

6 Being 'Accountable'

TV Audiences and Surveillance

Toby Miller

In most societies in which supernatural elements are important in attaining success, some form of divination is practiced, because fore-knowledge is one way of control. In parts of East Africa, the entrails of chickens are used for divining the future, while among the Karen of Burma it is the gall bladder of a pig; in Hollywood polls are used to determine the mysterious tastes of the audience. (Powdermaker 1950: 285)

We all know the power of television to make us laugh, cry, hide behind the sofa or forget our worries, particularly as we spend more time at home trying to escape the doom and gloom of the credit crunch. To help the nation seek some solace in February, one of the most depressing months, psychologist Donna Dawson has put together her pick of the month's programmes on Sky+HD to help lift your spirits. (Dawson 2009)

TV is still the 800 pound gorilla of media consumption, with viewers glued to their sets over 158 hours per month. In fact, TV viewing has increased more than an hour a day in the last decade, far outpacing any other major media option. ('Data Integration' 2010)

The first epigraph quotes the noted anthropologist who gave the *soubriquet* the 'Dream Factory' to Hollywood after a year's painstaking ethnography in the wilds of the studios. Powdermaker was referring to the industry's desperate desire to know and control audiences.

The second epigraph comes from a psychologist employed by Britain's leading satellite provider of television, Sky. It originally appeared as part of the company's 'Happier Days TV Guide'. Dawson's pop-therapeutic alibi was a means of corralling viewers into particular categories,¹ the better to know them and urge them to buy high-definition sets, which were thought to 'improve the psychological well being of the viewer' ('Sky+HD' 2009).

The third epigraph is the work of a noted TV ratings firm: 'In 100 countries around the world, Nielsen provides clients the most complete understanding of what consumers watch and buy'.² Nielsen seeks to counter the popular mythology of the *bourgeois* media (and those quaint academic narcissographers who love to write about themselves or their families) that television no longer matters.

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1 Together, these quotations encapsulate the core message of this chap-
2 ter: Whether we see audiences as knowledgeable, ignorant, passive, active,
3 powerful, weak, intelligent, idiotic—or none, all or some of the above—
4 their principal role for the television industry is to be known, and that role
5 remains vital across the media landscape. As such, their active participa-
6 tion in watching texts or creating paratexts is valuable to the industry,
7 because it offers corporations greater surveillance of them. For it is audi-
8 ences' attention, their mental and emotional labour, that gives them value.
9 The more visible that labour becomes—the more that is known about the
10 audience's composition and conduct—the better off corporate capitalism is.
11 I will demonstrate this with a case study from US TV. 3
12

13 INTRODUCTION

14 Audiences are not already-extant entities participating in the neoliberal wet
15 dream of supply and demand. Most of the time, television is not directly
16 selling to its audience, and the audience is not buying from it. Fifty years
17 ago, Dallas Smythe (2004: 319f) explained that audience attention was the
18 key commodity that television stations sold to advertisers, even though it
19 was not material and was difficult to define and measure. TV texts are not
20 so much commodities as 'symbols for time' (Hartley 1987: 133). In fact, the
21 industry positions itself 'at the intersection of time and real estate' (Maggio
22 2008). To do so, it routinely undertakes surveillance (Gandy 1989).
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24 Despite Nielsen's best efforts, any discussion of TV nowadays has to
25 deal with the argument that the medium has had its day. The rhetoric sur-
26 rounding newer audiovisual media is inflected with the phenomenological
27 awe of a precocious child set to heal the wounds of modern life, magically
28 reconciling public and private, labour and leisure, commerce and culture,
29 citizenship and consumption. The alleged upshot? *La fin de la télévision*
30 (The end of television) (Missika 2006); *La televisión ha muerto* (Televi-
31 sion is dead) (De Silva 2000). The grand organizer of daily life over half a
32 century has supposedly lost its pride of place in both the physical layout of
33 the home and the daily order of drama and data. We must all say 'Bienveni-
34 dos al mundo de la postelevisión' (Welcome to the post-television world).
35 Dual monopolies have allegedly been broken: The physical object no longer
36 dominates, nor does its model of unidirectional production (Verón 2008).
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38 Historically, most new media have supplanted earlier ones as central
39 organs of authority or pleasure, as per books versus speeches, films versus
40 plays and records versus performances. The present conjuncture is meant to
41 be one more proof of that teleology. The corporate recorded music industry
42 is shrinking due to online exchange, with double-digit decreases in compact
43 disc sales over the last decade. The Internet is displacing newspapers in
44 the Global North as a key source of political and commercial information
45 (Friedman 2008; Pew Research Center 2008).
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But TV is unusual. It blended earlier media to become a warehouse of contemporary culture (Newcomb 2005: 110; Standage 2006). Television modelled the Internet and commerce conceptually, just as it modelled the personal computer stylistically. And the early signs are that the Internet and TV transform one another. In the words of Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's chief executive, '[W]e will see TVs become more sophisticated and more connected. The boundary between the PC and the TV will dissolve' (quoted in Moses 2009; also see Microsoft 2009).

