HANDBOOK

GENERAL GUIDELINES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIVE TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

by

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and

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Preface

This handbook has been produced under the auspices of the Canada Department of Communications. It has followed seven years of investigations of the impact of television upon northern Indian communities. It forms a response to two primary findings of that research. First, it is an acknowledgement that Native programming itself is essential to the ultimate aspirations of Native people, figuring as a new vehicle of communications in the normal conduct of their daily lives, self-assuring identity, and protecting a natural balance in cultural change. Secondly, it supports attempts by Native groups to respond to the stressful content of general television which they often reject, by promoting content more in harmony with their own idiom, more satisfying because of its practical role in life, and more in accord with the traditional elements of thought and belief still cherished by many.

This book will attempt to show the "do's and don't's" of Native programming at a general level. It should be considered a basic set of guidelines in which the concept of "Native" is roughly equivalent to "non-Western". Most of its thrust will follow this central concept by demonstrating the distinction between Native and non-Native so that choice becomes possible. This is vitally important because television is a high technology invention by the urban-industrial world and has been so far a colossal power in diffusing the culture of its origin.

Many institutions, agencies and individuals have helped in the development of both data and ideas used in forming this handbook. While most of the technical studies of television impact have been done in Manitoba, Canada, notably at the Jackhead, Norway House, and Oxford

House Indian Reserves, much has also been learned elsewhere. The Saskatchewan Federation of Indians at Saskatoon provided important help, as did the All Pueblo Tribal Council in Alberquerque, New Mexico. Valuable data has been provided by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. We are indebted also to Gil Cardinal and Access Alberta for data on their programming development. Further afield, the Pacific Telecommunications Council in Honolulu, Hawaii provided the opportunity to directly discuss Native interests in television development with people from Japan, Fiji, Samoa, the Carolines, Guam, and other areas of the Pacific. This breadth of contact has made it clear that central themes are emerging. To my co-author, Dr. Gary Granzberg goes credit for the careful scientific design which conditioned the research leading to this document. To Christopher Hanks, an ardent Algonkian field worker, is accorded gratitude for many years of sensitive ethnology. Valuable assistance was also provided by Cecil Pereira, Department of Sociology, University of Winnipeg, and by Janet Cameron, former Executive Secretary of the Cross-Cultural Communications Program. Finally, it is fitting to thank the University of Winnipeg for its many years of support in these endeavors.

Jack Steinbring
Winnipeg
January 21, 1981

PART I

Pan-Indian Cultural Factors Critical to the Development of Effective Native Programming

Chapter 1

Introduction

All over the world today instant television communication has produced confrontation between radically contrasting value systems. These confrontations may be seen in two ways. There are the oppositions between Western culture and non-Western culture at a national level, for example American and Egyptian; and, there is the opposition between Western culture and aboriginal or "Native" culture, for example Canadian and Cree. The latter is a distinction of far greater depth. Native groups, within their national identities, have only recently begun to express themselves in connection with the use of television, usually advocating alternatives to the unacceptable elements of Western television content. Many perceive these contrasts to be in attitudes toward elders, relationships with children, spiritual beliefs, concern for material things, the role of money, respect for nature, attitudes toward health and death, and sexuality, and countless other things imbedded in the content of television. As positive values are implied in the expression of these things in general television content, they become potential models for change in a free communications system. Without control over what is received, especially by the young, cultural loss becomes a very threatening prospect. In some areas of the world, as among some Inuit of Canada, people are flatly refusing the invasion of this high technology and the social, psychological, and economic changes it can bring. On the other hand, in some areas, like rural Japan, television has become, through small scale community cable systems, an instrument of cultural continuity. Everything depends upon who runs it

when it comes into areas not previously served.

This last observation has complex implications. We can easily see that if the Hollywood-made, "violence-sex" formula dominates general television content, many Native people capable of making decisions about reception will reject it. They, even like some urban North Americans today, will find it a tasteless pandering to raw human emotion. On the other hand, people living in any non-Western cultural setting, like Canadian Inuit or Indian villages, or a cluster of highland Peruvian towns, may develop their own local television service. This may feature practical, direct communication, news, local cultural and political events, or educational services -- all things critical to the local setting. Normally these populations could not afford either the Hollywood programming or even the sophisticated equipment necessary to bring it in. Most cases fall between these two extremes and television impact on culture will vary directly according to the motives of those who initiate and manage television in non-Western settings. If this development and management is in the hands of outsiders, it is likely that their cultural persuasion and preconceptions about television's role will dominate. If Native people have sufficient expertise in the technology and are inspired to use television as an "internal" instrument of their own background culture, external influences can be greatly muted. The situation, however, is not this simple. Many Native people today are adopting Western values, ideas, and behaviours. The result is that most people form a changing composite of both Native and Western elements in all these categories. Television being a peculiarly Western invention, those Native persons having most familiarity with its technological and communicative properties often have advanced schooling in

a Western setting and have adopted the Western modes toward television use. There are, after all, no other models. The rest of the world has shown us now that this need not be. People may not be greatly acculturated by simply learning telecommunications technology or, even the arts of it. In the profoundly urban-American environment of Honolulu, a full time Japanese television channel broadcasts material mainly of concern to people of Japanese cultural background. Of course, Japanese Americans form 40% of the Hawaiian population. In Japan itself, the same distinctions as those between Canadian urban life and remote Cree or Inuit life are recognized. Aided by a general sophistication in communications technology, some Japanese fishing villages use cable television entirely as an instrument of their non-urban culture. It handles their political and cultural events, news, the ever important weather, crises like earth-quakes, and direct local communication in matters like deaths and weddings. The operators of these services are from the communities, and are providing the people with precisely the content they want. The operations are economically viable because they are not dependent upon large scale national technology and programming. We might say that they are "operating on a shoestring", but nobody is complaining.

Culture

Before we go on, it is well to reflect on what is meant by "culture". Cultures are people who live together and share a language, as well as a whole set of institutions reflecting all the significant formalized behaviors of the group, to include their family and social organization, economic life, the way they raise their children (or handle any age-group for that matter), their arts, their history, and even

their psychology. And, all these things interact, influencing each other as change may effect any one. Cultures are alive. They are always changing to meet human needs and aspirations. In this period of history, we are all conscious of rapid and profound change, and the evolution of technology is thought to be at the bottom of most of it. Television is one aspect of this technology, but it is more influential than others because (1) it alters the whole institution of communication, and (2) because it engages an added sensory dimension. Together, these two factors provide the culture-threatening power base of general television as an external culture diffuser.

The technology of television itself is not threatening. So long as it is used by and for any cultural grouping it enhances communications in that grouping and may even be seen to strengthen and sustain it. The content of transmissions is by far the most critical thing. It alone, through the acceleration of impact by binary sensory stimulation, can provide alternative models for belief and behavior. These models, as they may variously come to be tested in non-Western settings, provide the basis for stress and change. The only way in which people of non-Western background can control this (not necessarily stop it) is by running television themselves. In many areas of the world today, modest steps in this direction are being taken. Some Arctic peoples have rejected general television and have embarked upon Native programming development. The same is true in parts of Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and among North American Indians.

In North America, however, Native peoples live side by side with the culture that evolved this new system of communication and largely

influenced its modes of content. Acculturation among Native peoples in North America is and has been toward this general model. The result is that Native people trained in the media are often less sensitive than traditionalists to the potential impact of contrasting cultural content. For example, an Indian organization in the Southwestern United States, despite the fact that it has some of the deepest roots on the continent, not only uses essentially Western content and mode in its programming, but actually hires Whites to do it! A far better arrangement is seen in a Western Canadian Native organization which has all Native personnel in all phases of the operation. These people have been well trained, and are continuously working toward a fuller satisfaction of the Native populations they reach. But, there are still plenty of problems.

Not the least of these is money. Canadian Natives are almost entirely dependent on the federal government for their nearly every material need. For a time television may actually have been seen as a means of acculturating them and thus ultimately reducing the "burden". The economy has not allowed for much media expansion, and money is short for those already running their own media operations. This is leading to serious thought about adopting commercial advertising on Native stations, all of them so far without commercials. There is, of course, no reason for this not to happen. The problem lies in the fact that advertising epitomizes the most flagrant contradictions of traditional Native values, not just in Canada, but throughout the world. Materialism so dominates hard core advertising that it has become universally repugnant -- even to the Americans who invented it. Selling is selling, so it will not be easy to develop "appropriate" commercial advertising.

There is another problem facing the western Canadian group, as it does many other Native groups throughout the world. This problem centres on the question of how one is to know what the people want. This is a research question, and the answering of it requires that the persons responsible for content get down to the "grass roots" and ask people their preferences in sufficiently large numbers so as to be meaningful. In one survey the authors did, every household in an entire community was consulted, several times. But research design, and the facilities to carry it out, reach conclusions, and prove them, is practically never a part of Native programming operations in Canada. Even if it were, there would still be one major problem involving content preference for Native people. There is a basic division between those who live in the easily accessible urban centres, and those who live in the scattered, remote reserves. In the city, the problem may be further broken down into families who regard themselves as "Native" and those who don't. For reserves, there is a further distinction between road-connected and non-road-connected, and every community may be divided along lines similar to those we mention for the city. To handle the question of preference as a guide to content, ongoing research has to be implemented, just as it is for the urban world.

This discussion raises another point which has a bearing on the title of this handbook. In Canada, there is an increasing political split between people of aboriginal ancestry, and those of mixed background who are not on official band roles. Those of direct, traceable aboriginal ancestry and who also are official members of bands ("treaty") now often use the term "Indian" instead of "Native" to identify themselves.

"Native" is the term more broadly used throughout the world to denote original peoples so far as history knows, but in Canada it is coming to denote either people of mixed ancestry or it is used as a collective term for both Indians and the Metis (people of mixed background and "non-status" under Canadian law). We have used the term "Native" on the broader world-level application in this book, and with the further understanding that most of the principles expressed as guides to television content will probably apply nearly equally to non-status Native people in Canada. Given the political and economic situation in Canada as it applies to Native populations, it is quite unlikely that Native programming will ever be significant among the non-status divisions.

In summary, we now see some of the cultural, political, social, and economic issues which can condition the way in which the whole question of Native programming can be approached. We have a general idea of what culture is and how it lies at the base of Native programming development. This handbook, of course, is culturally oriented, and, in the next chapter we will explore in depth some of the measures of culture in television impact, and how these can be used in program development.

Chapter 2

Culture as a Key Parameter in Native Programming

There are several ways in which a sensitivity to culture can make television more meaningful and useful to Native populations. First, we must understand and respond to the roles it plays in community, family, and personal life. In other words, how is it used? Secondly, we must try to appreciate the particular way that general television is perceived -- what it is understood to be. In this area, we may be starting to ask whether it is simply a communications device -- or, more than that. Finally, these ways include the whole range of transmitted content. While we certainly cannot ignore the first two (which are always somehow related to each other and to the latter one), it is this content itself which has been shown to be by far the most critical. This is because it is much more than a simple transmission of imagery. For those not sophisticated in Western thought and values, it can become a source of great psychological and ideological confusion.

One pervasive, universal distinction between native and Western values (and the behaviour emanating from these values) lies in concern for material things, their role in life. Nearly all of the original people on all the continents of the world remain apart, for many cultural reasons, from the historical processes which have led to the urban-technological-industrial world of modern Western man. Materialism is one of the terms ordinarily used to characterize this world. By contrast, Native populations are generally non-materialistic. They are not acquisitive, getting things for the sake of having and admiring them, using them as symbols in competitive schemes of social and political

life. From one moral stance in Western society, we may generalize that Native peoples are more modest. This carries over into the non-material. Among Western peoples, great energy is expended in producing and acquiring things. The system is competitive and aggressive and conscious assertiveness is necessary on the part of people acting within it. This is lacking in many non-Western settings and the contrasting passivity is often a definitive trait among Native peoples. This is so clear among the Native peoples of sub-Arctic Canada and the Southwestern United States that they have become models of it in university textbooks the world over.

