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PORTRAYAL OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE MEDIA:

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS

by

David M. Day

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the
Department of Psychology in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the
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Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1984

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to examine the nature of newspaper articles which dealt with the subject of mental illness and mental health and also to identify how this particular medium portrays individuals described or depicted as suffering from a mental or emotional disorder. A total of 103 newspaper articles was selected from the Canadian Newspaper Index. The articles appeared in one of eight major Canadian daily newspapers during the period between January 1, 1977 and May 30, 1984. In addition, a second sample of articles was selected from two psychological journals: Canada's Mental Health, and the newsletter of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Network. This sample comprised the comparison group and was used to evaluate the validity of the content analysis categories. A content analysis procedure was applied to examine the newspaper and journal articles. Two qualities of the articles were assessed: the 'tone' and the 'ideology' reflected in the article. Five variables used to evaluate these qualities served as the dependent variables in the analyses. As well, the articles were categorized on eight descriptive variables including the year of the article, the newspaper or journal in which the article appeared, the tone of the headline, and the theme of the article. These characteristics were included in the analyses to identify the source of variance in the tone and ideology among the articles. The data were analyzed by a series of chi-square tests, t-tests,

Spearman r tests and one-way analyses of variance. Results of the analyses indicated that significantly more critical statements appeared in the newspaper articles than did recommendations (i.e., "positive" statements). This difference was also apparent when the length of the article was taken into account to determine the number of relevant statements per hundred words. Furthermore, significantly more statements which supported a humanistic or community approach to mental health care were found than statements advocating institutionalized mental health care. Again, this difference was apparent when the length of the article was considered in the analyses. Several characteristics of the articles were found to account for some of the variance in tone and ideology. For example, a greater concentration of humanistic statements were found in those articles with a headline rated as 'sympathetic'. As well, a greater concentration of critical statements were made in articles which appeared on the front page than in those appearing elsewhere in the newspaper. These results and others were discussed in terms of the findings of previous research and in terms of the possible effects which a distorted and negative portrayal of the mentally ill and mental illness may have on the formation of public attitudes. It was suggested that the preponderance of critical statements may lead the reader to believe that the mental health care system is itself in a highly critical, negative state. It was further suggested that the lack of recommendations which appear in the

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newspaper offers the reader with few suggestions for reforming the system and with few methods for improving the situation of the mentally ill. In general, few alternatives are presented which will allow the reader to view the system otherwise. The presence of this information has been found to be an important variable affecting the formation of positive attitudes toward mental health concepts (Nunnally, 1961). It would appear that community acceptance and public tolerance can indeed be furthered by the presentation of references to mental illness in the mass media. It is imperative then that such references contain a greater proportion of positive information such as recommendations and statements which support a community approach to mental health care.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A great deal has been written on the impact of the mass media on societal views of various issues such as media violence and pornography and the portrayal of certain ethnic and minority groups including blacks and women. However, considerably less has been written on the depiction of mental illness and the mentally ill in the media.

The present study was undertaken as an exploratory examination of the content of Canadian newspaper articles dealing explicitly with the subject of mental illness. Several reasons for conducting this study are suggested. One obvious reason is that less is known about the media depiction of mental illness than about the depiction of other groups. More importantly, however, as an important social influence, the mass media may have an appreciable effect on how the public perceives the mentally ill and what they understand and know about mental illness.

According to Roberts and Bachen (1981, p. 309), "Almost every dimension of social behavior is at least potentially influenced by mass communication.... Politics, health, prosocial and antisocial behavior, attitudes toward almost every definable group within society, occupational knowledge, education, consumer behavior". The mass media are of particular relevance to the areas of community mental health and community psychology by virtue of the frequency

with which references to mental illness appear in the media and because of the notable influence of mass communication on the formation of public attitudes and opinions.

The impact of the mass media lead McCall and Stocking (1982, p. 986) to admonish psychologists to "...at the very least... recognize the potential of the media", and Gardner and Radel (1978, p. 274) to conclude that "social and behavioral scientists need to be more aware of, and concerned with, the media and its role in influencing human behavior".

It has been suggested that the mass media serve as important sources of public information concerning the mentally ill and related mental health issues (Scheff, 1963; Steadman and Coccozza, 1977). According to Steadman and Coccozza (1977, p. 458), "public perceptions of the criminally insane, as with any group with which they have limited personal contact, are dependent on media coverage".

Indeed, the extent to which media coverage will influence public attitudes will be, in part, a function of the availability of additional or alternate sources of information. Hence, as people generally have few and limited sources of information about mental illness, other than perhaps personal experience, the impact of mass media coverage over the development of public attitudes will be that much more influential.

However, there exists a difficulty inherent in this impact of

mass-communication. While the mass media have the potential to inform and enlighten, by the same token, there is also the insidious danger to do harm by disseminating misleading and erroneous information. According to Kent (1962, p. 520),

Potentially valuable material can be twisted by a tone of contempt or ridicule so that the latter becomes the general effect of the article as a whole. Fallacies presented with what appears to be impartiality easily masquerades as facts. Useful or essentially harmless material can be blown up by taking the expert's words out of context. Helpful information can be trivialized by superficial treatment.

Yet despite the potential of the mass media to influence social behavior and the implications and relevance of this to community psychology and community mental health, psychologists have, by and large, failed to recognize this impact. This negligence is reflected in the paucity of research which exists on the topic of mental illness in the media and the sporadic pace with which the small body of literature has come to public attention:

The remainder of this chapter presents four additional reasons for conducting the present investigation. The chapter is organized into the following headings: (1) Effects of the Mass Media: Some Theoretical Propositions; (2) Incidence of Mental Illness in the Media; (3) Public Awareness of Mental Illness and the Role of the Media; (4) Review of the Relevant Literature. The final section presents various methodological limitations of the previous research which were addressed in the design of the present study.

Effects of the Mass Media: Some Theoretical Propositions

While it is not the intention of the author to present a lengthy review of the effects of the mass media, a few general points need to be asserted in order to clarify various issues to be raised. Perhaps the primary reason that references to mental illness in the media should be of concern to mental health professionals is that effects on society have been demonstrated.

Early studies on the impact of the mass media have indicated the 'powerful' ability of propaganda during wartime on dictating how the public perceived their country, the enemy and the war effort (Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield, 1949; Ellul, 1965). More recently, considerable evidence has demonstrated the effects of the phenomenon known as the 'agenda-setting function' of the media.

According to the literature, the media have a tendency to establish the importance or salience which the public attributes to certain social issues and events. This is achieved through the particular order by which stories are presented in the news. Issues which receive prominent and considerable media coverage will be perceived by the audience as having greater importance while events which are accorded less media attention will be viewed as having less significance. Katz (1980; p. 128) noted that, "...as a latent consequence of telling us what to think about, the agenda-setting effect can sometimes influence what we think".

With respect to information about mental illness, several comments regarding two particular effects of mass communication are in order. First, the literature suggests that the mass media convey to the public conventional rules of behavior which constitute the concept of 'normality' (Kline and Tichenor, 1972; Heibert, Ungurait and Bohn, 1974; Weiss, 1969). McCombs and Becker (1979, p. 107) refer to this as the 'ethnicizing' function in that,

the media define for an individual within the society what is normal and accepted behavior and helps to strengthen society's control on its members. The media reinforce the definition of 'normal' behavior and consequently few members of the society are unaware of the inappropriateness of certain behavior.

In this way, the mass media also function as efficient stabilizers of an established social order. Individuals who do not act in accordance with this 'media-dictated' concept of normality are easily distinguished from those who appear 'normal' and are often ostracized for their non-conforming behavior.

Second, not all information conveyed by the media is automatically absorbed and incorporated into the individual's belief system. Rather, the degree to which an individual will be receptive to a message will be mediated by various intervening variables such as the individual's personal experiences, the nature of the medium, and the existence of preconceived opinions and attitudes.

People are not merely passive recipients of the images, words,

pictures, and sounds emitted from the media. Rather, they employ a highly sensitive and efficient process of selection which enables them to 'tune in' to a message or elect to ignore it. One explanation for this phenomenon holds that this selectivity is the result of

the self-protective human process of selective exposure, selective perception and selective attention. We tend to expose ourselves only to those media that agree with our existing opinions and we tend to avoid media that are unsympathetic to our predispositions (Heibert, Ungurait and Bohn, 1974; p. 59).

While the media serve as rich and vital sources of information about the world, much of this material will ultimately be ignored, forgotten, rejected, or otherwise processed out of the individual's awareness if it conflicts with or fails to confirm information which is already accepted as a part of a belief system.

These demonstrated effects of the mass media give course to reason that since the media influence people's conception of normality they can also alter or influence public perceptions and attitudes towards the mentally ill and mental illness. Furthermore, as the mass media tend to reinforce, and so perpetuate, information already held by the individual about mental illness, prevalent attitudes will continue to receive such reinforcement.

Several studies examining attitudes toward mental illness have asserted that public reaction to the mentally ill remains negative and hostile (Lelman, 1978; Kirk and Therrien, 1975).

According to Kirk and Therrien, for example, "There is a well-established...pattern of public fear, anxiety, and revulsion in response to the mentally ill" (1975, p. 213).

Consequently, if the media portray the mentally ill in a similarly negative and stereotypic manner, according to the mass communication research, these existing attitudes will continue to receive reinforcement from the images presented in the media. Furthermore, media information which does not portray the mentally ill as bizarre, deviant and anxiety-evoking may not result in a restructuring of the individual's perception of the mentally ill.

This issue is becoming of greater importance in the light of advances made in the community mental health movement. Also, because public awareness of mental illness, as with the number of references in the media, both positive and derogatory, has increased in recent years, people will be utilizing this information to a greater extent than ever before.

Incidence of Mental Illness Coverage in the Media

A trend analysis was conducted by Gerbner (1961) to determine changes in the appearance of references to mental illness in the media over an extended period of time. Relevant items appearing in the mass media during the period between 1900 and 1959 were tabulated. The study revealed that the incidence of references was marked by considerable fluctuation, appearing only when the more 'serious' issues such as economic depression or war were

lacking.

Today, the number of references to mental illness appear with greater regularity, increased frequency and in more diverse contexts. References to mental illness not only appear within news stories but also range from the prevalent casual use of pejorative words denoting mental illness, such as, 'crazy', 'looney' or 'imbecile', to the more elaborate: the portrayal of a mentally ill individual in a fiction program on television or the detailed examination of a mental health issue in a television documentary or in an in-depth newspaper or magazine story.

In a trend analysis of the media reported by Nunnally (1961), a total of 438 references to mental illness were found to have appeared on television within an eight year period. These numbers are small relative to the frequency of references cited in more recent studies. Wahl and Roth (1982) noted that, based on a month-long survey, a reference to mental illness appears in one out of every 11 television programs. Extrapolating this figure over the 385 television programs broadcast in one month, it is equivalent to 35 references per month, or 420 references per year. This would indicate that a substantial increase in the number of references to mental illness in the media has indeed occurred.

Further comparisons may be drawn from the observation that the Canadian Newspaper Index, which references articles from eight major Canadian daily newspapers, lists a total of 575 articles

under the heading 'Mental Health' which appeared in the press within a seven and a half year period.

Even when one takes into account the growth of the mass media from 1951 (the first year of the tabulation for the trend analysis reported by Nunnally in 1961) to the present, it is evident that the frequency of media references to mental illness has increased significantly. It would also appear that this trend parallels the surge of public interest in, and public awareness of, the issue of mental illness and mental health.

Public Awareness of Mental Illness and the Role of the Media

Over the past two decades society has experienced a broadening or liberalization of attitudes and perceptions towards controversial and sensitive issues such as sexual freedom, abortion, and the status of women. Topics once considered taboo or improper are now discussed openly and intelligently without fear of censorship or persecution.

So too has the public's concept of mental illness undergone considerable reformation. The 1970s, which have become known as the 'Me Decade', spawned a new and intense interest in popular theories of psychology. Lehman (1978) suggested that the immense popularity of books offering to help people cope with the pressures of modern living may have been a contributing factor to the increase in public attention to mental health issues.

The marked social changes and technological advances made in

recent decades may have also brought about a greater awareness and appreciation for the perhaps precarious balance between mental health and mental illness. As society has become increasingly more complex, patterns of behavior often associated with mental illness, such as anxiety, phobias, and psychosomatic illness, have procured widespread attention. This may be due to an increase in awareness of the susceptibility to stress in our present society and how this may affect our physical and mental well-being.

The work of mental health organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), the Canadian Association for the Welfare of Psychiatric Patients and a group composed of ex-mental patients called On Our Own, have also contributed to the public education of mental health issues. The effort of these organizations has been particularly beneficial in providing the public with information about the community mental health movement; the difficulty which many patients experience upon integrating themselves back into the community and the role of the community to assist these individuals.

