's response to it initiate a major change in Jim Bob's attitude and set off the episode's main events.

Jim Bob spends a sleepless night thinking about the accident and early the next morning he seeks out Reverend Bradshaw to tell him that he has decided to become a preacher. During Sunday services later in the morning, Bradshaw surprises the community by making this announcement to the congregation. As the episode progresses, Jim Bob spends a considerable amount of time reading his Bible, missing meals because he is "fasting," and unhesitatingly lecturing the family members on their supposed religious

shortcomings by quoting Biblical passages, chapter and verse. He criticizes Elizabeth for her interest in science and the time she spends on her insect project which he perceives as a slight on her religious obligations. In several scenes throughout the episode, he argues with his younger sister in an attempt to convince her to give up her project and to release the insects she has collected. He also demeans his sisters for their squabbling over who has failed to contribute her share to the household chores and takes an indirect swipe at his father when during grace he says, "We're sorry that our father hasn't repented of his sins and gotten baptized. Please help him to mend his ways." Since the series originated, and in various episodes, Olivia has reluctantly come to accept John's refusal to be baptized. Although it remains a minor contention in their marriage, it is one the children have known about but have not been involved with. The family members alternately respond by teasing Jim Bob or by being frustrated by his overly pious attitude and behavior.

Honoring a promise to Reverend Bradshaw, Jim Bob goes to Boatright, a nearby town, to sign up for some seminary courses at the local college. He is surprised to learn that seminary study is a graduate school and that he must complete an undergraduate degree, including general studies as well as Greek and Latin, before he can enter the seminary

school program. Quoting the Bible he tells the headmaster, "Go you into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark, Chapter 16, verse 15. It doesn't say anything about having to learn Greek first." He says, "I have to preach. I can't wait four years to start." The headmaster, Professor Hoadley, suggests that if he is unwilling to pursue the course of study that "it would be wise for you to reconsider your decision altogether." He returns home disappointed but undaunted in his resolve. He gives his favorite possessions, his car, short-wave radio, and goggles to his brothers and sisters and early the next morning leaves a note to the family explaining that he has set off to "do the work of the Lord."

Stopping at the church to pray, he meets Tinker who is returning home after having been out drinking all night. Tinker cajoles Jim Bob into preaching a sermon for him. He says, "I've been doing a lot of thinking about this stuff lately . . . . I need some of your spiritual strength." Jim Bob is reluctant and suspects that Tinker is making fun of him. Tinker replies, "The church is for everybody. Saint and sinner alike. Besides, it'll be good practice for you." Hesitating at first, Jim Bob agrees and begins to talk about repentance. Tinker interrupts and reminds Jim Bob of some of their former escapades together. He successfully twists some Biblical quotations and confuses Jim Bob by asking him several questions about

sin and repentance which he is unable to answer. It is now obvious that Tinker's request for a sermon was a ploy to give him the opportunity to berate Jim Bob. He says,

> You're no preacher. You're just a little crazy in the head . . . . Now I've got a "Jim Bob Story" I can spread around town. I can hear the laughs. The day your momma had you, Jim Bob, she had the "Walton Family Fool."

Angered and speechless, Jim Bob punches him.

Later in the day Elizabeth finds Jim Bob sitting despondently by a small pond. She tries to talk to him, but he tells her to go away. She returns home and tells her father where she found him. In the episode's concluding scene John goes to talk with his son. Jim Bob tells his father about the incident with Tinker and that he has failed either to be a preacher or, because he lost his temper, to meet his own expectations of what a good person ought to be. In this conversation John helps him to see that he doesn't have to be a preacher to be a "good person," no one is more important than another, and he may choose any profession and still be a good person. Second, he helps Jim Bob to realize his motivation for becoming a preacher was based on a false sense of guilt that the family fortunes were God's punishment for his past behavior. Jim Bob says, "While I was still under the car it seemed that somebody told me that if I'd been a little bit of a better person and did what I was supposed to do, none of this would have happened." He also reveals that he has been afraid

his mother would die and he saw the accident as a warning that God would punish him by taking Olivia if he did not change his behavior. John tells him that he cannot place himself in the center of things and he must accept events over which he has no control and continue as best he can. Jim Bob realizes his father is right and once he admits his fears about his mother, he is able to return home with his father.

Kohlberg Analysis

Jim Bob. In his various exchanges with other characters throughout the episode, Jim Bob demonstrates the preconventional moral reasoning level. When his sister Mary Ellen criticizes him for returning home late and missing supper he says, "You're not my Momma." The difference between his attitude and tone of voice toward his sister as compared to his deference to his father reveals that he is willing to accept the authority of his parent. He recognizes the superior status position of his father and refuses to accept criticism from a sibling because she occupies a status position equal to his own. When his father tells him that his teacher has complained of his "smart aleck" behavior he responds, "I'm not hurting anybody." His reasoning is instrumental when he thinks right behavior is relative and that he may do as he wishes as long as he does not conflict with another person's interest.

These responses are two examples of stage two, instrumental reasoning. After his accident there are several instances where he criticizes various family members for their behavior and he quotes Biblical passages, citing chapter and verse, to support his reasoning. He is particularly critical of Elizabeth's interest in science. He tells his sister,

> I want you to stop ruining your life being deceived by science. . . . It's keeping you from more important things like reading the Bible and resting on the Sabbath. You have to decide whether you're a Baptist or a scientist.

At the preconventional level he follows concrete rules as established in the superior authority of the Bible. He is particularly concerned with punishment and repentance. For example, when he attempts to preach a sermon to Tinker he chooses to talk about repentence to avoid punishment and finally, when he talks to his father he says,

> I heard the jack buckle and everything got black . . . My whole life came to me in a split second. I knew what kind of person I was. Not a very good one. For a moment I was glad I was dead. Seemed like nothing was going right. First, Grandma got sick then Grandpa died and Curt was killed at Pearl Harbor . . . . It seemed that somebody told me that if I'd been a little bit of a better person and did what I was supposed to do, none of this would have happened. . . . I was being warned, Daddy. Any more goofs and . . . . momma might die.

The definition of being good and the obedience to rules to avoid punishment is the heteronomous stage one.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth's reasoning seems to fluctuate between stages two and three, the preconventional and the

conventional levels; she demonstrates both as the episode progresses. At the preconventional stage two she justifies her time and energy spent on the school science project by quoting Thomas Edison's homily "Science is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." When criticized by her sisters for her failure to help with the domestic chores she says, "I do my share." It is obvious, however, that she does not do her share nor does she have a reasonable estimate of what her share ought to be, and she fails to appreciate the amount of work which her sisters must do to keep the household running smoothly. She criticizes Jim Bob for failing to eat and fasting and she says, "It's been proven scientifically that you're supposed to eat seven basic food groups every day. Otherwise you get sick." When Cora Beth asks her how the family is "doing now that Olivia is gone," she replies, "We all miss her, especially me." The reliance on authority, the conceptualization of "fair share" in terms of concrete exchange, her inability to realize the amount of work her sisters are doing, and her concern for her mother's illness as a personal loss to her own well-being are all examples of stage two reasoning.

It is interesting to note that Elizabeth and Jim Bob establish a difference between religion and science, and they utilize that difference to support their respective commitments and behaviors and at the same time criticize

the other for his/her beliefs. They use the differences as a battleground to attack each other. The differences between science and religion are not pertinent to the Kohlberg schema analysis, but the fact that these characters rely on a superior authority, irrespective of the nature of that authority, is a pertinent reflection of their respective moral reasoning. They utilize their perceived differences between religion and science to establish the parameters of their conflict and in several scenes in the episode assault and attack each other's position. Finally, when her crickets get loose in her bedroom and when she discovers a luna moth has died in her trap, Elizabeth begins to adopt a conventional level perspective. She begins to appreciate her sisters' efforts and their criticism of her failure to help them from their perspective, and she expresses genuine concern for her brother's safety after he leaves home. This concern for other people and their feelings is stage three moral reasoning, interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity.