In producing and transmitting television content, we are confronted with the prospect of what happens when assertive, aggressive, competitive, acquisitive models are presented to unexposed (or newly exposed) populations who are non-assertive, passive, non-competitive, and non-acquisitive. In the only long term scientific study yet done to measure this, the proven conclusion is that unless there is a highly organized and concerted counter-effort, aggression will increase, sometimes to disastrous proportions. Even within the core of Western urban television consumption, it is now known that television violence causes social disorder. The National Coalition on Television Violence reported sixteen suicides directly attributed to a single movie shown on television in 1980.

The potential impact of general television violence can be increased in some cultural settings because of unique characteristics of culture. Among these, the "arctic hysterias" would stand out. These consist of berserk phases of unpredictable, violent behavior associated with circumpolar cultures like that of the Inuit. Profoundly

important from the standpoint of violence in general television is the fact that these hysteric episodes are based upon imitative behaviour!

The "hard sell", reflected in many commercials of general television comes to symbolize both the acquisitiveness and psychological aggression of Western life. Behind it lie armies of high technology and other specialized personnel, all committed to achieving success -- selling something. The techniques employed are so subtle that even the most central members of urban society are not aware of what is happening. It is, for example, growing commonplace that the programs themselves, thought to be supported by the commercials, are actually aimed at reinforcing the commercials! At a recent conference on telecommunications one participant stated that "the only way that one can logically understand commercials is as if they are a pack of lies"! Generally, Native people despise commercials, probably not much more so than urban populations, but for a few different reasons.

Commercials make the program discontinuous. This interferes in the extra concentration of those who do not use the language of transmission as their first language. Some commercials are especially repugnant for cultural reasons. Feminine napkin commercials create resentment among people with deep avoidance traditions pertaining to menstruation (true in many Native societies). Overt sexuality in commercials parallels the case in general American programming (and the cases in which other nations copy it). This too becomes offensive in societies in which sexuality is not obsessive. Arrogance, and competitiveness are common themes (or means of presentation) in commercials, and portray personalities and elements of life that are unacceptable in many Native cultures. Some commercialism in television

promotes a normal image of affluence, totally contrasting with the circumstances of the Native viewer. Automobile commercials may arouse expressions all the way from ridicule to frustration by people who live in remote, roadless areas with little likelihood of getting cars. Soap is cheap to make, and lots of companies probably spend more on advertising it than making it. The only controlled pre- and post-television scientific studies yet done to determine buying trends following exposure to general television show people buying more soap, shampoos, cosmetics than ever before. The same is true of phonograph records, and it seems that the kinds of music bought may have more to do with intensity of commercial exposure than to former preference. Country-Western, long favored in some areas, appears to have declined in favor of "rock" which has more television promotion.

All this, and a lot more, is subject to recent trends of study in what is called "television literacy". This has to do with determining the meaning and truth (reality) or non-truth in general television programming. So, we have asked viewers whether or not we could actually visit Steve McGarrett if we made a trip to Honolulu. The answer has often been yes. Television is frequently regarded as absolutely true, more, of course, by traditionally-oriented Native people than by others. Thus a greater faith may attach to something in a commercial than might be the case in urban centres. Even there, however, it is not uncommon to hear someone say, "That product must be pretty good, they certainly advertise it a lot". To some, the implication here would be that successful sales, because of a good product, have led to the capacity to more vigorously advertise. "Media literacy" has to go deeper than the media"!

In some ways the gap between television commercial advertising and Native television audiences reminds us of earlier days in education when the "Dick and Jane" readers were used in remote day school settings. The Native youngsters saw the father figure coming home from work in a big automobile, being met by his neatly dressed children (and "cute" dog), and proceeding from the concrete driveway into the gleaming kitchen, full of electrical appliances, where mother had been preparing the evening meal. Many, if not most, had never seen a car, and there was no electricity -- not to mention concrete pads and suburban houses. One of the authors travelled to a remote set of villages just after Christmas one year. The churches had sent toys and clothes in for the families and two youngsters had gotten ahold of some tiny plastic cars. They did not know what they were, so they tied them to strings at the ends of sticks and whirled them around their heads and in the snow!

Candy and soft drinks have achieved prominence in commercial advertising in recent years, and these pose a special problem. The consumption of ever increasing amounts of raw sugar among Native groups has led to widespread health problems -- now very adequately documented by extensive medical studies. The question is, will increased consumption follow from television exposure and lead to increases in already large scale dental decay and other disorders. Certain companies have promoted infant formulas, the use of which has led to extensive abandonment of breast feeding. This, in turn, has led to higher infant mortality because the formula was not economically feasible, and because bottle feeding poses greater hygienic problems than breast feeding, the cultural norm. Disposable diapers are another recent trend

in Native communities with general television. This results in littering, with potential health hazards, and redistribution of family income, already disordered by television influences to a point of failing to meet some basic needs.

According to research reported by the Canadian Journal of Public Health, the Inuit have experienced most of the above problems without television. Respiratory infections, diarrhea, inflammation of the middle ear have followed trends away from breast feeding. Dangerously high levels of cholesterol are found among those who no longer follow the Inuit lifestyle. Among the causes of extreme dental problems is the decline in use of fluoride within sea food. In situations like this, general television with junk food and soft drink commercials can be threatening to life itself.

There are other ways in which culture can be seen to influence perceptions of television quite apart from content. During the early days of our studies in Manitoba, we often had traditionally oriented people complaining to us that the White man had stolen television from the Indians. This related to a number of shamanistic practices based upon strong beliefs in long distrance communication through rituals. The main one of these was the "Shaking tent", an event involving the summoning of spirits in a swaying cylindrical tent. The shaman used the spirits to communicate across great distances. Other such traditions of long range communication involved divination with polished pryites or mica mirrors, and, in many cases, simply deep concentration in semi-dream states. The effect of these powerful traditions upon the introduction of television lies mainly in the special truth accorded them. This truth becomes attached to television. Television literacy among

Native populations, in Canada at least, will be more difficult to achieve because of traditional views of reality in connection with this long-distance communication.

To come to the final one of the three categories we started with, much depends upon how the culture comes to use television. In Western society, television started as a means of entertainment or diversion, and, to a large extent, remains that way. News, of course, has become important, but is still very much secondary to the many dramas and sports events. Western culture has it this way, but there is no requirement that it be so in other cultures. Thus intervillage communication with news and local events, along with some educational services might become the formula for some Inuit areas of the arctic, an area where Anik Satellite exposure brought a vehement rejection of standard Western programming. In fact, in most areas of the world where the integrity of traditional cultures has made choice possible, local programming has become the rule. Even if eventually, general television may come to these regions, culture has acted to mediate the impact. The result is a graduality of program expansion, while the centres of Western culture are themselves changing television content to a more balanced format. There are evidences that urban populations are beginning to question commercialism, and the violence-sex formula of dramatic programming too.

Chapter 3

Key Cultural Factors in Effective Canadian Native Programming

Part 1: Traditions of Communication

In our introduction to cultural parameters, we listed several Canadian Native traditions of long distance communications, and suggested that these conditioned the initial experience of television and started as it were, minor traditions around television itself. These latter, of course, are not explicit but the results have been found in many tests over many years. These provide a certain strength to the role of television in a Native group, making it, as it were, not entirely a thing of external inspiration. As we mentioned earlier, some people actually accused us of "stealing television from the Indians".

The value of all this lies in the integration and development or traditional Native communications with television. Storytelling certainly plays a prominent part in this. Non-literate societies preserve their entire history through this means, and the central processes of education are carried on through it: religious, moral, and social knowledge. The philosophy and psychology of peoples adapted to diverse areas are reinforced by the content and manner of storytelling. Such intricate and subtle considerations as the very nature of reality are taught and reinforced through storytelling. For Inuit and Indian populations of Canada, transformation, based upon an essential unity of nature, is a common element of stories. Anything or anybody may become anything or anybody else. World view is mobile, transient, not dependent upon immutable categories as is that of Western man. It remains to be seen how this will ultimately effect an Inuit's view of television, but

it seems likely that world view, along with all its philosophical and psychological ramifications will stay intact longer, if the traditional devices for its teaching and reinforcement are aided by television. Thus storytelling can become an important part of local television content. In this way it can be one of the means by which television can be used by the culture to perpetuate its deeper values. Some Native organizations like Alberta Access are already experimenting with storytelling format in educational television.

So it may be with shamanism. Here too there are traditional analogies to television and again, with sensitivity, it may be possible to integrate shamanism and television. In all Native Canadian and Inuit socieities, shamanism was the prime means for accomplishing live long distance communication and the prime idiom for interpreting dreams and good or bad luck. The meanings and functions of shamanism still continue to serve as a reference point for relating to television and often provide the basis by which the impacts of television, whether plus or minus are rationalized.

Part 2: Negative Expectations of Western Man and His Technology

The whole history of Native-non-Native interaction is negatively viewed by most Native people. Non-Native populations brought alcohol, guns, venereal disease, smallpox, Christianity, inappropriate technologies, contradictory values, government intervention, loss of lands, environmental disruption, and almost complete dependency. To some, Western medicine and money remain debatable "goods" as well.

From this kind of history, Native expectations about television will be characterized, at some levels, with suspicion. The Inuit, beyond all others, have been most expressive of this, most sensitive to the

content, and most apprehensive about yet more eroding influences upon their cultural life.

No group, however, has yet been able to resist at least an initial fascination, technically known as the "novelty effect". The decisions mentioned above most usually occur after at least some exposure. People must know from experience the influence general television can have in a non-Western setting. To some Inuit, this test produced the decision to remove television altogether. In other areas of the world, whole developing nations have decided to reject television, knowing its effect in other, related non-Western settings. The important thing here is whether or not groups are sufficiently integrated to reach a collective decision like this. For our purposes, they must also advance beyond this point and adopt television as an instrument of their own culture. This is happening elsewhere in the world and it is happening because general television has been seen to create too much cultural damage. Clearly, the best defense against what is, or what is expected to be, negative Western influence is to control the media itself. This satisfies the concept of self-determination and enhances the group by making television "their own thing".

Part 3: Factionalism and Solidarity

In the last part, we alluded to the degree of integrity needed to produce a decision to reject (none is needed to accept) general television. Herein lies many problems for those who commence the development of large scale Native programming. All non-Western societies are in a state of change, much of it based upon their perceptions of Western models. It is true that, on a world scale, the most "remote" societies like those of the arctic and of the tropics

are changing less rapidly than those in constant daily relationship with the urban-industrial world. In northern North America, a gradient of culture retention could be hypothesized along a north-south axis, the Inuit of the arctic forming the most conservative, culturally integrated Native group on the continuum. But, even these people have experienced the establishment of government defense installations, mining, whaling, oil exploration and development, modern hospitals, schools, Family Allowance, Christian missions, Western forms of architecture in government-provided homes, snowmobiles, fluctuations of the fur market, radios, tape-recorders, factory-made clothes, tabacco, alcohol, soft-drinks, and innumerable other things. None of these alone, or even collectively, will necessarily change the core elements of a culture. But, they certainly create differences of opinion about what should or should not be taken in at a general level. Thus some might find it desirable to have Christian church services broadcast. Strong traditionalists might object to this. On the other hand, recent research has shown an alliance between traditionalists and certain fundamentalist religious groups among Indian populations. In these latter cases, it is conceivable that fundamentalist church broadcasting would produce a sustaining effect. In the urban centres, these churches already broadcast on public access stations -- the performers being entirely Native.

