

comparable to the bed, the wheel and electricity. He points out afterwards that the arrival of television has meant, at least, a fundamental liberation for the rural world. For people in rural areas, television has brought closer what was once a very distant reality.

In the cities, television has an equally positive effect on the man who lives with his family. The author believes that television has a window-like nature, and strange things cannot be expected from it. Television is also, writes Monegal, a weapon used by advertisers and those human beings that detect power. One must look at the current example of Italy with Berlusconi at the head of the state. He used television and managed to make the people believe in him.

The text analyses the informative aspect of television, and compares it with the written press, with the radio, and with books. Despite its influence, if we are limited to television alone, we see one part of reality, but not all of it.

58 **When the Struggle for an Audience Causes Social Alarm**

PERE ORIOL COSTA

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The behaviour of the television networks in response to the Alcàsser killings engendered an important debate on the role that this form of media should play in a democratic society. The author recalls and affirms that despite the alarm caused here at that time, things have not improved in the world of television. The concern is justified in that, according to the statistics, a significant number of people spend all of their free time watching television. “Reality shows” are becoming the central topic of the debates and violent programmes are given priority in programming. In the slots dedicated to the news, the index of violence is not lower, and is aggravated by the fact that the news programmes portray real violence. The density of advertising, an

area where the restrictions are not complied with, is another problem. The author believes that it would be advisable for the Spanish government to create an entity specifically for regulating, monitoring and promoting television, similar to those in existence in France and England. At the European level, the Parliament of Strasbourg is also working along these lines. A High Audio-Visual Council might manage to make low quality television occupy a more marginal position.

67 **Television at the Limit of the Public Interest**

JOSEP GIFREU

The restrictions on a form of media are imposed by the authorities. Political and/or economic authorities, according to the author. He asks what television is. A modern communication technology? An enterprise or economic institution with profit-based imperatives? A basic means of information? If limitations are imposed on certain subjects or areas of conflict, journalists will not go to the front line. They will become inhibited and will wait for the official word.

Television, in the journalist's opinion, is becoming the paradigm of a new structure for the circulation of informational and cultural goods and services. On the perception of the world and social, political and cultural socialisation. Television cannot attack the basic principles of society; it must act with the prior legitimisation of a political debate. It must also be limited to a certain time period and specific circumstances. Certain programmes in particular should be limited in function of the public interest: state security; the protection of children; the right to honour and intimacy; and non-discrimination based on race, religion or gender.

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