As a consequence of the activities of these groups, there appears to have been a subtle trend toward a heightening of attention, interest, and even concern for the mentally ill. The public is becoming aware of the constriction in the personal freedoms of mental patients and the difficulties they may confront in obtaining gainful employment or in renting suitable

accommodation. These are often exacerbated by the lack of available community resources. It was noted by Baron, Rutman and Klaczynska (1980, p. 7) that

Congressional hearings, newspaper exposes and disturbing documentaries have begun to make the broader public acutely aware of the welfare hotels, exploitative board and care homes and inadequate foster placements available to the mentally ill; the disorganized service delivery systems, overwhelmed direct service staff and mystified bureaucracies attempting to provide care outside the hospital walls.

The plight of the mental patient has certainly become recognized by the public as an issue of considerable social relevance and one that can no longer be ignored or left unattended.

To a great extent, the mass media are responsible for bringing this situation to public attention. In the past several years there has been a profusion of articles in the media providing the public with reports and information concerning many relevant issues about mental health and the mentally ill.

In fact, it would not be wholly unreasonable to assert that the media, particularly the newspaper medium, have actively developed or manipulated the subject of mental illness into an issue of social importance as a result of the 'agenda-setting function'. As reports of various mental health issues receive prominent media coverage, so too does the public's interest in these issues become heightened.

However, extensive and in-depth media coverage of a particular

subject may not be considered agenda-setting behavior, exploitative journalism, manipulative, or unwarranted action by the media if the subject of the issue can be defined as 'news' or 'newsworthy', that is, socially relevant and of interest to the public.

A 'media crusade', which refers to a series of articles on one particular issue "often starts with a news story that uncovers an illness in society which the editors feel should be exposed" (Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn, 1974; p. 364). For example, a mental illness crusade may be precipitated by a single incident such as the report of abuse in an institution, or a series of events such as a rash of murders, rapes, or child molestings. Often a newspaper will feature a number of in-depth stories on the treatment of sex offenders in mental institutions and prisons following a series of sex crimes, or several feature items on electroconvulsive therapy in the wake of a news report that a patient was allegedly administered ECT by force in a mental hospital.

In an examination of the newspaper coverage of a murder by alleged mental patient Bayard Peakes, Kobre and Parks (1954; p. 313) provide some insight into the progression of a media crusade;

Recognizing that readers might want more information about this problem (of mental illness) the Times published a special story by Lucy Freeman on the gains made in this country in treating the mentally ill and the need for more funds, personnel and research.

At a later point in the report Kobre and Parks noted that,

"another article tied the Peakes case in with the national problem of the mentally ill." (1954; p. 316).

It is only when reports about mental illness are no longer 'newsworthy' but remain in the media to sustain public attention to inculcate one element or angle of a story into the mind of the public that they become an issue of exploitative and manipulative journalism. This may be done in order to 'sell the news' or perhaps because of a forthcoming political election.

Furthermore, the assertion that the mass media tend to emphasize the bizarre and unusual aspects of mental illness is consistent with the criticism that the media use sensationalism to exploit an event in order to 'sell the news'. Indeed, critics of the media often contend that the public is being entertained at the expense of being informed (McCombs and Becker, 1979).

This issue is of particular relevance to the mentally ill because of the exploitative media coverage of violent crimes such as rapes, murders, and child molestings. The perpetrators of these crimes are often described as "mentally deranged" or as having a history of mental illness. The latter description, regarding a psychiatric history, is of particular harm because it suggests a 'lack of curability' of mental illness (Scheff, 1963).

Several researchers (Scheff, 1963, Steadman and Coccozza, 1977; Steadman and Coccozza, 1978) have postulated that as a result of the sensationalistic media coverage, the public's perception of mental

illness has been equated with violence. Instances of this association appear frequently in the media and can lead to conclusions and gross generalizations that are detrimental to the treatment of the mentally ill in society and are counterproductive to the aims and objectives of the community mental health movement.

For example, a documentary program was aired on a major television network which dealt with the treatment of murderers, and other violent criminals in the United States. The title of the program, Crime and Insanity, was misleading as, in actuality, the show dealt with the subject of mental illness per se only in a cursory manner.¹

An article in the Windsor Star reported, "A baby-faced teenager classified as a severe psychopath may spend the rest of his life in a facility for the criminally insane after drowning a child and attacking two women with an ax and a meat cleaver" (1984, p. A4). The headline of this article stated: "Baby-faced killer found insane". It would seem evident that, as Scheff (1963) asserted, an "ineluctable relationship between mental illness and violence is established through the media (Scheff, 1963; p. 465).

Not only is this belief that the mentally ill are dangerous a prevalent and widely held misconception, but also, it is perhaps

¹Crime and Insanity, aired April 26, 1983, NBC.

the most troublesome to overcome (Wahl, 1976). Any instance in the media of this parallel between mental illness and violence will tend to confirm opinions which are already held by the public and hence will be readily accepted as factual information. This concern for the relationship between the 'violent' myth of the mentally ill and media coverage was succinctly described by the CMHA in the Policy Paper (1981):

The ordinary citizen's impression of mental patients is often a negative one, based on a lack of information and sensational reporting by the media. Two prevalent media images are that people who have had psychiatric treatment are sick and/or dangerous. The 'sickness' image leads the public to believe that people should be kept in hospitals for treatment, and the 'dangerous' myth causes unreasonable fear and mistrust.

There is evidence which supports the contention that the mentally ill are no more likely to commit a crime than anyone else in society. Wahl (1976; p. 8) asserted that, "severe mental illness... is more often characterized by immobilization than by assaultive or even assertive behavior".

Under some conditions it would not be accurate or justifiable to put the brunt of the blame on the media for this negative association. It is not objectionable to report in a news item that a murderer was suffering from paranoid delusions and had been previously hospitalized for mental illness, if this information is factual and relevant to the story. It is when references to mental illness are made only in this negative context that the

violent element of insanity becomes disproportionally represented.

Scheff (1963) remarked that if these negative reports were offset by positive references, this association would not have been so firmly established in the mind of the public. "An item like the following", he notes, "is almost inconceivable":

Mrs. Ralph Jones, an ex-mental patient, was elected president of the Fairview Home and Garden Society at their last meeting last Thursday (p. 465).

If the mass media continue to report a greater number of references associating mental illness with violence and dangerousness, hence exploiting the mentally ill, this activity may be deemed irresponsible journalism. This type of reporting contributes little other than the perpetuation of the cruel and malicious treatment of this group in society. As Scheff suggested, the media should attempt to balance the number of negative references with positive items in order to promote more accepting attitudes towards the mentally ill. However, even Scheff recognized the difficulty involved in altering public perceptions towards the mentally ill; he asserted that these negative attitudes receive continual support not only in the media but in ordinary conversation as well.

One particular news event aptly illustrates how seemingly positive or neutral statements to mental illness may carry negative connotations. During the 1972 presidential campaign it was disclosed to the press that Thomas Eagleton, the running mate of George McGovern, had been previously hospitalized for depression

and had undergone electroconvulsive therapy on several occasions. Eagleton's intention, when he made the remark, was only to be candid with the public concerning his life.

The press, however, were eager to carry the story as little was known about the candidate at that time. It may have been that Eagleton underestimated the significance of the story and of the reaction of the public to it. Altheide (1977) noted that, "Eagleton would not bestow the same meaning on these events" (p. 152). As the campaign progressed, the media clearly steered the issues away from the political and more towards Eagleton's psychiatric history.

Initially, the media attention was objective and straightforward and attempts to malign the candidate for his psychiatric history were not evident. Eventually, the newspapers began to receive letters from a sector of the public concerning the capabilities of an ex-mental patient in the position of Vice-President.

Soon afterwards, editorials appeared in the press calling for the resignation of the candidate. This increase in public opposition and the pressure for Eagleton to resign eventually lead the Democratic Party to drop the candidate from the election. Kreger (1975) noted that it appeared likely that the coverage would affect McGovern's chances of being elected and had damaged the credibility of the Democratic Party.

Despite the fact that, at least initially, a proportion of the media coverage was neutral and unbiased, the public tended to draw

negative connotations from Eagleton's psychiatric history, thereby imposing their own prejudices on the media reports. This example confirms the perhaps immutable preservation of prevalent negative social attitudes, as well as the manner in which these misconceptions may distort or obfuscate the real issues of an event.

Review of the Relevant Literature

Despite the broad implications and relevance of information about mental illness in the media to the field of community psychology, only a few studies have been conducted which examined this issue. Generally, these studies reveal that the mentally ill have been portrayed in a manner that is distorted, stereotypic, and which is conducive to the perpetuation of gross generalizations and misconceptions. Consequently, it was suggested that the effects of these depictions may be detrimental to the mentally ill as they may reinforce negative ideas and images which are likely rooted in fear and ignorance.

The first published study examining the issue of mental illness in the media was conducted as part of a larger project on public attitudes towards the mentally ill (Nunnally, 1961). This research was done over a six-year period and involved an extensive team of social scientists from the areas of communication studies and psychology. The results of their efforts were published in 1961, and today remain a comprehensive collection of mass communication and attitude research.

As part of the project, a content analysis of the mass media was conducted (Taylor, 1957). The content of television, magazines, radio, and newspapers, were analyzed, for a one month period, and any reference to mental illness and the mentally ill was recorded.

Attitudinal ratings to 180 statements about mental illness were subjected to a factor analysis from which ten categories, which correspond to ten 'types' of information relating to the mentally ill, were generated. Examples of these categories are the following: the mentally ill look and act differently; mental illness is induced by some occurrence in the environment; mental illness is of organic origin; and the prognosis for a mental disorder is not good.

The selected media references were then rated in terms of whether the information supported or did not support the ten statements. These data were analyzed with respect to the frequency of items which fit into each of the groups and whether the reference affirmed or denied each category.

Results of the study indicated that the media pictured the mentally ill in a derogatory and distorted manner. In general, the mentally ill were depicted as hopeless, and in need of support and guidance from a stronger individual. The most prevalent notion communicated to the public was that the mentally ill look and act differently.

The portrayal of physically and mentally handicapped people

were examined by Gardner and Radel (1978). These researchers conducted a survey of television programs and newspaper articles for a three-week period. It was reported that, in 100 percent of the references, the mentally ill were depicted as people who were dependent upon the assistance of community services. In contrast, only 33 percent of the physically handicapped were portrayed as in need of community services. Further results concerning the mentally ill as a separate group were not provided in the report.

In general, Gardner and Radel concluded that the stereotyped images depicted in the mass media can only serve to perpetuate widely held misconceptions of the handicapped, thereby reinforcing the barriers imposed by society and hindering the successful integration of this group into the community.

This negative media portrayal may also serve to reinforce negative beliefs that the handicapped may have developed about themselves. The distorted images pictured in the media may easily become internalized by the handicapped, thereby serving to establish a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.

Further conceptions of the portrayal of the mentally ill in the mass media were analyzed by Gerbner (1953). The unique approach adopted by this researcher was an examination of the files of a television network's censorship committee for the period 1951-1958. Results of the analysis revealed that an act of violence such as murder, suicide or kidnapping may be

justified to the censors and rendered permissible for television if the perpetrator of the crime was characterized as mentally incompetent, as acts of violence without adequate justification would not be permitted.

Apparently, characters deemed mentally ill were not to be held responsible for their behavior. Hence, if a character determined to be mentally deranged committed an act of violence or aggression, it would be attributed to their 'disordered mind' rather than viewed as an act of free will or volition.

It was also determined that the casual use of pejorative words and slang expressions connoting mental illness, such as 'nuts', 'crazy', 'idiotic', and 'having loose marbles', was often singled out by the censors for condemnation. This point was clearly made in a memorandum circulated by a television censor, regarding the use of the word 'crazy';

Of course many of us in spontaneous speech use the word and it naturally enough crops up in radio and television scripts. Our feeling is not that it is totally taboo, but that where it is so persistently and often equated with mental and emotional illness, it often approaches being mercilessly tactless. We are trying to discourage this...Let's not have our network in a position of bearing the stigma that we don't know anything about the prevalent problem of mental illness in the country (Gerbner, 1958, p. 302).

Gerbner and Tannenbaum (1962) noted that the use of slang words and phrases with pejorative meanings was also showing clear signs of 'renewed vigour'. Today, for example, derogatory words

and phrases can be frequently found in the media, such as on the successful television program, Barney Miller where the use of negative euphemisms for mental institutions and the mentally ill is prevalent.

Wahl and Roth (1982) had coders rate television characters, determined by the researchers to be mentally ill, on various personality and demographic characteristics. The survey was conducted over a three-month period and used a maximum of 16 coders.

The ratings consisted of 20 adjectives describing the character. These included "active", "confused", "dangerous", "fragile" and "confident". Ten of the adjectives were 'positive' and ten of the items were 'negative'. In addition, information such as age, sex, marital status, and occupation were recorded. The correlation coefficients for the inter-rater reliability of the characteristics were reported to range from .50 to 1.00.