Some people have passed through the educational system which has been implemented throughout almost all Native peoples. This formal system of learning, its structure, its action, and its content form, and always have formed, the main highway of acculturation. This is difficult for Western people to see. Education is so basic to values and psychological makeup that statements of it being an acculturational

vehicle must often be met defensively. In light of this, consider that the experience is formal; one person with great authority teaching a group at one time. Beyond this there is even structure in the placement of people, and the order in which material is disseminated. There is rigid timing, and shape to the place of learning. There are greatly detailed rules about how one learns, and also what information is presented and how it is presented. Traditional "education" among non-Western peoples, particularly those of arctic and sub-arctic Canada, is completely contrasting with this. It is informal, often one-to-one, sometimes outdoors, handled through example and direct experience, administered by older family members in the Native language. Analogy and metaphor characterize the teaching of principle. The logic behind these transmissions is fundamentally different from that of Western man. As opposed to causal it is fatalistic -- imbued with many super-natural considerations. Nuances of the language help convey these meanings, and the adoption of a Western language tends to eliminate them. Along with this, causality is taught, because it is basic to Western logic and to the Western teachers, who believe in it, and who cannot teach any other way. In fact, the subject matter like that of math, science and even history is not possible without it. All these, and the thinking behind them are the product of thousands of years in the cultural development of Western man. The important point about all this is that Native populations have been variously influenced by Western education. Normally, the more they have, the more acculturated they are. This leads to the diversity of opinion we mentioned. Some, because of higher levels of Western education will find certain television content desirable, while those with less education will

reject them.

Carrying on with the same idea, those Native people most directly connected with television development will have comparatively high levels of Western education. If the situation in other world culture areas prevails, this need not mean that Western bias will greatly influence programming. Despite much education and sophistication in television technology, people of Native background have accurately gauged the expectations of their viewers and have worked to make television a cultural instrument. In Canada, there is another factor which can aid in this kind of development. Both Inuit and Indian populations are highly adaptive, resilient, and capable of turning externally inspired innovations to their peculiar advantage. The perceptions and uses of general television by the Algonkians show this clearly, as do the efforts of Inuit groups to avoid general television and establish their own systems. Television thus becomes part of the overall adaptational strategy of the culture, with both its development and its uses satisfying identified group goals.

To some general communications theorists of today, any kind of control over the media becomes an infringement to basic human freedom. Particularly, control is a violation of "freedom of speech". The danger in control at the local level would be seen by these persons as a potential for group control, and manipulation by those in charge of the media. At a world level, sometimes (as in Iran) this has been absolutely true. However, profound cultural distance is but rarely a factor in these cases. The same language is spoken, the economy is based on money, the religion is the same, the cultural background of the people is not diverse. In Canada, at least, the cultural distance

is so great that culture itself is really threatened. Admittedly, it is a choice between two kinds of freedom. With clear control over political manipulation brought into the initiation of Native programming, factionalism will not constitute a debilitating problem, and the worst effects of cultural control as a potential violation of free speech. As the theory and regulations pertaining to this evolve throughout historical experience, a clearly articulated set of principles (probably very detailed) can be developed. It is a price that will have to be paid for cultural control.

Part 4: Adaptational Strategies

At several points in the course of these guidelines we have alluded to adaptation, suggesting that there is continuity in this from ancient times. The more "adaptive" culture is, the longer it can survive as an integrated entity. The cultures of Arctic and sub-Arctic Canada have long histories. The Algonkians of sub-Arctic Canada, in the profoundly inaccessible country of the Canadian Shield, are thought to represent at least 7,000 years of continuous culture history. The relatively unacculturated people of this background represent sets of ideas and psychological co-ordinations which have permitted high mobility, resilience, and balanced change. In such a system, despite many disruptions, external cultural elements can be absorbed with a minimum of stress. In other settings, such elements could be destructive. Long term research has shown that the more integrated a culture or community, the more capable it is in acting to absorb rather than being overwhelmed. Thus urban opportunities like good medical service, more efficient welfare programs, greater security in winter, form usable elements for Algonkians, perfectly in keeping with their

pragmatic adaptive rationale. Studies have shown their adoption of television to follow this at a deeper level, wherein television content satisfies less conscious needs related to psychological and social security.

The Inuit too are adaptive. Their history is much shorter than that of the sub-arctic, and their environmental adaptation is one of the most specialized in the world. However, the environmental extreme to which they have historically adapted has required unique technological innovations. The capacity to produce these innovations, and the unique small group sociology allied with them in the adaptation combine to produce the core of Inuit culture. The social history of continuous life in the arctic, because of its specialization, will allow less penetration than more generalized cultural adaptations. It becomes essential, in cases like this, for defenses to be thrown up quickly. Tests of these kinds of culture in the face of general television will be great. It is instructive that the Inuit of Canada have done more than other Native groups in Canada to develop Native programming, and also to inspire the large networks like the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to produce some appropriate programming for them. The fragility of Inuit culture is felt, and adaptation is expressed in the Native programming effort. If Native programming becomes an Inuit cultural instrument, then its content will be a reinforcement of central Inuit values. It will strenthen the culture, and allow changes to be gradual and manageable within Inuit adaptive strategies.

Adaptation to Western influence is highly variable among the non-Western cultures of the world. Some become utterly accommodating,

some appear to be but have internal resistance, and others are defiantly hostile. At the level of any one culture, all these may be found among sociopolitical divisions, families and individuals. Solidarity occurs when one or another extreme is present -- all for, or all against. The healthiest possible sign for integrated cultures is to see them capable of vigorous defense. The Inuit are making a collective case for this, much as are many other well identified cultures of the world. The urgent need they all feel in this form of adaptation is resistance to the hypnotizing Western models of general television. In the Pacific this content is referred to as "L.A. culture", identifying the colossal power of Hollywood.

Part 5: Social and Communal Interests

The models of social and family life beamed out on general television can be nothing but confusing to Native peoples the world over. Teenage prostitution, homosexuality, perversion, rape, incest, wife beating, child abuse, separation, divorce, illegitimacy, abortion, abandonment, suicide, infanticide, matricide, patricide, are part of any week of general television programming with an "L.A." source. The Native cultures receiving this array have fundamentally contrasting family values and behaviors. Families are close knit and constitute the wellspring of all social life. The family is highly structured with many intricate rules of marriage, inheritance, residence, authority, and responsibility. Normally, Native groups feature a very high order of family integrity reinforced by reciprocity and co-operation. It would be plain to all what would happen if non-Western cultures perceived general television primarily as a "teacher".

Non-Western cultures are, from a large scale historical

perspective, more successful at maintaining themselves than is Western culture. This is demonstrated by the fact that they all descend from more ancient traditions of cultural life, and that they are still clearly distinguishable in many ways from urban-industrial society. Western culture differs profoundly from them in its fragmented and often contradictory nature. Non-Western culture is conservative, changing slowly, maintaining itself, allowing no radical alterations which might lead to its breakdown.

Among the basic devices used by arctic and sub-arctic Native peoples in cultural maintenance, is another fundamentally contrasting mode of social behavior. Generally, we can refer to this as co-operation. Small, face-to-face groups with a subsistence economy, living in marginal environments must evolve internal co-operation to a sophisticated level in order to survive. Thus family ties govern the distribution of food in areas where famine may often threaten. This co-operation becomes institutionalized behavior, further enhancing group solidarity. Etiquette in face-to-face societies becomes highly evolved. Tensions are intolerable, always a threat to group success in precarious circumstances. While independence and individuality are also critical to economic survival in these concepts, they are subordinated in the distributional pattern to the societal and familial modes. This relates to the entirely different attitudes of non-Western peoples toward the material things. The Western model portrayed by most general television (and virtually all the commercials) is competitive and acquisitive. In a great many instances, these qualities are explicitly valued in general television. If, as some theorists proclaim, television is by its nature promotional of all its content, and viewers adopt it as a

source of alternative behavior models, then change is inevitable on a very significant scale.

Competition, as modeled by general television, features a kind of personal aggression that is almost entirely lacking in certain Native cultures. Certainly this is true of the Arctic and sub-Arctic areas of Canada. Here, long term studies of non-aggressive personality have become universal examples in social psychology. The aggressive models of general television have been clinically proven to be capable of increasing aggression and stress in exposed groups, expecially those not well integrated. To populations whose only aggression is handled through gossip, shamanism, games, music, and dancing, the violence of general television has given rise to beatings, shootings, knifings, and general instability based upon new perceptions of the self. Much of this, of course, is augmented by alcohol, and the distress of cultural breakdown and loss.

Part 6: Concepts of Time

Theorists on television impact have recently been paying more more attention to the influence of rigid timing, an absolute component of television experience. Most non-Western cultures, and especially those like the Inuit and Indian have no basic familiarity with lineal time. Time in such Native concepts is non-lineal, based on seasonality, unique events, repetitions (cycles) and is slow paced. Employers of Native people often become impatient when a Native worker shows up late for work, or, without warning, takes a few days off. While this is less of a problem today than in the past, it is a reflection of the gap between temporal concepts. The time-clock becomes a repugnant symbol of contrasting values in relation to time. The freer, Native mode

is relaxed, unstructured, flexible -- in keeping with the need for such a concept in the original adaptation. We don't yet know how clearly this may be tied to the psychology, but chances are that it has some structural connection because there is often much effort to resist the effects of Western time.

There is no question that non-Western people have become at least superficially familiar with clock time. The question is how much is this effecting their lives. Whatever kind of television comes to them, it will always be ordered to the day and clock. Moreover, much of it has, and will, cram a great deal into a very short span of time, as in the commercials. Months or years of a person's life may flash by in seconds. For Native groups, time and space are perceived, from some studies, to have a different relationship than in Western thought. Distance may be described as movement through a span of cyclical (like lunar) time, not too unlike the urban motorist who lives "20 minutes from downtown". There are many intricate variations and applications of these concepts, forming together a body of contrasting thought and behavior which can be altered by external models. Perhaps the most apparent, general threat in this is the possibility of increased dependency on a fixed system while greater flexibility would offer better cultural maintenance -- and thus internal harmony and security. Much sensitive, residential research is needed in this before accommodation in television programming could be planned.

Part 7: Non-Interference

The model of causality portrayed in general Western television programming allows for intervention and manipulation in goal-oriented behavior. It is the exact opposite of fatalistic systems wherein "nature

takes its course", also commonly perceived as supernatural, or "God's will". In interpersonal relations, some cultures have come to a kind of extreme in this which results in a complete incapacity to actively interfere in anyone else's life. So advanced has this become among sub-arctic peoples of Canada that restraint to the point of bodily harm, or even death, is known. In child rearing patterns (applying also to the Inuit), non-interference takes the form of great indulgence and permissiveness. This is sometimes rationalized by explaining that harshness toward children might do harm to their yet delicate souls. One sees no verbal arguments (except under the influence of alcohol), no attempt to visibly dominate or influence another person, no threats.

This Native pattern, often reinforced by highly evolved etiquette, is profoundly contrasting with the norm of urban man as portrayed in general television. Confrontation is abhorred in many Native societies and much energy is used to avoid any hint of it. There is plenty of evidence from social work that the repressed personality of Native adults changes only moderately in urban migration so that the expected impact from television models may not be immediately overwhelming to them. However, there is much evidence that youngsters emulate the aggressive models of violent television drama.

