
PRESS & TELEVISION

*TV and
the Elderly*

"How the Elderly Perceive Television Commercials" by Elliot S. Schreiber and Douglas A. Boyd, in *Journal of Communication* (Winter 1980), P.O. Box 13358, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101.

The elderly are not only a large (11 percent) and growing part of the U.S. population—but they watch more television than any other age group, according to the Nielsen ratings. Schreiber and Boyd, communications specialists at the University of Delaware, Newark, report that income, education, and age are good predictors of senior citizens' TV viewing habits.

The authors surveyed 442 persons, age 60 to 91, at senior citizens' centers and apartment houses for the elderly in and around Wilmington, Del. In general, they found that better-educated individuals who had held professional, clerical, and proprietary jobs watched fewer hours of television than their less-educated counterparts who had held lower-status jobs. However, the heaviest viewers in the study were those with between 7 and 12 years of schooling. Fifty-two percent of this group watched at least four hours of TV each day.

Male high-school graduates concentrated their viewing between 6:00 and 8:00 P.M., when evening news programs are broadcast. After 8:00 P.M., most of the men in front of the television set lacked high-school diplomas. One surprise: 47 percent of college-educated women admitted to problems in distinguishing commercials from regular programming, versus only 13 percent of women with 1–6 years of education.

"Younger elderly"—between 60 and 70 years old—were more apt to pick television as the most influential medium for advertising than were their seniors. Respondents over 70 stated that newspaper and magazine ads affected their buying habits more than TV commercials. Schreiber and Boyd suggest that this pattern stems from age differences in the 1950s, when TV first swept into America's homes.

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*Confusion
over Confucius*

"A New Interpretation of Confucius" by Philip Ho Hwang, in *Philosophy East and West* (Jan. 1980), The University Press of Hawaii, 2840 Kolowalu St., Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.

A man of action, the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 B.C.) discussed human conduct far more than human nature. [He saw the philosopher's task as that of identifying the specific duties that rulers and

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subjects had to perform to create a just society.] Yet most scholars are convinced that he thought of man as being naturally good. Their belief is based on the claims of Mencius, a 4th Century B.C. Chinese philosopher, and on debatable interpretations of Confucius's own ambiguous sayings, asserts Hwang, a professor of philosophy at Duksung Women's College in South Korea.

For thousands of years, Chinese philosophers took Mencius at his word when he proclaimed himself a true successor of the revered Confucius. But the two could scarcely have been more different. Confucius disdained worldly ambition and frequently incorporated the criticisms of others into his writings in the interests of discovering truth. Mencius, on the other hand, sought the limelight and stubbornly defended his ideas against all challenges. Mencius wrote voluminously about man's goodness. Confucius hardly mentioned human nature; the phrase appears only twice in the *Analects*, the most authentic available account of his life and sayings. One key passage, commonly translated as "Man is born with uprightness," may also be read as "Man is born *for* uprightness"—in Chinese, the preposition can have both meanings.

Though he maintained that his views conformed to Confucius's teachings, the ambitious Mencius was more concerned with luring disciples from his philosophical rivals. Playing to the Chinese people's deep respect for antiquity, Mencius wrapped himself in the master's mantle, pledging allegiance to Confucius as part of his campaign to become the pre-eminent philosopher of the day.

Mencius's focus on human nature may have been an "advance over Confucius" and a logical extension of his predecessor's teachings, observes Hwang. But the rhetorical homage that Mencius paid Confucius should not obscure his break with the master's thought.

Celibacy Retraced

"Clerical Continence in the Fourth Century: Three Papal Decretals" by Daniel Callam, C.S.B., in *Theological Studies* (March 1980), P.O. Box 64002, Baltimore, Md. 21264.

Celibacy for all priests is a relatively new development in Catholic history. The early Church regularly ordained married men, although bachelors and widowers were not allowed to marry once they entered the priesthood. Not until the 4th century did Pope Siricius (384-99) require that married, as well as unmarried, clerics lead lives of sexual abstinence (continence).

Theologians have long claimed that Siricius's decision flowed from a practical observation: Since priests were required to celebrate mass daily, and since custom forbade anyone who had sexual intercourse to participate in religious ceremonies the following day, sex was effectively off-limits, anyway.

But such arguments are faulty, contends Callam, a theologian at the