

Broadcasting in the 1930s; radio, television and the Depression – A Symposium

Part of the conference to mark the 50th anniversary of the Wisconsin Centre for Theatre and Film Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison
July 6th – 9th, 2010

ABSTRACTS

In alphabetical order by speaker

The Trumpets of Autocracies and the Still, Small Voices of Civilisation: Hilda Matheson, Emmanuel Levinas, and the Ethics of Broadcasting in a Time of Crisis

Todd Avery, University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA.

From its inception, British broadcasting was both a technological and a cultural phenomenon; or, to borrow Raymond Williams's formulation about television, broadcasting was both a technology and a cultural form. As a cultural form, British broadcasting, and its institutional embodiment, the BBC, functioned as a point of intersection for several related discourses—social, political, and aesthetic. As a public utility service in the national interest, molded according to Arnoldian assumptions about the nature of culture and about the role of culture in everyday life, the BBC was also an institution that officially promoted, sometimes explicitly and often tacitly, a particular moral agenda. At the very least—and this is a fact too-often overlooked in the history of radio criticism—the BBC served as a site of both open and implicit ethical discourse; in other words, if the BBC was a technocultural institution, then one of the constituent aspects of “culture” was the ethical. The BBC was a technocultural institution, and more specifically an electronic mass telecommunications institution, whose founders and early administrators embraced radio as a means of elevating the nation's moral ideals and standard of conduct through a quasi-Arnoldian dissemination of culture, “the best that has been thought and said in the world,” to a mass listening public. As the Listener's 14 May 1930 editorial on “Literary Values” put it, “broadcasting serves, as no other medium does, both for a vehicle of cultural diffusion, and for a means of undisturbed expression by the highest type of critical mind. Broadcasting can therefore assist to keep alive the spirit which animated men like . . . Matthew Arnold.”

The general purpose of this paper is to explore the ethics of broadcasting in a time of crisis—specifically, the early 1930s—with the aid of a critical lens afforded by the philosophical work of the French poststructuralist ethical philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, whose works have been central to the so-called ethical turn in literary and cultural studies over the past decade or so. My specific focus is on the theoretical, administrative, and editorial work of Hilda Matheson, an early Director of the Talks Department at the BBC. Matheson formatively influenced the sound of the BBC through her development of the “intimate” mode of address beginning in 1927. After leaving the BBC in 1931, she continued to comment, from an ethical perspective, on British

broadcasting and, increasingly, on German broadcasting under Joseph Goebbels, in a column for the Week-End Review. Then, in 1933, she published Broadcasting, one of the best-informed overviews of early British radio.

Ethical concerns played a central part in Matheson's vision for radio as a vehicle of cultural uplift and ethical progress. Central to her vision for broadcasting was the intimate mode of address, a speaking style that, she hoped, would encourage an understanding of radio broadcasting as a medium for communicative acts, not between a broadcaster and a listening public—one man or woman talking at the masses—but between a broadcaster and individual listeners: one man or woman speaking to another man or woman in a transaction repeated thousands or even millions of times simultaneously. In Broadcasting, Matheson puts it more succinctly. “[T]he basic fact of broadcasting,” she writes, is “that the microphone transmits an intimate voice to the individual; it is not a megaphone shouting at a crowd.” She elaborates: “Early experiments with broadcast talks showed that it was useless to address the microphone as if it were a public meeting, or even to read it essays or leading articles. The person sitting at the other end expected the speaker to address him personally, simply, almost familiarly, as man to man.” Matheson is writing here of British broadcasting, and she is writing with the clear awareness that other experiments had been tried, and were even then being tried, elsewhere—in the United States, for example, where cultural elevation and education had from the beginning taken a back seat to broadcasting as popular entertainment and where broadcasting had begun as a commercial activity rather than as a public service. She is also thinking of the ways that totalitarian states such as Germany, Italy, and Russia were developing broadcasting on what she saw as the “tub-thumping” propagandistic model of “a megaphone shouting at a crowd.”

This paper brings several basic Levinasian ethical ideas to bear on the ethics of style in early British radio as Matheson conceived it. Matheson's conviction that “the . . . microphone transmits an intimate voice to the individual; it is not a megaphone shouting at a crowd” grounds Matheson's broadcasting philosophy. What, as Matheson understood the situation, were the ethical uses of radio in the 1920s and 1930s? How did broadcast styles signify specific ethical purposes? How does the desire to speak to and not at listeners resonate with a Levinasian injunction to attend to the face of the Other? How well does Levinas's ethics as first philosophy, with its emphasis on seeing, translate into analysis of a verbal and aural communications medium in which the other is never directly encountered? How useful here are Levinas's concepts of the Saying and the Said? How does the intimate mode of address embody an ethics of responsibility that challenges what Levinas called the “philosophy of Hitlerism” in Nazi radio with its exhortatory, megaphone-shouting-at-a-crowd style designed to “awaken . . . elementary feelings” of identity and to enlist the listening population into a fundamental order of the Same? And what, finally, are the ethical resonances of the ethical mode of address that Matheson pioneered?

To address such questions is to illuminate a fundamental yet still obscure aspect of early radio theory and practice in Britain and in Germany, at a time of growing political crisis in which radio played a central role.

Todd Avery is Associate Professor in the department of English at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. He specializes in British literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a secondary emphasis in cultural studies and a perennial concern with relations among literature, ethical philosophy, and emergent technologies. Since 2001, he has published several articles and reviews on British modernism, especially the Bloomsbury Group. His book, "Radio Modernism: Literature, Ethics, and

the BBC 1922-1938," was published in September 2006 by Ashgate Press.

Performing Cultural Exchange: the BBC Jam Sessions from New York, 1938/39

Christina Baade, McMaster University, Ontario, Canada.

In October 1938, Felix Greene, the BBC's North American representative, wrote, "On November 5th the BBC in New York will hold a party. It is the first party of its kind and may never be repeated. From it we hope will be broadcast the greatest swing programme that has ever happened. It will be a real 'jam session.'" For Greene, the programme's thrill was its informality: star players might appear, the repertory was loosely set, and the arrangements would be decided on the spot. Leslie Perowne, who oversaw jazz records programmes and American swing relays at Broadcasting House, regarded the session as a historic assembly and as an important opportunity for British listeners. Meanwhile, Greene expected the party in the Roof Garden of the exclusive St. Regis Hotel, the star-studded jam session, and the press coverage it elicited to convince "the great American public that we are not quite as stuffy an organization as we are often made out to be."

The ambitious Saturday, 5 November, jam session was sufficiently successful for a second relay to be arranged for Friday, 20 January 1939. Together, the American jam session relays were highlights in the BBC's turn to jazz and swing broadcasting during the late 1930s. Although the BBC had long promoted dance music played by elite British "name" bands as respectable entertainment and made occasional jazz broadcasts, like those featuring Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington's Orchestra in their 1933 tours of the United Kingdom, its general policy was to eschew hot jazz, with its low class and "Negroid" associations. The impetus for change came from the advocacy of young members of the Gramophone Department: Perowne, Harman Grisewood, and later Charles Chilton. Perowne recalled, "The BBC became jazz-conscious in about 1937."

The Corporation treated American swing as a specialized genre that appealed to a minority audience of connoisseurs, an approach well within its mandate of serving diverse tastes. It offered gramophone series like Perowne's *Kings of Jazz* and Leonard Feather's *Swing Time*, and in cooperation with the Columbia Broadcasting System, it broadcast *America Dances*, a series of live swing relays from the United States. These programmes offered listeners music to which they had limited access: from 1935, the Ministry of Labor barred virtually all American bands and individual musicians from touring in Britain, and in 1937 the price for swing records had spiked, putting records beyond the range of many fans.

As welcome as the gramophone series and *America Dances* were in publications like *Melody Maker*, which served the dance music profession and jazz and swing enthusiasts, critics and fans recognized the 1938/39 jam sessions as exceptional. "Detector," the *Melody Maker*'s radio critic, described it as "the most ambitious broadcast of swing the Corporation has ever attempted." The relays represented a significant financial investment by the BBC. While it devoted £30,000 to dance music programming in 1938, averaging £43 per programme, fees for the November 1938 relay totaled \$374 (or about £94) and the January 1939 relay cost \$275. The excitement for British fans came not only from the famous personnel but from the status of jam sessions as sites of authenticity, artistry, and community, which existed beyond commercial demands. However, while Joe Marsala, the clarinetist and bandleader at the Hickory

House on 52nd Street, organized the players for both sessions and Alistair Cooke compèred both, British audiences did not receive the two broadcasts with equal enthusiasm. For “Detector” the first jam session was a “washout,” a decision that generated controversy among *Melody Maker* readers, while the second session was “grand.” The divergent reception among a minority audience, which the BBC was finally attempting to serve in a serious manner, reflected the changing expectations for jam sessions as 1) they moved from in- and inter-group activities to public and mass mediated events and 2) as they moved from New York’s jazz and swing cultures to Britain’s enthusiast subculture.