One way in which these values clash in recently exposed communities is in relation to placing restraints upon a child's television exposure. Traditionally oriented parents initially found it impossible to impose controls over children's viewing habits. When, however, it became clear that exposure was producing aggressive behavior among the children, the traditionalists did impose controls. Interestingly,

the non-traditional families tended not to. At first this was thought of as a very considerable contradiction, but as more came to be learned about the adaptive capacities of the culture, it became evident that the traditionalists were, in fact, using a flexibility in response evolved over countless generations. They were capable of making a decision which favoured cultural continuity, and they would take their chances on the immaturity of children's souls, and, if need be, all that went with it. Again, much research needs to be done to provide a clearer picture of this and its long term results, but most studies to date definitely show that traditionalists (at least among Canadian Indians) show the least effects of general television.

Part 8: Practical-Concrete Orientations

The traditional life of arctic and sub-arctic Native peoples was based upon a marginal subsistence economy which operated through an extremely efficient level of habitat adaptation. In order to succeed in their environment the people had to intimately understand and practically use all of their material surroundings. Everyday behavior employed vast concrete knowledge and direct applications of it. Neither the degree of leisure, nor the nature of the expedient Native logic permitted abstraction of the Western kind. What abstraction is found in these logical systems is verbalised almost exclusively in metaphor or found implied in the active arena of adaptive behavior. Thus principles based upon conditions of nature (thawing and freezing, wet and dry, bright and hazy, heavy or light, etc., etc.) would arise to make certain forms of trapping or hunting, or plant collecting possible over great distances. The supernatural, given over to infinite abstraction in the Western religions, is entirely handled in concrete

terms, never really separable from concrete, easily verbalized practical foundations in nature. In fact, religion in these Native culture areas could not be seen as "supernatural" at all. Everything is natural, and there are no separations in reality as is the case in abstract Western logic. Abstraction itself is a form of separation, brought on to permit intellectual control in the manipulation of burgeoning knowledge and chaotic change in the literate culture of Western man.

Native populations knew all they needed to know about their environment. Religion, whatever its form, answered the ultimate questions of life and death -- all any other religion does -- and did so in connection with a nature one with man and his constant provider. Intellectualization under this set of conditions operated slowly to elaborate myth, ritual, technology, and the arts. Abstraction, where it does occur in Native logic always has a specific referent, as in the highly evolved use of metaphor and analogy in storytelling as an educational tool. Intellectual experience does not include sheer abstraction, or speculation lacking in concrete relevance as is commonplace in Western thought. Certainly this fact will have much to do with establishing a plane of understanding about television content. It can permit material to be understood in completely different ways from that which is intended. Ongoing research on this should be conducted to test understanding of content.

There are some limited insights on this already. Research in the sub-arctic found shows like the Muppets (profoundly popular among non-Native populations) generally unattractive. The reasons expressed centred around its being "silly". Exploring further, it was found that the animals were unnatural, and many were foreign to Native experience.

Some, like the Frog, were more widely rejected because the frog has malevolent connotation in the mythology still important to traditionalists. Stories with "real" animals (not puppets) had positive response. This, of course, relates to the practical and realistic stance in world view. Another example of this kind of problem in programming comes from an ardent (almost hostile) rejection of Canadian produced talk shows in the late 70's. While there were other reasons too, one was surely the fact that abstractions and "in-culture" nuances made up much of the largely irrelevant "talk" that made up the content of these shows. Also, they replaced late movies which, if not understood, were still entertaining because of the action. One does not have to understand a sophisticated plot, full of remote ideas as long as there are car races, shootouts, explosions, floods, earthquakes, and burning buildings to keep the viewer's attention.

Detail and mechanical precision characterize much traditional Native thought in Canada. Thus, we are all aware of the remarkable aptitudes of the Inuit in motor maintenance, or the phenomenal Algonkian memory. These characteristics can be used in television programming both to make content responsive and attractive, and to assist the development of Native programming as an "in-culture" instructional instrument. Among Algonkians, young women have shown great talent for nursing and para-medical work. This kind of experience requires the background thought we are discussing, and Native television programming can readily relate to educational efforts involving such kinds of experience.

Part 9: Literate - Non-Literate

Many Native persons have come to learn reading and writing,

in Canada mostly English. But, the societies they represent are among the non-literate ones of the world. There is absolutely nothing inferior about this. In some ways, non-literate populations maintain enormous superiority over literate ones. For example, many have better memories. This is because they are not dependent upon the memory crutch of writing. The entire Western educational system is predicated upon this bias of behavior, another way in which basic contrasts in the vital institutions becomes apparent and can effect communications. Perhaps the most obvious fallout from this in Native programming would be less written material on the screen than would be the case for non-Native audiences. Inuit and Cree have their own syllabics, and it goes without saying that they should be used when appropriate.

In non-literate socieities, all knowledge is retained by memory and mnemonic devices. This system requires the development of many sustaining and reinforcing institutions. Here again storytelling constitutes a central force. Not only is storytelling a traditional teaching device, it is also a primary institution by which collective knowledge is culturally maintained. It transmits knowledge and practical wisdom from generation to generation. This must be borne in mind when a new communications system is established within a non-literate culture. A careful watch must be made to see how it functions in relation to earlier traditions of communications behavior. One thing is known. It will definitely be thought of in relation to past experience. This is true of every act of mankind.

Part 10: Verbal - Non-Verbal

While we can divide all societies up between literate and non-literate, we can also divide the non-literate (and a very few literate ones) into verbal and non-verbal categories. Basically, this

means that some groups talk more than others in their patterns of communication. Speech, we are beginning to find out, is not just "talking". It can involve postures, gestures, positions in groups, the use of graphic symbols, and countless other infinitely subtle means of communicating information, ideas, and, perhaps most important, feelings. One of the authors lived among Algonkians one very cold winter. One typical evening, he sat on the floor among the people in a remote cabin on a bush trail. For a half-hour none of the five or six adults had spoken. The door opened, and an old woman came into the cozy circle to get warm along her trip to a more distant cabin. She sat down for twenty minutes or so without speaking, or being spoken to. She then got up, adjusted her coat, and left on her way. There was nothing odd about this. All knew where she was going, and why she had stopped by. All knew what the weather was like outside, and how she, as well as all the others, enjoyed the cozy wormth and each other's friendly company. Words were not necessary, or even appropriate. Everyone knew all they needed to know, and everyone was, in fact, having a very good time. How can this behavior be seen in relation to American (or American style) "talk shows"?

Non-verbal people think a lot, reflect, perhaps spend a lot of their time in a kind of near conscious dream state. This kind of state approaches that associated with creativity in scientifically studied persons in urban society. It involves increases in activity of the right hemisphere of the brain, an overall situation known to researchers as the "alpha state". This becomes very important to us when we learn that "alpha state" is often achieved by television viewing. Some have gone so far as to say, that television may help people

be more creative because of this. There is no knowing what really happens in the long run, but it is certain that populations having different norms for right brain-left brain activity from those of urban groups will have different responses to television.

Part 11: Taboos

In connection with the subject of menstruation in television commercials, we noted that there were powerful historical traditions relating to it and that commercials were seen by some to violate these. In fact, this involves taboos, strong general proscriptions against some kinds of behavior. In many Native groups taboos regarding menstruation, birth, and death formed powerful sanctions, the violation of which could result in calamity or even death. Such beliefs change slowly, and it appears certain that television content which suggests faulted taboos will be the source of anxiety for some traditionalists. Here detailed ethnic data must be consulted in order to assure compatible content, but such universal ones as mother-in-law avoidance, male presence at birth, certain food exclusions, and the ritually governed timing of events come immediately to mind.

It would be easy to dismiss all this as unimportant in rapidly changing situations. Some will say that these ideas are now extinct, or soon will be. The authors feel that it would be unwise to generalize in such ways and to not include consideration of such matters in Native programming development. The main reason for our concern is that persistent evidence of such things has been forthcoming at a personal level for many years of field study. These things are often nearly secret, and people are extremely reluctant to risk being held in ridicule for being "old fashioned" by those not cherishing

similar views. Thus, even people of Native background who long ago gave up such ideas, may not be aware of their retention by traditionalists. This relates back to our discussions of factionalism and solidarity. Rapport of the kind needed to communicate on the Native idiom is based mainly upon mutual respect and confidence. This kind of rapport will be needed in the development of Native programming if the more subtle and closed aspects of Native thought and feeling are to be accommodated in television content. It would be easier to downgrade such matters, but in the long run, cultural erosion will be the result. The display of aggression itself, though not quite at the level of conscious and structured taboo, has already been shown to produce such an effect.

Part 12: Television "literacy"

Most people, Native or non-Native, are television illiterate. This means that they do not perceive the meanings behind television production, or motives in content. For many children, fantasy and reality are not separable. For populations newly exposed to general television, the reality factor (as mentioned earlier) is even more important because there may be a predisposition to regard all television as "real" because of traditions about communication. It is difficult enough for people in the urban setting, with much education, to distinguish between fact and fiction in much television content, or to respond critically to various assertions, say about a product's value or a political candidate's qualifications. Minor efforts have been initiated for assisting Native children in becoming television literate in Canada, but the bulk of the responsibility remains. It would be a remarkable thing if Native television programming itself

could form the vehicle by which television literacy could be taught! Television literacy is in aboslute opposition to the control of television as a propaganda instrument. The more television literacy is taught, the less control it will have over people. The lesson we wish to teach in these guidelines if that it should have no control over the people. The people should have absolute control over it!

Chapter 5

Determinants in Television Acceptability

All of the factors discussed in Chapter 2 play some role in the acceptance of television as a means of communication, of problem solving, of entertainment, of learning, or even of status achievement. The full story of how all these factors interact in the process of receiving and using television would take a long time to explain. At this point, we will describe a few of these relationships, more or less as examples in this highly complex matter.

The Hero Figure

All age groups in any society will use the content of television differently according to their particular needs and wishes. Youngsters who are growing up naturally emulate the qulaities which they aspire to in normal psychological growth, or which the peer sub-culture has established as its models. These may not be perfectly aligned since the peer sub-culture often operates in defiance of adult generational modes. In societies experiencing transitional stress, this confrontation may be more acute than in well integrated groups with smooth generational movement. In the Native cultures of sub-arctic Canada, based as they were on the primary economic roles of men in hunting and of raging adaptations, any stress connected with role change could have serious consequences. This is precisely the case. Opportunities for men have been deteriorating for a long time, and, at the same time those of women have been increasing. The introduction of the Canadian Family Allowance, paid directly to mothers while bush-adapted economic roles for men were disappearing, set up a process of

role reversal. This was accelerated by a female emphasis in crafts. The result was role tension which often became complicated by alcohol. In some places a decline in able-bodied males followed deaths or injuries from highway crashes or hostilities. In general, there was a deterioration in the male parent figure for youngsters. Into this television brought an endless array of "macho" figures; fist fighting detectives, fast riding cowboys, fearless doctors, powerful tycoons, even benevolent giants who could throw bulldozers at the crooks. Carrying all this to the next step in our human, social ecological cycle, we see the youngsters adopting aggressive models, despite the fact that they derive from one of the world's most passive cultures. As experience with television spreads, the aggression also spreads beyond the limits of simple male adult modeling. Direct use of weapons in play, unheard of traditionally, led to many serious injuries including loss of eyes; and vandalism exploded. School burnings and smashed cars, wrecked pulp camps, malicious destruction of every kind in communities one might think to be quiet symbols of the peaceful life. "L.A." culture on general television becomes a faultless training vehicle for those susceptible to it. Native populations caught in acculturation stress, and in which the young are most severely affected, are the most susceptible on earth.