John Walton. The father, John Walton, reasons at both the conventional and postconventional levels. His primary mode, however, would seem to be at Kohlberg's stage four-B, the transitional stage. When criticizing Jim Bob's rowdy behavior he says, "You can't horse around all your life. I tried it when I was your age. It got me a reputation I couldn't get rid of for years. I don't want

the same thing to happen to you." His concern for his son's reputation in the community and his definition of right behavior in terms of conforming to the expectations of others are stage three reasoning. After a family squabble he tells his children, "You've been at each others' throats ever since your momma went away. I know you miss her. I miss her too, but we've got to start pulling together." Here he is able to take the perspective of his children to understand their difficulties in dealing with their mother's absence. He attempts to influence them to work together for the family group. The definition of right behavior in terms of doing one's duties, upholding the social order for the welfare of the group, and taking the perspective of others is stage-four reasoning. His adamant refusal to be baptized, however, would suggest that he does not completely respond to the opinion of others. This area of rural Virginia is a closely-knit community and the members of the area meet at church and consider their religion a major influence in their lives. By refusing to be baptized, John is following his own conscience. Also, in defending Jim Bob's religious belief and behavior to the other children he says, "There is nothing wrong with getting a little religion. As long as you don't let it get out of hand." When Jim Bob leaves home, he decides not to go after him saying, "Jim Bob's got to work this out for himself." He follows his own conscience

in his decision not to be baptized and he believes Jim Bob should follow his own conscience and attempt to work out his decision to preach for himself. The decision to follow his own conscience and to allow Jim Bob to follow his is the transitional stage four-B moral reasoning.

In the final scene, in his conversation with Jim Bob, he shows him Elizabeth's ant farm and says, "Everyone of those ants has a different job to do. And no one is more important than the other. That goes for folks too, you know. No job is more important than the other." These statements would seem to be conventional level reasoning in that his belief is that everyone contributes to the good of the society. When he refers to the death and illness which have occurred in the family, he says, "You can't blame yourself for things that happen in life. You can't put yourself in the center. You've no business there." This seems to be a postconventional level of moral reasoning. John has accepted a universal concept of the individual prior to the society and a moral point of view which suggest that the individual's behavior must be based on a universal concept of doing the best that he is able regardless of the circumstances or events surrounding his life.

Moral/Value Analysis

Characters and relationships. This program series is set in rural Virginia during World War II, and the events occur within the family and the community setting. It

is important to note that there has been a major change in the current quality and character of life as compared to earlier episodes in this series. When the series began several years ago, the time-frame was the late Depression years. The family unit was a traditional one in which the grandparents lived in the home and contributed their efforts to the family's livelihood. The family's work was limited to their farm and every member worked and contributed to this effort. As the series has continued over the years the time-frame has progressed, the community has grown, the pace of life has quickened, and the primary work of the area has shifted from farming to lumber production to meet the demands of and support for the War effort. As a result, there is considerably more interchange with people outside of the community and the community's life-style has been affected by this contact. The Walton family is now economically more prosperous, and their primary need for survival during the Depression has shifted and been replaced by a set of emotional problems caused by the stresses of change in a rapidly growing community and changing family structure.

The departure of Grandpa, Curt, and Olivia, and the reduced influence of Grandma due to her illness, and father John due to his frequent absences, have required the younger family members to adapt to a rapidly changing family environment. They have lost their primary role models and

therefore they do not have direct contact with those characters whom they are able to emulate. The loss of John Boy as a role model is particularly evident in Professor Hoadley's comment when he tells Jim Bob, "I knew your brother John when he was here at Boatright. If you are anything like him I am sure you are going to excel at anything you put your mind to including the ministry." With the departure of the senior role models, the basic character relationships among the remaining family members has shifted from an extended one to the nuclear family structure. The members' need to adapt to these changes in their community and family has disrupted their strength and stability as a cohesive family unit, and has provided one of the continuing underlying conflicts for all of the characters in this and recent episodes.

Although there has been a shift in the family relationships and growth of the town, there still remains a major concern for the traditional values of the community and family. The community members still utilize the church as a meeting place and it is here that they learn of Jim Bob's decision to become a preacher. The children respect their father and defer to his opinions as the final source of authority and the mediator who attempts to resolve the family controversies. Yet he is not an autocrat since he attempts to allow his children to organize their own lives and to pursue their own interests. He allows Elizabeth to

pursue her science project and does not interfere when Mary Ellen and Erin complain to him that Elizabeth is not contributing to the completion of the domestic chores. However, when her crickets accidently escape in their bedroom and cause an uproar he says, "Elizabeth, I know science is important to you, honey, but maybe you better take your bugs out to the shed tomorrow, huh?" The "huh" means "don't you think that would be a good idea?" The question is an indirect demand. As a mediator he influences his children by suggestions of what actions are best, but he allows them to make their own decisions. Similarly, his conversation with Jim Bob at the conclusion of the episode is a reasoned presentation. He tries to make suggestions and to guide Jim Bob to realize his own motives,thereby helping him to make a reasonable decision. He retains his authority, however, when he demands that Jim Bob fix the car brakes and that he stop fasting and start eating regularly scheduled meals. He also tells the other children that he doesn't want them to tease Jim Bob and stops their increasing tendency to tease him. He exercises his authority to fulfill his role as parent to protect the physical and emotional well-being of his children rather than for some selfish reason to protect his own ego or position of authority. In fact, he is vulnerable to criticism from his children as evidenced by Jim Bob's censure when, while saying grace, he prays,

"We're sorry that our father hasn't repented of his sins and gotten baptized." John's response is limited to a slightly disapproving sideways glance rather than a direct condemnation for his presumptuous interference in a matter which is obviously beyond his competency to understand or to judge. John's approach reflects at least two factors: first, he understands that his children are growing and they need to attempt to make their own decisions as part of the maturational process and second, that the community's life style is changing and becoming more democratic and therefore he is reflecting this change in his behavior toward his children.

In contrast, Cora Beth Godsey represents the older values and thinking of the community. When Elizabeth comes into the general store to purchase some Mason jars for her science project she asks her, "Have you been helping Mary Ellen with the canning?" When Elizabeth answers, "No, this is my own project," Cora Beth responds, "Oh, Elizabeth, that's very impressive for a girl of your age. You must enter a jar in the county fair." Her assumption that Elizabeth is processing food and her failure to consider that she might use the jars for some other purpose reveals that she focuses on the traditional female homemaking activities. She is also fiercely proud of the community and the church. Referring to Jim Bob's decision to become a preacher she says to Elizabeth, "How proud you must be to

have a brother so dedicated to such high ideals and lofty ambitions. I have been always able to hold my head up high ever since my brother Albert graduated from the seminary at Jerome College in Savannah."

There are two important distinctions between Cora Beth and John, in how they utilize their positional authority, and also in how they treat the children and their sensitivity for the children's feelings. Cora Beth uses her position as postmistress and owner of the general store to learn other people's personal business and to influence their behavior by unhesitatingly talking about them to anyone who will listen. In this episode Elizabeth is particularly sensitive to her position and methods and is cautious in her dealings with Cora Beth. She knows that Cora Beth is adept at obtaining information by unabashedly asking questions. Elizabeth answers all questions respectfully but with the minimum of detail and she volunteers no information. Conversely, John limits the use of his authority to protecting his children's emotional and physical well-being and he prefers to allow them to make their own decisions. He respects the feelings of his children, talks to them and treats them as if they were adults, and he expects them to deal with problems in a mature manner. Conversely, Cora Beth manages to talk down to the children and she is insensitive to their personal feelings. She

asks Elizabeth, "Well, how are you little orphans doing now that Olivia is gone." The reference to them as "little orphans" is extremely hurtful and mean to Elizabeth first, because she is not an orphan and second, because she is quite worried that her mother is ill and might die. Cora Beth's attempted pleasantry displays a gross insensitivity for Elizabeth's feelings.

Moral/value dimensions. The broad category of values depicted in this episode may be characterized as a concern for the community, including both the family members' relationships to each other and to the townspeople at large. The particular value dilemma depicted is primarily one of autonomy versus dependency. As the two youngest children, both Elizabeth and Jim Bob are struggling to establish their own strengths of character as individuals, but because of their ages and emotional maturity levels, they remain dependent on the older family members for physical as well as emotional support.

Elizabeth is angered when her sisters fail to share her interest in science and when they demand that she assist them in the completion of the domestic chores. She says, "I wonder if Madame Curie had to put up with a sister?" She uses her science project as an attempt to achieve independence from the family and she would prefer that her sisters leave her alone. Similarly, Jim Bob utilizes his new-found religion to attempt to separate

himself from the family, to the point of leaving home, as he supplants the authority of the family for the authority of his religion. He expresses a compelling need for recognition and approval from the family, however. When Grandma Walton gives him her baptismal Bible he says,

> I always figured I was sixth in line for everything in this family . . . . I'm going to keep it forever just to remind me that somebody in this family believes in me.

In the final conversation with his father he is concerned that "Grandma will be disappointed in me."