In addition, the two broadcasts represented two different approaches to translating the intimate, spontaneous atmosphere of the jam session into intelligible, appealing radio for home listeners. While the BBC promoted both relays as authentic jam sessions—the first in terms of its party atmosphere, the second in terms of its intimacy—they succeeded very differently as broadcasts. The first session delighted the participants, but the medium of radio and the style of reportage failed to provide a transparent window into the gathering for listeners; rather the party’s gusto, Cooke’s loss of control, and atmospheric interference reinforced their distance. In contrast, by moving back into a radio studio and emphasizing small-group intimacy, the second jam session appealed to radio listeners as participants, rather than mere observers. Cooke’s straightforward compèring and the generally sympathetic musicianship operated effectively within the medium’s intimate mass address to render the proceedings comprehensible to a home listening audience.

This paper contextualizes the 1938/39 jam session relays in relation to the BBC’s institutional culture, the American swing industry, and transatlantic fan discourses. It addresses how the relays mediated national, racial, and stylistic differences, and it compares the ways in which the two broadcasts negotiated understandings of authenticity, intimacy, and spontaneity in the jam session and in radio. The paper concludes by considering the role of 1938/39 jam sessions as models for subsequent developments in British jazz and jazz broadcasting.

Christina Baade is associate professor in music and communication studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Currently, she is completing a monograph for Oxford University Press, *“Victory Through Harmony”*: *The BBC and Popular Music in World War II*.

Unintended Consequences; BBC talks policy in the 1930s.

Hugh Chignell, Bournemouth University, UK.

Today we associate radio with the voices of celebrities, the famous, the ‘great and the good’ who occupy so much airtime. It would be wrong, however, to assume that was always the case and the project of getting famous people to the microphone, and in particular great writers, was beset with problems. By the end of the 1930s, however, partly because of the regular talks of E.M.Forster and Desmond MacCarthy, radio was

associated with the voices of 'great men'. The BBC gained legitimacy and consent from these 'key brokers' in society and so cultural life was increasingly enacted through radio.

There is a powerful sense in the pre-war BBC of a rapidly expanding organisation which, despite Reith's moral and social orthodoxy and the top-down rigidity of its management, was beyond anyone's control. There were too many talks, too much news and, in particular, too many free spirits like Matheson, Fielden, Siepmann and Dimbleby to allow the BBC to be a risk-free area. Radical and progressive voices and ideas did feature on BBC radio. Leonard Woolf's six part series on 'The Modern State' in the 1931 was 'a sustained indictment of the British government for its failure to realize democracy for its citizens at home and in the colonies abroad'. So much for the caricature of the pre-war BBC as timid and conventional.

One of the aspirations of the early BBC was to feature 'the best which has been thought and said in the world'. This ethical mission was combined with Reith's own ambition for radio and the BBC and so it is no surprise that the greatest and most famous writers of the day were invited to speak. But many of these men, although they were extremely famous, celebrities of their day, also held dangerously radical views. The unintended consequence of the BBC's ambition was to give a platform to speakers who were variously socialist, communist, pacifist, atheist and almost completely at odds with Reith's own beliefs. It has become possible to write about the relationship between the literary elite and radio because of a flurry of publication featuring some great person and their radio career.

Two particularly prominent 'great men' who graced the BBC's talks schedule were H.G.Wells and George Bernard Shaw. Wells, apart from being a famous writer, was 'perhaps the best known socialist in the world for much of the twentieth century'. In common with some other notable speakers, he was initially reluctant to speak on radio because he was not prepared to have his talks censored. He was persuaded, as so many were, by the irrepressible Hilda Matheson, and he gave his first talk, on world peace, in July 1929. Following that, Wells became a regular talker motivated partly by his desire to use radio to 'educate the world to the dangers of fascism' and dictatorship. Befitting his internationalism, Wells interviewed both President Roosevelt and Stalin for the BBC, following this with a talk summing up an eight part series on Russia in 1931 in which he spoke favourably about long-term economic planning. Also in 1931 he spoke on 'What would I do with the world' and argued for disarmament, long-term economic planning and a single world currency.

The degree to which Wells's radicalism was politely ignored by Reith and others is illustrated by the fact that, despite being a noted anti-monarchist, Wells was invited to make a special broadcast for the Coronation of George VI in 1936; he replied with the suggestions 'The advantages of a republic' or 'The deadly influence of the monarchy in British intellectual life' both of which were rejected!

George Bernard Shaw was certainly in the same league as Wells; a nobel laureate, internationally famous playwright, socialist and advocate of women's rights. Shaw personified the BBC's dilemma regarding famous speakers, a brilliant public speaker but also a man with dangerously radical views which he took particular delight in expressing. He was much more closely associated with the BBC as an institution than Wells, serving

on the Spoken English Advisory Committee and chairing the committee in the 1930s, he was also a member of the BBC's General Advisory Committee.

Shaw delivered about twelve talks in all, although the BBC decided not to broadcast his speech on the occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1926, for fear that he would be too controversial. He returned regularly to the microphone because, as Conolly states: 'recognizing Shaw's brilliance as a public speaker and his ability to adapt his skills to the medium of radio, and responding to listeners' eagerness to hear him, the BBC did its best to give Shaw a voice on radio as often as possible'. But the price of his brilliance and fame was his relentless outspokenness; in 1934 in the 'Whither Britain?' series (pre-recorded but delivered live to the US) he argued that 'we... live in a dictatorship of bankers and ship-owners, with cabinet minister as their puppets and scapegoats'.

This paper will discuss the implications of the radicalism of some 1930s talks and the significance of them for the burgeoning talks culture as well as lessons to be learned from the complex relationship between Bloomsbury and the BBC.

Hugh Chignell is Associate Professor of Broadcasting History and Assistant Director of the Centre for Broadcasting History at Bournemouth University. He has published on radio history and theory including *Key Concepts in Radio Studies*, (Sage, 2009). He is currently writing a history of British radio talks, news and current affairs for Palgrave Macmillan.

'A Quietening Effect?': The BBC and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)

David Deacon, Reader in Media and Politics, Loughborough Communication Research Centre

This paper will examine how the British Broadcasting Corporation covered the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. As such, it connects directly with one of the major themes of the conference (i.e. 'representations of crisis'). The quoted reference to 'a quietening effect' in the title of the paper is taken from a memorandum sent in March 1937 by Anthony Eden, then the British Foreign Secretary, and which summarises the British government's view as to what it would have preferred the effect of the Corporation's coverage of the conflict to be. As the principal architects and advocates of international non intervention in Spain, the government was keen to cool domestic debate and ardour about events in a country that had previously seemed remote, but had come to resonate with ideological, political and military significance. It was also very concerned about international impression management, particularly among nations where the principles of public broadcasting were imperfectly understood and the BBC was assumed to operate as the mouthpiece of government.

In the title to this paper I have posed Eden's quote as a question to signify the purpose and focus of my analysis, which is to assess the extent to which the BBC complied with the government's wishes. Some versions of broadcasting history in 1930s Britain appear to suggest that the BBC willingly and consistently subordinated itself to the wishes of the British State. For example, Bryan Haworth has written of the 'staid respectability', 'old-guard rectitude' and 'unimaginative trustworthiness' of the BBC senior management during this period (1981: 51-2). It is my contention that this picture of

passivity does not capture adequately the political issues raised by the BBC's response to the Spanish Civil War. Through the detail of my analysis I shall show that the state-broadcast relationship, on this matter at least, was characterised as much by conflict as it was by complicity.

The issues examined in the paper will include:

- How the British government's news management strategy over the BBC and Spain fitted within its general political and propaganda strategies in the conflict.
- How they perceived the BBC's editorial coverage of the war.
- The respective significance of news bulletins and 'news talks' in the BBC's coverage.
- How BBC editors were forced to counter 'flak' from other national media organisations alongside pressures from government.
- The high level negotiations conducted between the BBC's senior management and senior Foreign Office sources in 1937 that aimed to diffuse an increasingly acrimonious and distrustful relationship fuelled by the conflict in Spain.