The hero on television is thus an attractive alternative to insecure and unattractive traditional models. But his attractiveness is even further augmented by the tendency to refer to dreaming and conjuring as reference points for understanding television. For these references give the television hero great strength and credence, more so than is the case in typical Western settings.

Clowns

For many years, Gilligan's Island was an extremely popular program among television-exposed Native populations of Canada. Re-runs still are. This was a light-hearted comedy in which the bungling hero almost perfectly matched the trickster of Native mythology. The trickster is a comic hero, often figuring in origin themes, but mainly used to teach principles of practical life, morality, and some history. He is always getting into trouble, usually because he faults taboos or, by impatience, inattention, or pure contrariness he louses up his instructions from his supernatural superiors. The results are comic, like a circle of old ladies tying him to a tree and urinating on his head. With Gilligan the parallels were so obvious and so complete that everyone enjoyed it. Again, when asked about the true nature of Gilligan, many felt that he was real and that there really was a "Gilligan's Island". In this case it would be hard to find negative consequences in the television experience. Values like co-operation, honesty, loyalty, fairness, etc., along with slapstick and an uncomplicated plot, made up almost all of the content. In the overview, between "good" and "evil", good always won by a mile. It was an amusing morality play with lots of action, and everybody liked it because it fit their life in many ways. To Algonkians, Gilligan was "Nanibush" or "Weescayjac", and stories in which greed, or lack of respect, or impatience met with unpleasant consequences, were simply in a different language in a different geographic setting.

If Native television programmers want to fill in some time, and still provide an acceptable content, they should acquire Gilligan's Island. Repeats would not be a problem for many. And, for completely

Native production, it would not be a bad model.

The News

An entire book could be written on this subject alone. While we would judge it to be secondary to "L.A." content in its influence, it is still profoundly important for its impact. News, more than anything else, alters concepts of reality and widens consciousness. As in Western society, its self-proclaimed authority goes largely unquestioned. Partly, of course, this is due to initially exaggerated television reality.

The news exposes people to far off places and world events. It introduces the scope of technological development, both by seeing it in action elsewhere, and through the miraculous function of television itself in bringing distant events to the viewer instantly. It is probably news as general television content which has, more than anything else, sustained and reinforced the "magical" character of television. "Magic in the Sky" for the early Inuit users, and "Koosabachikan", or "shaking tent" for some traditional Algonkians. The truth associated with the traditional concepts of this carries over into television, and makes news less questionable than in Western society where a "credibility gap" is persistently widening. Recently, in fact, political news associated with the American election campaign was so faulty, especially in early pre-election predictions, that the competence of analysts and media alike have come to be severely questioned. Television literacy can mean different things in different settings.

Early in our research in several sub-arctic Native communities we found it difficult to explain the popularity of the news. Only one channel was received and the news was somewhat "urban", even for

some urban people. It was top heavy in complex politics, it covered sophisticated economic matters, legal arguments, and often featured some very remote analysts. To a large extent this has not changed. Only a very little of this kind of news content appears to have been understood by Native viewers. What certainly did come across was that there were earthquakes, floods, wars, industrial explosions, mine cave-ins, fires, plane crashes, exposed toxic chemicals, nuclear fall-out, epidemics, sit-ins, lie-ins, stand-ins, protest marches, staggering increases in murder, rape, robbery, arson, police brutality, political corruption, and unfairness in the workplace -- just to mention some.

This imbalance taken in as "truth" by television non-literate Native populations seems to have two primary effects, both related to reality. First, the negative image of Western man is very substantially reinforced. He is even worse than has always been thought. Secondly, and probably more important as an active impact, is the status of the external (non-Native) world. It is a chaotic, unmanageable mess, and it is getting worse. The full effect of this view is not known from hard scientific measures. But, it is easy to predict that it raises anxiety and insecurity. For "news" is culturally equivalent to the results of traditional dreaming and conjuring and, in fact, the word "news" comes to be the English translation for events revealed by means of signs, omens, conjuring, dreaming and traveling. It therefore demands special attention and special concern, especially among those who have become most dependent upon the external world. All are somehow dependent, but those whose economic, social and emotional ties to the external world have been cemented by job, marriage and

location become the most susceptible. Our answer to this is that strengthening the Native idiom wherever it is, and whatever it is like, will create by contrast effective cultural defenses. These can, in part, be made by television programming as a cultural institution.

There is another potential problem in connection with news. All over the world, as we mentioned in the Introduction, television is used as a political and propaganda instrument. News forms the centre of this. What people learn will directly affect their views, and thus their support for one or another political alternative. Those in power control the media in many places, and use it to maintain that control. Every precaution must be implemented to ensure that no chance for this could ever arise in the development of Native programming.

Soap Operas

Nothing has ever matched the attractiveness of "soaps" in television preference among Canadian Native populations -- where the most intensive research on this has been done. Again, it is extremely difficult at first to see why these models of urbanity should receive any attention at all. At 7:00 p.m. on February 7th, 1974, the Native people of sub-arctic Canada having access to CBC television saw the following on "Edge of Night":

> A woman who is experiencing the menopause collapses after being told that she is spending too much time with her infant grandson. Her husband, the District Attorney, arrives to comfort her. She later goes for treatment to her son (father of this baby) who is a psychiatrist. Her husband, meanwhile speaks with the young parents, and gets advice from his son-in-law that this is "an empty-nest syndrome", and that the grandmother needs more attention. Grandfather, however, is a very busy public official. Among other things, he has "sent up" Ben Travis, an ex-crooked politician who the Governor is now planning to pardon and release from prison, where

> Travis has contracted a terminal illness. He plans to live with his daughter who is married to Adam, a young lawyer who is being backed by Mrs. Whitney, society scion, in an election for United States Senator. Mrs. Whitney is worried about the influence her protege's father-in-law might have on Adam's election. She calls in a young newspaper reporter who has been assigned to the "Travis case", and orders him not to print anything about Travis till after the election. He refuses and is later warmly supported by his young wife. Meanwhile Travis calls his daughter to his prison hospital bedside, and tells her to talk Adam out of running for Senator. He demands this as a deathbed agreement, explaining his own complete moral transformation (with the aid of a priest) and admonishing her that politics will break up her marriage. (author's field notes, 1974).

How could the Inuit at Frobisher Bay or the Saulteaux at Little Saskatchewan Band know the meaning of "United States Senator", or empathize with the clinking of champagne glasses in a glittering penthouse celebration? Clearly, there are other factors in this acceptance. Research has shown that there is cultural predisposition for this acceptance. The content, while barely understood linguistically by many, is understood for certain elements of stance, positional relationship, and tone. All these produce a special kind of imagery and mood. Two persons talking very seriously about a third person not present forms the main percentage of content. This is gossip, the primary means of social control in small, face-to-face, subsistence societies. Among Algonkians, it is exaggerated to proportions ranking high in the world. Tense, non-violent interpersonal confrontation is almost unheard of among Algonkians, the pressures actually being greatly relieved through gossip. In television soaps, vicarious release is possible, and this makes for a better explanation than full understanding of peculiarly urban matter. Analysis of intricate webs

of social relationships and their implications is one of the major voluntary interests of Native life. The intracies of soap opera social patterns fully blend with these interests and with concrete, practical concerns which emphasize relevance, immediacy and believability, and which produce aversion to "repeats", the lack of which forms a major attraction for soaps.

The background music plays a part also. Research has found that its slow development to a crescendo coordinated with emotional high points in the plot conforms precisely with indigenous musical themes associated with the most emotional event in the traditional culture -- the vision quest. In this, the young person seeks a guardian spirit by fasting and meditation in a remote, secret place. The vision appears gradually, accompanied by a slow musical buildup. Few people today are actually involved in the vision quest. But, its role has been central to all sub-Arctic religious experience, and it has played a basic part in the psychology of Algonkians. So, of course, has the gossip -- which has increased during recent acculturation. The combination of these things goes to the quick of the ongoing culture and provides for a successful integration of soaps.

This is not where it stops. The top rating given soaps leads directly to wider television use. For some, it triggers legitimization. The ads associated with soaps will have more appeal, and the ads for more shows (now a common ploy) lead to more watching, and more watching leads to more ads... If urban culture had consciously connived to find something attractive to sub-Arctic Natives with which it could influence and secure dependency through television, it would have been soaps.

PART II

Native Programming

Chapter 5

A Review of Native Programming

In the Introduction we pointed out that the people engaged in Native television programming had acquired their telecommunications training in the urban environment. They were also trained by urban people. Moreover, the people involved in producing content (software) may even reflect a highly specialised sub-culture of urban society. The values they perceive and work to communicate are values established in and for their sub-culture. Most of this happens in Los Angeles, California. Despite some theory, a lot of technology can be learned independently of social and philosophical values. One can learn to repair, or even make, radios or outboard motors without becoming a Mormon or a Marxist. This is by far the most important point to be made in this handbook. If programming is to be Native programming, then its inspiration must come from the Native communities, not from Los Angeles or Toronto! This is the lesson to be learned from world comparisons. Local programming is the alternative to acculturation toward the L.A. model everywhere.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Yellowknife has sought to reach Native audiences through the production of some experimental programming which relates to specific needs and desires. We judged some of this to be culturally sensitive, well and meaningfully presented, and probably successful. Our judgments were based upon more or less practical factors in cultural application, not the deeper connotations of psycnological and social re-use. Generally, the "down-to-earth" presentations, depicting familiar behavior struck us as capable of achieving basic appeal. Three programs represent the

variety of production and responses which can fall within Native programming. The first involves what amounts to a graphic report on the skinning and butchering of a caribou. Two hunters perform the entire operation together, speaking only in the Native language. The coverage is extremely detailed, and the objective seems to be instructional. Squeamish persons in urban society might very well faint seeing this, but it depicts normal, everyday behavior for northern sub-Arctic and Inuit populations. It could help train younger people in useful practices, and it could serve in some unexpected ways. For example, in the 1950's a psychologist did some tests on Inuit living at Great Whale River. These tests involved the presentation of Rorschach or "ink blots" to a number of Inuit there. The tests, of course, were invented by urban people, and had been interpreted by urban people, in accord with certain assumptions about the psychology of urban people. Thus the blots had formerly been "read" by viewers as representing symbols of the urban world. For the Inuit, "expectations" had to be immediately abandoned. Almost all of the responses to the blots were statements about anatomical parts of animals. These were the things that figured importantly in the minds of the people, the daily practice of skinning and butchering was tied inextricably into their feelings about security. The sense of detail reflected their non-abstract rationale. To people who still cherish this nature-based value system, a detailed portrayal of skinning and butchering can have culture-reinforcing effect as well as the instructional role it may be basically intended for. Also, it can be seen as a form of story, by and for the Native people It can also be overdone.

Another positive segment involved a strictly instructional

presentation on the preparation of furs for maximum sale value. The success of this, obviously of economic benefit, was probably based upon something else. Instructional presentations too often follow the urban model, a polished talker, wearing a suit and tie, uses a blackboard and charts to "educate". In this segment, the man is of very ordinary appearance, uses no urban language, and actively demonstrates throughout all of his part of the presentation with furs. He handles them, showing exactly what he is talking about, and never gives the impression that he is lecturing to people who are dependent upon him, or over whom he has some authority. He is "low key", genuine, entirely equal, talking about something he understands to the point of ease. There is no "acting". As in the butchering segment, this is "real". While this is studio produced, the main portion of it is not contrived. Moreover, the fur expert is not Native. This is a very important point. Inevitably Native programming will be at least partially dependent upon non-Native personnel, both technically, and in terms of content. It would be most unrealistic to think otherwise. In these situations, it will be necessary to ensure that the urban model does not dominate. It is entirely understandable that some non-Native people will come over better than certain highly acculturated Native people in television content.