Both Jim Bob and Elizabeth focus their interests on agents outside the family in an attempt to break their dependency on the family; Elizabeth centers her interest and values on science while Jim Bob adopts the values of his religion. Jim Bob recites passages and quotes chapter and verse from the Bible and Elizabeth quotes homilies from Thomas Edison. It is interesting to note that their two choices produce a conflict between them when in fact their choices are motivated by a similar need to express their independence. They attempt to express their independence from the family by accepting the principles of some external authority. John Walton understands his children's attempt to deal with this autonomy versus dependency dilemma and because of his position as their father he must also deal with the dilemma. When he hears of Reverend Bradshaw's announcement that Jim Bob is going to

be a preacher he tells Jim Bob that his decision is "all right with me, Son. Just kind of wished you had talked it over with me first." While he is willing to accept his son's decision he also wants to be consulted and to participate in the decision-making process. When Jim Bob leaves home he decides not to go after him saying, "Maybe he deserves a chance to try his hand at preaching." He sees this as an opportunity for his son to attempt to carry out a decision on his own. When he tells his son of his own bad reputation and that he does not want him to have a similar one he also expresses the autonomy versus dependency dilemma. In all of these incidents he is somewhat torn between his wish to give his son the opportunity to make his own decisions and his instinct to protect his son by helping him deal with his emotions and conflicts.

Generator and moral nature of the resolution. There are several events which generate and shift the action and which motivate the characters. In addition to the general changes in the family and community, Olivia's departure, the car accident, the fight with Tinker, and finally his meeting with his father are the specific events which influence Jim Bob's behavior in this episode. In response to each of the events he seems to swing from extremes of rowdy pranks to overbearing piety and finally, after his fight with Tinker, he is totally dejected because he realizes that he can neither preach nor meet his own

expectations of being a "better person." In his conversation with his father, he begins to understand his own emotions and feelings, he sees that he needs to have a more realistic appraisal of his own capabilities, and he begins to resolve his own emotional conflicts and guilt feelings. Similarly, when Elizabeth's cricket collection gets loose and when her brother leaves home she begins to understand and to adopt the perspective of her siblings and to become concerned for the feelings and values of her family. She understands her sister's objections to the insects in the house and their need for her help with the household chores, and she becomes sympathetic and empathetic to the difficulties her brother is experiencing.

The conflict between Elizabeth and Jim Bob concerning the difference between religion and science also provides them the opportunity to resolve their dispute and to understand each other's feelings and behaviors. During one argument with Elizabeth, Jim Bob displays a rare bit of insight. Most of his attention has been focused on sin and repentance which reflects his own feelings of inadequacy and guilt concerning the family's tribulations. His perception seems to change, however, when he tells his sister she ought to let her bugs free. He says, "Insects were made for fields, not for bottles. Would you be happy in a jar?" Later, she finds a luna moth in her trap, but she is disappointed and hurt when she realizes it is dead.

She tells Mary Ellen, "Maybe Jim Bob was right. Living things shouldn't be kept in jars." After Jim Bob leaves home she finds him sitting near a pond and she attempts to console him; she says, "You were right about the insects. You can't learn anything from them in jars. You learn so much more studying them in nature. You know I missed you." Freedom for the insects may serve as a metaphor for their own struggle for independence and while they may or may not realize this connection, they at least begin to appreciate each other's difficulties. During the Depression years the family members drew strength from their willingness to share those difficult times and to help each other. From their current difficulties they learn to share a different set of problems and to draw strength from each other by sharing these difficulties.

The moral nature of the resolution seems to be that both children begin to understand their own emotions and motives, and that they both accept their respective roles in the family and the community. In the process both have matured and built upon their shared experience to increase their own sense of autonomy as individuals. They return home and their lives with their family resume or seem to be normalized, although they have been changed by the experience. The turmoil depicted in the episode may be interpreted as typical of the idealism and egocentrism of the adolescent maturational process whereby the children

become socialized into the family and the community. As part of this coming of age process Jim Bob and Elizabeth test parental, sibling, and community pressures and sources of authority. Their search for freedom and autonomy creates turmoil; however, the resolution reestablishes order to the family and brings the family members closer to each other. Jim Bob's changed perspective of himself and his relationship to the family is reflected at the close of the episode when the narrator says, "Although Jim Bob never became a preacher, his deeply religious experience added an important dimension to his life and to his relationship with our father."

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

That there are rich moral/value dimensions in television programing is the basic assumption which motivated the development of this study. The purpose of this dissertation was to discern, describe, and analyze the moral/value dimensions depicted in selected commercial television dramas, and to evaluate the usefulness of two forms of content analysis. These two forms are the Kohlberg schema for moral reasoning and a specially designed moral/value questions schema.

The process of developing the focus of this study was based on several related ideas. The first of these was the conviction that the television medium is an integral part of the American social/cultural experience, and that the medium exerts a variety of influences. Television and its influences have been extensively researched, analyzed, and commented on, but there have been few studies which directly focus on the moral dimensions of television programing. Many prior studies alluded to or dealt with the question as a correlative interest. Those authors who have focused on some elements of the moral/value realm tend to write interpretively rather than presenting

research findings to support their ideas. The interpretive mode may be valuable to provide interesting and informative insight, but it seems that such efforts have failed on at least two counts. First, many writers have presented an argument on a priori conceptions. Secondly, researchers who work in this area lack cohesiveness and thus fail to build a body of common knowledge on the topic. The need for some well-defined methodology and theoretical framework is evident.

Considerable investigation into the topic of moral/value education has been conducted by professional educators. A variety of approaches to the area have been developed, perhaps the most widely known being the theory of cognitive moral development constructed by Lawrence Kohlberg. Members of the education community have focused their attention on the television medium as an influence to either hinder or assist their professional efforts. For example, the producers of Sesame Street adapted advertising production techniques. Ryan's (1976) analysis demonstrated that it is possible to employ Kohlberg's schema to analyze the moral/value content of television programs, and to suggest that such an endeavor might be useful to pursue. The study presented here is an extension and refinement of this proposal.

A final idea on which this study focused was inspired by Comstock (1975b) who suggested that a great number of

quantitative studies on television have been conducted, and perhaps now was an opportune time to seek some other means to study this medium. His suggestion did not imply that prior quantitative studies had been futile, but rather that such studies had inherent limitations, that the use of these procedures for further research in the area might not lead to substantive gains in knowledge about the topic, and that perhaps some new approaches to the topic would be appropriate to gain additional insight into the nature of the phenomenon. The nature of the moral/value dimensions of television programs is one such appropriate concern.

In the first chapter I suggested that there are implicit and explicit moral messages in both television programing and the school experience, and that both institutions exert an influence on the moral/value perceptions of their respective clientele. Since both institutions inherently contain similar messages and exert similar influences, it seemed reasonable to utilize some concepts which had found favor in the educational community to study the television phenomenon. Chapter I was a summary of some of the empirical studies and interpretive writings in the television literature. The former group included those studies which addressed the topic as a correlative interest, and the latter group may be

described as individual perceptions rather than well formulated procedures within a coherent theoretical framework. Both groups support the contention that television programing does contain a moral/value dimension, and imply that further research in this area is appropriate.

Chapter II was designed to accomplish two goals. First, a general discussion of the underlying assumptions of the various appropriate methodologies for such an inquiry was presented. More specifically, I chose the content analysis methodology which has been successfully utilized in a variety of social science and communication research applications. This approach provided a fairly sophisticated set of assumptions and a theoretical framework for the type of analysis undertaken in this dissertation. Content analysis is a generic form of research which requires the establishment of specific categories in which data may be coded. The Kohlberg schema provides one such set of categories, but is limited to analyses of moral reasoning judgments. Therefore, complementary categories were utilized and Lofland's modes and foci provided an approach. A series of moral/value questions specially designed for this study was developed to code those factors external to the television characters which influenced their behavior, to define the moral/value nature of the conflicts/dilemmas, and the generator and moral nature of the resolutions. The second part of the

chapter presented a rationale for, and the results of, a methodology employed to conduct two studies. These verified the proper application of the Kohlberg schema and the moral/value questions applied to the three episodes analyzed.

Chapter III contained three case studies of selected episodes of The Paper Chase, Little House on the Prairie, and The Waltons. A summary of the episode events preceded the Kohlberg analysis and the moral/value questions analysis. Although these last two sections were presented separately, it is important to note that this format was adopted as an organizational device, and that these analyses were interrelated and supported the general conclusions.

The remainder of Chapter IV is presented in three parts. A discussion of the principal findings and discussion of the case studies is presented in the next section. An evaluation of the content analysis methodology, the Kohlberg schema, and the specially designed moral/value questions includes a discussion of the implications of this project for television producers/writers, parents, and members of the educational community in their respective personal and professional areas of concern. Some suggestions for future research precede the final section of the chapter in which I discuss my reactions to the process of writing this dissertation.