The authors found that television characters designated as mentally ill were rated more often as "active", "confused", and "aggressive" and less likely to be rated as "confident", "poised" and "loyal". The characters were often identified only by their mental illness as they were infrequently assigned an occupation or a family. Wahl and Roth concluded that mentally ill characters tended to be "disenfranchised" from the mainstream of society and were "not part of the usual fabric of home and work" (1982; p. 604).

A review of available studies reveals that a concern with

negative and stereotypic media images is not entirely a North American phenomenon. Studies published in foreign journals such as in France (Koupernick and Lepoutre 1979), Czechoslovakia (Janik and Kubickova, 1976), and Germany (Stumme, 1979) reflect concerns and conclusions similar to those expressed in the North American publications. For example, Janik and Koubickova (1976) remarked that the use of negatively-toned slang words and words with pejorative and criminal connotations were used frequently in the Czechoslovakian press.

Indeed, Nunnally (1961) raised a similar issue concerning the problematic use of words and phrases used in the media in association with mental illness. Nunnally concluded that the terms most often used "bear strong negative connotations" and tend to promote misleading and fallacious information (1961, p. 148).

The content of popular American magazines has also been analyzed to examine the nature of the coverage accorded to mental health issues (Kent, 1963) and to assess the completeness and accuracy of the mental health coverage (Adelson, 1981). Both of these researchers concluded that the portrayal of mental illness and related issues in popular magazines was distorted and did not represent the reality of the situation. Kent (1963), in reaching conclusions confirmed in other studies, determined that certain magazines tended to emphasize sensationalistic elements of psychoses and that they often regarded the mentally ill as 'bizarre'.

Adelson (1981) commented on the overrepresentation of the milder disorders in popular magazines, noting that this was not an accurate reflection of the clinical population of mental disorders. It is of interest to note that the results yielded by Adelson are contrary to those of Taylor (1957) who found that of 41 persons classified as mentally ill, 20 of these were noted to be neurotic and 21 were psychotic, indicating an equivalence in the depiction of milder and severe disorders.

This discrepancy may be the result of actual differences in the nature of the various media forms analyzed in each of the studies. Because of their propensity toward 'popular' stories, personal advice columns and self help items, to which most people could easily relate, magazines may tend to avoid sensationalistic and fear-evoking descriptions of severe disorders. The severe mental disorders are more likely to be identified in newspaper articles and in television fiction programs and news broadcasts.

Limitations of Past Studies

Within this body of literature, several problems with the methodology of the research are suggested. First, studies typically analyzed the content of several forms of media (e.g. television, radio, magazines, and newspapers) from which general statements about the portrayal of mental illness were drawn (e.g. Taylor, 1957; Gerbner and Tannenbaum, 1960; Gardner and Radcl, 1978).

However, evidence from these studies suggests that

appreciable differences exist between the various media forms. These differences may result in a distortion of the conclusions drawn from research which has not taken into account the portrayal of the mentally ill within each of the distinct media presentations. According to Howitt (1982, p. 19), "...it is wrong to conceive the mass media as a single entity".

For example, Gardner and Radel (1978) noted that of 27 television programs which contained a reference to mental illness, only five of these were news programs, three were specials, and 19, or 70 percent, were entertainment programs. Of the 36 newspaper articles that dealt with mental illness, 18 were news stories, 12 were feature stories and six were 'appeals'. That is to say, the predominant context in which references to mental illness appeared was different on television than it was in newspapers.

It would seem that references to mental illness which appear on television are made primarily in entertainment, fictional programs and other 'nonserious' contexts, whereas comparable references appearing in newspapers are primarily of a 'serious' nature, as they appear more frequently in news stories and feature articles. Consequently, conclusions about the overall role of the media in the depiction of mental illness may fail to reflect the differences between television and newspapers. Therefore, more precise information would result from a separate analysis of each media form. This could then be compiled to yield a more accurate

representation of the portrayal of mental illness in the media.

Furthermore, there is evidence which suggests that people do not regard all media presentations alike. For example, studies indicate that people retain more information received from the print media (e.g. magazines, newspapers) than from the broadcast media (e.g. television, radio).

In one study, subjects were exposed to either print media or to broadcast media and subsequently tested on their knowledge of events. It was concluded that, while exposure to all forms of media tended to increase the person's knowledge, "print media usage appears to be much more crucial in explaining differentials in information levels than does broadcast media usage" (Kline and Tichenor, 1972; p. 81). As well, Cumming, Cardinal and Johansen (1981) noted that, "...print is durable while broadcast material is transient, or at least more difficult to recall".

With regard to information about mental illness and mental health, research suggests that people tend to rely more on the print media for information about science, health and social science than on broadcast media (Schramm and Wade, 1967; Kline and Tichenor, 1972; Davison, Boylan and Yu, 1976; McCall and Stocking, 1982). McCall and Shocking (1982, p. 986), citing a study by Caplan, Morrison and Stambaugh (1975), reported that,

In one study of high level bureaucrats in Washington, fully half reported getting job-related social science information from TV and radio, 70 percent from

magazines and 81 percent from newspaper.

It would appear that, because of the differences in the relative impact of the presentation of each media form, information about mental illness conveyed through the newspapers should be of greater concern to both the researcher and the mental health practitioner than mental illness information conveyed through the broadcast media.

Extending this assertion further, it would also be of value to make a distinction between not only the various media forms but also between references within the same media form (i.e., 'serious' versus 'nonserious'). Presumably, people will be less inclined to believe information conveyed in a context perceived as 'nonserious' or fictional, irrespective of the medium, and more likely to accept or believe material conveyed in a context perceived as 'serious' or 'credible'.

In a discussion of the effects of the television documentary program Madness and Medicine, Hussain and Robins (1978) noted that, in reference to Nunnally (1961), "a content analysis of media presentations related to mental health revealed a generally distorted picture of mental health problems. One would expect more from the purported documentary such as Madness and Medicine than the perpetuation of such distortion" (p. 36).² Furthermore,

²Madness and Medicine, aired May 26, 1977, on ABC.

one might also expect more from the television documentary Madness and Medicine than from a fictional program which also depicted a mental health issue.

While this might be the obvious conclusion one would draw with respect to 'serious' references to mental illness, the actual nature and the relative impact of this information is still in need of investigation. It may be that references to mental illness which appear in extensive and in-depth feature stories and television documentaries convey material which is no less a distortion and misrepresentation of reality than information provided in 'nonserious' references and fictional contexts, thereby contributing further to the distortion of the public's perception of mental illness.

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present investigation was to analyze the content of newspaper articles dealing with mental health issues and mental illness to determine

- a) the predominant tone of the articles (i.e., positive, negative, or neutral) with respect to the theme.
- b) the predominant ideology reflected in the articles (i.e., custodianship versus humanism).
- c) the frequency with which certain demographic and personality characteristics appear with regard to mentally ill individuals described or depicted in the article.

The five dependent variables assessing tone and ideology were also examined with respect to the following eight descriptive characteristics of the articles, which served as the independent

variables in the analyses:

- a) the year of the article
- b) the particular newspaper in which the article appeared
- c) the type of article
- d) the author of the article
- e) the theme of the article
- f) the location of the article
- g) the tone of the headline
- h) whether the tone of the headline was judged to be an accurate reflection of the content of the article

It was speculated that variations in the tone and ideology of the articles may be explained, in part, by the various categories or levels of these descriptive characteristics.

The present study was also designed to eliminate certain methodological limitations of the previous research. Essentially, this was achieved by analyzing the content of mental health references which appeared in a 'serious' context only; in a single media form; and in the particular medium which, according to research, is most crucial to the communication of health, science and social science information, that is, the newspaper. As well, the present study provided a more in-depth analysis of references to mental illness than the previous research, which have typically only examined the depiction of mentally ill individuals described in the media.

Finally, an important objective of the investigation was to compare the findings of the present study, wherever relevant, with results of the previous research. It is of interest to know whether relevant changes in the nature of the references made to

mental illness in the mass media have occurred in the past 20 years.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Method for Sampling Articles

A sample of 103 newspaper articles was selected from a total of 575 articles referenced in the Canadian Newspaper Index (CNI) under the heading 'Mental Health'. The articles appeared during the period between January 1, 1977 and May 30, 1984 in one of the following Canadian newspapers: Vancouver Sun, Calgary Herald, Winnipeg Free Press, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Montreal Gazette, Montreal Star, and the Halifax Chronicle Herald.

Approximately 20 percent of the articles listed in the CNI under this heading were selected for inclusion in the study. This was accomplished by selecting every fifth article beginning at the top of the list for each of the eight years until the required number was selected.

An article was excluded from the sample if it appeared, from the headline indicated in the CNI, that it was not relevant to the subject of this investigation. Articles that were excluded dealt with alcoholism, Alzheimer's Disease and mental retardation. If an article was determined not to be suitable for the sample, the nearest acceptable article downward from that point was selected in its place.

The CNI was chosen as the source of articles for the analysis for several reasons. First, as the CNI references articles under

general headings, including 'Mental Health', it provided a convenient means of selecting a suitably large sample of articles in a systematic manner that dealt explicitly with the subject of mental illness. Moreover, the CNI is an index of newspaper articles culled from eight major newspapers from across the country. The sample was selected, then, from a broad geographical area rather than from one particular city, region or province.

A third reason for accessing articles from the CNI was that this source indexes newspaper articles from a seven and a half year period. This allowed for an analysis of references over a considerably longer period of time than the samples used in most of the previous studies. Past analyses of media content have examined references to mental illness over a period of three weeks (Gardner and Radel, 1978), and one month (Taylor, 1957; Wahl and Roth, 1982).

Finally, articles listed in the CNI are maintained on microfilm and are made available to the public at most university libraries. This provided easy access to the articles and convenience for the analysis.

In addition to the sample of newspaper articles, a second sample was selected to serve as a comparison group. A total of 16 articles were selected to comprise this sample. The purpose of this comparison was to provide an indication of the validity of the content analysis categories. These articles were selected from two psychological journals: the newsletter of the CMHA, Network,

and the journal Canada's Mental Health. The articles from the latter source were selected from the section of the journal entitled 'Field Reports'.

Articles from these sources closely resembled the newspaper articles in both style and content. The articles were generally nontechnical, journalistic accounts of an issue or event pertaining to mental illness/mental health. As this was considered an important criterion for including articles into the comparison group, random selection from the journals could not be completely achieved. As well, the themes reflected in the comparison group were comparable to the themes represented by the newspaper sample. The characteristics of the two samples are presented in Table 1.

It was expected that the tone and ideology of these journal articles would be consistently more positive and supportive of the mentally ill and mental health issues, and that this difference would be evident in the comparison with the newspaper group. As well, the tone of the newspaper sample was expected to vary to a greater degree and perhaps be more critical in the treatment of the subject matter than the journal articles.

Materials

A content analysis procedure was applied to examine various characteristics and qualities of the newspaper and journal articles. Content analysis is a technique widely used for research in the field of communication studies. It has also been adopted for

Table 1

Characteristics of the Sample Rank-Ordered by Frequency

Category	Newspaper Group n = 103		Comparison Group n = 16	
	n	%	n	%
Year of the Article				
1977	35	(34.0)	0	(0.0)
1981	15	(14.6)	4	(25.0)
1982	11	(10.7)	3	(18.8)
1983	10	(9.7)	5	(31.3)
1980	10	(9.7)	3	(18.8)
1978	9	(8.7)	0	(0.0)
1979	8	(7.8)	0	(0.0)
1984	5	(4.9)	1	(6.3)
Newspaper/Journal				
Globe and Mail	35	(34.0)	-	-
Toronto Star	22	(21.4)	-	-
Winnipeg Free Press	15	(14.6)	-	-
Vancouver Sun	10	(9.7)	-	-
Calgary Herald	8	(7.8)	-	-
Montreal Gazette	6	(5.8)	-	-
Halifax Chronicle Herald	4	(3.9)	-	-
Montreal Star	3	(2.9)	-	-
Network	-	-	10	(62.5)
Canada's Mental Health	-	-	6	(37.5)
Type of Article				
News Story	76	(73.8)	-	-
Feature Story	16	(15.5)	-	-
Other	11	(10.7)	16	(100)

table continues

Table 1 continues

Category	Newspaper Group n = 103		Comparison Group n = 16	
	n	%	n	%
Author of Article				
News Reporter	88	(85.4)	0	(0.0)
Editorial	11	(10.7)	0	(0.0)
Mental Health Expert	3	(2.9)	10	(62.5)
Other	1	(1.0)	6	(37.5)
Location of Article				
First section	66	(64.1)	-	-
Family/Lifestyle Section	10	(9.7)	-	-
Editorial Section	9	(8.7)	-	-
Front Page	9	(8.7)	-	-
Other	9	(8.7)	16	(100)
Science/Medicine Section	0	(0.0)	-	-
Tone of Headline				
Neutral	49	(47.6)	14	(87.5)
Sensational	35	(34.0)	0	(0.0)
Sympathetic	19	(18.4)	2	(12.5)
Theme of Article				
Psychiatric Care	31	(30.1)	1	(6.3)
Patient Needs	28	(27.2)	8	(50.0)
Government Policy	10	(9.7)	0	(0.0)
Housing	9	(8.7)	2	(12.5)
Specific Institution	9	(8.7)	0	(0.0)
Other	9	(8.7)	2	(12.5)
Criminality	7	(6.8)	3	(18.1)

table continues

Table 1 continues

Category	Newspaper Group n = 103		Comparison Group n = 16	
	n	%	n	%
Headline Congruence				
Accurate Reflection	87	(84.5)	16	(100)
Moderate Reflection	9	(8.7)	0	(0.0)
Inaccurate Reflection	7	(6.8)	0	(0.0)

analysis of both written and oral material in political science, sociology, and psychology (see Holsti, 1968).