The paper draws upon a lengthy research investigation funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and which has recently been published as a book by Edinburgh University Press (see Deacon, 2008). This research has uncovered new archival evidence about the BBC's relationship with the government during the war, in particular private correspondence in March 1937 between Sir John Reith, the BBC's Director General, and Sir Robert Vansittart, then Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the Foreign Office, in which the government spelled out explicit stipulations about how the corporation should proceed in its coverage of the conflict.

David Deacon's published work has covered communication theory, media production, journalism, public relations, political communication, cultural studies, audience research, policy analysis and election research. He is the lead author of a major research method text book for media and cultural studies, which has just been published in its second edition (Deacon et al, 2007). His latest book (2008) is on the media and the Spanish Civil War.

Radio and the (Trans)gendered Soundscape in 1930s Argentina

Christine Ehrick, Department of History , University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Early and golden age radio in Argentina was a site where gender, citizenship and the public sphere were contested and reconstituted. Exploring issues of gender and radio broadcasting raises intriguing theoretical questions about the relationship between the voice and the body, and in turn between gendered bodies and technology. By breaching traditional boundaries between public and private and separating the voice from any immediate visual referent, radio was a key forum within which anxieties about shifting constructions and hierarchies of gender and sexuality merged with the fantasies and fears provoked by new technologies and by cultural and political massification. The mystery of the radio receiver, in other words, intersected with worries that feminism was creating a

new generation of mannish and/or promiscuous women and neurasthenic suspicions that “modern” urban society was making men soft and perhaps even less heterosexual.

“Radio and the (Trans)gendered Soundscape in 1930s Argentina” explores issues of radio and “gender trouble” in 1930s Buenos Aires, Argentina, which was home to one of the larger, more prosperous radio markets in the Americas at that time. Known as the “infamous decade”, the 1930s were a time of increasing class and gender-based tensions in Argentina, and the end of the decade saw the consolidation of new nationalist populist coalitions reflecting this new age of both mass media and mass politics. As elsewhere, early Argentine radio offered a brief window of opportunity for voices that directly challenged the traditional gendered soundscape (female radio commentators, radio “drag” performances, etc.). But these dissonant radio voices met with significant backlash from those who saw radio as a vehicle of “anti-culture”, immorality and subversion of “Argentine” values.

This essay explores ways in which radio voices performed gender, especially moments when those voices challenged and subverted the gendered order and disrupted the gendered soundscape via the introduction of unorthodox pairings of voice and speech or voice and seen body. Radio’s capacity to elasticize identity construction is grounded in the medium’s separation of sound from any immediate visual referent. Sound emanating from a radio receiver is never “synched” with any image. Moreover, the intimacy and immediacy of the human voice communicates veracity and invites the listener to come up with her/his own imagery (in the “mind’s eye”) to suit the sounds and voices they are hearing. For all these reasons radio is invocatory of the cultural imaginary in ways, perhaps, that visual media are not. And radio stimulated that cultural imaginary in ways that evoked both fantasy and fear. As a sound medium, in other words, radio has the capacity to overflow existing boundaries of space and culture, at the same time that it plays to (and thus reinscribed) those same boundaries. Radio transvestism existed in the tension between these two trajectories: as an example of the medium’s capacity to transcend traditional boundaries and as a straw “man” for those seeking to reimpose those boundaries.

Using the popular radio magazines as its main source, this paper will examine and compare campaigns against both female and transgendered male voices on the airwaves in 1930s Buenos Aires. The Western tradition has long considered women’s oratory as irrational, immodest, sinful and even unhealthy. These discourses resurfaced with a vengeance during radio’s golden age. In early 1930s Buenos Aires, for example, the radio press mocked female commentators and poetry recitationists as “vulgar”, immodest and hard on the ears. This story is placed alongside a lower volume, but still significant, campaign against “men singing women’s songs” on the radio during the early 1930s. Some feared that radio was providing a platform and a cover for the vocalizations of male homosexuals and/or transvestites, fears which played into homophobic nationalist discourses that were on the rise in Argentina during this decade. This paper seeks to draw out the links between these two campaigns, and to point out the multiple (albeit overlapping) ways in which radio challenged the gendered soundscape, and in turn provoking campaigns that sought to realign radio with so-called “traditional” values, putting dissonant voices back in their place (in the case of women) or silencing them altogether (in the case of “radio transvestism”). In so doing, it underscores the deeply gendered aspects of campaigns to “sanitize” broadcasting and argues that the “gendered

soundscape” is an important category for analyzing the “crisis” of 1930s broadcasting generally.

This paper also engages with existing scholarship on Argentine gender anxieties and popular culture in 1930s Argentina, particularly that dealing with tango and soccer (*fútbol*), and thus contributes to the larger process of moving radio out of the ‘blind spot’ of the cultural and political history of mid-twentieth-century Latin America. At the same time, this project also contributes to a broader process of integrating the history of women and gender with the history of radio and sound. “Radio and the (Trans)gendered Soundscape” is part of a larger book-length study of women/gender and golden age radio in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Montevideo Uruguay. *Ethereal Citizens: Women and Radio in the Río de la Plata, 1930s-1940s*, traces the history of women’s voices and the reception of those voices across times and genres, and compares and contrasts two important and overlapping South American radio markets operating in two distinct political and economic contexts.

Christine Ehrick is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Louisville, where she teaches courses on Latin America and Media History. She is currently writing her second book, *Ethereal Citizens: Women and Radio in the Río de la Plata, 1930s-1940s*.

Broadcasting as critical infrastructure. A story of European fine-tuning and techno-political interferences.

Andreas Fickers, Maastricht University, The Netherlands.

This paper aims at reflecting problems of scarcity and vulnerability of broadcasting as a critical infrastructure in a historical and European perspective. These reflections build on the concept of infrastructures as “mediating interfaces”. Viewing infrastructures as mediating interfaces in a number of interactions thus forces us to analyze them in their material, institutional and discursive complexity. These different levels “interact” in various forms. While political conceptions of Europe as a community of sovereign but legally committed nations have influenced the (fragmented) construction of a European broadcasting space, new broadcast technologies (for example short wave radio) have challenged the politicization of the ether and offered unexpected possibilities for civilian appropriations (amateurs) of Europe as a transnational communication space. European broadcasting infrastructures are a perfect mirror of these continuous tensions between the very nature of broadcasting as a transnational or transborder technology with its inevitable spill-over effects and its national and international forms of institutional and symbolic domestication and regulation. Focusing on the example of frequency allocations for radio broadcasting in the European spectrum in the 1920’s and 1930’s, this paper aims at analyzing the scarcity and vulnerability of broadcasting infrastructures in their material, institutional and symbolic nature. Depending on the ambition or the perspective of the narrator, the story of European broadcasting regulation could be told a transnational success story or as a succession of dashed hopes and sensitive setbacks. In fact, the most appropriate narrative structure is probably that of a soap opera. The international frequency conferences undoubtedly had something of a

staged performance and more than once ended with a cliffhanger and a classical “to be continued...”.

The identification with the central characters of the story is relatively easy too, as the main actors performing on these highly ritualized venues show a surprising continuity on the stage. Building on an extensive archival research at the EBU archives in Geneva, this paper aims at problematizing the concepts of “technopolitics” and “regulatory regimes” by focusing on the activities a central “technopolitical mediator” in the regulatory system of the International Broadcasting Union: the Technical Committee of the IBU, and especially its Chairman and Director of the Technical Center in Brussels, Raymond Braillard.

Andreas Fickers is Associate Professor for Comparative Media History in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University. He is President of the German Association for the History of Medicine, Science and Technology.