Conclusions and Discussion of the Study

The purpose underlying this dissertation was to discern some of the moral/value dimensions depicted in commercial television, and to evaluate the Kohlberg schema and the specially constructed moral/value questions as useful and effective forms of content analysis. The case studies presented in Chapter III demonstrated their application. There was no intention to generalize the results of this study to all of television drama. In this section I will present some general comments about the qualities of moral/value dimensions which do exist in these episodes according to the results garnered from the application of the two schemas. Some of these ideas were mentioned or alluded to in Chapter III and are elaborated here.

As anticipated, differences among the moral reasoning stages were demonstrated by various characters in these episodes. Most characters reasoned at the conventional level, particularly at stage three; and, few lines of dialogue may be classified as either stage one or stage six reasoning. In each episode there was one person who may be characterized as a "moral teacher." He is the individual who defines right behavior. Although these individuals demonstrated reasoning levels higher than other characters, there is no consistency in reasoning levels across episodes, e.g., Charles Kingsfield at stage

six, Adam Kendall at stage four-B and five, and John Walton at stage four-B. Significantly, these characters do demonstrate the higher stages and cluster at or near the postconventional level.

These differences may be the result of the script writers' perceptions of how these characters ought to respond to other persons in the episode, and can be seen as evidence of significant sensitivity on their part. In each episode there is at least one character who is the center of the conflict/controversy, and the moral teacher must reason at a higher stage than this individual if he is to influence the outcome. For example, Liz Logan is the central character in the episode of The Paper Chase, and her global score is stage four-B. As a moral teacher, Kingsfield demonstrates stage-six reasoning. Similarly, Jim Bob is the central character in The Waltons episode. His global score is in transition between stages two and three. His father, John Walton's score is stage four-B. It is important to note that Kohlberg has suggested that moral growth is initiated through exposure to the next higher stage of moral reasoning; i.e.,an individual at stage two can understand and develop his moral reasoning capacity if exposed to stage-three reasoning. Moral growth will not occur if the individual is subjected to reasoning several stages above his own, however. For example, an individual at stage two will not comprehend the individual

who reasons at stage six, and there will be no growth of moral reasoning capability in such an exchange. In The Paper Chase, Carley, who reasons at stage two, and Kingsfield, at stage six, have no scenes or exchanges. It is difficult to imagine what they would say to each other if they did meet since their ideas, perceptions, and modes of behavior are so different. If the writers knew of Kohlberg's principle of "next higher stage" is speculation; their understanding of the idea was evident in all three episodes, however.

A second similarity among these three episodes concerns the nature of the conflicts/dilemmas and the nature of the outcomes. In all three episodes there is a conflict. These conflicts are not basic differences in beliefs or ideologies, but rather differences in perceptions of appropriate outcomes. For example, in The Paper Chase there is no disagreement among the characters concerning the role of women in the society, a question of a moral nature. Rather, the conflict develops from an individual's failure to demonstrate espoused beliefs. Similarly, the conflict in The Little House on the Prairie does not center on the question of winning or that competition is appropriate. Both social groups, the farmers and the townspeople, accept the football game as an opportunity to succeed. In this episode there is a confused moral message since both sides use essentially questionable tactics,

and the writers have failed to comment on these occurrences.

A third similarity evident in these episodes relates to Kohlberg's principle that individuals will experience cognitive moral growth. In each episode at least one individual is in a transition period between stages, and the resolution of their dilemma is evidence of increased moral reasoning capacity. For example, Jim Bob Walton and Tom's father make a transition from stage two to stage three. Significantly, some major characters make no such transition, however. For example, Albert, the central protagonist, and Tom, about whom the story evolves in The Little House on the Prairie, experience no change in their reasoning capacities.

An important and related area of concern which I have attempted to address in parts of Chapter III, but which is not strictly evident from either analytic mode utilized in this research, is the question of the implicit value dimensions in television drama. As a generic term the implicit dimension may be generally defined as those ideas and messages which transcend the actual content of the message (Dreeben, 1967; Nystrom, 1975). In these case studies there are several moral/value judgments which are accepted without question by the characters. For example, a moral value judgment reflected by Albert in The Little House on the Prairie and by Liz Logan and her fellow

classmates in The Paper Chase concerns the value of achieving success in terms of both monetary accumulation and social position. They both accept a definition of success in these terms, and the necessity for individual effort to achieve these goals.

In addition to the acceptance of these values by the characters, there are also dimensions contained in the nature of the dilemmas developed by the episode writers, and the accepted means the characters use to resolve the dilemmas. For example, it seems that many times the writers require their characters to overcome some type of adversity to resolve their dilemma. Although this plot structure seems obvious as an integral part of developing a drama, the important point is that the characters always do overcome the adversity, usually through hard work or determination, and do successfully resolve the dilemma. Tom and his father accept Tom's blindness and mend their estrangement. Tom is able to overcome an act of fate over which he has no control, his blindness, and through hard work and determination prove his self-worth as an individual to himself and his father. In The Paper Chase there is a confused implicit message. Liz Logan and her fellow demonstrators mount a massive campaign and through hard work and determination assert themselves to accomplish their goal. The conflict in the implicit message is that success is achieved through the efforts of Kingsfield

to create a quiet atmosphere for discourse, and the willingness of the adversaries to meet and resolve their conflict. The conflict in the implicit dimension seems to indicate that hard work and determination are not appropriate means to resolve the dilemma, but rather that the situation may be resolved through quiet, reasonable discourse. A similar message is found in The Waltons when John takes advantage of a quiet setting and through examination of ideas and a warm, supportive relationship helps Jim Bob to examine his motives and resolve his difficulties. In addition to the nature of the values accepted by the characters, the second implicit dimension relates to the means the characters use to resolve the dilemmas.

The third area of implicit dimension relates to the outcome of the conflict/dilemma. Irrespective of the means employed or the values accepted, the important notion is that script writers always seem to contrive to resolve the dilemma in accord with some acceptable outcome. The outcome is always positive and optimistic. The series writers not only establish the dilemmas, but they also distinguish the "good guys from the bad guys." They contrive to win the viewers' sympathy for the good guys and then manipulate events to insure that these characters succeed. There seems to be an unwritten rule in television that the good guys will overcome adversity through hard work and determination or through some acceptable means,

and the dilemma conflict will be resolved in accordance with some optimistic positive outcome.

This need to resolve the conflict on an optimistic/positive note may force the episode writers to rely on either some contrived or simplified means to resolve the dilemma, and thus miss an important concern. For example, as discussed in Chapter III, neither Charles Ingalls nor Adam Kendall comments on or evaluates the nefarious schemes concocted by Albert to influence the outcome of the game and win his wager. As mentor figures their failure to address this means/ends issue must be deemed a crucial failure on the part of the episode writers to address the serious moral/value issue which they have raised. Also, the final play of the game, the "first forward pass of a human" may be described as a deus ex machina. It is a contrived means to win the game and, although the viewer may cheer Albert's ingenuity, the likelihood that such an outcome would be possible is highly unlikely. The writers have relied on an improbable device to assure the outcome of the game, and have failed to address a serious moral/value question in an effort to serve their need to appropriately resolve the dilemma. The judgments, the nature of the dilemmas, the means to resolve them, and the final outcomes are implicit dimensions which may be analyzed in terms of acceptable values for

the viewers and, it may be argued, address some notion of the values held by the viewers.

Evaluation of the Content Analysis Methodology

Content analysis is a generic description of a methodological approach to examine the content of a communication. It is a qualitative approach which permits the researcher to determine the characteristics of a phenomenon, the form it assumes, and the variations it displays. The approach allows the researcher to discern and describe the phenomenon. The outcomes, by which I mean the usefulness of the results, are the understanding and insight it affords. This insight is particularly useful in that it will assist interested individuals in a variety of applications and policy considerations in their respective personal and professional areas of concern. These individuals include parents, educators, and television producers and script writers.

The purpose of the following discussion is to evaluate the content analysis methodology, and more specifically the two-code schema used in this study, in terms of its ease of application and the usefulness of the insight garnered from the results. The primary advantage of the content analysis methodology is that it serves the user as a language of inquiry to focus the exploration. The questions ought to be sufficiently specific to direct the

researcher to those qualities or elements for which he is searching. If the questions lead to the elements, then the elements ought to be valuable and useful tools of analysis, and serve as a foundation upon which to draw inferences about the significance of the phenomenon to a particular area of concern. The mode has a dual advantage. It is heuristic in that it provides a direction for the exploration, and at the same time it is empirical in that it provides a measurement standard which can be used by several researchers to examine the phenomenon, and in turn build on the body of knowledge about the concern.