Even cybertarian true believers, who patronisingly refer to television as part of 'legacy media', must confront the fact that the sites most people visit are really rather distant from futurist fantasies. In 2010, the US broadcast networks' websites increased their viewership by an average of 82%, and twenty-three of the top twenty-five Internet news destinations were professional outlets from before the web began. Worldwide, the power of the Internet to attract audiences is clearest in the deployment of venerable sources and genres: the BBC (employing a lot of properly trained journalists as per the 20th century), YouTube (featuring material 'liberated' from film and TV as per the 20th century) and Wikipedia (following an 18th century format) ('A Cyber-House' 2010; Kelly 2008; comScore 2011; Rosenstiel 2011; Sacerdoti 2011).

And US TV continues to grow by every indicator imaginable. In 2006, more than 98% of US homes had at least one set, while 64% subscribed to cable, up twenty points in twenty years. Consumers spent \$20 billion buying new TVs that year. By 2007, 51% of people owned three or more, and the next year, the number of US households owning televisions increased by 1.5%, with particularly significant growth among migrants and their recent descendants (Spangler 2009; Motion Picture Association of America 2007: 35 and 37; Borland and Hansen 2007; Ellis 2007: 40; Reynolds 2009).

The average US resident devoted 127.25 hours to television a month in 2006, as opposed to 26.5 hours online and 2.25 hours with their cell phones; in 2009, 93% of adults watched at least an hour of TV a day, but just 4% consumed an hour of video online each day. Three quarters of people did so at some time—but they spend seventy times more hours a month doing so via a conventional set ('Nielsen Media' 2006; 'Majority of Americans' 2007; Shields 2009).

And the young? People born between 1984 and 1990 choose television over the Internet and the cell, for both entertainment and information. Half the Internet sites that children aged between 6 and 11 visit attract their attention through advertising on TV or in print. US children between the ages of 6 and 14 tune to television at rates unprecedented for twenty years; 69% have sets in their bedrooms, versus 18% with Internet access and 49% owning or subscribing to videogames. Those aged between 2 and 11 watched 17.34 hours of TV a week in 2006, an increase on the previous year. The keenest viewers are young girls. They quite like new technology, and adopt it at a frenetic pace—but 'TV is king', in the words of The Tubes' album *Remote Control* (1979) (Pew Research Center 2005; Downey 2007; Friedman 2009b).

1 Across the United States, television is the most influential advertising
2 medium, and its influence is greater than during the pre-web period. Hun-
3 dreds of case studies undertaken over the past two decades confirm that
4 TV is the principal source of raising brand awareness. Of the top hundred
5 companies recognized by residents in 2009, sixteen were television or film
6 related, with CNN and MTV in the top ten (Loechner 2009b; Neff 2009;
7 Thomasch 2009; Reynolds 2009).

8 In short, as the web matures, more and more Gringos watch TV (Umstead
9 2010). Television still occupies vast amounts of people's time and money,
10 because it delivers information and entertainment with astonishing speed
11 and ease. And its audience is subject to increasing fascination and knowl-
12 edge, a creature for inquiry through surveillance.