Jack Benny’s Intermedia Juggling Act: Integrating Radio and Film in the 1930s

Kathy Fuller-Seeley, Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA

Jack Benny’s top-rated NBC network radio program, emanating from Hollywood from 1935, drew listeners into the popular culture of film, thoroughly intertwining the two rival media forms. Like a funhouse mirror reflection of the *Lux Radio Theater* radio show (as analyzed by Michele Hilmes), the Jell-o program accentuated listeners’ fascination with Hollywood. While the Benny show’s premise concerned the performance of a radio broadcast, characters and situations centered on the world of movies. Film themes sung during the program, punning references to current movie titles, nearly 50 parodies of hit movies, and references to the Benny cast members’ work in motion pictures filled the Jell-o program. The show aspired to be more connected to Hollywood than to other radio shows broadcasting on the NBC network. The Jell-o program occasionally featured appearances by Hollywood actors, directors and producers, but very rarely discussed any radio programs or radio celebrities other than Fred Allen (also employed by the Young and Rubicam agency). A number of Benny radio programs take place at the Paramount studio, where radio listeners hear him fret about his meager dressing room, lose battles with directors, producers and costars, and make disastrous attempts at film acting. The Benny radio characters’ dialogue was suffused with the geography of Hollywood streets and Los Angeles neighborhoods, mentions of stars who resided near Jack’s Beverly Hills home, and jokes about restaurants and nightclubs habituated by celebrities. Jokes about Jack’s vanity and stinginess often involved motion pictures, too, as he insisted on viewing his films over and over, and dodged Mary’s insults about attending Dish Night giveaways.

Not only was the content of Jack Benny’s radio program in the 1930s intertwined with motion pictures – but so was his star image. Benny gained the greatest success on screen in a series of late 1930s radio-flavored films costarring his Jell-o show colleague Eddie “Rochester” Anderson. This integration of radio and film, as well as black and white, led to unprecedented -- but also problematic -- success. Benny’s film comedies

with Anderson (*Man About Town*, *Buck Benny Rides Again*, *Love Thy Neighbor*) were top money-earners for Paramount. In both arenas, the characters' comic routines not only meshed media forms but also featured far greater interaction between black and white characters than was typical of either Hollywood or network radio at the time.

White and black critics and the public responded strongly to the comic pair. Many praised the high quality of the humor and Rochester's witty put-downs of the Boss made him a sensation. Benny and Anderson were honored with Schomburg Center awards in 1940 for their race relations efforts. Nevertheless, the comics' close familiarity and master and servant relationship, in this time of Jim Crow segregation, also created an undercurrent of tension and critical reaction. Some conservative white Southerners objected angrily to NBC at suggestions of racial equality, while African-American newspaper critics and the NAACP took the Jello radio program to task for Rochester's all-too-frequent boozing, dice-rolling, and razor-wielding.

This paper combines textual analysis of the Benny radio shows and films, and reviews of the programs, with an examination of how the program, and the two comics' star personae were constructed by their advertising agency, network and studios. It will illuminate the complex ways in which the separation and integration of film and radio programs, film and radio stars, were debated and understood in American culture of the 1930s and early 1940s.

Kathryn Fuller Seeley is Professor of Moving Image Studies in the Communication Department of Georgia State University. Recent publications include: *Hollywood in the Neighborhood: Historical Case Studies in Small Town Moviegoing* (California 2007, editor), "Learning to Live with Television: Technology, Gender, and America's Early TV Audiences," in *The Columbia History of Television* (Columbia 2007).

Communists on the BBC, 1935-39

Ben Harker, University of Salford, UK

During the second half of the 1930s, the Communist Party of Great Britain subordinated revolutionary class politics to a broad-based anti-fascist agenda under the name of the 'popular front'. The new line compelled communists to build alliances with anti-fascists of all political persuasions, with the long-term goal of forming a progressive 'popular front' government. Though a failure politically, the new line enabled the party to enjoy a significant, if short-lived, profile in British cultural life. During these years communists were prominent in the Left Book Club, which would number 57,000 members by April 1939; the communist-dominated cultural journal *Left Review* (1934-38) became a key vector of the decade's crisis-generated cultural radicalisation; coalition-minded communists conducted an apparently more constructive dialogue with Britain's cultural and political traditions and key institutions, including the BBC. This paper, which is based on research for a forthcoming monograph on communist cultural politics, maps and analyses the under-researched communist engagement with the BBC during the popular front years (1935-39).

Communists in this period took radio seriously. The *Daily Worker* newspaper, which reached a circulation of 200,000 in the late 1930s, carried not only detailed radio listings, but extensive analysis of the BBC's uses and abuses of the medium. In journals, books and pamphlets, party intellectuals including George Audit and Charles Madge scrutinised 1930s BBC radio in the light of a better future. Drawing upon these writings, the first section of this paper explains that the BBC was conceived by communists dialectically. It was both an insidious institution exercising baleful influence on behalf of the ruling class, and a ready-made cultural apparatus whose public status and presence in millions of homes made it of great relevance to the 'rising class' and its (communist) political representatives. Analysis will outline some of the skirmishes, critiques and controversies that ensued, from communist criticisms of the BBC's priorities and leadership (Sir John Reith was frequently charged with using the BBC to soften up Britain for fascism), to communist allegations of BBC bias in the coverage of the Spanish Civil War, to controversies around the exclusion of communist leaders from the airwaves.

The paper will argue that these confrontations—which saw the BBC as the location of political struggle between ruling and oppositional elements—were enmeshed in a broader debate about the medium of radio itself. Like more celebrated figures from the international left, such as Bertholt Brecht and Walter Benjamin, communists in Britain repeatedly contrasted the establishment's habitual, inherently conservative, monologic use of radio ('a platform for old men to lecture us', in the words of the *Daily Worker's* George Audit), with the medium's largely unexploited potential for a more de-centred, dialogic and demotic communication (radio as 'the ear and voice of millions'), attuned to a full spectrum of social and cultural experiences. These tensions between settled conventions and creative possibilities were sharpened during the late 1930s. Well-documented technological improvements, such as the BBC's belated acquisition of Dramatic Control Panels and Mobile Recording Units in 1937, created new opportunities for innovation. The mid-1930s expansion of regional BBC staff saw the influx and promotion of permanent employees sympathetic to leftist agendas (John Pudney, Olive Shapley, D G Bridson) and the entrance into the BBC of individual communists (James Miller / Ewan MacColl, A. L. Lloyd, Joan Littlewood) who established more tentative footholds as casual scriptwriters, actors and presenters.

The second half of this paper turns from broadcasting's harder end—news, talks, institutional structures—to features programmes. Drawing on research in the *Daily Worker's* radio listings, the BBC Written Archives and recently declassified MI5 files, the paper revisits communist critique of programmes considered to espouse reactionary agendas: these include 'An English Pageant for St George's Day' (April 1936), which allegedly repressed Britain's industrial history and radical traditions in favour of a reassuring myth of rural idyll, and 'Revolution in Russia' (December 1937), a hotly contested 'radio panorama' of events close to the hearts of all communists. The paper will also restore to view programmes whose alleged censorship sparked significant debate. These include the radio adaptation of Clifford Odets' agitprop play *Waiting for Lefty*, a key text of the 1930s whose recorded radio adaptation was pulled by the BBC in February 1939, and communist A. L. Lloyd's 'The Voice of the Seaman' (December 1938) which was critically acclaimed on its original broadcast but sidelined and never repeated after complaints from shipping companies. Focussing on a small cluster of programmes also feted by communists, including 'Cold Coal' (September 1938), 'Summer in Wales' (August 1937), and 'Eleven Thousand Whalersmen' (August 1939), I argue that such broadcasts were welcomed by communists as political interventions, especially in their celebration of the political and cultural resources of the working class. These programmes were also, I argue, regarded as innovative creative acts which began

to mobilise the medium of radio's full potential, pre-figuring the consciousness-raising, counter-hegemonic function that radical broadcasting might play in the context of the BBC under a popular front alternative to the National Government.

Ben Harker lectures in English and Cultural Studies at the University of Salford. He is the author of *Class Act: The Cultural and Political Life of Ewan MacColl* (2007). His articles about the 1930s, culture and the political left have been published in journals including *History Workshop*, *Science & Society*, *Textual Practice* and *ELH*.

Science, the 1930s and the BBC: competition and collaboration

Allan Jones, Department of Communication and Systems, Faculty of Mathematics and Computing, Open University, UK

The 'social relations of science' movement grew to prominence in the 1930s. Its story has been told by McGucken, MacLeod and MacLeod, and Wersky among others. The movement consisted of predominantly left-wing scientists who held that science could and should be applied to the alleviation of social problems, and that a rationally planned society was more just, and more efficient, than one operating on *laissez-faire* principles. In their view, the potential of science for social improvement was being frustrated by reactionary and vested interests. Part of their mission was to educate the public in science and rational thought. Mass media such as radio were attractive for this function.