This methodology does not provide the precise tools or language of inquiry against which to discern data and draw comparisons, but it does require the establishment of a coding system to categorize the content. The three level/six stage moral reasoning schema developed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1978) was used to categorize reasoning judgments. A moral/value questions schema was specially designed for this study to categorize those factors and relationships external to the characters which influenced their behavior, to describe the generator of the dilemma/conflict, and to interpret the moral nature of the resolution. The coding schemas are valuable because, as evidenced in the case studies in Chapter III, they do provide useful information and insight. It is important to note that these two do not exhaust the possible schema which might be used,

however. In fact, I prefer to consider them as part of a repertoire of tools that could be used to either refine the moral/value questions or to develop other coding schemas.

My general conclusion is that while these two schemas provided useful and informative insight into the moral dimensions of television programs, the study also identified significant differences. Used concurrently the two schemas provided considerable insight into the moral/value dimensions of television programing, but in a sense the major strengths of each schema also reflected some of its important limitations. The primary strength was that both were sufficiently detailed to provide significant insight into specific moral dimensions. But scope of the analysis in each schema was by definition limited. This factor was particularly evident in the use of the Kohlberg schema. As discussed earlier, Kohlberg had established that his schema was limited to analyses of judgments, and it may not be used to consider either behaviors or external factors which influence behavior. The moral/value questions were similarly defined. They did not provide the tools to discern either the implicit moral dimensions, discussed earlier, or to examine the inherent nature of the medium and the structures of episodes which influence the viewers' perceptions. As a language of inquiry, each schema provided considerable depth of insight into its respective area, but this strength may also be considered a weakness since

their foci was narrow, and thus may have failed to provide important information which might influence more complex interpretation.

The Kohlberg Schema

The use of the Kohlberg schema of moral reasoning in the study demonstrated both advantages and disadvantages as a useful and effective tool to examine the moral/value dimensions of television drama. Considerable effort was expended to refine and elaborate both the Kohlberg theoretical framework and the specific definitions of its categories. Therefore, it was useful to this application in that it was a self-contained, well-defined, specific coding schema.

As reported in Chapter III, the schema proved useful in distinguishing differences among the reasoning stages of the characters. In addition to identifying the nature of the dilemmas, it was also helpful in identifying the quality of reasoning of the moral teachers who prescribed appropriate behaviors and values and who served to guide the other characters to a satisfactory resolution of the conflicts. Significantly, the schema focused attention on the concept of transitional development, i.e., on people in the process of advancing their stage of moral development. This helped to indicate both moral growth and how this growth became the basis for the resolution of the moral dilemmas.

The use of the schema in this type of analysis requires the researcher to accept the assumptions underlying the schema as a true reflection of the reality of different modes of reasoning. A considerable body of research has been conducted by Kohlberg and his followers in attempts to support the schema. There have been some criticisms leveled at the theory, however. Part of this criticism rests on the fact that the schema is designed to examine levels of reasoning, and specifically avoids those factors and occurrences external to the individual which might influence the decision-making process. Furthermore, the development of the schema has generally focused on moral/value questions relating to the concept of justice. It is probably true that most television drama is based on the resolution of some type of conflict, and that these conflicts might be considered in moral/value terms. It is probably not possible, however, to consider all dilemmas in terms relating to the concept of justice. Although Kohlberg's schema is not limited to questions of justice, the majority of his support for the schema has been centered in this area. I am suggesting that the schema may be somewhat less robust in other areas of moral/value dimensions, and as a consequence may fail as a useful device to discern some dimensions depicted. For example, the question of justice in the episode of The Paper Chase was eminently obvious in Kohlbergian terms, particularly since this program relies on

the legal definition of justice. It was less obvious and direct in the means/ends question raised in the episode of Little House on the Prairie, and seems to be completely absent in The Waltons episode. I am not suggesting that the moral/value dimension in these latter episodes was more difficult to discern using the Kohlberg schema, but rather that since development of the Kohlberg schema has relied heavily on the justice concept, it may prove not to be equally sensitive to all moral values depicted in television drama.

A closely related difficulty in the application of the Kohlberg schema involves the fact that the schema was designed to categorize levels of moral reasoning. That television drama may generally be associated with the development and resolution of conflict, and that a moral dilemma also is associated with the development and resolution of conflict does not support the contention that the resolution of dilemmas could be or is resolved in strictly rational terms. That is, the Kohlberg schema is limited to the examination of rational thinking, whereas television drama often includes many nonrational factors such as emotions, family ties, pressures and factors external to the particular character, which act to influence both his thinking and his behavior. This latter point is important since the nature of the television medium

requires that the drama contain depictions of behavior as an integral part of the episode.

Television depicts action and behavior. Kohlberg has specified that his schema be limited to an examination of the rationalization process, and he carefully warns against attempts to analyze behaviors according to his schema. This stricture was particularly evident and proved especially difficult in the attempt to analyze the reasoning level of Professor Charles Kingsfield in the episode of The Paper Chase. So much of the professor's character in this episode was revealed through his facial expressions, his noncommital response to other characters, and his behaviors in particular situations, that it was difficult to find specific lines of dialogue which would serve to code his level of reasoning.

Lastly, there is an inherent weakness in the use of the Kohlberg schema for this type of study simply because the schema itself and its underlying assumptions and theory are quite complex. Ironically, the strongest appeal of the schema, its seemingly well-defined categorization system, may prove to be its greatest weakness in an attempt to apply it. These complexities made for subtle and informative interpretations, but they made its application difficult which would limit its use as a readily and generally adaptable common language of inquiry. However, it may be possible to simplify the schema for broader use

without doing harm to the integrity of the theory. For example, parents and educators could use levels of reasoning rather than the more specific stages of reasoning.

For television script writers, knowledge of the Kohlberg schema would provide a useful device to assist their development of characters' reasoning. For example, in an episode of Family, which was not reported here, there are two related plots, each involving one of two sisters. The elder sister, who is in her late twenties, has accepted a new job and is struggling to gain acceptance by her fellow workers; the younger sister, who is sixteen, is trying to be accepted by the football cheerleading squad as a route to popularity and acceptance by her peers. Both girls are subjected to unwanted sexual advances, the elder by her new boss and the younger by a boyfriend. Essentially their social status and their moral dilemmas are exactly the same. The younger sister demonstrates both stage-two and stage-three reasoning, whereas the older sister demonstrates both stage-four and stage-five reasoning. At the conclusion, both sisters satisfactorily resolve their respective dilemmas utilizing the higher stage of moral reasoning, and by implication, both girls have advanced to a global score at the higher stage. This episode is particularly interesting in terms of the Kohlberg schema for it demonstrates two essentially different stages of reasoning which deal with essentially the same

problem. The outcome is based on a single Kohlbergian notion of the process of development in the hierarchy of reasoning capabilities. It is speculation to wonder if the script writer was knowledgeable of the schema or if he used it to develop his plot. One wonders, moreover, if a writer would be able to effectively use such a complex system deliberately and systematically.

Moral/Value Questions

While the Kohlberg schema focused on the rational, verbal behavior of the characters, the moral/value questions focused on their emotional interactions and behaviors. Television drama is developed from conflicts among characters, their relationships, interactions, and behaviors. Since these categories were specifically designed for this study, the primary strength of the moral/value questions is that they were attuned to these facets, thereby providing a complementary framework for the Kohlberg schema.

As reported in Chapter III each of the three categories of questions was useful in distinguishing the moral/value dimensions, particularly as these dimensions were affected by the behaviors and relationships of the characters. The characters and relationships category was useful in establishing some of the underlying themes and factors which influenced both the development of the dilemmas and appropriate means to effect their resolution. For example,

the law school setting in the The Paper Chase, and the transition period after the Depression years in The Waltons were significant elements in the plot developments and the characters' responses to the conflicts. Similarly, the relationships question established ties--e.g., between Tom and Jim Bob and their fathers--and conflicts--e.g., the males versus the females in The Paper Chase, and the farmers and townspeople in The Little House on the Prairie--among the characters, affected both the establishment and resolution of the conflicts.

The moral/value dimensions questions also provided a useful focus to help further define the values and nature of the conflicts, e.g., the autonomy-versus-dependency conflict in The Waltons. Finally, the generator of the moral nature of the resolution questions specifically identified the causes of the dilemmas and qualitatively defined their outcomes. The dimensions and resolution categories provided useful insight into the nature of the issues and appropriate approaches to their resolution. Also, these questions provided suggestive evidence that the nature of the outcomes is a reflection of the moral/values, either expressed or implied by the characters, of the script writers' perceptions of the values held by the viewers.