13 14 15 ACCOUNTING AND SURVEILLANCE

16
17 The US television industry would not utilise my chosen vocabulary of
18 surveillance to describe its activities. Television mavens are much more
19 enamoured by 'accountability'. That concept seems a long way from the
20 political issues raised by surveillance, and equally distant from the fun that
21 is deemed central to the medium. It is worthy of critical examination.

22 The far-from-thrilling nature of accountancy has been established ethno-
23 graphically, lexicographically and rhetorically (Flowerdew and Wan 2006),
24 as per Monty Python's renowned vocational-guidance 'Lion Tamer' sketch
25 ('dull, dull, dull') featuring the League for Fighting Chartered Accountancy.
26 Desperate to reverse, or perhaps to play on, these longstanding connotations,
27 the Californian accounting firm MGO adopted 'Proud to Be Boring Account-
28 ants' as its slogan in 2010.⁴ You do not marry such people for the ride of
29 your life. And in this case, their work is being used as a euphemism.

30 Accountability *should* refer to corporations and governments being
31 accountable to popular democracy and financial auditing, with their rep-
32 resentational norms, profit-and-loss columns and hiring practices pub-
33 licly available for scrutiny. But in TV, the term signifies the amount of
34 information about audiences that networks hand to advertisers—what
35 kinds of people watched and what they went on to purchase. Account-
36 ability equals surveillance.

37 Surveillance has long been a central strut of modernity, supposedly to
38 make populations secure, content and productive. Foucault explains the
39 phenomenon like this:

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41 [A]n important problem for [French] towns in the eighteenth century
42 was allowing for surveillance, since the suppression of city walls made
43 necessary by economic development meant that one could no longer
44 close towns in the evening or closely supervise daily comings and goings,
45 so that the insecurity of the towns was increased by the influx of the
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floating population of beggars, vagrants, delinquents, criminals, thieves, murderers, and so on, who might come, as everyone knows, from the country . . . In other words, it was a matter of organizing circulation, eliminating its dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximizing the good circulation by diminishing the bad (Foucault 2007: 54; also see Foucault 1976; Ravel 1999)

With the expansion of state authority into the everyday, into all corners of life, the *quid pro quo* for the security afforded by governments became knowing everyone's identities and practices. The equivalent expansion of corporations into the everyday, into the same corners of life, had as *its quid pro quo* for the provision of goods and services that they, too, know more and more about us. The proliferation of methods for studying how people interact with the media may even infringe privacy and free speech, given the proprietorial methods used by corporations to undermine autonomous reading (Turow 2005; Andrejevic 2006; Baruh 2004). The World Privacy Forum proposes that we are in a 'one-way mirror society', where power accretes to corporations through the supposedly even-handed tool of interactivity (Dixon 2010). It is certainly a good time for commodifying and governing talents, interests and ideas by transforming them into intellectual property.

US TV is available to spectators all day, every day. The price is more than purchasing consumer electronics, subscribing to satellite or cable, or paying for the electricity to drive these appliances. It is the price of having your identity known, governed, bought, and sold:

What do Klingons, giant rubber bands, and monster trucks all have in common? They hold the fascination of every male on the planet—and they make frequent appearances on Spike TV. Spike TV, which totes itself as a network for men, is the perfect example of the power of knowing your audience and giving them what they want.

In one week of watching Spike TV you can expect to see poker, ultimate fighting, demolition derbies, cop shows, kung fu movies, school bus figure eight racing, pyrotechnic explosions, Klingons, customized cars, Chairman Tamori, giant rubber bands, sports superstars, Captain James T. Kirk, video game awards, Japanese trivia shows, dating competitions, MacGyver, and monster trucks. And that is only a partial list of what Spike TV offers men. (Smith n.d.)