This paper looks at the social relations of science movement in relation to science broadcasting on the BBC during the 1930s. During the first half of the 1930s, several 'science and society' broadcasts were given on BBC radio, often by scientists associated with the social relations of science movement, such as physicist Patrick Blackett and mathematician Hyman Levy. These talks will be outlined, as will the BBC's 'Changing World' series of broadcasts which were a direct consequence of the economic crisis of 1930/31.

The paper will argue that despite the known liberal sympathies of many of the BBC Talks staff during the early 1930s, 'science and society' talks were regarded by them, and especially by science producer Mary Adams, with suspicion. This was not so much because these talks presented controversial politics (although there was an element of that), but because they were regarded as 'poor radio'. The paper will argue that BBC production staff used criteria for assessing broadcasts based on their own developing sense of the professionalism of public service broadcasting. The profession of broadcasting embodied, in the view of BBC staff, the distinct skill of knowing what the audience could cope with and how best to present it. This skill was the exclusive preserve of the professional broadcaster.

The developing split between the scientists' view of the role of the public service broadcaster – the promotion of science and rationality – and the BBC's view – the promotion the public interest as construed by the broadcasting profession – set the scene for a showdown during the second world war when scientific organisations attempted to secure greater influence over the BBC's science output. The paper will supply the context for this split. It will explain how science broadcasting was handled within the BBC, who the key personalities were within the BBC, and how they performed their 'gatekeeping'

function. It will show how BBC staff, despite their sense of their own professional competence, drew on advice from a stable of informal and formal advisors operating on the boundary between broadcasting and science. Key figures here were the science popularisers Gerald Heard, J. G. Crowther, and Peter Ritchie Calder, and the biologist Julian Huxley. These boundary figures, in fact, helped to maintain a sense of where the boundary lay, and ensured that the BBC could maintain the appearance of independence and autonomy.

The paper will also look at how scientists viewed their role in relation to society, at their views of the dangers of irrationality and superstition (of which the rise of Nazism was an example), and at their admiration for the Soviet planned economy. It will present dissenting scientific voices – notably the biologist John R. Baker (a frequent broadcaster) who saw in the rise of the social relations of science movement a threat to scientific autonomy and impartiality. Drawing on the work of social theorists such as Gieryn and Kohler, and scholars of professionalism, such as Freidson, Abbott and Macdonald, it will present broadcasters and scientific organisations as rival institutions, competing for occupancy of the (in the 1930s) still new territory of scientific broadcasting. Although this institutional rivalry did not come to a head until the war period and after, the paper will argue that its seeds were sown in the 1930s. In this period, scientists recognised the potential of radio for disseminating a view of science as socially beneficial, and as a safeguard against contemporary ills. Despite the developing institutional competition in the 1930s, at the level of individual scientists and producers, relations were cordial, and the roles proper to each job were not disputed.

Finally, the paper will show that, despite continual charges that the BBC had an antipathy to science, and that the organisation instinctively favoured the humanities in its programme content, the BBC has always taken science seriously in its output, and science has actually been well served. Science content on the BBC was often ‘invisible’ to scientists because it tended to be integrated into general-interest programming.

This paper is based on original archival research at the BBC’s Written Archives Centre and at other archives, and tells a story that is largely unknown both to media historians and to students of the popularisation of science.

Allan Jones is a lecturer in the Department of Communication and Systems at the UK Open University. He is completing a PhD thesis on BBC radio science broadcasting from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Simple concept, complex nature: German television in the 1930s

Judith Keilbach, Utrecht University, The Netherlands.

When television started its regular broadcasting service in Germany on 22 March, 1935, the National Socialists celebrated the new technology as proof of German superiority. Creating a national myth by drawing on Paul Nipkow, inventor of a mechanical scanning disk in 1883 and after whom the first television station was named, they claimed television to be a »technical innovation of German spirit«. In line with National Socialist ideology the new technology was not just described as evidence of Aryan supremacy but also conceptualized according to the ruling leader principle [*Führerprinzip*]: In his inaugural address, Reich Program Director Eugen Hadamowsky stated this already well-defined purpose of this new technology clearly: now, in this hour, broadcasting is called

upon to fulfill its greatest and most sacred mission: to plant the image of the *Führer* indelibly in all German hearts«.

However, despite of these superficially unambiguous concepts television was quite different from what the National Socialists pretended it was. In my paper I will contrast this simple conception with the multinational, cross-administrative and intermedial nature of German television in the 1930s.

First of all, we know that television was by no means a German invention but rather an international enterprise with a great many inventors contributing to its development. In particular, the opening of the world's first regular television service in Germany goes back to experiments and patents of the multinational (and competing) corporations *Telefunken* and *Fernseh AG*. Not only did the naming of Paul Nipkow mask this international and collaborative invention of television to claim national superiority it also conceals that his scanning disc, once an important device for the development of mechanical television, was already outdated and rendered obsolete by newer inventions.

Secondly, on an institutional level television was the subject matter of power struggles. The Ministry of Propaganda, the Post Ministry and the Air Ministry all competed over the responsibility for the new medium pointing to the vague allocation of tasks that characterizes the National Socialist administration at large. The conflicting interests even led the Propaganda Ministry to believe that the Post Ministry was sabotaging its broadcasts because a number of programs had to be cancelled on short notice due to technical measurements that were performed by the Post Ministry. Although the institutions' relations improved over the course of time, their particular agendas and competing ideas of the new medium affected the nature of television significantly.

Thirdly, these competing ideas included differences about the usage of the new broadcasting technology. While the Propaganda Ministry advocated collective television viewing in *Fernsehstuben* (television parlors) the Post Ministry intended to introduce receivers for private reception very early on. And while Goebbels's Ministry saw television as another medium to spread National Socialist propaganda, the Post Ministry basically wanted to air (»apolitical«) entertainment programs. These different programming concepts resulted in the scheduling of a variety of broadcasts such as Nazi rallies and party events as well as musical shows, television dramas, sports programs or cooking shows. Thus, far from every program, and in fact very few programs, fulfilled the mission to »plant the image of the *Führer* indelibly in all German hearts«.

These different ideas of television's usage are at the core of the very concepts of the medium's identity. We know that after its introduction, early television had an »identity problem«, given that its place and function within the existing constellation of media (radio, film, etc.) was not yet clear. Consequently television remediated earlier media, art or entertainment forms by broadcasting vaudeville shows, sports, documentaries, feature films, radio-dramas and television plays. On the other hand live transmissions emerged by and by as a specificity of television. Subsequently this capacity was emphasized and effectively described as the new medium's particular identity, as a result of which German television programs of the 1930s were (and still are) often considered as live broadcasts.

My paper will highlight the contradictions of the simple image that the National Socialists created of the new medium television and its complex nature. Referring to (amongst others) the findings of Elsner/Müller/Spangenberg (1990), Uricchio (1991) and Winkler (1996) I will first describe television's multinational, cross-administrative and uncertain character in more detail. In the second part of my paper I will draw on my own

investigation of television programs and discuss their intertextual and intermedial references. Viewing the collection of 1930s television programs at the German *Bundesarchiv* reveals that the new medium not only remediated existing forms, but that it was also involved in the mutual exchange of concrete ›material‹. To name just three examples: when musicians and stage artists presented their acts on television they were sometimes introduced by an announcement of the place of their next stage performance. Well known radio announcers lent their voices to the new medium by announcing sports events or party activities; in doing so they eventually became visible (allowing radio listeners to visualize the hitherto disembodied voice). Film footage was aired, either as short versions of contemporary movies or covertly by integrating recorded images in supposedly live-transmissions (as in the case of a report from the Party Congress 1936 (*Sonderbericht des ›Aktuellen Bilddienstes‹ vom Reichsprteitag 1936*) that uses images of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* which was shot at the 1934 Party Congress).

Judith Keilbach is Assistant Professor for Television History at the Media and Cultural Studies Department of Utrecht University. She has published extensively on the representation of the Nazi past in German television documentaries and is currently doing a research on German television of the 1930s and its archiving.

Betwixt Hollywood and Pulp Horror: A Cultural History of *The Witch's Tale*

Matthew A. Killmeier, University of Southern Maine, Portland, Maine U.S.A.

