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**EDITORIAL**



## Television A-Z

Toby Miller

**What do we think of** when we see the word *television*? It stands for so many things, in so many contexts, for so many different people that the answer to that question could itself cover a dozen books. A short list might include fun, boredom, public service, profit, sport, action, news, men, the United States, movies, color, disaster, poisonous fumes and parts, and sweated manufacture. In fact, I have my own television A to Z list:

**Advertising:** Texts that interrupt television, or are the best television, or enable television.

**Broadcasting:** When television went through the air and was aimed at everyone.

**Culture:** What television was not. Not.

**Drama:** Once characterized television, and has *always* characterized its internal workings and debates about it.

**Effects:** Measuring the impact of worrying about television on politicians, family power dynamics, and the careers of psychology and communication professors.

**Flow:** The movement of Raymond Williams backwards, forwards, and sideways on a trans-Atlantic liner.

**Government:** The space between television as a vast wasteland and a toaster with pictures.

**Hegemony:** How television forms consent. Of course, this is not functionalist. Not a bit.

**Ideology:** What people who live outside plutocracies and militarized states no longer believe in.

**Journalism:** Extinct species, formerly common in the United States.

**Knowledge:** Used to disagree with people who refer to an information society.

**Liveness:** Plausible, in the case of sports coverage.

**Media:** Subject for corralling undergraduates and teaching them that what they enjoy is also good for them.

**News:** RIP September 11, 2001.

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**Ownership:** A topic that used to matter but is no longer important because people in villages apparently interpret television programs in accordance with their local rituals.

**Production:** Invisible other than as what media studies undergraduates must do rather than their essays.

**Quality:** It's not quality, it's television.

**Race:** A Grand Prix.

**Sex:** Only on satellite and cable.

**Technology:** Sold to public by offering sport exclusively on latest innovation.

**Uses and Gratifications:** Jeremy Bentham watching *Survivor*.

**Violence:** To be derided, other than when done by the state to foreigners.

**Women:** A market segment.

**X-cess:** Media studies academics writing about wrestling or their children.

**Youth:** Spectators learning how to be responsible consumers.

**Zworykin:** Fabled television inventor from RCA who "liberated" an already patented invention.