AUDIENCE FANTASIES, AUDIENCE NUMBERS

Three basic systems of fantasizing about TV audiences dominate marketing: the individual, the regional and the global. The first is animated by classifications of race, class, gender, age and psyche; the second by geopolitical

1 clusters; and the third by a growing cosmopolitanism. Audience surveil-
2 lance starts before television programs have even been made, via focus
3 groups, which scrutinise small numbers of people whose identities repre-
4 sent the social formations desired by advertisers. They are shown pilots of
5 programs to judge the likelihood that people like them will watch shows
6 that are picked up by networks. These groups are crucial to the arrival
7 and departure of US TV texts. The firms that undertake such research fre-
8 quently work for both producers and networks, thereby creating a conflict
9 of interest, and are rarely multilingual, unlike their equivalents in public
10 relations or advertising.

11 Once a series is on the air, ratings and subscriptions are the keys to
12 determining their success. They have become of increasing importance as
13 the audience for television has fractured. The English-language US broad-
14 cast networks attained their peak viewing numbers in 1976, with 92%
15 of the national audience; by 2005, they had 45% of it.⁵ US cable pro-
16 gramming thrived at their expense with the deregulation of the 1980s and
17 1990s, which permitted cable networks to start their own stations and
18 make their own programs. Today's highly targeted cable networks offer
19 original programming. They seek a signature in the public mind and cor-
20 relate consumption with viewing. The upshot? Perhaps most spectacularly,
21 more people watched CNN than any broadcast network on election night
22 in 2008, and no fewer than thirty-seven cable stations that carry com-
23 mercials reported their best prime-time viewing figures that year, while
24 audience numbers for the broadcast networks dropped by an average of
25 11% (Attallah 2007: 330; Flaherty 2008; Richardson and Figueroa 2005;
26 Collins 2009; Hassan et al. 2003: 446f; Morris 2007).

27 Companies like MTV attract young audiences who are less inclined to
28 sit through commercials than their elders. Some research suggests they cust-
29 omise TV schedules to suit their diaries, not to avoid advertising. So now there
30 are more and more ideas about interactive commercials, where viewers use
31 remote controls to respond to pitches—and disclose data about themselves
32 (Helm 2007; Downey 2007; Reynolds 2008; Edgecliffe-Johnson 2007).

33 Some telling examples of intense audience targeting and surveillance
34 come from sporting TV. At the height of the Great Recession, the premium-
35 cable network HBO had 41 million US subscribers paying \$3.84 billion a
36 year. Their social identities and viewing interests are very precisely cali-
37 brated (Ben Block 2010). For example, visitors to HBO's web site on boxing
38 encounter a section titled 'TALK', which invites them to participate in polls,
39 sign up for a newsletter and write on bulletin boards.⁶ 'TALK' is also and
40 equally a system of surveillance that allows the network to monitor view-
41 ers' tastes and ideas without paying them for their intellectual property
42 (Miller and Kim 2008). The basic-cable sports network ESPN uses inter-
43 active TV fora such as 'My Vote' and 'My Bottom Line' to uncover audi-
44 ence drives in the name of enabling participation and pleasure in watching.
45 ESPN has also purchased broadband portals that ensure global dominance.
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It now owns Cricinfo, Scrum.com and Racing-Live, which provide two-way exchanges with their audiences to build loyalty and deliver intelligence to advertisers (Nordyke 2008; Hampp 2008; Spangler 2009; Gibson 2009; Stiernstedt 2008).

For its part, Fox Soccer Channel succeeds not because it commands huge audiences, but because of their composition—men aged 18–34 with annual household incomes of more than \$75,000 ('Fox Soccer' 2008). The station's biggest-ever ratings, for a 2011 English Premier League game, drew 418,000 average viewers and 285,000 households.⁷ That may not seem significant in a country of over 300 million people, but with a highly targeted demographic strategy, such numbers can produce profitable outcomes. The hint as to how the channel identifies viewers to advertisers comes from its TV commercials, which are about regaining and sustaining hair growth and hard-ons, losing and hiding pimples and pounds, and becoming and adoring soldiers and sailors.