This paper provides a cultural historical account of *The Witch's Tale* (1931-38), a U.S. radio program that emphasized the horror genre. It was a half-hour, weekly anthology program that debuted on WOR New York in 1931 and was syndicated by the Mutual Broadcasting System network from 1934 to 38. *The Witch's Tale* was one of the first U.S. horror radio programs. As Richard Hand notes, it innovated the framing host in horror radio, which influenced other radio programs as well as horror comics and television programs. Creator Alonzo Dean Cole wrote the plays and directed their broadcast. *The Witch's Tale*, and horror radio in general, have received scant critical attention. Recovering the program's cultural history will illuminate its unique characteristics and provide insights into one of the twentieth century's most resilient genres across a variety of popular media.

The program's heterogeneous content is suggestive of horror's intermediality in the 1930s and afterward. Its narratives bridge the older, Gothic style of popular horror and the more modern. *The Witch's Tale* not only bridged generic changes but also other media. The cultural historical significance of *The Witch's Tale* lies in uncovering its intermediality. The programs' intermedia and intertexts—popular Hollywood horror pictures and horror pulp magazines—are imperative critical contexts for understanding its resonances in the 1930s. This paper situates *The Witch's Tale* amongst its intermedia cohorts and explores the interactions among them in order to probe the particularities of the program and better understand the permutations of the horror genre. These contexts will inform a critical analysis of the program's narratives and use of the medium to assess the interaction of content and form.

Horror Pictures

Hollywood film was certainly an influential “intermedium” for most other media in the 1930s, especially radio. As Michelle Hilmes argues, Hollywood provided programs and talent to radio. These intermedial interactions were particularly important for *The Witch’s Tale*. While the program did not employ Hollywood talent, or directly translate horror films, the latter likely influenced *The Witch’s Tale*. The subjects of Universal Pictures’ horror films of the 1930s, especially *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Werewolf of London* (1935), were echoed in the program’s plays. *The Witch’s Tale* also adapted Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* in 1931, and broadcast plays dealing with vampirism and lycanthropy. As the most prestigious and publicly scrutinized mass medium, Hollywood’s success with horror indicated large audiences for and public tolerance of mass-mediated horror. Hollywood also influenced *The Witch’s Tale* through its Gothic narratives and representational realism. While the program also featured modern horror much of its drama was Gothic. Hollywood’s earlier development and heightened refinement of representational realism was an important influence on *The Witch’s Tale*. Hollywood’s realism set the bar for radio drama through seamless narration and strong continuity. Its horror pictures also raised expectations for fantasy realism through deft special effects. Hollywood horror’s realism registers in *The Witch’s Tale* through strong narrative and evocative use of sound effects.

Horror Pulps

The American pulp magazines were successors to the nineteenth-century dime novels; both were aimed at and largely read by working-class readers. Lee Server claims that many popular genres—science fiction, horror, private eye, Western and superhero—originated in the pulps. Pulps were certainly a constitutive intermedium for radio early on. *The Shadow* grew out of *Street & Smith’s Detective Story Magazine Hour* in the 1920s; the latter program consisted of readings from Street & Smith’s weekly pulp magazine. The horror pulps were a small part of the pulp’s large corpus of popular, short fiction, but were influential on *The Witch’s Tale*. *Weird Tales* (1923-54) was the most influential horror pulp, and the longest running. The magazine’s early stories tended toward the Gothic, but also featured a mix of classic horror and original stories that carried on and innovated upon the classics. This was likewise the case with *The Witch’s Tale*, although *Weird Tales* had a great deal more expressive freedom; it was not hampered by the norms and regulations governing radio. Supernatural and weird subjects were mainstays of *Weird Tales* and faintly echoed in *The Witch’s Tale*. In addition to their use and reworking of classic horror and generic ties, *Weird Tales* and *The Witch’s Tale* likely shared audiences. Cole reworked a radio play, “The Spirits of the Lake” (1/2/33) for the November 1941 issue of *Weird Tales*.¹ Additionally, while a great deal of the pulps and radio were serials, horror pulps and radio used an anthology format, which was conducive to heterogeneity in subject, setting and character (much of TV horror followed suit).

Aural Realism & Uncanny Stories

Hollywood horror pictures and horror pulps influenced *The Witch’s Tale*’s formal characteristics and content. The program sought to create a mood or atmosphere that complemented its content through sound effects and music. Sound effects were used to create an aural realism that enhanced the fantastic and supernatural plays’ verisimilitude. Aural realism was also used as a means of heightening the uncanny subjects dramatized. Finally, *The Witch’s Tale* used sound effects and music expressively, to elicit and cue affect. Aural realism also enhanced the program’s content, which tapped the Gothic, supernatural and weird subgenres of horror. *The Witch’s Tale*’s content straddled classic

and modern horror, and was similar to but distinct from its intermedia. Its Gothic plays and moderate representations were more akin to Hollywood than the pulps. However, *The Witch's Tale* was closer to the pulps in its conscription of the imagination in storytelling.

The Witch's Tale plowed the same supernatural ground as Hollywood and the pulps, crafting cultural narratives that likely resonated with overlapping audiences. Understanding the program and the genre's appeal in the 1930s necessitates situating them in the context of contemporary crises—the Great Depression, the wake of World War I and the onset of World War II. The article therefore also assays *The Witch's Tale* symptomatically, reading its narratives as cultural expressions not only of genre and intermedia contexts, but as tapping, dramatizing and crystallizing the terrors of its times.

Matthew A. Killmeier (PhD University of Iowa 2003) is an assistant professor of communication and media studies at the University of Southern Maine. His research interests include the cultural history of radio, consumerism and the media and the history of communication.

“Going begging: building tasteful programming in Canada during and after the bigger downturn.”

Len Kuffert, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada.

Although they acknowledged daily that their broadcasts were going out to significantly different audiences, public service broadcasters in the British Empire/Commonwealth measured themselves and their programming in relation to the wealthier and more experienced British Broadcasting Corporation. The comparison was hardly fair, but the BBC was the most visible model of non-commercial broadcasting for those who were convinced that public service was the way to go. Aspiring to provide a similar service in the Dominion did not constitute a betrayal of listeners' trust, but rather settled the nerves of some listeners eager to stay in touch with Old Country ways and doings. It was a complex field in which to broadcast. When the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation chose not to carry a speech by the Duke of Windsor, the decision prompted complaints that the only place to hear the speech was on US radio, and that the CBC had been at the same time too eager to emulate the BBC in ignoring the former King's career since abdication. Being too British would not fly with some listeners, and the CBC did not help its own reputation in this regard. The network's first General Manager had been with the BBC for more than a decade, and declared in 1939 that the CBC's programming policy was quite simply “that of the BBC, adapted to Canadian requirements.” Paradoxically, the BBC widened its electronic reach during an era in which the empire was coming apart. For the CBC, the example of the BBC was both an inspiration and an unattainable standard, and the story of the CBC's first few years on the air reflect this tension. Tailoring programming to an audience that expected quality to be kept up even as the programming day lengthened was a tall order, made even more difficult by limited budgets in which (unlike the BBC example) wire transmission costs and time zone concerns figured prominently. Though there was considerable debate in the late 1920s and early 1930s over what sort of broadcasting system Canada would or could adopt, to claim poverty and cede the field to commercial broadcasters never seriously occurred to those who had the most power to shape the system. The 1930s were broadcasting's moment in Canada, and despite the impact of the depression – perhaps aided by the severity of the depression – the public service option found enough money and timely support to survive and ultimately thrive in wartime. The financial costs of broadcasting came second to the