A major difficulty encountered in the application of the moral/value questions was naming or defining the

particular values held by the various characters, whereas it was relatively simple to describe the categories of persons and their behavior. In Lofland's terms, the static analyses of acts, activities, meanings, and relationships was rather straightforward since it was generally a process of describing. There was no difficulty, for example, in segregating the students from the professors in the episode of The Paper Chase or the townspeople from the farmers in Little House on the Prairie. The analysis of these persons' behaviors (acts, activities), their status among each other (relationships), and the responses (meanings) to a given situation or the behavior of the other characters was a definitional task, and it was not particularly difficult to choose the terms which seemed to adequately convey or describe the action and content of the drama.

There were two separate difficulties encountered in the application of the phase analysis. Phase analysis requires the researcher to discern stages through which the characters exist or pass in the process of culminating particular activities. Additionally, the researcher needs to focus on the meanings and relationship categories. In the former category the generator of the moral resolution was generally a descriptive process. The events which motivated the dilemma and its resolution were evident. For example, in the episode of The Waltons, Jim Bob's

accident under his car set off the chain of events, and his fight with Tinker and final conversation with his father were the events which helped him to understand his own motivations for his behavior. Similarly, Tom's blindness and the final football game in the episode of Little House on the Prairie initiated the dilemma and helped Tom and his father to understand their motivations/behaviors and to resolve the estrangement in their relationship. All of these characters made some change in their perceptions based on the events of the episode. The process of describing the stages through which the characters exist and pass was a straightforward matter of definition.

The meanings and relationships portion of the phase analysis was difficult in terms of adequately defining the nature of the phenomenon in terms of moral/value dimensions. The difficulties in executing this portion of the analysis were threefold. First, there was the difficulty of choosing terms to adequately define the resolution. Second, the more I thought about the resolution the more complex it became for I continually found more interpretations for the causes of the outcomes, the meanings of the resolutions, and the reasons for the characters' responses in the various situations. In several instances the resolution was ambiguous, allowing for different and contradictory conclusions. For example, at the conclusion of The Paper Chase the viewer sees Liz Logan dancing with Justice Reynolds.

It is not clear if they resolved their differences and appreciated each other's position, or if there was a sexual domination by the male leading the female in the dance. In this case, did Logan succumb to the force of Reynolds' personality or his reasoning? In the conclusion of The Waltons did Jim Bob gain additional insight into his own cognitive and emotional growth? Or did he succumb to the values of his family and community and, through a process of conforming to these socializing influences, abandon his individual personality and desires; and, as a result relinquish his position as a separate individual and conform as a member of the group? These are only two possible interpretations of these episodes. The important point here is that several interpretations were possible which created the third difficulty. As each possible interpretation was developed it became evident that it would be possible to reinterpret the preceding analysis to support the new interpretation. That is, as I completed the final portion of the analysis I found it necessary to reevaluate the entire analysis in light of these possible interpretations. For each episode I chose the interpretation which seemed to possess the strongest evidence.

It is now obvious that the moral/value questions provide useful insight into some of the moral/value dimensions of television drama, but it is also obvious that the questions also limited the analysis. They were limited

to behaviors and events and they did not focus on those dramatic devices which also serve as an integral part of the value dimensions. Among others, the use of music was often used to convey some element of characterization which reflected on the values expressed by the characters. For example, in the episode of The Waltons after Cora Beth Godsey broke the heel of her shoe she is shown walking home, her back held straight and her head held high as she attempts to maintain her dignity which definitely had been ruffled when Jim Bob narrowly missed hitting her with his automobile. Her decorum is obviously upset by her need to limp on a broken shoe heel. As she limps along, the music, a march-like theme, hits a sour off-key note on each limp. The effect is ludicrous and obviously ridicules her attempt to maintain her dignity. The device, in addition to ridiculing Cora Beth, also serves to demean her position in the community, and those community held values which she represents to the viewer.

Similarly, the setting of particular scenes in the episodes was a dramatic device which exerted some influence on the moral dimensions, and which was not immediately evident from the content questions. For example, the law school setting in the episode of The Paper Chase evidenced the characters' concern with the legal aspects of the dilemma raised; however, in The Waltons episode John and Jim Bob have their final conversation sitting near a small

stream and in The Little House on the Prairie episode several scenes are set against a pastoral background. In these latter two instances there is a contrast developed between the pastoral setting and the city life depicted in these two episodes. In both cases the characters are able to begin to resolve their dilemmas in the pastoral setting. The unspoken assumption here is that the quality of the setting is somehow superior to the city existence in that the characters can find peace and their individuality away from the pressures and hectic pace of the city. That this conclusion was not immediately obvious from the content question of the setting may have been the result of my own lack of anticipation that such a result might be possible,or that the question itself was not clearly defined.

Schemas like the moral/value questions developed for this dissertation may prove useful to television script writers on a practical level. Since television is a commercial medium, producers and writers seem to be particularly concerned with developing programs that appeal to viewers. The selection of dramatic themes and social issues is one area in which the moral/value questions may prove helpful. Similarly, script writers ought to be concerned with the moral messages that their dramas may communicate. For example, at the conclusion of The Little House on the Prairie episode,the Winoka Warriors win the football game. The writers have obviously slanted their

presentation to encourage the viewer to expect this result. It is interesting to speculate how the writers would have dealt with the outcome if the team had lost, particularly in terms of the moral lessons to be learned. We as viewers have come to accept the homily that effort leads to success even though this is not always the outcome. Losing the football game would have provided the moral teachers, Kendall and Ingalls, the opportunity to examine an entirely different set of values. Parents who watch with their children might also raise this question, engaging their children in a discussion of the possibilities and importance of outcomes different from the ones presented.

A third possible use of such schemas, and the one I personally favor, is directly related to the original purpose underlying this dissertation. I believe that television programs are rich in moral content, and therefore it is important for educators and the public to be sensitive to this content. I believe educators ought to open dialogues with their students, parents, and persons in the medium to make them aware of the existence of the moral/value dimensions inherent in programing, to allow students to critize and evaluate the presentations of the dilemmas, and finally and most importantly, to discover how these depictions influence their own perceptions of moral/value dilemmas, suitable methods to deal with these dilemmas, and to judge the appropriateness of their resolutions. This

approach is obviously limited to persons possessing the intellectual capacity to deal with these types of questions, but for the educator it is, I believe, a worthwhile endeavor.

The insight provided and the difficulties encountered in the application of the moral/value questions may be the result of several factors. Primary among these is the quality of the questions themselves. They were developed specifically for this study, and the more I worked with them the more obvious it became that they are quite unsophisticated in comparison to the well defined Kohlberg schema. This primary weakness, the ambiguity of the questions, may be their greatest strength, however. They were designed to serve as a language of inquiry, a means to focus the exploration. In addition to providing the insight for which they were designed, they also raised some additional questions and areas of concern. I think that as a model for investigation in this area their ambiguity may prove most valuable for they allow a richness of interpretation. For example, their application in this study highlighted a number of issues which are inherent in the content of commercial television, and which affect the moral qualities of programing.

These qualities of the medium include, among others, the time and space limits imposed on the development of the television drama by the medium itself. For example, the sixty-minute episode per se limits the time available

to the series writers to develop both character and plot. As a result both character development and plot complexity must be limited to those essential elements necessary to establish the conflict and to effect the resolution. Similarly, the space limitation and television screen size also influenced the analysis. Depictions of interactions between characters were usually limited to two persons and many of the picturizations/shots were close-up photographs of the head and shoulders. These interactions and foci may assist the television director to depict the actions and responses s/he believes appropriate to develop the plot; however, this dramatic advantage may be offset for the researcher conducting this type of analysis since the researcher must accept the focus of the director. In fact, it might be more advantageous to turn his attention in a given situation to some other aspect of the scene or some unseen behaviors or responses of a character. The time and space limits also affected the analysis in that the depiction of events was limited to only those occurrences necessary to develop the conflict and to effect its resolution. I was quite surprised to discover that there seemed to be few instances where the action or dialogue, when carefully considered, did not add to the plot development or characterization. For example, in the episode of The Waltons, the relatively short scene between Cora Beth and Elizabeth, when she buys Mason jars at the general store,

not only reveals the values of these two characters, but the comment about entering a jar in the county fair helped to establish the community values which ultimately influenced Jim Bob's behavior at the conclusion of the episode.

One final note concerning the nature of the medium relates to the overall nature of television programing. The programing itself is continuous over many hours and there are several commercial interruptions in each episode. This continuous programing limits viewers' opportunity to reflect on the moral/value dimensions depicted in a particular episode. Secondly, the commercial interruptions not only distract the viewer but they also break the continuity of the plot developments. It was evident that the writers generally develop the plot such that there is some type of unresolved mini-dilemma that provides a "hook" on the viewer. The plot is developed to accommodate the commercial interruptions and to hold the viewer so that s/he does not change channels during the commercial.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are several areas for possible future investigation which might be suggested as an outcome of this dissertation. First, some effort ought to be devoted to elaborate and refine the moral/value questions schema. I am particularly interested in strengthening some definitional terms and theoretical concepts to support these questions.