The third example from the Yellowknife segments involves a kind of community public report, using a Native leader in an on-site interview program dealing mainly with the economy and education. The Native leader speaks in English. If the program mainly hits highly acculturated communities, this may be all right. If not, there could be reaction to the choice of a person of Native background who uses

English as a first language. From a purely practical angle, this may often be the best that can be done. There is still a lot of redeeming, in-culture value to this type of presentation. First of all, it features community life, and is in the field, depicting real, familiar scenes. The problems centred upon are common problems for most communities. Thus, there is a binding quality in the potentials of this kind of communication. With direct, active production-consumption relationship, Native programming can develop this format of telecommunications into a very important component of future broadcasting. It is already a significant format on radio. The dangers in it have already been touched upon throughout this book, but one needs additional emphasis right here.

Community affairs programming, based upon the phenomenally powerful urban models for this, can produce acute stress. Community affairs can more easily than any other form of programming become the vehicle of promotion. Thus, sentiments can be aroused at a general level to the point of anxious confrontation in societies where this has no precedent, and in which this can aggravate factionalism and personal distress. The movement of a cemetery, the lack of nurses, a change in trapping territories, the granting of a pulp contract, or new fishing quotas can arouse much feeling by many. Again everything depends upon who produces the content and how it is produced. Community affairs programming, to be true to its definition, must be particularly responsive to the Native audience and its cultural idiom. It should be unnecessary to point out that political persuasions on the part of programming authorities would have to be introspectively controlled, either through a deep sense of ethics in transcultural broadcasting, or a comprehensive set of explicit, articulated formal guides, or both.

In the North, the Inuit have yielded more research data on television impact than any other group. This is because Inuit culture is more visibly contrasting with Euro-Canadian culture than that of Native groups to the south. This contrast has always evoked sensitivity to cultural protection, both by the non-Native population, and by Native organizations. Inuit Tapirisat, the primary national organization for Canadian Inuit, has explicitly and aggressively worked for media control for many years. This stems from an initial awareness of negative television impact during early "experiments", and a substantial volume of hard, field research to back it up. The present result is the formation and development of extensive Inuit telecommunications in Inuktitut. Television forms the main emphasis in large scale current expansion of this, and through this, Native programming becomes a kind of national goal. Two basic factors combine in its success to date. Inuit communities have not all accepted television, many are apprehensive about the impact of general television, and longitudinal studies by respectable scientists have clearly demonstrated substantial change -- most of it viewed by the Inuit as culture-destructive. The second basic factor is the unparalleled organization and efficiency of Inuit Tapirisat, as a national lobbying agency, promoting the interests of Inuit.

A secondary factor of nearly equal importance is the long term accumulated expertise in radio. This has produced high technological capability, without undue cultural sacrifice. To generalize this to other cultural backgrounds, however, would not be appropriate. It may be true or possible for some others, but the Inuit have proven to possess special aptitudes for technology.

In Canada and the United States there have been many attempts at Indian television programming. Some of this had been based upon long term radio experience just as in the case of the Inuit. This, however, is not an assurance that continuity will occur, or that it will be successful. The added picture forces immobility, and radios are portable. It becomes a choice between the user controlling place, or the users' place being controlled by the machine. Without going into the psychology of this (which is substantial), one can see the immediate implications for the economy of subsistence peoples. One can't cut pulp or lift a net while watching the tube. But, one can do these things while listening to a transistor radio. This fact, along with awareness of band administrative difficulties during the trapping seasons, helped initiate the Trail Communications Project. This project, sponsored by Canada Department of Communications, featured the use of two-way portable radios "on the trail". With them, the Chief or councillors could communicate with their band office, and with each other while in remote areas. It made it possible to reach decisions without returning to the village for a meeting, and the numerous costs that would entail. While this, of course, does not involve programming it does highlight the basic, practical needs, and the adaptability of modern electronic communications to meet them. It is an idea which in other areas of the world is achieving wide support as an alternative to television. It is focusing on real communication <u>needs</u>. All in all, the Trail Project was a success.

The same concept of local need (and probably "desire") accompanied the initiation of "Project Iron Star", a satellite television

broadcasting experiment in Northern Alberta. At its time in 1974, it was an ambitious venture. It involved five Native communities who would receive a phased radio and television exposure based upon local needs and desires. To enhance the true communicative dimension of this locally-based telecommunications experience, the system had a two-way "interactive" component. Workers at band level could express opinions on content and direction to the central facility in an ongoing way. On paper, the motives and planning about this project, even in hindsight, are not bad. There was mixiмum Native involvement in decisions, starting with the basic proposals themselves and running through the development of structures ensuring basic Native involvement in content decisions and administration. The project, however, failed in several ways, and has not led to other similar experiments. While arguments can be endless over whether the lack of will among community participants, or administrative bungles (like not providing key equipment until after absolutely essential deadlines) by government services were to blame, the principles brought out so far in this handbook can be seen as relevant.

Foremost for "Iron Star" among these operational concepts is the fact that telecommunications is an urban-industrial offspring in which the basic technology has conditioned enough of the "non-technical" to make humanistic concerns secondary. The philosophic thrust becomes expediency. In the face of equipment delays, and problems of organization at the local level, basic community control became virtually abandoned, and external personnel had to intervene and play roles they were not to have played. Community interaction as originally planned, was limited to only a very few instances over the

114 hours of programming. While 90% of the program production was by The Alberta Native Communications Society, figures given in an evaluation of the project show that an average of fourteen persons per night watched the broadcasts from the two largest communities. The budget was $242,000.

The content of this Native television experiment mainly involved spokespersons for government departments and Native organizations. The most frequent were the Metis Association of Alberta, the Indian Association of Alberta, Central Mortgage and Housing Department, and the Canada Department of Health and Welfare. Much of the content featured the interview format in "Mike Wallace" fashion. In the few cases of "interactive broadcasting", government officials shared time with Native respondents or questioners. This, they felt, diminished their chances of getting their point across. Participants from the Native organizations favoured this arrangement, while the government people came to reject the opportunity provided by Iron Star.

It should be plain that nearly everything that went wrong in Iron Star was the result of not using the principles brought out in this handbook. Of course, they could not have been used anyway. The handbook did not exist. Perhaps most of the necessary ideas had already been expressed diversely throughout many reports from many world examples of transcultural telecommunications experience. They were not, however, brought together and used to guide such experiments. Our knowledge is better now, and growing all the time. It is perhaps useful to summarize the key points in relation to the Iron Star results as a guide to future ventures of a similar kind.

First of all, and perhaps most obvious, is the clear fact

that Alberta Native Communications Society programs were "talk shows", emphatically the most rejected form of programming in all Native impact research in Canada. Not only, however, was it a talk show format, but it was mainly a special kind of talk show format. It was "administrative" in nature, often with government people "explaining" their programs. It was also a studio format, neat people with authority, wearing suits and ties, explaining, discussing, perhaps promoting, always just talking. The people who even now feel that it is better to use this format "to get their point across", to "educate", to "help", need introspection more than it has ever been needed before. The use of this format employs the entire symbolic context stereotypical of urban television information transmission. Hindsight is always 20-20, but one could ask now why the response could not have been perfectly predicted. In the cases where some form of expediency (economic, political, etc.) were still threatening to govern decisions about format, a "no" answer should be taken seriously as an alternative to this whole phase of directed content. Appropriate formats, avoiding the errors of this one, are possible, and the use of this one might be very profitably delayed until sophistication in the alternatives has been sufficiently developed.

The second major point to be made about Iron Star is that it was not Native programming. Neither the inspiration nor the ultimate conduct of it was based upon the grass roots will of Native community members. While "local interaction" was in the plan, it became lost in problems of expediency. The decisions about how and what, fell, for whatever reasons, to people outside the core influence of Native values in communications experience and aspirations. The

fourteen nightly viewers, out of the thousands possible, perfectly reflects the presence (and health) of the Native idiom!

The inspiration behind Iron Star was not Native. It was but a part of large scale satellite technological experiments undertaken by the Canadian government. Within the vast scope of these projects, Iron Star was classed as one of the social experiments of the community interaction type. The urban world invented the project, and only a highly detailed study will reveal the planning processes which led to Alberta Native Communications Society involvement. To assume these processes to have been ethnically sound would be naive indeed, judging from the result. Governments in their overall operations come to experience a kind of isolation in transcultural matters because their structure, the bureaucracy, has sub-cultural connotations. So it is not just urban culture which influences the thought and operation of government departments, but it is also the structure and values of the department itself that grow complex through time and place their own special stamp upon results. Thus, as evaluations have shown, the expectations of the government in the Iron Star experiment, could not be met without alterations in the key aspects of truly "Native" programming; remembering, of course, that the government had the money. This allows us to focus on the problems of communication in the development and maintenance of the project itself. We can now see at least three separate entities involved, the government, the Native organization, and the people in the Native communities. Each of these represents a different set of values and expectations in the venture. None is right and none is wrong. They are just different. To ensure that the fullest appreciation for

cultural values be implemented in Native communications, the inspiritation for the development must be Native in origin, even if this amounts only to asking for television, and then expressing opinions about what is needed and what is not. People of Native background who have learned the technology and are sensitive and responsive to this basic expression are the only people who can handle this job. Those who know the language, visit frequently, maintain their social and cultural ties, and are committed to protect their cultural values through the "nativization of telecommunications" will succeed. They will need a lot of help, but, more than that, they will need a full understanding of their special role, and an unprecedented sensitivity to the non-Western values they will wish to reinforce through the television mechanism. It is only in this way that fiascos like Iron Star can be avoided, and the overall objectives of Native programming can be achieved.

Chapter 6

Some Programming Suggestions

Thus far we have tried to document the major problems to be confronted in the development of effective programming for Indian and Inuit populations. We might summarize by saying that Native programming must overcome cultural and linguistic diversity; it must be cognizant of the need for cultural integrity, self-determination and preservation, while still responding to requirements in education, modernization and change; and, in all of this, it must be mindful of the necessity to present material in ways which are relevant, meaningful and understandable.

We have the following concrete suggestions for each of these problem areas.

Responding to Problems of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Indian and Inuit peoples not only have cultures and languages which contrast with those of the dominant urban culture, but they also have cultures and languages which contrast with each other. No one program style can be created which would achieve adequate relevance, meaning, and clarity in all cases. Pluralistic programming is the only answer.

Progress has already been made here. We urge continued and expanded support for the efforts of the various Indian and Inuit groups concerned with the production of meaningful programming for their various constituencies.

There is, however, the danger of encouraging a biased product. Effective Native programming should not be merely a dubbing of Western-created programs with the Native language, nor should it be exclusively

"Native". Collaboration is needed. Native groups can provide expertise about local interests, conventions, styles and needs, but the telecommunications expert needs to translate the suggestions into a detailed and practical formula that can be placed upon the television screen.

And then, too, one's own world of expertise always contains blind spots. The Native person may not be fully objective about his own culture and may fail to consciously comprehend very important parameters of his cultural idiom and style which are objectively observable to an outsider. On the other hand, the television expert may fail to perceive problems in the technical production of Native programming which are perceived by the Native observer.