And broadcast TV? A network drama like *Alias* (2001–2006), which did not rate well, remained on the air for five years because of the youthfulness of its fans and its successful promotion of DVD sales. Low-rating situation comedies about élites, like *30 Rock* (2006–) and *The Office* (2005–), keep their places on the schedule as a consequence of being much loved by affluent viewers. That quality can enable unpopular series to survive, because advertisers of costly merchandise are promised ruling-class audiences by networks. With overall declines in ratings, the broadcast networks are sometimes forced to offer free commercial time to advertisers who have paid for programs that do not attract the 'right' people. Then there is very specific, local targeting, where broadcast stations follow the lead of radio and the airlines, via credit and debit cards articulated to frequent viewing and rewards systems with local advertisers (Downey 2007; Consoli 2008; Greenwald 2009).

Youthful audiences are of particular surveillant concern to the industry, because the young are thought to be still deciding on their favourite commodities—toothpaste, transport, tutus, and so on. To quote 1970s' ABC executive Leonard Goldstein, they are 'the most curious' viewers, the likeliest to 'seek out the new'. The success of *Friends* (1994–2004) encouraged broadcast networks to schedule comedies that would appeal to people in their twenties and thirties. Other age groups got the message that they were not a priority and did the sensible thing of turning to cable stations. Ironically, when CBS reverted to the idea of addressing a mass audience in 2008, it won the ratings both overall *and* among young people (Collins 2009).

Broadcasters are forever announcing new, failsafe schemes for captivating and capturing the audience. In 2006, NBC unveiled 'Television 2.0', which was meant to be the end of drama in prime time. In 2008, it declared the return of the '8 o'clock Family Hour' with serial drama throughout the year—this was called 'The New Paradigm'. Then 2009 ushered in 'The NBCUniversal2.0', a 'New, New Paradigm' with less original

1 programming and more reality and talk shows, described in the idiotic
2 vocabulary of managerialism as a ‘margin enhancer’. Consider this embar-
3 rassing quotation from the head of NBC-Universal’s TV and movie inter-
4 ests in 2009: ‘We have a sniper focus on 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. to drive a power
5 audience flow’ (de Moraes 2008; Friedman 2009a). The translation is that
6 the network had given up on creating high-quality drama other than during
7 those two hours.

8 It is hard to believe that these people inhabit the world of English when
9 they use such laughably inelegant and aggressive metaphors to describe
10 the surveillance and management of viewers. Then the industry turns the
11 manifold, manifest failures of these manager-warlocks into assertions that
12 audiences are their masters!

13 I do not suggest that the practice of surveillance is omniscient and omnip-
14 otent. Audience numbers and practices have massive effects, but they are
15 not pure, unvarnished accounts of popularity and conduct. For example,
16 ratings apartheid was practised for decades in the US until 2007, initially
17 because Spanish-language networks thought their viewers were being lost
18 in the Anglo-Yanqui mass. When Spanish-language networks were finally
19 measured alongside their English-language equivalents, Univision won the
20 ratings amongst advertising’s most desired age group—18–49—no fewer
21 than fourteen times in 2008, because Latin@s were not departing net-
22 work TV for cable or the Internet, due to their economic situation (Bauder
23 2008).⁸

24 The belated recognition of Univision’s importance emphasises the limita-
25 tions of ratings. The measurement of bilingual audiences to Anglo networks
26 was so incompetent that it was wrongly used to downplay the appeal of
27 ethnically inclusive English-language material, misreading viewers’ desires
28 and hence diminishing work prospects for minority talent. Numerous mul-
29 ticultural shows were prematurely cancelled, such as *Greetings from Tuc-*
30 *son* (2002–2003), *Kingpin* (2003) and *Luis* (2003), because their audiences
31 were underestimated—in every sense. What else were Spanish speakers to
32 do but turn to Univision, when Anglo networks systematically ignored,
33 distorted or misunderstood them, as decades of content analysis in the
34 *National Brownout Report* have illustrated (National Association 2006;
35 Rincón & Associates 2004; James 2007)? This connects to the intellectual
36 narrowness of Anglo executives and attempts by traditional networks to
37 minimise the power of cable stations by stressing prime time as the centre-
38 piece of measuring audience size, which suited their heavy investments in
39 marquee programming at that time, and their cosy relationship with the
40 companies that research viewers.