A content analysis codebook was designed specifically to meet the objectives of the present investigation. A total of 17 categories were developed to comprise the codebook (see Appendix A).

Three of the categories (items 15, 16, and 17), which were concerned with describing individuals portrayed in the articles, were subdivided into subsequent levels. A total of 24 categories made up these three items and served to identify the characteristics of the individuals depicted in the articles as suffering from an emotional disorder. These categories may be classified as a) demographic information, (item #15), b) information about the illness, (item #16), and c) personality characteristics, (item #17).

This information was recorded in order to establish a profile of the 'typical' person portrayed in the articles as emotionally or mentally ill, as well as to determine the range or homogeneity of the traits by which these individuals were described. In addition, the majority of the items were derived from content analysis categories developed for previous investigations (Nunnally, 1961; Wahl and Roth, 1982; Gardener and Radel, 1978). This allowed for comparisons between the results of the present study and the relevant findings of this literature.

Eight of the 17 categories were included as descriptive

characteristics of the articles, and served as the independent variables in the analyses. These items were, the year of the newspaper, the particular newspaper in which the article appeared, the type of article, the author of the article, the location of the article, the theme of the article, the tone of the headline and whether the tone of the headline reflected the content of the article (hereby known as 'headline congruence').

These particular items were included in the final version of the content analysis codebook as it was expected that they might be useful predictors to identify the source of variance in the treatment of mental health issues among the sample of articles. For example, a previous analysis of the Globe and Mail (CMHA, 1982) reported that articles determined to be highly critical were found to depict certain mental health themes more often while other themes were generally treated in a neutral or sympathetic tone. For the purpose of comparison and convenience the themes identified in the analysis of the Globe and Mail were incorporated in the present investigation. These themes were, Housing, Government Policy, Patient Care, Specific Institutions, Patient Needs, Criminality and a general category designated as 'Other'.

The two variables concerning the headline of the article were included in the content analysis codebook, as several studies reported that aspects of the headline, such as the degree of correspondence with the content of the article, were found to be

consistent determinants of the integrity and 'communication accuracy' of the article (Tichenor, Olien, Harrison, and Donohue, 1970; Tankard and Ryan, 1974; Pulford, 1976). For example, Pulford (1976) found that a misleading headline occurred in 32.2 percent of the articles sampled, more than any other type of error reported. Tichenor et al. (1970) noted that 'headline congruence' correlated with communication accuracy of the article at the .05 level of significance.

Other issues explored in the present study were the existence of a trend in the portrayal of mental health issues from 1977 to 1984, differences in tone or ideology between particular newspapers, differences between feature stories and news items, and between articles which occur on the front page and those which appear within other sections of the newspaper.

Coding Procedure

The sample of articles was analyzed in terms of five variables which assessed 1) the tone of the article, and 2) the ideology of the article. These five measures served as the dependent variables in the analyses.

The unit of measurement that was counted, as a means of quantifying the dependent variables, was a 'statement' that appeared in the article. A 'statement' was defined as a series of words which conveyed information that could be coded into a single category of the construct of tone and/or the construct of ideology.

An entire sentence was counted as one 'statement' if the information conveyed in the sentence could be classified into one category of either construct. A portion of a sentence was counted as one 'statement' if the sentence contained more than one item of information which could be coded into a single category of either construct. Therefore, one sentence could contain more than one statement.

Measurement of Tone

Measurement of the 'tone' was an attempt to assess the quality of 'positiveness' and 'negativeness' of the article. This was achieved by determining the relative frequency of critical statements, recommendations, and neutral statements that appeared in the article.

A 'critical' statement was defined as a unit of information which identified or made explicit the existence of a problem or limitation with a particular issue. An example of a critical statement is, "psychiatrists and other doctors at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre say that the transfer of patients from the Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital has been so poorly planned that overcrowding and inadequate care for the mentally ill appear to be the likely result" (Globe and Mail, May 1979, p. 1).

A 'recommendation' was defined as a statement which conveyed the idea that specific action will be taken or is suggested to be taken in order to improve a particular situation, or that, in some

way, the mental health care system has provided beneficial care to the mentally ill. Two examples of a recommendation are "Duckworth says the amount (of incentives for psychiatrists) should be doubled", (Toronto Star, September, 1983, p. A11), and "...three quarters of the clients take a course in how to get out into the work force and 'a great many' of these do get out, she said" (Vancouver Sun, September, 1979, p. A14).

A 'neutral' statement was defined as a unit of information which imparted neutral or nonjudgemental information about an issue. An example of a neutral statement is "Staff salaries bring the total costs to about \$110,000", (Toronto Star, June, 1979, p. A4).

Measurement of Ideology

An attempt was made to determine the predominant ideology reflected in each of the articles. Within the mental health profession, there appears to be two main ideological perspectives. A portion of mental health professionals ascribe to a traditional approach to mental health care, characterized by the maintenance of institutionalization and custodial care facilities. On the other hand, there are those personnel who ascribe to a different approach to mental health care which advocates deinstitutionalization and community care. This group endorses the humanistic ideology of mental health care, and the former group supports the perspective of custodialism.

Measurement of the 'ideology' reflected in the article was assessed by determining the relative frequency of custodial statements and humanistic statements. A custodial statement was defined as a unit of information which supported or advocated the incarceration of mental patients in institutionalized facilities. Such a statement also may have suggested that institutionalized care is an acceptable and useful method for the treatment of mental disorders, or conveyed the notion that the mentally ill are dangerous and need to be restrained. An example of a custodial statement is "A psychiatrist told the court that his release from Penetanguishine Mental Health Centre had been a tragic mistake" (Globe and Mail, September, 1980, p. 12).

A humanistic statement was defined as a unit of information which supported community-based alternatives for the treatment of mental illness and suggested that such treatment centres should be made available to the mentally ill in order that they may be given sufficient opportunity to reintegrate themselves back into the community. An example of a humanistic statement is "There is a definite need for more group homes" (Toronto Star, May, 1981, p. A3). In general, the humanistic perspective attempts to promote greater public acceptance, tolerance and more positive images of the mentally ill.

It should be emphasized that one statement or unit of information may have been classified into a single category of both

the tone construct and of the ideology construct. The following example illustrates this point. "There is a severe shortage of staff in the inpatient ward of the Queen Street Mental Health Centre and \$90,000 are needed to hire more personnel". With regard to the tone, the sentence contains two separate statements; one which conveys a critical unit of information, and one which suggests a recommendation. As well, the sentence as a whole advocates that more funds be appropriated to hire more staff for the inpatient department of the hospital. Hence, the entire sentence would also be counted as a single custodial statement.

In this way the categories which comprised the two constructs of 'tone' and 'ideology' were not mutually exclusive. Rather, one statement may have been categorized into one of the tone categories as well as one of the ideology categories. A statement, however, would not have been classified into more than one category of the same construct. A statement was either positive or negative or neutral, and reflected either a custodial perspective or a humanistic ideology.

An additional item included in the analyses as a dependent measure was the number of persons depicted in each of the articles. Variations in the number of persons per article were analyzed with respect to each of the descriptive characteristics of the newspapers. It was of interest to know whether one type of article portrayed more persons than another type of article, and

subsequently, what the characteristics of these articles were.

These measures, as with the characteristics of the articles not derived from the previous research, were developed by the present author. It appeared as though the qualities of tone and ideology would vary with respect to the particular characteristics of the articles included in the content analysis codebook. As well, a count of the number of critical statements, recommendations, and neutral statements appeared to be an appropriate indication of the 'positiveness' and 'negativeness' of the newspaper articles.

It was thought that a preponderance of one type of statement in an article would result in a corresponding impression in the mind of the reader regarding the subject of the article. For example, an article which contained a greater number of critical statements would leave the impression that the mental health care system is in a negative state with little opportunity for improvement. An article with a greater number of recommendations may create the impression that the mental health care system (or some aspect of it) was very much an effective and beneficial mode of treatment for those who were in need of the services.

Likewise, it was assumed that the appearance of more statements advocating a humanistic or community approach to mental health care would leave a more favorable and positive impression about the mentally ill in the mind of the reader than would a preponderance of statements which supported institutionalized and custodial care.

Measurement of Tone Used in Previous Studies

It will be useful to examine, in this section, various methods that have been developed in previous investigations of assessing the tone or "emotiveness" of a media report and to compare these with the method adopted in the present study.

Tichenor et al. (1970), reported that the emotive quality or tone of a newspaper article may be assessed by determining the ratio of adverbs and adjectives to nouns and verbs in the article. This measure was found to correlate highly with the accuracy of the headline. However, a difficulty with this particular method of measuring tone is that it provides no indication as to the direction of the emotion (i.e., positive or negative) and thus is of limited value.

It is suggested that critical statements and recommendations, as defined in the present study, may contain a greater number of adjectives and adverbs than neutral statements, thereby corresponding with the measure of emotiveness described by Tichenor et al. (1970), and with the added quality of distinguishing the direction of the tone.

A study conducted by Cheesman (1984) attempted to assess the tone of newspaper articles by subjectively determining whether the predominant perspective of the article agreed with or supported a particular issue, did not support the issue or was neutral with respect to the issue. This measure was essentially a qualitative

appraisal of the tone of the article rather than a quantitative assessment. Hence, Cheesman's method was somewhat different than the method adopted in the present study.

However, the method of counting different 'types' of statements, as an indication of the tone of the article, may indeed add the element of objectivity which was lacking in the measure adopted by Cheesman. The preponderance of critical statements in the article may be seen as reflecting a nonsupportive position on an issue, while the preponderance of recommendations in the report may be viewed as being supportive of an issue.

Finally, a series of investigations conducted by Nunnally (1961) attempted to assess the effect of 56 'stylistic' features of a message on the subsequent development of attitudes and opinions by the reader. One of these stylistic characteristics was the number of words appearing in the message that were "expressive of negative evaluations such as 'no', 'don't', 'horrid', and 'dislike'" (p. 183).

These 56 features were applied to 70 one-page messages culled from a diversity of sources including the Bible, a text on typewriter maintenance, and an article on sunglasses. Following this, a factor analysis was performed to identify the variables which loaded on the same factors. One of the four factors derived from the analysis was of the 'positiveness-negativeness' of the message, that is, the tone.

The particular variable that yielded the highest loading was ("the number of words expressive of negative evaluation". Three additional variables were reported to load highly on the 'tone' factor. These were a discomfort-relief quotient, derived from "the number of units expressive of displeasure, tension, and unhappiness"; a measure of 'evaluative common-meaning terms' defined as "a subjective count of all words that have a 'good' or 'bad' connotation", and the Fries class III words which was reported to be "similar to a count of adjectives" (p. 168).

Subsequent to this, Nunnally applied these factors to composed messages about mental illness in order to examine the relationship between characteristics of the message and the impressions developed about mental health concepts by the reader. Among the numerous findings reported by Nunnally, it was determined that "the highest negative versions were rated as more tense on the 'tense-relaxed' scale of the Semantic Differential" (1961, p. 193). This would lend support to the contention that a message which conveys a negative tone with respect to the subject matter may result in a corresponding effect (e.g., 'tense') on the reader.

A final item of the content analysis codebook concerned the approximate number of words in the article. This variable served as a measure of the length of the article and was used as a means of standardizing the absolute number of statements counted for each of the five dependent measures.

The approximate number of words was determined by multiplying the number of lines in the article by the average number of words in each line. This figure was then divided by 100 for ease in coding. For the sake of brevity in reporting results, discussions in this thesis pertaining to the number of statements per hundred words will be referred to as the 'concentration' of statements.

Inter-Rater Reliability

The content analysis of the total sample of articles for the present investigation was conducted by the author. However, conducting a content analysis requires that the inter-rater reliability of the content analysis categories be determined prior to the collection of the data. This is to ensure that the categories developed for the analysis are objective and may be applied with a suitable level of agreement by several readers.

Two statistical measures of correlation were calculated to assess the level of reliability of the 17 categories. Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960), (k) was calculated for the categorical items (e.g., newspaper, tone of the headline) and a Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient, (r) was calculated for the variables measured on a continuous scale (e.g. number of recommendations, number of words in the article). An average correlation coefficient was calculated using the coefficients reported in Table 2 to determine the overall level of reliability for the content analysis codebook.