Responding to the Need for Cultural Integrity and Self-Determination

Programs which communicate within the Native idiom go a long way toward maintaining cultural integrity. But the manner in which such programs are developed and introduced may or may not satisfy needs for self-determination.

As we have stated many times, it is crucial that local groups be given a role in programming decisions. They should be given an initial choice of accepting or rejecting television signals and, after that, if they choose to receive signals, they should be given a creative role in shaping those signals to their specifications.

A procedure that has been successfully employed throughout the world, which we recommend, is variously known as the tele-club, the local committee, or the peer discussion group. In essence, it is a group of local people who meet regularly to watch television shows and to discuss the effectiveness and usefulness of the programs. It is a group which has the goal of making useful recommendations about

improvements and about what is good and bad in programming.

These discussion groups may be used at all stages of program development and we suggest they not be excluded from the early experimental stages. They can be shown early "work-ups" of a concept and can provide very important information at that time. Of course they should continue to monitor programs as they develop over the years and continue to offer their assessments. It is important that continuity characterize this function, both from the standpoint of policy and from the standpoint of personnel so far as possible.

These groups are best formed by the directing efforts of local authorities and, most important, they must know that their role is consequential. The world experience has shown that such groups quickly become ineffective and alienated if their opinions are not truly incorporated within the decision-making machinery. They must see positive effects arising from their suggestions. If this occurs, a very big step toward maintaining the principle of self-determination will have been taken.

Responding to the Need for Education and Modernization

An educational need felt in all Native communities is the need to better understand English. Programming may respond to this need in a number of ways. One format that is very popular in Native households and which could be adopted for Native programming is that of popular children's programs like Sesame Street. The Native adaptation would require extensive alteration of setting, mood, structure, and characters. The reserve setting or the Native neighbourhood setting would replace the urban setting. The pace would be slowed with more use of storytelling, mime, and silent example. Certain sequences

would need to be reduplicated in several Algonkian, Athabascan and Inuit languages. And, the puppet characters would need to be carefully fitted to Native conceptions of what is appropriate.

Another pressing educational need is the development of a better understanding of the telecommunication medium itself. An educational "short" should be developed to demonstrate the history and origin of television -- the way it works, the way programs are made and the way illusions are constructed. Children especially should be taught that television doesn't always depict "reality" but, instead, often shows artifical, made up, specially selected scenes -- scenes often chosen only because they are thrilling, funny, or unusual.

We recommend the use of modified trickster legends as one vehicle for meeting this educational need. There are several legends in which the trickster symbolically concerns himself with "seeing" (he juggles his eyes and loses them and trades his eyes with other creatures and thus provides them with interesting and unusual "seeing") which could form a baseline from which appropriate modifications might be made.

Trickster, for example, may decide to make a very special kind of eye which people can put on or see through and which can be used to see things very far away. He might decide to demand certain services in return for the use of this eye. Later he would get greedy and would want more people to come and use it -- so he would begin to trick them and instead of showing them the real world he would show them a false and much more exciting world which, however, they would think was still the real thing. He would begin to train his friends to pretend to do certain exciting things which would be

seen through the eye.

Or, again, trickster may discover a television set (a dreaming machine). He may watch it for a while and see familiar things endangered by floods, fires and avalanche. But when he goes to investigate, he only finds a few puddles and some smoke and loose gravel. He returns to the dreaming machine perhaps four times and four times it tricks him (e.g. scenes of fun and pleasure in the city are changed in actuality to poverty and sickness). So he gets mad at the television and makes it show only the truth, not lies. Perhaps he enlarges its rabbit ears and points these in the right directions -- or something else is done.

The possibilities are infinite. But we cannot venture beyond these very rough initial ideas until Native storytellers and Native media people have the opportunity to introduce their own ideas.

Another educational need is that of gaining practical information about life in the city. It is our opinion that an ideal framework for educating in this area may be found in the popular soap opera. Many countries have already employed the "soap" for educational purposes and it can be done by the Indians and Inuit as well.

Indian and Inuit soap operas would employ Native actors and settings. Local communication groups should be encouraged to tackle the problem with each group employing its own language, actors and settings.

But in all cases the focus would be upon current problems and conditions in the reserve and city. The goal should be to demonstrate how problems emerge and how they may be confronted. Effective and ineffective approaches could be detailed and the reasons for success

and failure highlighted but, of course, without lecture. Everything would be developed through concrete, relevant and realistic situations. Potential topics are legend. They would include welfare, employment alcoholism, child care, abortion, transportation, education, illness marriage, death and crime.

Still another educational need is that of current affairs and news. We suggest that Native news shows be developed. But these should not simply follow the urban stereotype. The show should be slower paced and should dispense with the dry, formal studio desk setting and formal dress. It should incorporate an "analyst" to supplement strictly factual reporting. The "analyst" would utilize traditional, metaphorical techniques of communications. He would tell stories and recall legends which would reveal the relevant dimensions of the news stories.

This, of course, is the function of the traditional story-teller. He rarely told sheer fantasy, escapist stories. He chose stories which contained metaphorical action which stood, on the one hand, as symbols of concrete incidents in everyday life and, on the other, as symbols for timeless higher order behavior representing truths of life derived from ancient wisdom. Such people still exist in almost all Native communities and would be capable of expert news analysis. News shows should also develop appropriate means for celebrating special events of local, national and/or international significance to Native people Such events would include celebrations, historical treaty signings, classic fur trade reminiscences such as York boat festivals, pow-wows, solstice ceremonies such as the sun

dance, and sports events like the Northern Olympics.

Appropriate television celebration of these events might include live broadcasts from the scene of activity and interviews with participants and observers. But special care must be taken in this. For, many of the festivities are of a very sacred nature. Televising such events might not only compromise taboos concerning who may or may not witness the activities (where often females and the uninitiated are excluded) but might also infringe upon long held convictions that ceremonial may lose its power and influence if the "soul" of the ceremony is captured on film.

One final response which, like soap operas, combines entertainment with education is the situation comedy. The clown in a situation comedy is well understood from trickster legends and he employs the same humour based upon improbable transformations of status and role and upon disregard of basic ethical and natural standards of conduct.

Situation comedies may be developed where the clown is placed in a Native setting and assumes a disguise or a mistaken identity to explore the basic Native premises of the social life and the interaction of man, nature and the supernatural.

Responding to the Need for Relevance and Understandability

Because of vast cultural diversity in Indian and Inuit life we cannot presume to be able to adequately describe the great variety of understandable programming for the many potential audiences. What we can do, however, is to describe some of the ways we might deal with certain widespread values and perspectives common to most Native

peoples which are not adequately incorporated in current general television programming and which must be confronted (along with other factors) if relevance and understandability are to be achieved. These have been alluded to earlier in this guide.

It should be understood, for example, that Northern Indian and Inuit peoples still often refer to a very immediate, very flexible, and very personal supernatural world in explaining and understanding phenomena. Dreams are taken seriously as sources of communication with that world, sorcery is feared as usage of that world, shamen are sought out as specialists capable of providing protection against that world and restoring proper relationships to it, and myriad other aspects of daily life are understood as manifestations of that world.

Much of Native life is oriented toward ordering, structuring and dealing with this supernatural world. Television programming should be sensitive to this perception and definition of reality.

We should be reminded that Native people generally value concreteness. They thrive upon concrete example, detail and specificity. Sheer fantasy programs do not hold up under this framework. Programs should always be tied to reality and to the real concerns of Native people.

Cognizance should also be taken of the many tabooed subjects in Indian and Inuit life. Many subjects which are treated rather informally in Euro-Canadian life, receive a much more guarded usage. Sex, nudity, aggression, interference, birth, and menstruation are a few examples. These subjects should be handled appropriately or eliminated altogether.

The strong social-communal interests of Indian and Inuit

life should also be considered. Sharing, kinship, and group focus is heavily stressed. Programs should not dwell upon individual, selfish motives as if they were standard and all pervasive in human life. They should, instead, be developed as contrasting responses to the needs for filial piety and obligation to kin and neighbor.

One should always be aware of the non-lineal time perspective in Native life. The pace of life is not as fast, not as controlled and dominated, not as artificially precise as it is in urban life. Programs need not always be disseminated in neat half-hour or hour long packages. They can be slower paced and longer lasting, or they can be short.

Finally, it should again be stressed that much Native communication is non-verbal. Programming should not be as "talkative" as is normally the case in general television. Quiet air time should not be feared. Action, not verbosity, should be emphasized.

It is hoped that these suggestions will prove fruitful as new networks and new Native programming mandates emerge upon the scene. Native programming is in its infancy and thus far has not had the advantage of a unified, coherent frame of reference by which common problems may be considered. It is hoped that this review and guide will create better awareness of the extent to which Native peoples find their life styles threatened by general television, and of the task now faced in developing more culturally sensitive programming.

PART III

Summary

I. Introduction

All over the world today instant television communication has produced confrontation between radically contrasting value systems. Our concern is with opposition between Western culture as expressed through general (mostly Los Angeles dominated) television and aboriginal or Native culture, especially Canadian Indian and Inuit. Our purpose is to suggest ways by which this opposition may be minimized so that culture loss need not be such a dominant concern of Native and Inuit peoples who are confronted with new telecommunication media. We are committed to the development of more culturally sensitive programming as one response to this crisis.

Pursuant to this, we here offer suggestions based upon many years of experience with Native peoples and with telecommunication impact in Native communities. Our primary guiding principle is that of cultural relativity. Our goals are twofold: 1) to increase familiarity with some of the more important widespread values, beliefs, needs and customs of Indian and Inuit people of Canada which impinge upon their television experience, and 2) to suggest ways by which programming can be made to better accommodate these aspects of Indian and Inuit culture.

II. Culture as a Key Parameter in Native Programming

Because of the power of culture to shape perceptions of reality, and because Canadian Indian and Inuit cultures differ in many respects from that which is typical of the southern Euro-Canadian, different meanings, uses, and impacts of television occur among these populations.

The Canadian Indian and Inuit tend to give television much credibility. They tend to view it with more trepidation and, at the same time, give it more of a messianic aura. They tend to be swayed more into copying it and are more persuaded by commercials. They tend to use it more as a revelational device and as a relevant, practical and metaphorical statement about reality. They also tend to use it as a means for becoming better educated about the urban world. The impact of this has been to create a very charged atmosphere into which television settles; an atmosphere which is volatile and which television can stimulate to produce rather extensive effects in terms of change. Some changes which seem inevitable are an increase in general knowledge, an outward turning of identity, and closer alignment of consumerism with that which is typical of urban areas.

Television stress arises because of increasing self-awareness of plight, and because there is a tendency to copy television hero figures. The manifestation of this stress, in agrressive non-traditional acts, is dependent upon the extent of community solidarity and cohesion. Successful countermeasures develop in solidary communities and can, at least for a time, reduce overt disruptions.

A major step toward understanding these characteristically Indian and Inuit patterns of television usage and impact can be accomplished by examining twelve core elements of Indian and Inuit culture which shape the television experience.

III. Twelve Key Cultural Factors in Effective Canadian Indian and Inuit Programming

1. Traditions of Communication

Television's main role in Native society, as in non-Native

society, is a device for live-long-distance communication and story-telling. However, in Native society, usages and meanings associated with devices for live-long-distance communication and storytelling differ considerably from those found in the non-Native society. And, inevitably, partly unconsciously and partly consciously, these are applied to television and produce a differing television experience.

Inuit and Indian have traditions that live-long-distance communication may be accomplished by means of conjuring, dreaming, and image making. And there are similarly elaborate traditions of storytelling through highly metaphorical trickster legends, poems, songs and narratives.