41 The panic over Univision’s success and the gains made by cable stations
42 over broadcast networks repeat the anxiety of the 1980s, when video-cas-
43 sette recorders and premium channels threatened to take control of the
44 audience away from TV corporations and towards film studios, cable com-
45 panies and viewers. These concerns were reawakened when Digital Video
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Recorders (DVRs) permitted viewers to elude the clutches of capital by avoiding commercials in real time. DVRs were even advertised for these qualities, supposedly transforming audiences into schedulers. There was a dramatic loss of confidence in TV's efficacy amongst major advertisers, despite this additional intelligence about viewers, out of fear that '[l]e pouvoir de programmer passe des mains de l'éditeur à celles du téléspectateur' (the power to program is shifting from editors to spectators) (Cristiani and Missika 2007; also see Carlson 2006).

By 2009, almost a third of US homes had DVRs. But just 5% of TV was being time shifted, and people skipped a mere 3% of commercials ('The Revolution' 2009). Time shifting grew in 2010, with the average resident watching nearly ten and a half hours more that way by the end of the year. The biggest annual increase was in the third quarter, which was 17.9% over the same period in 2009.⁹ But these increases came from a small base. Furthermore, the first popular versions of these devices only worked when subscribers connected them to the Internet, thereby allowing service providers, TiVo and ReplayTV, to collect information. In addition to amassing a huge database of consumer information, they pinpointed the identities and actions of television viewers (Lewis 2001: 40; Rose 2001; Attallah 2007: 330; 'The Revolution' 2009).

To repeat, the elemental desire that drives advertisers is not absolute numbers of viewers. They want information about, and surveillance of, those audiences in terms of identity, wealth and taste. Ratings firms have developed ever-more impressive-sounding methods of investigating audiences—10,000 US viewers are under surveillance through People Meters nowadays, to add to the 15,000 examined by other means, such as Anytime Anywhere Media Measurement. And online sites replaying network television and movies, such as Hulu, use 'geo-filtered access logs' to identify audiences. These are measured each day, alongside confessional testimonies by potential viewers—if you tell us about your life and practices of consumption, we'll tell you about programs that may interest you ('Nielsen Media' 2006; Mermigas 2008). This is the future of 'TV Everywhere' initiatives.

Consider YouTube's Video Identification software, which was developed with Disney and Time Warner. It is a surveillance device for tracking copyrighted materials on the site that follows the history of each uploaded frame, spying on users to disclose their Internet protocols, aliases and practices to corporations. The software permits these companies to block or enable reuse of texts, depending on their marketing and surveillance needs of the moment. YouTube has thus become commercial TV's valued ally, tracking intellectual property and realising the culture industries' paradoxical dream of engaging in product placement each time copyright is infringed on line, while learning more and more about their audiences (Miller 2009).

This passion for knowing the customer at the same time as claiming to serve it explains the advent of firms such as Phorm and FrontPorch ('Watching' 2008). Corporate consultant Openwave's *Privacy Primer* says

1 it protects consumers from an *Era of Behavioral Marketing*. But the *Primer*
2 gleefully avows that '[o]n the internet, customer feedback isn't requested
3 so much as it's collected, like a digital trail of breadcrumbs. Mobile tech-
4 nology only sharpens the focus on user behavior by bringing location and
5 contextual information into play' (Openwave 2009).
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8 CONCLUSION 9

10 Focusing on corporate power, as I have done here, leaves one open to the
11 venerable, predictable charge of denying the ability of audiences to func-
12 tion autonomously of how the TV industry wants them to behave. Foucault
13 rightly said, 'On se plaint toujours que les médias bourrent la tête des gens.
14 Il y a de la misanthropie dans cette idée. Je crois au contraire que les gens
15 réagissent; plus on veut les convaincre, plus ils s'interrogent' (Some com-
16 plain that the media brainwash people. This seems misanthropic to me.
17 I believe that people resist; the more one tries to convince them, the more
18 they question) (Foucault 2001: 927). Stuart Hall concurs: 'I speak and talk
19 to the radio and the TV all the time. I say, "that is not true" and "you are
20 lying through your teeth" and "that cannot be so". I keep up a running
21 dialogue' (Taylor 2006).