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients for Inter-Rater Reliability

Category	Occasion	
	A	B
Newspaper ^a	1.0	1.0
Type of Article ^a	.74	1.0
Author of Article ^a	1.0	1.0
Location of Article ^a	-	1.0
Tone of Headline ^a	.70	.67
Theme of Article ^a	.88	.63
Words in Article ^b	.92	.94
Headline Congruence ^a	.42	.63
Number of Critical Statements ^b	.66	.94
Number of Recommendations ^b	.65	.77
Number of Custodial Statements ^b	.55	.23
Number of Humanistic Statements ^b	.92	.63
Number of Neutral Statements ^b	-	.96
Age of Individual ^b	1.0	-
Sex of Individual ^a	1.0	-
Marital Status of Individual	.70	-
Occupation of Individual ^a	.84	-
Residence of Individual ^a	.60	-
Type of Disorder ^a	.70	-
Prognosis ^a	1.0	-
Symptoms Described ^a	.83	-
Etiology of Disorder	*	-
Treatment ^a	.65	-
Violent ^a	.34	-
Dangerousness ^a	.34	-

table continues

Table 2 continues

Category	Occasion	
	A	B
Predictability ^a	.61	-
Tenseness	*	-
Dependence ^a	.50	-
Cleanliness	*	-
Attractiveness	*	-
Friendliness	*	-
Sociability	*	-
Happiness	*	-
Productivity	*	-
Honesty	*	-
To be Feared/Not Feared	.60	-
Transient/Nontransient	*	-
	\bar{X}	
	.77	.80

^aCohen's Kappa

^bPearson Moment-Product Correlation

*The correlation coefficient could not be calculated due to a small n

Inter-rater reliability coefficients were calculated on two separate occasions: once prior to the analysis of the sample of articles, and once again, following the collection of the data. On the first occasion, three raters, in addition to the primary researcher, coded the same sample of 15 newspaper articles selected at random from the CNI. Using the highest coefficients between two coders for each item, it was determined that the mean inter-rater reliability coefficient for the codebook was .77. This was deemed suitable to proceed with the data collection process.

On the second occasion, two raters in addition to the primary researcher, coded a second sample of ten articles selected from the CNI. Again, the highest coefficients between two raters were used and it was concluded that the inter-rater reliability had been maintained throughout the analysis of the articles. The average correlation coefficient on the second occasion was determined to be .80, indicating a slight increase from the first occasion. The correlation coefficients for all of the variables on the two occasions are presented in Table 2.

It should be emphasized that the inter-rater reliability of the personality and demographic variables of the individuals depicted in the articles was assessed on the first occasion only, as no such individuals were described in the second sample of articles. Also, it was not possible to calculate a correlation coefficient for several of the items of category (17), due to the

large number of ratings of 'nine' assigned by the coder, indicating that the personality characteristic was not described with respect to the individual portrayed in the article.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The present study was undertaken as an exploratory analysis of newspaper articles dealing with the subject of mental illness. The study was conducted to determine the nature of articles with respect to their tone and predominant ideology, and to examine the portrayal of mentally ill persons described in the sample. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner and Brent, 1975).

The results of the study are organized in the following sections: (1) comparison of the newspaper group with the sample of journal articles; (2) analysis of demographic and personality characteristics of individuals described in the articles as mentally ill; (3) analysis of the newspaper group as a separate sample.

Newspaper Group with Comparison Group

The articles for the comparison group were selected from two sources: Network and Canada's Mental Health. The purpose of this comparison was to ensure that the content analysis categories were sufficiently valid so as to assess differences between articles where such a difference was expected. In this way the validity of the content analysis codebook was evaluated.

The analysis of these data consisted of a comparison of the mean of each type of statement between the two groups and comparison of the frequency of ratings on the relevant descriptive variables.

Results indicated that, as expected, notable differences were found between the newspaper group and the comparison group in the tone and ideology of the articles. That is, the categories were discriminating as intended.

There was a significantly smaller concentration of critical statements in the journal articles than in the newspaper articles, $t(117) = 2.57, p < .01$. As well, there was a greater concentration of statements that were supportive of a custodial approach to mental health care in the newspaper group than in the comparison group, although this difference was not statistically significant.

Comparisons of the absolute number of each type of statement made in the two samples revealed that the expected difference became more evident, as indicated in Table 3. A chi-square test also revealed that the newspaper sample contained significantly more headlines which were rated as 'sensational' than the comparison group, $\chi^2(2, N = 116) = 9.88, p < .001$. No differences were found in the distribution of themes presented in the two samples.

Portrayal of the Mentally Ill

The total number of individuals described or depicted in the sample of newspaper articles was 44. Although this number is somewhat small, it was sufficient to establish some semblance of a profile of demographic and personality characteristics representing the 'average' person portrayed in the newspaper medium as suffering from a mental disorder.

Table 3

Relation of Mean Number of Statements Between the Newspaper Group
and the Comparison Group

Type of Article	Newspaper Group	Comparison Group
Critical	10.36	4.81*
Recommendation	4.55	11.43**
Neutral	9.84	18.18**
Custodial	1.21	0.12
Humanistic	3.49	7.56**

* $p < .03$

** $p < .01$

The average age of the individuals described in the articles was 33.3 years. The remaining demographic and personality characteristics of this 'typical' person were signified by the particular category for each item that received the highest endorsement proportion. The incidence of these characteristics was also examined in relation to the data presented in Hospital Statistics, 82/83 (1984).

This individual, then, was depicted as male, single and unemployed, and living in an institution. He was described as suffering from schizophrenia of environmental origin, exhibited bizarre symptoms, and his illness was treated with medication. His prognosis for recovery was not hopeful.

Regarding his personality characteristics, he was violent, dangerous and unpredictable in his behavior, dependent upon social services, agencies and other people. He was seen as tense, unsociable, unhappy, unproductive, to be feared and was considered a vagrant or transient type of person.

An interesting question concerned how these characteristics described in the newspaper medium compared with the population of patients admitted into mental institutions in Ontario. Information published in Hospital Statistics, 82/83 (Ministry of Health, 1984), revealed that the number of males admitted into mental institutions with the diagnosis of schizophrenia, between the age 25 and 34, is 2137, or 66 percent of all males admitted 'with psychoses', and 66

percent of the total number of patients admitted with the diagnosis of schizophrenia in that age group. It would appear that a 33 year old male with schizophrenia is not atypical of the clinical population.

When this question is examined further, a distorted picture of the mentally ill described in the newspaper sample became more evident. The newspaper sample depicted 13 schizophrenics (76.5 percent), 3 individuals with a personality disorder (17.6 percent), and 1 neurotic (5.9 percent). These findings may be compared with the admission rates listed in Hospital Statistics, 82/83, for the three diagnoses of schizophrenia (9089 or 37 percent), personality disorders (3827 or 15 percent), and neurosis (11690 or 47 percent). It would appear that the media overrepresented the severe disorder of schizophrenia and underrepresented the neurotic disorders.

As presented in Table 4, the newspaper sample depicted a greater percentage of individuals in the age groups, 15-24, 25-34, and 35-44, relative to the percentage of patients admitted into Ontario mental institutions, and underrepresented the age groups of 45-54, 55-64, and 65 and older. With respect to the variable of sex, the newspaper sample overrepresented males and underrepresented females.

Newspaper Sample

These data were analyzed, essentially, by a series of one-way

Table 4

Comparison of Diagnosis, Age, and Sex Between Hospital Statistics
82/83 (1984) and the Present Study

	Hospital Statistics 82/83		Present Study	
	n	%	n	%
Diagnosis				
Schizophrenia	9089	(37.0)	13	(76.5)
Personality Disorder	3827	(15.5)	3	(17.6)
Neurosis	11660	(47.4)	1	(5.9)
Total	24576	(100)	17	(100)
Age				
0-14	64	(0.24)	0	(0.0)
15-24	5597	(21.0)	7	(31.7)
25-34	7862	(29.5)	6	(27.2)
35-44	5209	(19.5)	6	(27.2)
45-54	3291	(12.3)	1	(4.5)
55-64	2651	(9.9)	1	(4.5)
65+	1932	(7.2)	1	(4.5)
Total	26606	(100)	22	(100)
Sex				
Male	11627	(53.2)	25	(65.8)
Female	10230	(46.8)	13	(34.2)
Total	21857	(100)	38	(100)

analyses of variance with each of the five measures of tone and ideology, the number of words in the article and the number of persons in the article as the dependent variables and the eight characteristics of the articles as the independent variables. Separate one-way analyses of variance were performed for each of the characteristics of the articles with each of the dependent measures. As well, chi-square tests were performed for each of the descriptive variables with each other. Finally, Spearman r correlations were performed to determine strength and direction of the relationship between each of the five dependent measures and each of the rank-ordered categorical items, (e.g., year of the article, tone of the headline, headline congruence).

Results of a frequency count revealed that, in the 103 newspaper articles sampled, 1068 critical statements and 469 recommendations were determined, indicating that 44 percent more negative statements appeared in the newspaper articles than positive statements. This difference was statistically significant, $t(102) = 6.19$, $p < .001$. In addition, 1014 neutral statements were counted in the sample. This number was found to be significantly greater than the number of recommendations, $t(102) = 5.06$, $p < .001$, but not significantly different from the number of critical statements. A comparison of the two variables of the ideology construct revealed that more humanistic statements were counted than custodial statements, 360 and 125, respectively.

This difference was found to be statistically significant,
 $t(102) = -4.62, p < .001$.

Although these results are of interest, it is important to take into account in the analyses the variation in the length of the articles in order to fully understand the relative impact of the different types of statements. For example, an article which contains ten critical statements, and is 1000 words in length will have a qualitatively different impact on the reader than an article which is 100 words long and contains the same ten critical statements. The relative impact of the critical statements made in the second article will presumably leave a stronger negative impression in the mind of the reader than will the same statements made in the longer article.

When the number of words in the article was divided into the number of each type of statement counted, a similar pattern of results as noted above were apparent. These results are summarized in Table 5. (Note that the comparisons are made between the concentration of statements, i.e., per 100 words.)

Further analyses were performed to determine whether there were significant differences between the number of articles which contained a greater concentration of critical statements, recommendations and neutral statements, and between articles with a greater concentration of custodial and humanistic statements.

Consistent with the findings noted above, there were

Table 5

Summary of Comparison Between the Concentration of Statements in
the Newspaper Sample

Critical Statements by Recommendations						
	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	df	p
Critical Statements	103	2.3	2.3	4.58	102	.001
Recommendations		1.4	1.8			
Custodial Statements by Humanistic Statements						
	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	df	p
Custodial Statements	103	.23	.41	-4.29	102	.001
Humanistic Statements		1.1	2.1			
Neutral Statements by Recommendations						
	n	\bar{x}	sd	t	df	p
Neutral Statements	103	2.7	3.9	3.14	102	.001
Recommendations		1.4	1.8			

significantly more articles which contained a greater concentration of critical statements than recommendations ($n=70$), than there were articles with a greater concentration of recommendations than critical statements ($n=25$), $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 65.96, p < .001$. It was also determined that there were 66 articles which contained a greater concentration of neutral statements than recommendations. This number was found to be significantly larger than the number of articles with a greater concentration of recommendations than neutral statements, ($n=33$), $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 86.61, p < .001$.

Unlike the results noted above, there were significantly more articles that contained a greater concentration of neutral statements than critical statements, ($n=54$), relative to the number of articles which contained a greater concentration of critical statements than neutral statements ($n=47$), $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 91.44, p < .001$. As expected, there were significantly more articles which contained a greater concentration of humanistic statements than custodial statements ($n=56$), than there were articles with a greater concentration of custodial statements than humanistic statements ($n=19$), $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 25.13, p < .001$.

It could be argued that newspaper articles which present the issue of mental illness in the most positive manner would be those news stories with a greater concentration of recommendations and the greatest concentration of humanistic statements. Conversely, the articles which convey a truly negative impression about mental

illness would be those articles which contain the greatest concentration of critical statements and a larger concentration of custodial statements.

In the present investigation, 17 of the most 'positive' articles (greater concentration of humanistic statements and recommendations), and 20 of the most 'negative' articles (greater concentration of critical statements and custodial statements) were determined. The difference in the appearance of these types of articles in the present sample was found not to be statistically significant. Only two articles were found to contain a greater concentration of recommendations and a greater concentration of humanistic statements. Thirty articles were determined to contain a greater concentration of custodial statements and a greater concentration of humanistic statements. However, the large difference in the number of critical/humanistic articles and recommendation/custodial articles may be due, in part, to the greater number of critical statements and humanistic statements that were found in the present sample of articles than the number of recommendations and custodial statements.

A series of one-way analyses of variance were performed to examine the effects of each of the eight descriptive variables on each of the five dependent variables. For example, the relationship of the particular newspaper was examined with respect to the tone of the article and to the ideology reflected in the article.