These traditions are carried over to television and produce expectations of revelation, truth, personal and metaphorical messages and certain fears.

2. Negative Expectations for Western Man and His Technology

There is a history of negative experience with Western man and his technology and, as a result, expectations of negative consequences from interactions with the West. This has obvious implications for television. Television is a Western technological device and, as such, is met with a wary and suspecious eye when it enters Native communities. The extent and effectiveness of the resistance and suspicion is determined, in part, by the next factor -- factionalism and solidarity.

3. Factionalism and Solidarity

Every Native community is factionalized into groups more or less hostile or friendly to the White Man and his ways. These groups develop differing attitudes as to how to cope with the acculturation experience. If a community is heavily shifted toward one or the other

end of the continuum, it may develop a rather solidary approach without many divisions of opinion and may be effective in implementing its adaptational strategy.

One community may decide, for example, to reject television. It may have enough solidarity to carry this out effectively and may even go to the extreme of refusing to allow television in the community or in the homes. On the other hand, it may permit controlled usage of television by developing well integrated and effective stories, rationalizations and sanctions which warn children about television and curb their desires to copy television hero figures.

Another community may decide it will accept television and use it to learn about the West and to become more assertive. If it is solidary in this strategy, it may effectively create an atmosphere of stories and sanctions which encourage children to learn from television and to copy it.

Another community may be highly divided in opinion and lack solidarity. It will be unable to develop and implement an effective adaptive strategy and will find that television increases stress as people use it in different ways and for often conflicting purposes.

4. Adaptational Strategies

Although adaptational strategies differ within a community according to various factions more or less hostile to the West, societies can yet share deeper habits of how resistance or acceptance of Western ways are to be accomplished. In some communities there is resistance by closure and avoidance. In others there is resistance by false fronts and by surface interaction and change, but with deeper-lying conservatism and stability. In still others there may be

resistance by open confrontation.

Each type has a corresponding profile of susceptibility to television and stress from television.

5. Social and Communal Interests

Native communities are much more concerned about kin patterns, sharing, and reciprocity than most southern Euro-communities. These interests point to a need to deal in non-individual, non-competitive ways with these communities and to develop programming which does not dwell upon the selfish, ego-centred interests of characters as the paramount focus.

6. Time Concepts

Native peoples traditionally conceive of time in more non-lineal terms than is found in the West. Non-Western time is more cyclical, slower paced and repetitive. It is based on natural clocks like the weather and seasons rather than man-made clocks.

Television shows are often too rigidly timed and too fast paced within this context.

7. Non-Interference

Native communities stress themes of mutual self-respect and non-interference. This creates a set of needs with respect to children's usage of television. For children are greatly indulged. The parent-child relationship, in general, is not as dominant, interfering and authoritarian as typically found in non-Native society. Hence control of children's viewing preference is a problem. And dominant, confrontational, interfering patterns of human interaction often seen on television are viewed as offensive to the values of Native life.

8. Practical-Concrete Orientations

Natives view the world in detailed, concrete situational terms. Though they are capable of lofty abstraction and elaborate metaphor, these are always in context and always have a specific referent. There is an aversion to sheer, abstract, speculative behavior which lacks concrete relevance.

Sheer fantasy shows on television, like the Muppets, run into some difficulty because of this.

9. Literate - Non-Literate

Native societies are traditionally non-literate. Knowledge is not retained by writing, but by highly disciplined memory and mnemonic devices found in legends and in art. This must be borne in mind in educational programming which attempts to teach writing skills. Because non-literate traditions focus attention upon the metaphorical meanings associated with graphic symbols, children will tend to learn the sounds associated with whole words rather than the sounds associated with the phonic substratum. This is a handicap in learning to read, and it is an area where special effort is required.

Further, we should be mindful of the fact that some Native languages in Canada and elsewhere can now be written in syllabics. This should be incorporated into educational efforts, for it is a major factor in ensuring the preservation of Native culture.

Finally the importance of memory in non-literate societies points to a Native interest that reinforces concrete and non-lineal concerns for detail and process rather than climax and punchline, and for well defined example rather than abstract principle.

10. Verbal - Non-Verbal

Native groups are basically non-verbal. This means that they think a lot, reflect, and perhaps spend a good deal of time in a near-conscious, even dream-like state. This kind of state approaches that now being researched as "alpha" states. Since alpha states are often achieved during television viewing, it is significant to consider that perhaps the Native person, more than the non-Native person, is susceptible to this condition while viewing television.

This has profound implications when we consider that alpha states are associated with the right hemisphere of the brain which is now known as the intuitive, subliminal side of our consciousness. This then adds a biological factor to all the cultural factors which condition Native susceptibility to television. This underscores the pressing need to help the Native person develop a critical, resistant stance toward television, and to maintain extra diligence in monitoring the content of television programs.

A further and more obvious implication of the non-verbal culture of the Native is that it points to a programming style which stresses silent reflection rather than continued and uninterrupted verbal pattern.

11. Taboos

There are widespread Native taboos which concern disposal of the dead, male-female separation (especially during birth and menstruation), direct aggression and confrontation, and change. These create considerable problems with respect to television, for television often does not observe Native taboos and may therefore be offensive.

12. Television Illiteracy

The mechanics of television are not well understood in isolated Native communities. The techniques of producing a television show and the motives of production are unclear. Native children, especially, have difficulty in differentiating fact from fiction in television. Even adults are often unsure whether actors seen on television really live their television roles or whether they are just playing a role which is not, in fact, truly theirs in real life.

IV. Determinants of Television Acceptability

The factors of Indian and Inuit life discussed above combine to create certain preferences with regard to television programming. These include a special fascination for hero figures, clowns, news and soap operas.

Hero Figures

The Native youngster is prone to emulate television hero figures. This because they are an attractive alternative to often insecure traditional models whose roles have been undermined by acculturation pressures. The models achieve heightened credibility as fatherly, guardian figures by the tendency of viewers to refer them back to concepts of dreaming and conjuring as traditional reference points for gaining an understanding of television. This is an important factor in making television such a potentially persuasive phenomenon in Native life, and why it is so necessary to be sensitive to the extent to which the hero's behavior measures up to Native standards with respect to aggression, self-effacement, emotional control, non-interference and generosity.

Clowns

Native traditions provide a ready made framework for understanding the clown on television. Clowns are reminiscent of the trickster figure in Native legends. Like the trickster, the clown is a transformer, often causing vast and sudden changes in his world and often manifesting, in his own behavior, a variety of quick changing roles and statuses. And also like the trickster, the clown is a teacher who, by negative example, reveals the pitfalls in life and the consequences of disregarding laws and morals.

There is therefore a great opportunity to utilize clowns on television to teach important lessons of life while, at the same time, providing entertainment. Situation comedies become important settings for such undertakings, for the characters of such shows, employing mistaken identity and clownish miscues are readily understood. That is why "Gilligan's Island" was an especially popular program in many Native communities and why Gilligan's clownish antics, based often upon disguise, and resulting often in sudden transformations of events either for better or for worse, were so entertaining.

News

News programs are very popular and very influential in Native life. And again this is because of the traditional meanings and usages provided by traditional equivalents to news. These equivalents are found in the informatioin obtained by dreaming and conjuring. In fact, the word "news" comes to be the English translation for events revealed by signs, omens, conjuring dreaming and traveling. News is therefore quite persuasive and demands special attention and concern. Because of this, every precaution must be taken in the

determination of how news is gathered, filtered, selected and presented to Native peoples.

Soap Operas

Soap operas, perhaps, are the most popular form of general television programming. Although, at first, this might seem incongruous considering the often foreign settings and topics of conversation (as seen from the perspective of isolated Indian and Inuit peoples), it becomes understandable when one considers the fact that one of the most compelling and all encompassing interests of Native life is the social process of developing and maintaining friends, discovering and resisting enemies, gaining social influences and maintaining face. Gossip plays a major role here and this, indeed, is 90% of what soap operas are about.

Furthermore, soaps reveal the life of the Euro-Canadian in detail never before observed and it vicariously pleases many Native persons to realize that their life is not so different from that of the southern Euro-Canadian when it comes to grief, misfortune, anxiety and heartache.

V. A Review of Native Programming

It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term "Native programming". It is our opinion that much of what purports to be Native programming is not. The essence of Native programming is that it is internally inspired and is consistent with the identities and customs of Native people.

Programs which are produced by Native groups and which focus upon Native interests and which may even incorporate the Native language, but which uncritically adopt the style and format of

general, Los Angeles-based television shows are considerably removed from true Native programming.

Programming, on the other hand, which is produced externally and which focuses upon subjects only peripherally interesting to Native people and which are transmitted only in English may still be suitable for Native programming if it adopts a down to earth, practical, self-effacing, non-artificial format.

The most effective Native programming, however, will undoubtedly be produced through the combined efforts of two kinds of people: Native people who are in close touch with the interest and lifestyles of the Native community and yet who have a wide ranging vision of the larger technological and urban world, and non-Native people who have a sensitive appreciation of Native life and understand the ways in which telecommunication media operate and produce impacts.

An organization spearheaded by such a collaboration and with specialized knowledge and technological assistance of both media and Native people, will have the best chance of success. These endeavors will be aided by non-commercial funding in which programming decisions remain independent of remote "popularity" surveys. Great patience on the part of the unding agency, however it may be, will be essential. Native programming efforts of the past have been burdened by time constraints, and by lack of experience, and by a feeling of great pressure to simply fill the air time allocated to projects. As a result, expediency became a central concern rather than truly effective communication. This remains a potential proglem, but it can be substantially overcome by reasonable expectations and by not succumbing to overly ambitious goals.

VI. Some Programming Suggestions

Native programming faces many problems in its development. Three major ones which it must overcome are cultural and linguistic diversity, the need for cultural integrity and self-determination along with culture change and modernization, and the need for programming relevance and understandability.

The response to cultural and linguistic diversity requires pluralistic Native programming. No one format and no one production unit will be successful everywhere. Native programming must develop in numerous localized centres but, at the same time, may be unified by common goals of education and modernization.

These would include local adaptations of Sesame Street-like formats to teach English, syllabics and math. Adaptations of widespread trickster legends to inform about the nature of television itself and to develop media literacy would be appropriate. The localization of the soap opera format and adaptation of focus to include very practical information about problems that Native people face would form an important means. Utilization of familiar trickster-like clowns to entertain through themes of mistaken identity and social miscues and to educate by exemplifying the consequences of disregarding ethical standards and established patterns of interaction between man, nature and the supernatural presents a particularly suitable format. Relevant and understandable news should be developed through the inclusion of local storyteller "analysts" and by the incorporation of events meaningful to the Native. This should include special methods for celebrating historically significant events (as by live coverage or interviewing), but with care not to infringe upon concern that

ceremonial may lose its power and influence if its "soul" is captured on film.

It is hoped that by applying these kinds of emphases, the delicate balance between modernization and cultural integrity will be upheld. This may be furthered by the presence of local "tele-clubs" who monitor content and stimulate community proposals, by patient non-commercial funding sources, and by continued impact and evaluation research.

By these means it is hoped that Canada will fulfill expectations that its leadership role in telecommunications development will be matched by its efforts in developing knowledge of the social implications of telecommunications and, as well, by its efforts in the application of that knowledge to the development of culturally sensitive Native programming.

We hope that Canada's leadership in these capacities will be reinforced by research which keeps apace of the rapid encroachments of new telecommunications into the Native world. It is hoped, too, that this handbook will provide some service in this respect.

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