abstract and deferred costs of not broadcasting, as leaders in the field of public broadcasting saw most commercial fare appealing to the least sophisticated audiences. To lower the tone of programming would be to give up the most crucial fight at its most important stage, the stage when listener expectations were still being formed. In comparing the CBC and BBC, Gladstone Murray encapsulated this very well when he noted: “Neither organisation can claim any advantage over the other in a consistent routine of crisis and strain inevitable to the impact of a new agency of communication. Yet one firmly believes that each in its own way will protect and enrich the intangible assets of the communities served, perhaps decisively.” Precisely what these assets were and how they could be enriched and protected can be better discerned by looking at how the two organizations co-operated, diverged and negotiated the movement of programmes, ideas and personnel across the Atlantic. This paper (which represents the first section of a chapter on the CBC-BBC relationship from the book I’m writing on programming and taste in early Canadian radio) explores the extent to which the new Canadian public service network looked selectively to the UK for inspiration, for cautionary tales, and for programmes to fill its schedule. Given limited finances, a huge geographic area to serve, and a bountiful supply of American programming, the conditions in which the CBC was launched in 1936 could hardly have been less auspicious. However, thanks to a relationship that could be characterized as consistently warm during the 1930s, the CBC had come to expect that BBC broadcasts would be available to them for the asking. Though this eased the burden of producing content early on, when the BBC did not send its coverage of the Munich Crisis to the news department-less CBC, an American feed had to be found at considerable expense. As well, the CBC had to contend with the possibility that listeners might not reflexively laud everything the BBC might send. Critically-acclaimed radio still might fall flat with listeners, and so CBC staff often cast about for fresh programme ideas that might click. Programming staff suggested military bands and talks by prominent literary figures as potentially attractive productions to be beamed over, even while carrying on a dialogue with their BBC counterparts about the vulgarity of music hall shows and the incompatibility of the British and North American senses of humour. What to choose, and how to deploy it over what I have elsewhere called a ‘fledgling’ network were questions testing CBC personnel who at the same time desperately wanted to help their service mature quickly and contribute its own productions to the transatlantic (or even the continental) exchange of programmes. First the CBC had to establish its own approach to programming. Overall, this transitional period was notable for the bold declarations radio people made regarding listeners, their tastes, and the abilities of various programmes to meet and to broaden the range of material that listeners might consume. The elephant in the room was often readily-available American programming, but the CBC’s determination to account for the listeners who wanted to know “why we couldn’t get Big Ben at 7.00” indicates that the elephant was not as powerful as we might expect. Emerging from the last half of the 1930s as a service that recognized and used the political and cultural ties between Britain and Canada without venerating them seemed to be the aim of the CBC, an organization that forced itself to play catch-up during difficult times. It is hoped that the paper will contribute most directly to the symposium’s themes of Transnationality and Representations of Crisis.

Len Kuffert teaches history at the University of Manitoba. He published *A Great Duty: Canadian responses to modern life and mass culture* in 2003, and has since been working exclusively on radio, especially on the concept of taste and its relationship to programming in Canada.

Domestic Disturbances and Economic Crisis: Modern Families on the Air in the 1930s and Today.

Jason Loviglio, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA.

Almost from the inception of the daytime serial format, it has been axiomatic for critics to focus on its uniformly and intensely domestic character. For more than 70 years, corporate sponsors like Procter and Gamble were self-conscious and overt in their pursuit of an atmosphere of woman-centered domesticity in which to sell their wares and just as importantly, the domestic ideal that would require an almost endless need for such wares. And critics have been quick to point to the social and political ills of such an atmosphere. The plush, almost claustrophobic interiors, the nearly exclusive focus on the goings-on of a handful of families, the emphasis on dialogue, close-ups, and emotional crises –it is impossible to imagine the soap opera in terms other than those most evocative of the domestic sphere. As Rudolph Arnheim has put it, “the world of serials is quite clearly a ‘private’ world in which the interests of the community fade into insignificance.”

So what are we to make of soap opera plots in which the most severe crises of the intimate sphere—illnesses, problematic pregnancies, marital discord, and unruly children –are inextricably linked to the machinations of corrupt businessmen and politicians and for which the only resolution is community-wide collective action?

My research –and that of other scholars---suggests that the exclusive emphasis on soap operas’ domesticity obscures as much as it reveals. Radio soap operas, like the other radio genres and performances we have considered, are intensely focused not on domesticity per se, but rather on the public/private dichotomy in American social life. In particular, the radio soap operas that I have examined from the 1930s through World War II call attention to the limits of this dichotomy as a way to understand local community, relations between the sexes, and most surprising of all, the political economy of the United States. Soap operas sound, at first hearing, like a world of hypertrophied domesticity—virtuous, stalwart women rescuing feckless, inconstant men, and leading families through a never-ending series of trials. Under close examination of hundreds of scripts, recordings, and correspondence, the soap operas of the late 1930s and early 1940s depict a world preoccupied with but highly ambivalent about the real-life consequences of sharply separated spheres.

While rhapsodic paeans to the pleasures of domesticity were *de rigueur* in the serial dramas of the period, the solution to most domestic crises required the messy and unorthodox blending of the home, the marketplace, city hall and some broadly ineffable sense of national community. The plots moved inexorably towards linking—often in highly stylized ways—the personal happiness of the “typical Americans” depicted in the soaps to the economic fortunes of the community in which they lived, and often, of the nation itself. In particular, the resolutions of intimate crises were almost always linked to a collective solution to a public dilemma. The discourse of home became the code through which factories were built, mill workers were represented, and community health care needs of the under- and unemployed were guaranteed.

Hilmes has demonstrated how auteur Jane Cruisinberry was tightly constrained by network and sponsor executive who demanded storylines for Mary Marlin be neither too public nor too private. “Yet these strictures,” Hilmes tells us, “were constantly challenged and violated.” Women’s strength and heroism derived not simply from their mastery of domestic affairs but rather from their ability to take advantage of the porous boundary between the home and the larger social and economic community of which it is a part.

This presentation revisits my research and the scholarship of others on radio soap operas in the US in light of the recent economic crisis and the cultural responses that have emerged in the electronic media. Thanks to feminist scholarship, we have come to see the domestic as a crucial site in political and economic life of a society. But the popularity of depictions of domestic crisis---in reality shows as diverse as *Extreme Makeover*, *The Marriage Ref*, and *The Jersey Shore*; on dramas and comedies like *Big Love* and *Modern Family*; and countless “viral” homemade Youtube videos---continue to draw critical incomprehension, if not scorn.

This presentation compares the trope of unconventional family formations in 1930s soap operas to those in contemporary radio and television programs in the era of the Great Recession. Listening afresh to the representations of crisis that formed the bedrock of 1930s serial storylines in light of more recent versions, can help to elucidate both the historiographic assumptions we make about 1930s radio and the persistence of tropes of domestic troubles in times of economic crisis.

Jason Loviglio is Director of Media & Communication Studies and Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He is coeditor, with Michele Hilmes, of *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio* (Routledge, 2002) and author of *Radio’s Intimate Public: Network Broadcasting and Mass Mediated Democracy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

Learning to Listen: Developing the Canadian Radio Audience in the 1930s

Anne F. MacLennan
York University, Toronto, Canada

The imagined community of Canadian radio fans emerged quickly. In a country with a small and scattered population, radio had an unparalleled appeal. Both Canadian and American radio stations were received by large concentrations of listeners closest to the border. The commercial programs rapidly available to listeners through American network radio were but one sign of radio’s popularity. Programs such as Pepsodent’s *Amos ‘n’ Andy* were reputedly had such a strong hold on their fans that toilets stopped flushing for the fifteen minutes at seven in the evening when it could be heard over the airwaves. The experience in Canada was not as consistent, due to the slow development of Canadian network radio, region by region.

Fans demonstrated their early devotion to the broadcasts of local entertainment as well as distant programs. Early DXers kept maps in their homes documenting all the locations from which they received postcards confirming their own letters noting the call letters and timing of a song or program broadcast by a distant station. A lack of interference due to the limited number of broadcasts and clear atmospheric conditions rewarded the early hobbyists or fans with broadcasts of distant programs reportedly from other continents.

The growth of radio and increasing interference ended the explorer phase of the fans' early activity.

As Canadian fans entered the 1930s, more stations, a greater variety of programming and a desire for entertainment expanded the fan base not just for specific programs as noted in the United States, but for the medium in general. While some local newspapers studiously avoided inclusion or even mention of their perceived competitor, others integrated a variety of radio columns, advertisements and listings into their daily pages and often became early owners and operators of radio stations across Canada. Columns provided tips on how to assemble radio receiving sets, what tubes were best and how to guarantee better reception. The merits of local and network programs were also extolled to listeners. Radio columns provided testimony to the participatory involvement of early listeners with their radios.

Canadian listeners made exceptional efforts to guarantee their ability to receive radio programs. A listener outside of Regina, Saskatchewan reported that even though the family was busy with chores on the farm during the growing season winter meant radio. Not only did confinement to the home encourage listening on cold Canadian winter nights but in this case the battery was removed from the tractor and connected to the radio to make listening possible.

Radio wafted out the open windows during the summer on city streets taunting and tempting those without radio according to some listeners. Live and local radio was especially valued by local columnists and the radio listeners who wrote letters to the newspapers. Radios fan base extended from children listening to their nightly bedtime story to farmers who attentively awaited weather and grain reports.