Year of Article.

Analyses of the variable 'year of article' with each of the measures of tone and ideology revealed no significant differences on any of the dependent variables. The Spearman r performed with each of the dependent measures failed to identify a trend in the tone or ideology of the articles across time.

Newspaper

The one-way analyses of variance performed for the variable 'newspaper' indicated that the concentration of neutral statements differed significantly across the eight newspapers, $F(7,95) = 5.76$, $p < .001$. Scheffe's confidence interval test revealed that the articles appearing in the Vancouver Sun contained a greater concentration of neutral statements than the remaining newspapers ($p < .05$).

Type of Article

The one-way analyses of variance of the variable 'type of article' revealed no significant differences on any of the five dependent measures. However, inspection of the data revealed several findings which should be noted. The category of 'other' (which included editorials) contained a greater concentration of critical statements, recommendations, custodial statements and humanistic statements than other types of articles. This would indicate that editorials convey, as would be expected, a greater number of opinions, attitudes, suggestions, and emotion-laden

statements and few statements which merely impart neutral information. This finding provided further support for the validity of the content analysis codebook.

Author of the Article

One-way analyses of variance performed for the variable 'author of article' with the five measures of tone and ideology revealed, as expected, a pattern similar to the effect yielded for the variable 'type of article'. Although no differences were significant, the editorial articles contained a greater concentration of critical statements, recommendations, humanistic statements and custodial statements.

News reporters made the fewest critical statements and the fewest humanistic statements per hundred words, and mental health professionals, although their numbers were few, made the fewest recommendations and custodial statements per hundred words. These differences were not statistically significant. A chi-square test indicated, as expected, a significant association between the variables 'type of article' and 'author of article', $\chi^2(6, N = 103) = 125.23, p < .001$.

Theme of the Article

The one-way analyses of variance for the variable 'theme of the article' yielded a significant difference in the concentration of neutral statements, $F(6,96) = 2.93, p < .01$. The themes of Criminality and Patient Needs contained the greatest concentration.

of such statements. The Scheffe test failed to reveal a significant difference between pairs of themes. No other significant differences were found with the remaining dependent variables.

Location of the Article

A one-way analysis of variance was performed for the variable 'location of article' with each of the five dependent variables. These analyses revealed several interesting findings. It was determined that significantly greater concentration of critical statements were made in articles which appeared on the front page than elsewhere in the newspaper. $F(4,89) = 3.37, p < .01$. This effect was substantiated by a significant correlation yielded by the Spearman r ($r = -.15, p < .05$).

Inspection of the data indicated that a greater concentration of recommendations were found in the editorial section of the newspaper, than elsewhere. A greater concentration of custodial statements were made in the Lifestyle/Family section of the newspaper and the greatest concentration of humanistic statements were made in the first section of the newspaper, on a page other than the first.

Chi-square tests were performed on the variable of 'location of the article' with the variables 'type of article' and 'author of the article'. These tests yielded a significant association for 'location of the article' with both of the variables,

$\chi^2(8, N = 103) = 95.05, p < .001$, and $\chi^2(12, N = 103) = 95.70, p < .001$, respectively. These results may perhaps be explained by the observation that news stories appear primarily in the first section of the newspaper and editorial articles appear essentially within the editorial section.

Tone of the Headline and Headline Congruence

Analyses of the variables 'tone of the headline' and 'headline congruence' substantiated the assertion that articles which appeared on the front page of the newspaper tended to portray mental health issues in a negative manner (as these articles were found to contain the greatest concentration of critical statements).

Although the association between the location of the article and the tone of the headline was not statistically significant, it was determined that the headlines of seven of the nine articles that appeared on the front page of the newspaper were rated as 'sensationalistic'. The largest number of sympathetic headlines appeared in articles in the first section of the newspaper, on a page other than the front. The Spearman r yielded a significant correlation between the location of the article and the variable 'headline congruence', indicating that the content of an article which appeared on the front page of the newspaper was less likely to have a headline that was an accurate reflection of the article ($r = .19, p < .02$).

Chi-square tests revealed a significant association between

the type of article and the tone of the headline, $\chi^2(4, N = 103) = 9.33, p < .05$). It would appear that editorials possess significantly more neutral headlines and that feature articles are more likely to have either a sensational headline (43.8 percent), or sympathetic headline (37.5 percent).

Results of two chi-square tests also revealed significant associations between the variables 'theme of the article' and 'tone of headline', $\chi^2(12, N = 103) = 30.36, p < .001$ and 'theme of the article' with 'headline congruence', $\chi^2(12, N = 103) = 21.48, p \approx .05$. Articles which portrayed the theme of Patient Needs were more likely to have headlines that were rated as 'sympathetic' and 'accurate reflections of the content of the articles'. Articles depicting the theme of Psychiatric Care were more likely to have headlines which were rated as 'sensational' and were more likely to be misrepresentations of the articles' content.

A new variable was created by combining the variables 'tone of headline' and 'headline congruence'. This variable was developed as a means of investigating further those articles which were truly sensationalistic, sympathetic and neutral, with respect to the rating of the tone of the headline and the variable 'headline congruence'. The three categories comprising this variable were as follows:

Category

- (1) sensational headline and accurate reflection

- (2) sympathetic headline and accurate reflection
- (3) neutral headline and accurate reflection

The number of articles classified into each of the three categories was 19, 19, and 49, respectively. The headlines of the remaining 16 articles were rated as 'sensationalistic and moderate reflections of the content of the article' ($n=9$) and 'sensationalistic and distorted with respect to the content of the article' ($n=7$). These two categories were not included in the analyses as their interpretation respect to the 'true' tone of the articles was considered to be ambiguous. Results of a one-way analysis of variance determined that there was a greater concentration of humanistic statements that appeared in articles which were truly sympathetic (category 2), $F(2,84) = 3.51$, $p < .03$. Scheffe's confidence interval test revealed that a smaller concentration of humanistic statements appeared in articles which were truly sensational (category 1), ($p < .05$). Although the difference was not statistically significant, there was a greater concentration of critical statements in articles which were truly sensational (category 1).

Chi-square tests of the new variable with the eight characteristics of the articles revealed only one significant association. This was determined for the variables 'sensationalism of the headline' with 'the theme of the article', $\chi^2(12, N = 103) = 25.89$, $p < .01$.

Number of Persons in the Article

Analyses were performed to identify the relevant features of

the articles which described or depicted mentally ill individuals. This provided greater understanding of the nature of the context in which the mentally ill were portrayed. One-way analyses of variance were performed for the variable 'number of persons portrayed in the article', which served as the dependent variable, with the eight characteristics of the articles as the independent variables. These analyses revealed a significant difference with the variable of 'tone of the headline', $F(2,100) = 3.51$, $p < .03$. It was determined that .16 individuals per hundred words were portrayed in the articles with a sympathetic headline, .15 persons described in articles with a sensationalistic headline, and considerably fewer persons per hundred words, .03, were depicted in articles with a headline rated as neutral in tone.

Number of Words in the Article

Finally, a series of one-way analyses of variance were performed to determine the source of variance in the length of the article with respect to the eight features of the newspaper articles. Significant F values were yielded for five of the eight descriptive variables of the measures of tone and ideology. These results are presented in Table 6. As expected, the feature articles contained more words than either news stories or editorials. Articles located in the category of 'Other' (e.g., second section) contained more words than articles located elsewhere in the newspaper.

Table 6

Summary of Analyses of Variance of the Variable 'Number of Words in
the Article'

	\bar{x}^a	df	F
<u>Newspaper</u>			
Vancouver Sun	4.40	(7,95)	1.14
Calgary Herald	3.87		
Winnipeg Free Press	3.26		
Toronto Star	5.77		
Globe and Mail	5.97		
Montreal Gazette	6.67		
Montreal Star	4.00		
Halifax Chronicle Herald	2.50		
<u>Year of Article</u>			
1977	4.00	(7,95)	3.03** /
1978	5.55		
1979	4.12		
1980	7.50		
1981	4.53		
1982	6.18		
1983	3.20		
1984	11.20		
<u>Type of Article</u>			
News Story	4.22	(2,100)	20.62**
Feature Story	10.43		
Editorial	3.09		
<u>Author of Article</u>			
Reporter/columnist	5.26	(2,99)	1.42
Mental Health expert	3.66		
Editorial	3.09		

table continues

Table 6 continues

<u>Theme of Article</u>	\bar{x}^a	df	F
Housing	3.44	(6,96)	.731
Government Policy	3.90		
Psychiatric Care	5.00		
Specific Institution	7.11		
Patient Needs	5.46		
Criminality	5.57		
Other	4.55		
<u>Location of Article</u>			
Front Page	6.22	(4,98)	5.36**
First Section	4.18		
Editorial Section	3.11		
Science/Medicine	0.00		
Family/Lifestyle	7.60		
Other	9.55		
<u>Tone of Headline</u>			
Sensationalistic	6.45	(2,100)	3.09*
Neutral	5.12		
Sympathetic	4.94		
<u>'Headref'</u>			
Accurate	4.85	(2,100)	7.05**
Moderate	9.44		
Distorted	2.12		

*p < .05

**p < .001

^ain hundreds

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that the treatment of the mentally ill and mental health concepts in the media is essentially of a critical nature, with a preponderance of statements which indicate problem areas within the mental health care system. However, there are more statements which convey information about community mental health that are consistent with the ideals of the movement toward deinstitutionalization, than statements which advocate a return to custodial mental health care.

Results of the analyses revealed that 41.8 percent of the statements counted were of a critical nature, 39.7 percent were determined to be neutral and 18.3 percent were rated as recommendations. The analyses also revealed that 74.2 percent of the statements which were determined to reflect an ideological perspective were rated as humanistic rather than custodial. It would appear that although there is a greater number of critical statements than recommendations in the media, that is, more negative than positive, there are also a greater number of humanistic statements than custodial statements, that is, more positive than negative in this respect.

It was also found that 67.9 percent of the articles contained a greater concentration of critical statements than recommendations, and 24.2 percent of the articles contained a greater concentration

of recommendations than critical statements. Moreover, 45.6 percent of the articles contained a greater concentration of critical statements than neutral statements, although 52.4 percent of the articles possessed a greater concentration of neutral statements than critical statements. Only 32 percent of the articles contained a greater concentration of recommendations than neutral statements as 64.3 percent of the articles possessed more neutral statements per hundred words than recommendations.

The articles were also categorized with respect to eight descriptive variables. These characteristics served as the independent variables in the analyses to identify the source of variance in the tone and ideology of the articles.

Few descriptive variables were significantly related to the dependent variables. This would indicate that either the tone and ideology of the articles did not vary in a systematic and discernable pattern or that the tone and ideology varied with respect to characteristics other than the eight categories utilized in the present study.

Perhaps further investigations might examine characteristics of the event precipitating the appearance of a news report to determine how closely the tone and ideology of the actual event resemble the resulting news article.

Among the descriptive characteristics examined in the present analysis, the location of the article accounted for variance in the

tone of the articles. Results of a one-way analysis of variance revealed that articles appearing on the front page of the newspaper conveyed a greater concentration of critical statements than articles appearing elsewhere in the newspaper.

Although the difference was not statistically significant, it was also found that articles which appeared on the front page were more likely to have a headline which was rated as sensationalistic. Results of a Spearman r indicated that these headlines were also more likely to lack 'headline congruence'. This negative treatment of mental health concepts determined for articles which appeared on the front page was substantiated by the result that headlines rated as 'distorted' with respect to the content of the article contained a greater concentration of critical statements.

These results would suggest that articles which appear on the front page of the newspaper contribute to the distorted and critical treatment of mental health issues to a far greater degree than articles elsewhere in the newspaper. It would also appear that articles which possessed a 'negative' element in one respect, such as the tone of the headline, were also likely to be 'negative' in other respects, such as in 'headline congruence' or the concentration of critical statements.

Analyses also revealed that articles with a 'sympathetic' headline contained a greater concentration of humanistic statements than custodial statements and depicted a greater number of persons

per hundred words. This would indicate that articles which were 'positive' in one respect were also likely to be 'positive' in other respects.

It was determined that theme of Psychiatric Care was portrayed in the greatest number of articles (31, or 30 percent), followed by the theme of Patient Needs which was depicted in 28, or 27.1 percent of the articles. As well, articles which dealt with the theme of Psychiatric Care tended to employ sensationalism with respect to the tone of the headline.

The incidence of the themes portrayed in the present study and the treatment of these themes may be examined in relation to the incidence and treatment of the themes depicted in an analysis of the Globe and Mail, sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association (1982). This comparison indicated various differences, as presented in Table 7. For instance, the present sample contained a greater number of articles portraying the themes of Psychiatric Care and Patient Needs. However, when the findings of the previous study are compared with the 35 articles from the Globe and Mail of the present investigation, these differences become less apparent, also as indicated in Table 7.