This need is particularly evident for more clearly stated definitions of the values and the conflicts/dilemmas; e.g., equality, or autonomy versus dependency. These are relatively broad concepts; and, if they are to be used as the labels for a coding system, then it seems appropriate that there should be some definitional guidelines established to assist the researcher to code these values and events. This ambiguity also occurs in the moral nature of the resolution question. As evidenced by the ambiguity of the outcomes of The Paper Chase and The Waltons episodes, it is difficult to exactly specify the resolution. The interpretation of the resolution may be affected by a number of influences including first, the perceptions and orientations of a particular viewer. Second, the script writers, as seems to be the situation in these two episodes, may intentionally construct the outcomes in ambiguous terms and thus leave the interpretation of the outcomes to the viewer.

In addition to the difficulty of precisely specifying the outcome, there is the additional problem of defining the moral nature of the outcome. Given the ambiguities of the resolutions and differences in perceptual orientations, it may not be possible to develop detailed guidelines to determine outcomes. It is possible, however, to develop a repertoire of examples to serve as possible

alternative interpretations if a sufficiently large number of outcomes were analyzed. If this were accomplished it seems that greater clarity for interpretations of the moral nature of the resolution would be possible.

In the same area, it would be helpful if there were some schema to code what I would term "keying elements." These are dramatic devices or plot structures used by the writers which key or transmit a value message to the viewer. Placement of characters in relationship to each other, the settings and the characters' positions within the settings, the focus and composition of the picture, characters' dress, facial expressions, mannerisms, and background music are examples of these types of keying elements which are an inherent part of the medium. When successfully used by the writers these elements not only transmit moods, emotions, and feeling, but they lead the viewer to accept or reject the values expressed by a particular character, and they reinforce the dramatist's moral message.

Another concern which ought to be researched concerns the continuity of moral reasoning levels exhibited by various characters across several episodes in a given series. For example, Charles Kingsfield and Charles Ingalls serve as mentor figures in their respective series. The question is, are they fairly consistent in the moral reasoning levels they display and the means they utilize to resolve dilemmas in different situations? If they are,

is there some consistency in the nature of the outcomes of the various dilemmas/conflicts due to their influence? Or, if they are not, what are the factors which influence a change in their reasoning strategies? Such a study would focus on one or two characters across several episodes of one series. This type of study might show either consistency or variation in problem-solving behavior and reasoning; and more importantly, some kind of consistency of the moral/value standards in the resolution of conflicts/dilemmas or values to which the particular series writers might subscribe as appropriate.

A similar outcome might be garnered from a study of the kinds of moral/value questions depicted in various series which, it might be argued, reflect the moral/value concerns of the viewing public. For example, an episode of the series Family was discarded from analysis in this dissertation because it dealt with the struggles of a female lawyer to gain acceptance as a competent individual irrespective of her sex. Essentially this problem was closely related to Liz Logan's struggle in The Paper Chase. These two programs were broadcast within five weeks of each other, and probably reflect a concern by the program writers for this social question. A study of the types of dilemmas/conflicts presented would address Holsti's (1968) "to whom" and "why" questions to allow the researcher to draw inferences about the audience of a message and the values,

intentions, and strategies of both communicators and audiences. A study of the type and nature of conflicts presented might suggest issues which are currently considered pertinent to viewers. It would also indicate some evaluation of appropriate or acceptable means to resolve conflicts, and the approval of specific outcomes by viewers. This latter suggestion seems particularly interesting as a reflection of socio-cultural standards against which to judge appropriate outcomes as a reflection of basic values held by the society.

A third possible area of study might focus on programs other than those which I have categorized as family dramas. Two studies reported in Chapter I seem to have made attempts in this direction. The Arons and Katsh (1977) examination of the application and practice of Constitutional safeguards depicted in police/crime programs and the Bever, Smith, Bengen, and Johnson (1975) discussion of the believability of advertisements are two examples of these types of studies. With some minor variations in the research approach and focus of the analyses, these two studies are examples of the kind of research which might be adapted to analysis of the moral/value dimensions inherent in these program formats. The authors of these articles attempted to draw some conclusions in this area. Another fertile area for this type of research is television situation comedies. Rabinowitz' (1975) analysis of <u>All in the Family</u>

is one example of the possibilities in this area. Despite the general criticisms often leveled at this format, there are currently being broadcast some comedy series which transcend mindless slapstick, and when carefully analyzed, must be considered fairly intelligent commentary on the American socio-cultural experience. I am suggesting that there probably exist moral/value dimensions in various program formats, and that it would be interesting and productive to conduct research and analyses in these areas.

Personal Statement

My committee chairman suggested that I write an epilogue to this dissertation in which I discuss my reaction to the process of writing the dissertation, and in which I explain the dissertation in terms of its meaning to my own thinking and insight. My initial reaction to this suggestion was less than enthusiastic for I was torn between conflicting requirements. First, I have been constantly aware of the necessity to separate my own emotional response to the topic in favor of the logical, and hopefully, scholarly rigor demanded for the project. Second, these demands have overshadowed the realization that there has been a considerable change in my perceptions about its outcome. These changes are not so much substantive as they are changes in the process of my own thinking. And finally,

this is an important time for me to assess the dissertation in terms of my future and the directions I will pursue.

In the development and writing stages of our discussion about this dissertation my chairman used the metaphor that the dissertation is like a lens. I believe I have come to more fully appreciate this idea. This dissertation is a device which, like a lens, has provided me with one means to look at the topic. It seems to me that in some ways the writing of the dissertation was secondary to the process of preparing to write. That is not to suggest that the writing was particularly easy, yet the preparation time and the development of the approach underwent a considerable metamorphosis. I was surprised to note that most of the background work, the various topic outlines, approaches, and ideas were discarded before I began. The preparation time was spent shaping the lens, whereas the writing served to polish the rough device. Now that the process is complete I feel this personal statement may be useful to me, and perhaps interesting to my reader, as a way to reflect back to discover where it began, how it germinated, came to fruition, and where I am now in my own thinking about the future.

Recently I thumbed through a pictorial history of television and was taken by the realization that I remember most of the earlier programs. Through the years I have

maintained an active mental involvement in what I watch or read. This is, I think, the result of my instinctive interest in the process and development of the communication. I am interested in the actual development of the story, how it begins and evolves and the various elements and factors which influence its conclusion. To me a "good story" is in the telling. I can trace my interest in this process to my earlier school years. My bachelor degree major was history and my minor was radio and television which, on the surface I suppose, might seem an unusual combination. Although I cannot recall having examined my motivation for this choice, other than it suited me, I realize now that the combination was logical in view of my interest.

After graduation I joined the Army for four years. Those were physically demanding and busy years, and when I left the service I realized, particularly during my eighteen months in Vietnam, that I had been separated from changes in American society. I was particularly struck by the realization that I had little access to or time for television, and there seemed to have occurred a considerable change in both the technology and the content of the medium. My absence provided me the opportunity to see television from a fresh viewpoint, and more importantly, I came to realize that the medium has its own perceptions and depictions of reality. I had spent nine months on an information-gathering project which required that I travel to all areas

of Vietnam, yet when I returned home to watch the nightly news reports I realized that I didn't recognize either the war or the country. My perceptions were totally different from what I was seeing on television. These conflicting perceptions brought me to the realization that the medium has its own set of rules. The inherent nature of the medium condenses and shapes time, space, distance, and speed. It is more than a filter which merely screens out certain elements. Rather, the medium treats reality as a malleable entity which it shapes according to its own demands. Unfortunately, most viewers fail to appreciate these rules and accept the medium's depictions. As I think about this I realize that what I am writing now was not clear to me then.

Upon my return to civilian life I decided to pursue a Master's degree in radio and television at Syracuse University. That was an exciting and engrossing period, and I renewed my interest and enthusiasm in the process of developing and producing a communication entity. Yet, when I completed my academic program I had a vague, disquieting feeling that I was missing something. After working for three years in commercial radio I decided to return to school to complete a doctorate. I was not really sure how or what I was pursuing; however, I knew that I was searching for something that I had missed during my studies at Syracuse. Somehow working in the medium which had engrossed

so much of my interest was not satisfying. I entered the School of Education at UNC-G rather than a school of communications. This decision, on the surface, may have appeared either haphazard or inconsistent. My basic interest had not changed; however, in the back of my mind I had the notion that I needed a different perspective or a different approach to my interests.