22 Very nice. But lest it be assumed that ratings and so on are purely the stuff
23 of old-style effects studies, we should recognise that marketers like nothing
24 better than active audiences who are overflowing with knowledge about pro-
25 grams; nothing better than diverse, articulate groups with easily-identified
26 cultural politics and practices; nothing better than fine-grained ethnographic
27 and focus-group work in addition to large-scale surveys that provide broad-
28 based demographic data. The supposedly resistive social identity is just one
29 more category for their delectation (Maxwell 1996a, 1996b).

30 And training students to analyse TV texts is in no way threatening to
31 commerce: 'Advertisers think media education is great' (Bazalgette 1999).
32 No wonder Virginia Postrel's (1999) infamous *Wall Street Journal* op-ed
33 welcomes media and cultural studies as 'deeply threatening to traditional
34 leftist views of commerce . . . lending support to the corporate enemy and
35 even training graduate students who wind up doing market research'.
36 Beyond our own field, capitalist lackeys in neuroscience lie in wait to scan
37 audience brains and identify which segments activate purchasing desires
38 while viewing (Bürgi 2007).

39 Marketers avow their powerlessness over audiences when challenged in
40 the public sphere, but boast omnipotence over them in the private world:
41 the essay that won the oleaginous 'Best New Thinking Award' at the 2003
42 Market Research Society Conference acknowledged that successful mar-
43 keting does not 'view . . . the consumer as an individual' but 'part of the
44 herd' (Earls 2003). And producers who hide behind the rhetoric of sover-
45 eign consumption frequently hold audiences in contempt. The creator of
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Heroes (2006–2010) referred to people who viewed his show on network TV as 'saps and dipshits who can't figure out how to watch it in a superior way' (quoted in Hirschorn 2009). Thanks for that.

The task for those of us who want television to be more entertaining, informative, inclusive and democratic is to alert our fellow audience members that our viewing and social identities are governed and commodified and our mental labour sold to others without our consent or remuneration. We must make TV accountable by exposing its own surveillant eye to scrutiny by those it seeks to observe and channel.

NOTES

1. <http://www.donnadawson.co.uk>. Last accessed 2011–10–07.
2. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/about-us.html>. Last accessed 2011–10–07.
3. Thanks to Rick Maxwell for first alerting me to thinking in the way that animates this chapter and to the editor for his helpful and supportive comments and his understanding of how to manage my peccadillos!
4. <http://www.mgocpa.com/go/mgo/?jsessionid=EC11314641BFF963CA5F3F14BBCDE75F>. Last accessed 2011–10–07.
5. CBS, ABC, NBC in 1976; Fox appeared later.
6. <http://www.hbo.com/boxing/index.html#/boxing/talk/index.html>. Last accessed 2011–10–07.
7. <http://www.epltalk.com/fox-soccer-channel-sets-new-record-for-chelsea-vs-liverpool-telecast-29232>. Last accessed 2011–10–07.
8. This prompted one more tedious but nasty turn in a national debate over assimilation that saw ludicrous accusations to the effect that young Latin@s were not learning English or patriotic identification as a consequence of watching shows in another tongue (Arnoldy 2007). Empirical studies of minority groups using TV to solidify their culture and remain in touch with places of origin, such as Turks in Greece or Arabs in the US, counter the notion that this precludes integration, and Latin@s move easily between languages, code-switching both inter-sententially and between phrases, in keeping with their use of both Anglo and Spanish television channels (Madianou 2005: 55; Rizkallah and Razzouk 2006; Loechner 2009a).
9. http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/media_entertainment/tv-usage-trends-q3-and-q4-2010. Last accessed 2011–10–07.

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