It was also revealed that articles portraying the theme of Housing (in the total sample of newspaper articles) contained a greater concentration of critical statements and humanistic statements, and the smallest concentration of neutral statements.

Table 7

Incidence of Themes Represented in the CMHA Study (1983) and the Present Study

Theme	CMHA Sample		Total Sample		Present Study Globe and Mail Articles	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
	n = not given		n = 103		n = 35	
Housing	4	(26.0)	9	(8.7)	5	(14.3)
Government Policy	-	(26.0)	10	(9.7)	8	(22.9)
Psychiatric Care	-	(15.0)	31	(30.1)	7	(20.0)
Specific Institution	-	(12.0)	9	(8.7)	4	(11.4)
Patient Needs	-	(11.0)	28	(27.1)	6	(17.1)
Criminality	-	(10.0)	7	(6.7)	3	(8.6)
Other	-	(0.0)	9	(8.7)	2	(5.7)

These results are contrary to the findings of the Globe and Mail study which found that articles dealing with the subject of Housing were essentially, "neutral in tone, presenting apparently actual reports" (p. 10). These differences may be due to the greater diversity of newspapers analyzed in the present study. Further comparisons are presented in Table 8.

Implications for Attitudes About Mental Illness

The question then arises: How might the incidence of these statements in the newspaper medium influence the development of attitudes towards mental health concepts and the mentally ill? Indeed, to establish an unequivocal causal relationship between information received through the media and attitude formation is likely beyond the scope of traditional scientific investigation.

Nevertheless, it is useful to examine the findings of studies which have alluded to a strong correlation between information disseminated through the media and public attitudes in order to arrive at a possible answer to the question. For example, numerous studies have studied the role of the mass media in the development of political orientation, opinions and attitudes about various political issues (see Hirsch, Miller and Kline, 1977). As well, research of the 'agenda-setting' function of the mass media have demonstrated a significant relationship between media information and awareness of specific issues.

The mass media have also been instrumental in the success of

Table 8

Comparison of the Tone of the Themes Between the CMHA Study (1983)
and the Present Study

Theme	CMHA Study (1983)	Present Study
Housing	neutral	critical/humanistic
Government Policy	critical	critical/humanistic
Psychiatric Care	sympathetic	neutral critical
Specific Institution	sympathetic	critical/custodial
Patient Needs	sympathetic	neutral/humanistic
Criminality	sympathetic	neutral/custodial
Other	neutral/sympathetic	critical/humanistic

various public education campaigns to increase awareness of high blood pressure and other coronary risk factors (Meyer, Nash, McAlister, Macoby, and Farquar, 1980) and of mental illness (Soddy and Ahrenfeldt, 1967). Soddy and Ahrenfeldt reported that a 1957 study of the effects of five television broadcasts about mental illness had determined that

there had been a small but well-spread increase in the public's acceptance of the principle that mental illness is 'just another illness'; and that the broadcasts were followed by an increase from 5 percent (before) to 10 percent (after) in the proportion of the public aware of mental illness as a major social problem (1967, p. 279).

Further support for a relationship between information received through the media and the development of attitudes and opinions has been documented by Nunnally (1961). Results of these investigations provide valuable insights into the nature of this relationship.

Nunnally was interested in the relationship between exposure to various 'stylistic' characteristics of messages about mental illness and the subsequent development of attitudes and interest. Eight one-page messages about mental illness were composed which varied with respect to three characteristics: 1) 'message anxiety', 2) a variable relating to the 'personal-impersonal' quality of the message, and 3) 'message certainty'.

The variable 'message anxiety' was defined by the presence or absence of people pictured in situations of physical danger, fear, and humiliation. The second characteristic concerned the degree

of "personal or impersonal phrasing of the message" (p. 121). A personal message, for example, invited the reader to identify with the content of the article by describing how events would affect the reader. Impersonal messages were written in the third person and described how events would affect other people. The third variable, 'message certainty', concerned the degree to which a message provided apparent solutions to a problem. High message certainty also contributes to high message anxiety.

The messages were mailed in packages of eight to a group of subjects. These individuals were instructed to read the messages and then rank them, from one to eight, in terms of preference. The results indicated that subjects tended to prefer the messages which possessed a high level of message certainty, and messages with a relatively low level of message anxiety. Nunnally reported that,

Public interest is raised when messages tend to alleviate rather than increase anxiety, and when messages provide solutions to problems. Much mental health information currently conveyed to the public is probably self-defeating because it decreases public interest by raising anxiety and providing few real solutions to the problems it discusses (1961, p. 121).

Nunnally also examined the relationship between certain characteristics of a message, including the three previously mentioned, and the development of attitudes about mental illness. Subjects were given messages about mental illness which varied

with respect to one of the characteristics. Subsequently, the group was administered an attitude scale composed of semantic differential items. Among the numerous findings reported, Nunnally (1961) determined the following:

- (1) Relatively low-anxiety treatments of mental health communications are related to more favourable attitudes than are relatively high-anxiety treatments (p. 137);
- (2) The more certainty with which mental health information is stated, the more favourable will be the attitude towards concepts related to the message (p. 164);
- (3) The destruction of information about mental illness without supplying new information results in negative attitudes toward related concepts (p. 165).

The variable concerning the 'personal-impersonal' content of the message was found not to affect the formation of subsequent attitudes about mental health concepts. In conclusion, Nunnally stated, "The message makes the reader feel secure by sounding certain, by providing solutions, by presenting an understandable explanation, and reducing anxiety in other ways" (1961, p. 238).

Comparisons may be made with the characteristics of the messages manipulated by Nunnally and the dependent variables utilized in the present investigation. For instance, message certainty appears to be related to the number of recommendations which appear in the newspaper articles. Message certainty may be increased by the appearance of recommendations which signify that solutions to the problems of the mental health care system are tenable. The absence of recommendations, denoting low message

certainty, will result in a higher level of message anxiety. Message certainty may be further decreased by the presence of many critical statements which imply that the negative status of the system and the situation of the mentally ill is extensive.

The level of message anxiety may also be modified by the appearance of (or lack of) statements which reflect an ideological perspective. Message anxiety may be decreased by the presence of humanistic statements which convey the impression that the mentally ill need not be locked away in mental institutions, but that they may lead normal and productive lives if given the opportunity. The presence of these statements may serve to reduce the level of message anxiety of the articles, thereby increasing their appeal to the reader. It was determined in the present study that more statements were made which called for the development of more group homes and community-based mental health facilities than statements which advocated institutional care and a return to secured incarceration of the mentally ill.

The appearance of custodial statements may leave the reader with the impression that the mentally ill are dangerous, need to be restrained and incarcerated for their own welfare, thereby increasing the message anxiety of the article. However, these types of statements were found to appear relatively infrequently in the newspaper.

It would appear that the various types of statements which

were counted as an indication of the tone and ideology of the article in the present sample correspond well with the two characteristics of a message: message anxiety and message certainty. These characteristics were determined by Nunnally (1961) to be significant factors affecting the formation of attitudes and opinions towards mental health concepts.

How the Newspapers Portray the Mentally Ill

Factors which may further serve to increase the level of anxiety of a message may also be found in the treatment of mentally ill characters depicted in newspaper articles. These individuals tended to be described in a manner which was degrading and stereotypic.

It was determined that the mentally ill were portrayed as a relatively homogeneous group falling within a small range of personality and demographic characteristics. They were more likely described as unemployed, living in an institution, and as unproductive members of society dependent upon social services or other people. The findings of the present study are similar to the results of Wahl and Roth (1982), with the exception of the larger number of 'unknown' values counted in the present study (see Table 9).

The mentally ill portrayed in the present sample were more likely to be described as suffering from a severe disorder, exhibiting bizarre symptoms, and being unpredictable in their

Table 9

Comparison of Demographic Information Between Wahl and Roth (1982)
and the Present Study

	Wahl and Roth		Present Study	
	n = 35		n = 44	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Age				
18-25	10	(28.5)	7	(15.9)
26-40	7	(20.0)	11	(25.0)
41-55	11	(31.4)	2	(4.5)
55+	5	(14.2)	2	(4.5)
Unknown	2	(5.7)	22	(50.0)
Sex				
Male	25	(71.4)	25	(56.8)
Female	10	(28.6)	13	(29.5)
Unknown	0	(0.0)	6	(13.6)
Marital Status				
Single	15	(42.8)	9	(20.4)
Married	5	(14.2)	2	(4.5)
Divorced/Separated	2	(5.7)	2	(4.5)
Widowed	2	(5.7)	0	(0.0)
Common-Law	0	(0.0)	1	(2.3)
Unknown	11	(31.4)	30	(47.4)
Occupation				
Professional	3	(8.6)	2	(4.5)
Educator	4	(11.4)	0	(0.0)
Blue Collar	4	(11.4)	0	(0.0)
Student/Homemaker	2	(5.7)	1	(2.3)
Unemployed	0	(0.0)	9	(20.4)
Other	5	(14.2)	0	(0.0)
Unknown	17	(48.5)	32	(72.7)

behavior. As well, 84 percent of those rated on the violent-nonviolent characteristic were labeled as violent, and 95 percent of the individuals who were rated on the dangerous-safe dimension were determined to be dangerous.

These characteristics were consistent with the pattern of behaviors reported in the literature (Nunnally, 1961; Wahl and Roth, 1982; Steadman and Coccozza, 1977). Contrary to the findings reported in Gardner and Radel (1978), that 100 percent of the mentally handicapped were depicted as dependent individuals, only 71 percent of the individuals described as mentally ill in the present study were determined to be depicted as dependent.

Further comparisons of the media portrayal of the mentally ill with the depiction of the physically handicapped may be drawn from an analysis of the media coverage accorded to the Stephen Dawson case (Pappart, 1983). A few weeks after birth, Stephen Dawson contracted meningitis which left him with severe brain damage. At the age of six, it was determined that Stephen required an operation to repair a shunt which was necessary to drain fluid from his head. The parents of the child refused to grant permission for the doctors to perform the operation as they felt it was in Stephen's best interest to "die with dignity" rather than to suffer in his "isolated and tormented world". This issue came to the attention of the courts and the media when the parents were challenged by the Superintendent of the Family and Child

Service, on behalf of the physicians, requesting that the child be taken away from the family.

Analysis of the coverage provided by the newspapers and television determined that the reports were highly emotional and tended to put more emphasis on the trauma of the parents than on the real issues of the case. This resulted in a blurring of the actual facts and events of the situation. According to Pappart: "The result was a confusion of stories which only served to reinforce stereotyped views across the board". (1983, p. 4)

There was also a propensity of the media toward using emotionally charged words and phrases in association with Stephen's state of health, such as 'vegetative state', 'death with dignity' and describing the 'anguish' which the parents were going through.

In certain respects, the media coverage of the Dawson case illustrates various criticisms levelled against the media with regard to the portrayal of the mentally ill. In general, the media coverage of both subjects had a tendency to use emotionally-laden statements, phrases and words, and a propensity toward the use of sensationalistic messages and erroneous information. These may be detrimental to the public's perception of the handicapped and distort the essential issues of the story.

The number of individuals portrayed in the present sample as suffering from a mental illness ($n=44$), was comparable to the number determined by Nunnally (1961) ($n=41$), and Wahl and Roth

(1982) (n=31). The total number of items which made reference to mental illness in general, however, varied between the three samples. Nunnally (1961) reported a total of 202 relevant items appearing on television, radio, and in newspapers and magazines. Wahl and Roth (1982) determined that there were 220 references which appeared on television. A total of 103 relevant articles comprised the sample of the present investigation. This would indicate that a higher proportion of items which contained a reference to a mentally ill individual was determined in the present study (43 percent) than was reported in Nunnally (20 percent) or Wahl and Roth (11 percent).

As a result of these media portrayals, it would seem likely that mental illness and the mentally ill have become associated with several myths and misconceptions. Perhaps the most prominent and most abusive to this group is the belief that the mentally ill are dangerous, violent, and unpredictable in their behavior.

This phenomenon has been discussed and documented in the previous research (Nunnally, 1961; Wahl and Roth, 1982), and is still apparent in the findings of the present investigation. The newspaper medium continues to actively contribute to the perpetuation of this common misconception.

Examples of this image can be seen in the following headlines which appeared in two Toronto newspapers: "Ex-mental patient kills total stranger, doctor rues release" (Globe and Mail,

September, 1980, p. 12); and, "Police call attacker a 'nut case'" (Toronto Star, August, 1983, p. A2). In the latter article, it was reported that,

"We've got a kook on our hands", one investigator said. "This is the worst kind of guy you can have, he's out there and anything can set him off".

An article appearing in the Globe and Mail (November 10, 1977, p. F11) reported that, "The public believes that if you commit a mad act you're always mad". The headline of this particular article read, "Killers put back out on streets".

