

## Chapter 10 Media Ethics

### Intro

-The primary use of media shifted from distributing info to providing entertainment and popularizing culture

### Ancient Misunderstanding

-Plato: hated poets, called them dreamers who were the potential undoing of philosophy

Rebels of the first order

Those who restrict the arts do so because they mistrust the power of the artist

### Tolstoy and Television

-Tolstoy = first artist that Plato would fear

-Wrote "What is Art?"

-Argued that good art had a dominant characteristic: communicates the feelings of the artist to the masses in which the artist intended

-Tolstoy rejected Shakespeare & Beethoven as being incapable to understand the masses

-TV and documentaries have made viewers more aware of the plights of the people through a unity of purpose and craft

-Tolstoy asserts that great art is defined by how the art is understood by the audience

-wrote War & Peace

-Popular art loses its edge & takes shortcuts to commonplace insight

-Entertainment media get their power in the underlying assumptions that will become widely held societal values, ex: Muslims as terrorists (stereotypes get their name here)

### What is Art?

-Prior to the Industrial Revolution, art was something only the well educated paid for, ex: Mozart

-Artists later discovered that if they could find more than one person to pay for their work, artistic control could return to the artist = concept of popular art

### Truth in Art and Entertainment

#### Important Questions

How much truth should the audience expect from entertainment?

How entertaining should the audience expect truth to be?

-No truth is required in art

-The belief that there must be one accepted truth for all

-The audience does not care when the lines of truth & entertainment are blurred

COP TV: Entertainment, Info, or News?

-Screenwriter Paddy Chayefsky envisioned a time when the lines would be blurred b/n news & entertainment (see the film Network)

-News did start to take a look of entertainment, but he did not predict that entertainment will also look like news (ex: The Onion, The Daily Show)

Infotainment: shows spawn that seem to spin a truth (ex: Cops, America's Most Wanted, Unsolved Mysteries) but are really a form of entertainment

They often spawn spinoff shows & are very popular

By blending information and entertainment, the possibility for abuse of an unsuspecting audience exists

Infotainment keeps the look of news yet airs content of lowbrow entertainment juxtaposing traditional uses and gratifications

Reality TV: Oxymoron, Profit Center, and Using the Audience

-Fewer quality programs are in syndication and fewer producers of quality shows are able to get their product into the schedules of major networks now obsessed with so-called reality

These tend to be more expensive and require writers whereas reality shows hardly involve scriptwriters and no talent, thus cheaper to produce

-Ethical inquiry: What constitutes reality?

The Documentarian: Artist or Journalist

-Documentarians are truth-tellers

-They seek to tell the truth from a POV influenced by context

-Documentarians are concerned with exploiting those they've become close to yet worry about becoming the prisoner of a single POV

-They seek to overtly link emotion, fact, logic and action in a way that journalism seldom does