After seven years of working on my doctoral program, and teaching at a junior college, I have found that "missing something." The piece is, it seems now, simple. I was failing to see beyond the transmitter; my perceptions were limited to the program rather than to the reality of the depictions. My emphasis and concern centered on the aspects of production rather than on the meaning of the content. I had fallen into my own trap of "a good story is in the telling." The telling portions of a television program are those techniques and rules of the medium, whereas the content or reality of the story/program transcends the program itself. A brief explanation will serve to clarify this distinction.

A basic classical communication theory which has often been used to explain the transmission of meaning/reality is that a message originator encodes his meaning, transmits it through a medium, it is received, decoded, and understood. Each of these steps in the communication process has received considerable study. As powerful and compelling as these

studies and theories are, I personally believe that in a very real sense they tend to be sterile if they fail to consider the viewer as a rational and involved being. In this communication model the recipient is seen as a receptacle which receives the communication and responds to it. This idea relates to the difference between an instructor and an educator. An instructor presents content, whereas an educator employs strategies to help students develop the capacity to deal with knowledge. These communication studies have failed, it seems to me, to provide the viewer with practical help to deal with the content of television.

Amazingly enough there is now a movement on the part of the networks to move in this direction. They have been encouraging parents to help their children select programs, to watch with them, and to discuss the programs with their children. There does exist in this suggestion a correlation to the attempt which I have made in this dissertation. The important notion is that these discussions will begin to provide children the opportunity to reflect and examine what they have seen. That discussion promotes understanding is firmly based on accepted educational practice. The missing elements, however, are the tools or frameworks to examine the programs. My own dissertation, I hope, provides one such mode to examine one dimension of programs.

The completion of this dissertation has provided for me a fairly useful device to understand the phenomenon of

television, and to understand my own thinking about the medium. I am surprised to realize now that the dissertation and the tool it provides are not as important to me as the process of developing an understanding of my own work. As I watch television I am aware that my perceptions of the medium have changed. That is not to suggest that I constantly evaluate programs against the schema constructed for this dissertation. I am still actively and rationally involved with what I watch, and I am still interested in the "telling of a good story." The difference, which is the result of this dissertation, is that my own perception has broadened to include the reality beyond the transmitter. Perhaps this is a result of my own growth and perception capabilities. The dissertation is not a conclusion; it is a step along a continuum. I remain tremendously excited about the topic, and believe it is an interest area which I can and will pursue in my future work.

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APPENDIX

SIX STAGES OF MORAL THOUGHT

Level A: Preconventional Level

Stage 1: Heteronomous

Content: Right is blind obedience to rules and authority, avoiding punishment, and not doing physical harm.

a) What is right is to avoid breaking rules backed by punishment, obedience for its own sake, and avoiding physical damage to persons and property.

b) The reasons for doing right are avoidance of punishment and the superior power of authorities.

Social Perspective: Egocentric point of view. Doesn't consider the interest of others or recognize they differ from actor's. Doesn't relate two points of view. Actions are considered physically rather than in terms of psychological interests of others. Confusion of authority's perspective with one's own.

Stage 2: Individualism and Instrumental Purpose and Exchange

Content: Right is serving one's own or other's needs and making fair deals in terms of concrete exchange.

a) What is right is following rules but when it is to someone's immediate interest. Right is acting to meet one's own interests and needs and letting others do the same. Right is also what is fair, that is, what is an equal exchange, a deal, an agreement.

b) The reason for doing right is to serve one's own needs or interests in a world where you have to recognize that other people have their interests, too.

Social Perspective: Concrete individualistic perspective. Separates own interests and points of view from those of authorities and others. Aware everybody has their own interest to pursue and these conflict, so that right

is relative (in the concrete individualistic sense). Integrates or relates conflicting individual interests to one another through instrumental exchange of services, through instrumental need for the other and the other's good will, or through fairness as treating each individual's interest as equal.

Level B: Conventional Level

Stage 3: Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Interpersonal Conformity

Content: The right is playing a good (nice) role, being concerned about the other people and their feelings, keeping loyalty and trust with partners, and being motivated to follow rules and expectations.

a) What is right is living up to what is expected by people close to you or what people generally expect of people in your role as son, sister, friend, etc. "Being good" is important and means having good motives, the showing of concern about others. It also means keeping mutual relationships, maintaining trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude.

b) Reasons for doing right are: 1) the need to be good in your own eyes and those of others, 2) your caring for others, and 3) because if you put yourself in the other guy's place you would want good behavior from the self (Golden Rule).

Social Perspective: Perspective of the individual in relationship to other individuals. Aware of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations which take primacy over individual interests. Relates points of view through the "concrete "Golden Rule," putting yourself in the other person's shoes. Does not consider generalized "system" perspective.

Stage 4: Social System and Conscience

Content: The right is doing one's duty in society, upholding the social order, and the welfare of society or the group.

a) What is right is fulfilling the actual duties to which you have agreed. Laws are to be upheld except in extreme cases where they conflict with other fixed

social duties. Right is also contributing to society, the group, or institution.

b) The reasons for doing right are to keep the institution going as a whole, "what if everyone did it," or self-respect or conscience as meeting one's defined obligations.

Social Perspective: Differentiates societal point of view from interpersonal agreement or motives. Takes the point of view of the system which defines roles and rules. Considers individual relations in terms of place in the system.

B/C: Transitional Level

Stage 4B: Transitional

Content: This level is postconventional but not yet principled.

4(5) Obligation to our conscience orientation. Aware of relativity of different social standards, so orients to personal moral values or conscience. "Conscience," however, is the internalized social standards of Stage 4. One has a duty to follow one's conscience. There may be an objective external moral law expressing the essence of social morality.

4-1/2 Choice is personal and subjective. It is based on emotions and hedonism rather than conscience, since conscience is seen as arbitrary and relative, as are terms like "duty," "morally right," etc.

5(4) Decision is personal and subjective unless it impinges on rights of others. Morality is arbitrary and relative because one has the right to free choice. Rights, however, are bounded by the like rights of others.

Social Perspective: Subjective and "outside of society." The perspective is that of an individual standing outside of his own society and considering himself as an individual making decisions without a generalized commitment or contract with society. One can pick and choose obligations which are defined by particular societies, but one has no principles for such choice.

Level C: Postconventional and Principled Level

Such decisions are generated from rights, values or principles which are (or could be) agreeable to all

individuals composing or creating a society that would have fair and beneficial practices.

Stage 5: Social Contract or Utility and Individual Rights

Content: The right is upholding the basic rights, values, and legal contracts of a society, even when they conflict with the concrete rules and laws of the group.

a) What is right is being aware of the fact that people hold a variety of values and opinions, that most values and rules are relative to your group. These "relative" rules should usually be upheld, however, in the interest of impartiality and because they are the social contract. Some non-relative values and rights like life and liberty, however, must be upheld in any society regardless of majority opinion.

b) Reasons for doing right are, in general, that Stage 5 individuals feel obligated to obey the law because they have made a social contract to make and abide by laws for the good of all and to protect their own rights and the rights of others. They feel that family, friendship, trust, and work obligations are also commitments or contracts they have freely entered into and entail respect for the rights of others. They are concerned that laws and duties be based on rational calculation of overall utility, "the greatest good for the greatest number."

Social Perspective: Prior to society perspective. Perspective of a rational individual aware of values and rights prior to social attachments and contracts. Integrates perspectives by formal mechanisms of agreement, contract, objective impartiality and due process. Considers "moral point of view," "legal point of view," recognizes they conflict and finds it difficult to integrate them.

Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principles

Content: Guidance by universal ethical principles which all humanity should follow.

a) What is right: Stage 6 is guided by self-chosen ethical principles. Particular laws or social agreements are usually valid because they rest on such principles. When laws violate these principles, one acts in accordance with the principle. Principles are universal principles of justice: the equality of

human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons. These are not merely values which are recognized, they are principles used to generate particular decisions.

b) The reason for doing right is that, as a rational person, the Stage 6 individual has seen the validity of principles and has become committed to them.

Social Perspective: Perspective of a "moral point of view" from which social arrangements derive or on which they are grounded. The perspective is that of any rational individual recognizing the nature of morality or the basic moral premise of respect for other persons as ends, not means.

Note: Adapted from Kohlberg, L., Colby, A., Gibbs, J., Speicher-Dubin, B., & Powers, C. Assessing moral stages: A manual Part I (Preliminary ed.). Cambridge: Harvard Univ., July 1978. Pp. 24-28. Copyright by Lawrence Kohlberg, et al. Reprinted by permission.