Indeed, many more references to mental illness which are made in this violent and dangerous context appear in the media and were not included in the present sample because of the particular source from which articles were selected. Hence, the findings of this study likely indicate a more positive assessment of the portrayal of the mentally ill and mental health issues than the true state of media portrayals. Far more casual remarks appear in the newspaper, such as the following brief news items:

A Kalamazoo-area man was found guilty but mentally ill on charges stemming from the April 1982 shooting deaths of his estranged wife and her aunt (Detroit News, February 1984, p. 1).

The headline of this particular article was: "Kalamazoo man guilty, mentally ill in 2 killings". The headline of another article read: "Passerby, 3 cops prevent jump from overpass". It was reported in the text of this article that, "Smith was taken to

Detroit Receiving Hospital, he was kept briefly in a psychiatric ward before being released Tuesday night" (Detroit Free Press, February, 1984, p. A3). Such references, although brief and seemingly inconsequential, contribute further to the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and misconceptions of the mentally ill.

It is from these media portrayals that public attitudes toward the mentally ill are likely to germinate. It would appear that the mass media not only define for society what constitutes 'normality', but they also clearly and explicitly define what is 'abnormal' and what characteristics constitute 'mental illness'. Although a direct or causal relationship between information received through the media and subsequent attitudes and behaviors is extremely difficult to ascertain, as demonstrated by the equivocal and inconclusive findings of the research on violence in the media, it is likely that people do come to believe and accept, at least in part, the information received from the media through repeated exposure to certain images. According to Howitt (1982, p. 23),

While the media does not influence everyone in their consuming, voting and other lifestyle habits, there is a tendency to claim that certain individuals have a predisposition to be influenced by the mass media in some way.

The Nature of the Medium

A final issue which should be addressed concerns the nature of the medium selected for analysis, and the particular type of article which was selected for inclusion in the present study.

According to the literature, the print media, particularly the newspaper, is the more important source of information about health issues, science, and social science (McCall and Stocking, 1982; Kline and Tichenor, 1972; Davison, Boylan and Yu, 1972). One would expect that the depiction of the mentally ill and the coverage of mental health issues would be in keeping with the social responsibility of the newspaper medium. The results of this analysis however, indicate that the newspaper medium does convey information which contributes to the perpetuation of erroneous public misconceptions and stereotypic images of the mentally ill.

Furthermore, the articles included in the present sample may be classified as 'serious' references to mental illness and from a source perceived as 'credible', that is, from news stories. The articles were not derived from the comic section, personal advice columns, horoscope or other 'nonserious' items appearing in the newspaper. One would suspect, as did Hussain and Robins (1978) and Nunnally (1961), that references which appear in a context purported to be 'serious' would convey information that is of more value to the education of the public than the perpetuation of misconceptions.

The results of the present study, in part, fail to support the assertion that documentary-type references to mental illness, purported to be 'serious' (such as a feature story in a newspaper) would be less likely to result in the perpetuation of distorted

images of the mentally ill. However, while the articles did contain far more critical statements than recommendations, lending them to bear a 'negative' quality, there were also more humanistic statements than custodial statements. The greater proportion of these 'positive statements' may contribute to a more accepting and tolerant perception of the mentally ill within the society. It may be that as the community mental health movement gains strength and momentum, the number of humanistic statements made in the media may increase concomitantly. It could be stated with reasonable certainty that the number of humanistic statements that were made in the media ten and 20 years ago is considerably less than the number of humanistic statements found today, and will likely be less than the number of such statements which appear in the media ten and 20 years from today.

Conclusions

To summarize the results of the present analysis of the media depiction of the mentally ill, it will be useful to consider four questions posed by Howitt (1982, p. 56) regarding the treatment of a minority group in the media:

- (1) Do the media actively propagandize in favour or against the minority group?
- (2) Do the media ignore or under-represent the minority group?
- (3) Do the media present the minority group in a highly stereotyped, limited social role?
- (4) Do the mass media subtly reinforce existing beliefs about the minority group?

With respect to the first question, the results of the present study suggest that the newspapers propagandize, essentially against the mentally ill as a result of the preponderance of critical statements and the relative lack of recommendations as well as with the negative characteristics which are used to describe the mentally ill. However, the newspapers also convey a larger number of statements supportive of a humanistic perspective to the treatment of the mentally ill. These latter statements may be considered favourable to this group as they tend to promote a more positive image.

The second question poses a little more difficulty as it implies a comparison with a second issue, that is, the representation of one group or issue relative to another. Certainly, the mentally ill are not ignored in the newspaper medium. The incidence of references to mental illness reported in recent studies, in addition to the findings of the present investigation, would indicate that considerable media coverage is accorded to the mentally ill. These numbers may also be compared with the incidence of relevant media items reported in Nunnally (1961) a study conducted 30 years ago. Again, this evidence suggests that the incidence of references to mental illness has increased in recent years.

In comparison with the incidence of media references to a second minority group, the physically handicapped, Gardner and

Radel (1978) reported that, in a three week period, 64 physically handicapped persons were depicted in the media and 48 mentally ill individuals were portrayed. This would indicate a slight underrepresentation of the mentally handicapped group. However, to draw conclusions from a single study would lead to spurious generalizations. Certainly, further comparison of the frequency of references between these two groups would be necessary to provide an adequate answer to this question.

With respect to the third question, results of the present study suggest that the mentally ill are depicted in a manner which is distorted and stereotypic, and are pictured as a homogenous group. They are more likely to be portrayed as unemployed, single, living in an institution, unproductive and dependent upon social services or other people. These results also support the contention that the mentally ill are pictured in a manner which is derogatory and stereotypic. This portrays the mentally ill in a more parasitic rather than a productive social role.

The scope of the present investigation does not permit a conclusive answer to the fourth question. The present study did not attempt to identify the existing attitudes and beliefs about the mentally ill. Hence, it is beyond the realm of this thesis to evaluate the relationship between media images and commonly held beliefs.

One might speculate that the media do reinforce many beliefs

held by the public about mental illness. For example, the media tend to perpetuate the association between mental illness and violence, which is likely to be a commonly held misconception. However, the mass media also convey positive images of the mentally ill through which further and continued exposure, may eventually result in the incorporation of these images into the belief system of the public.

In conclusion, the findings of the present investigation into the portrayal of the mentally ill and mental health concepts in the newspaper, would lead one to concur with Nunnally (1961) in that a great deal of the mental health information disseminated through the media is 'self-defeating' as it tends to decrease public interest.

Results of the present study determined that the newspaper medium convey far more critical and sensational messages to the reader than information which promotes positive images of the mentally ill and mental health concepts. Nevertheless, there were also more statements which advocated community mental health care than custodial care. However, these numbers are few relative to the number of critical statements that appeared in the articles and are likely to have less of a significant impact on the reader. Indeed, the information conveyed by the humanistic statements may conflict with the individual's own conception of the mentally ill such that it would be processed out as a result of the cognitive mechanism of selectivity. However, if this cognitive mechanism

holds true, this pattern may be altered as attitudes toward the mentally ill are also shifted.

It is suggested that further research is needed to examine more thoroughly the portrayal of the mentally ill and of the treatment of mental health issues in other subsystems of the media such as film, magazines, popular books, on television, and radio and even popular music. Public attitudes toward the mentally ill stem, to a certain degree, from the information conveyed in all of the sources.

However, the nature of the information about mental illness communicated through one form of the media may differ from the information conveyed by another form. Therefore, separate analyses, similar to the investigation reported in this thesis, should be performed for each media form. Further research on the media portrayal of mental illness should also draw a distinction between references purported to be 'serious' and the 'nonserious' references that are made within the same media form.

Subsequent research should also attempt to refine the methods used to analyze the content of the media to strive for precision of measurement as well as substantial levels of reliability and validity. In this way a more comprehensive and precise appraisal of the media depiction of the mentally ill and of mental health issues may be achieved.

It was suggested in the present study that certain features

of the newspaper articles appeared to be related to the positive or negative treatment of the subject of mental illness in these articles. Further research could be conducted to isolate these relevant characteristics in order to replicate the findings of the present study and also to identify additional characteristics to understand the impact of these characteristics on the communication of mental health information on the public. Moreover, it would be an important contribution to the issue of information conveyed through the media and attitude development, to replicate Nunnally's research on the stylistic features of the message (1961), perhaps making use of actual articles derived from the newspaper to increase the generalizability of the results.

APPENDIX A

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK

APPENDIX A

Content Analysis Codebook

<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Variable Code</u>	<u>Column</u>
1) Subject number	001 - 119	1-3
2) Date of Article	day/month/year	4-9
3) Newspaper/Journal	1. Vancouver Sun 2. Calgary Herald 3. Winnipeg Free Press 4. Toronto Star 5. Globe and Mail 6. Montreal Gazette 7. Montreal Star 8. Halifax Chronicle Herald 9. Network 0. Canada's Mental Health	10
4) Type of article	1. News story 2. Feature Story 3. Other (e.g. Editorial)	11
5) Author of article	1. News reporter/columnist 2. Mental health professional/ expert 3. Editorial 4. Other (e.g. mental patient)	12
6) Location of article in newspaper	1. Front page 2. First section (on a page other than the front) 3. Editorial section 4. Science/Medicine 5. Family/lifestyle 6. Other	13
7) Tone of headline	1. Sensationalistic 2. Neutral 3. Sympathetic	14
8) Theme of article	1. Housing 2. Government policy 3. Psychiatric care 4. Specific Institutions 5. Patient Needs (e.g. legal aid, social/recreational facilities) 6. Criminality 7. Other	15

<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Variable Code</u>	<u>Column</u>
9) Approximate number of words in the article (in hundreds) _____		16-18
10) Does the headline reflect the main point (theme) of the article? 1. Accurately 2. Moderately 3. Inaccurately		19
11) Tone of the article	a. Number of critical statements _____	20-21
	b. Number of recommendations/ constructive statements _____	22-23
12) Ideology reflected in the article	a. Number of statements supporting/advocating a traditional approach to mental health care _____	24-25
	b. Number of statements supporting/advocating a nontraditional approach to mental health care _____	26-27
13) Informative value of the article	a. Number of statements which impart neutral/ nonjudgemental information _____	28-29
14) Number of mentally ill individuals portrayed in the article _____		30
15) Information about the person(s) depicted in the article (if more than one person is portrayed, use additional lines)		
a. age - _____	(assign <u>99</u> if not given)	31-32
b. sex - _____	1. Male 2. Female 9. Not given	33
c. marital status - _____	1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced/separated 4. Widowed 5. Common-law 9. Not given	34

<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Variable Code</u>	<u>Column</u>
d. occupation -	1. Professional 2. Skilled worker 3. Unskilled worker 4. Student 5. Housewife 6. Unemployed 9. Not given	35
e. residence -	1. With family 2. Alone in house/apartment 3. Group home 4. Institution 5. Share house/apartment 6. Other 9. Not given	36
16) Information about the disorder		
a. type of disorder -	1. Neurosis 2. Psychosis 3. Schizophrenia 4. Personality disorder 5. Other 9. Not given	37
b. prognosis -	1. Hopeful/positive 2. Moderate improvement 3. Hopeless/negative 9. Not given	38
c. symptoms -	1. Bizarre (delusions, hallucinations, etc.) 2. Moderately bizarre 3. Mild (phobia, anxiety) 9. Not given	39
d. etiology -	1. Organic 2. Environmental 3. Other 9. Not given	40
e. treatment -	1. Psychotherapy 2. Medication 3. Physical therapy (e.g. ECT, psychosurgery) 4. Combination 5. Other 9. Not given	41

APPENDIX B
A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

A Note on Methodology

One consideration should be emphasized regarding the methodology of the present study. Nunnally (1961) raised an issue with regard to the particular findings of a study examining the effects of stylistic characteristics of a message on preference levels. He remarked that results of the stylistic analysis of the content of various messages yielded a preponderance of 'bad' elements and that relatively few 'good' elements were determined. Nunnally concluded that this result may in fact be due to an artifact of the particular measure of tone. He noted that, "One explanation may be that the rater found it easier to identify the 'bad' elements" (p. 186). As an alternate hypothesis, Nunnally asserted further, "It may be that, in fact, evaluation in messages is more often negative than positive". (p. 186)

Indeed, it may have been easier for the rater in the present study to identify critical statements in the newspaper articles than recommendations because of the operational definitions adopted for the relevant terms of 'positiveness' and of 'negativeness'. An alternate explanation of these results, as Nunnally suggested, is that the newspaper articles do convey more critical statements than recommendations.

Support for the latter hypothesis may be derived from the analyses of the newspaper group with the comparison group, the journal articles. It was determined that, in the journal sample, a

greater concentration of recommendations were found ($\bar{n}=1.34$), than the concentration of critical statements ($\bar{n}=.84$). These findings suggest that this method of assessing the tone of a message, although similar to the measure of tone adopted by Nunnally, may not be inherently biased toward the identification of negative elements.

Furthermore, one of the functions of the media is to report the ills of society as they occur. The newspaper is not required to seek out viable solutions to the problems in order to present them to the public. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to make the assertion that more critical statements will be found in the newspaper than recommendations.

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