Listening to early Canadian radio also included transgressions ranging from hiding radio receivers from inspectors to avoid payment of the annual license to the loyal audiences of foreign language programming, whose programming was curtailed during the Second World War. The patterns of the listening day, acceptable programming, regulation, licensing, and audience behavior all developed in the medium's first few decades. This research based on oral history interviews, newspaper sources and archival materials revealing the slow growth of a loyal radio fan base in Canada.

Anne MacLennan is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Studies at York University and the York-Ryerson Joint Graduate Program in Communication & Culture. She is a media historian whose research focuses primarily on Canadian radio programming and audiences during the 1930s.

'Delivering a fatal blow to British industry': the BBC and television in the 1930s

This paper, based primarily on archival research at the BBC's written archives at Caversham and the Post Office Archives in London, will consider the development of British television in the 1930s. It will look, in particular, at the ways in which the key players (the BBC, Baird Television, Marconi-EMI and the Post Office) were embroiled in debates which drew on notions of Britishness, questions of national pride and patriotism at a time of economic and political volatility.

The paper will firstly provide an outline of the relationship between the BBC and the Baird Television Company in the mid to late 1920s - an often fragile relationship which laid the foundations for increased tensions during the 1930s. The BBC's attitude towards television development will be explored in this paper as part of the wider themes noted above.

The 'threat' of the US and the perceived antipathy of the BBC towards British scientific advance raised its head in the early 1930s. By this time, EMI and Marconi were developing their electronic method of television and this naturally caught the attention of the BBC. From this point on, the debate over which system was best – the mechanical (Baird) or the electronic (EMI or Marconi-EMI after the two companies merged in March 1934) – dominated television development. Asa Briggs has compared the debate with the debate over railway gauges during the expansion of the railway system. In November 1932, EMI offered the BBC and the Post Office a demonstration of its high-definition system – the quality was obviously superior in picture terms. The EMI files at the BBC Written Archives Centre, show that there was a 'cosier' and amiable relationship between the BBC and EMI and this, rightly irritated Baird who remonstrated when he heard that the BBC were considering allowing EMI space to install their own broadcasting equipment at Broadcasting House in London. Sections of the press, members of the public, Members of Parliament and supporters of the Baird Company clamoured to accuse the BBC of an American bias. The American interests of EMI (in the form of its links with the Radio Corporation of America, RCA) would be damaging for British industry and the development of television was a matter of British national pride. Sydney Moseley, a journalist and keen Baird advocate, accused the BBC of not fulfilling its duty to the country. Writing to the Post Office, Moseley suggested that by supporting developments at EMI, the BBC would be letting the Americans in through the back door. What is then interesting is that the Post Office then tried to put pressure on the BBC to delay the installation of EMI apparatus at Broadcasting House, but to no avail.

The two key strands in the paper, therefore, are (a) an exploration of the BBC's attitude towards television and the accusations that the BBC, in its dealings with the Baird Television Company in particular was acting in an un-patriotic manner which was detrimental to British industry during a period of depression and (b) a discourse of pro-Britishness and anti-Americanism which emerged from debates over television's early development.

Dr Jamie Medhurst is Senior Lecturer in Film and Television Studies at Aberystwyth University. He is Principal Investigator on a UK Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research network on early broadcasting history and has recently published a book on the history of commercial television in Wales. He is currently writing a book on the early years of television and the BBC in the 1920s and 1930s.

Recruitment, Race and Transnational Resistance: Prewar developments and BBC Radio

Darrell Newton, Salisbury University, Maryland, USA.

This paper provides an historiographic account of how radio programming directed toward West Indies audiences in the 1930s and beyond, represented the looming crisis of WWII, and subsequently hailed the support and involvement of ‘Colonials’ troops. While original archival documents indicated a liberalist desire by BBC management to provide programming that called upon subjects to help fight the *People’s War*, these broadcasts ultimately led West Indian radio producers to use the programs as a platform for notions of black Britishness, and citizenship. These efforts often circumvented the organization’s emphasis upon Empire and colonial solidarity, and drew instead upon ethnic pride and place.

Beginning in 1939, *Calling the West Indies* featured troops on active service reading letters on air to their families back home in the Islands. Authors, servicemen, teachers and others who visited or lived in England discussed their personal experiences and views on Britishness for the benefit of island audiences, including those considering enlistment or immigration. The BBC situated these segments within programs they ultimately controlled; yet guests and producers used these sites as locations for communiqué packed with intrinsic value for hopeful citizens; citizens who developed strong transnational ties to both home countries. Each program’s live broadcast constructed individual notions of empire while highlighting discourses of belongingness, and citizenry, particularly in regard to the war effort.

Within the context of this paper, the advent of broadcasting services in the Colonies, as discussed in a 1937 report from the Colonial Office to the BBC and other governmental agencies, was intended as a useful tool for education and a reinforcement of empire. In a memo and report to E.B. Bowyer of the Colonial Office, J.B. Clark, then Director of Empire Service, provided brief biographical notes on those authoring the report; people with whom the BBC had contact ‘in relation to broadcasting in the West Indies.’ In that next year, the group completed an *Interim Report on a Committee on Broadcasting Services in the Colonies* for the Colonial Office to justify this effort. Radio programs were soon created by producers Una Marson and Moultrie Kelsall, and broadcast from production centres based in London; targeting West Indian audiences in Jamaica, Barbados, and other islands.

However, these programs went beyond the well meaning, yet paternalistic narrative of what England meant from a white Briton’s perspective, and instead provided a platform for West Indian troops to discuss life among white Britons. Beginning in the 1930s until the reappearance of BBC television after the war, the intentions, aspirations, and concerns of West Indian troops were conveyed to radio listeners. This included self-reflexive analyses of social issues such as the colour bar, in a country where one did not supposedly exist, and perspectives on life in England. While it is unlikely that these insightful, yet potentially disruptive perspectives were the intent of the corporation, and surely not Sir John Reith’s, the opinions expressed drew from a post-colonialized, yet liberalist notion of what life within the United Kingdom could, and perhaps would be. Discussions reflected those men and women of colour involved in the military during WWII, offering their demonstrative appropriations of Britishness, while collapsing binary constructs of the colonialized other and those considered true Britons: white, Christian, conservative, and the true owners of the title ‘British’ (Paul 1997). Communities, bound by duty, helped to reinforce the imperial presence in manner most intertextual, as West Indians Una Marson, Sir Learie Constantine, and Ulric Cross broadcast messages of commitment and involvement over BBC radio, documentary film (Webster, 2005). As suggested by Hilmes, radio clearly lent itself to an ‘association with ideas of nation’ and ‘national identity’, in this case a nation other than America (Hilmes, 1997). However, British nationality and a guarded acceptance of the wartime West Indian presence in

England created a different consideration; yet, this very same measure of community allowed spaces within the author function of BBC radio programming to fill with varying ideologies and intentions not originally recognized within the traditional constructs of Britishness or, perhaps, BBC broadcast policy.

Current studies of Transnationalism highlight the importance of the contemporary information society and its global consortiums of transnational corporations, western governments, and technocrats. Surveyed are the usage of satellites, the internet, and other televisual links through international communication systems; as are policy issues that criticize the First World's mass communications monopolies. Transnationalism has surely had a huge economic and intercultural effect upon multiple audiences, and touted as an ideological site for immigrants and ethnic groups to negotiate power and agency. Through a re-examination of globalization, transnationalism encourages efforts toward the deconstruction of nationalism, and subsequent naming of citizenry. Transnationalism has also historically signaled changes in migratory efforts by varying ethnic groups. Whereas migration studies have often discussed issues of departure from the imagined homeland to the utopic Promised Land, transculturalism and Transnationalism highlight movement back and forth between social spaces; particularly through transportation sources and more contemporary telecommunication technologies.

Historically, however, this paper examines how BBC radio and its practices created transnational possibilities for West Indian audiences of these programs, and the recognition of African Caribbean voices. West Indian troops changed the foci and intention of these shows, and began to offer varied, personal perspectives on life in England and the war effort. While this portion of the study does not seek to research exhaustively the BBC's influence within the Caribbean, it does attempt to provide a framework for how broadcast policies for BBC radio at a time of crisis engaged and empowered the presence of African Caribbeans subjects.

Darrell Newton currently teaches Media and Cultural Studies, Media Literacy and Film Studies at Salisbury University in Maryland. He recently published an essay "Shifting Sentiments: West Indians immigrants, the BBC and Cultural Production," and is currently completing a book, *Paving the Empire Road: BBC Broadcast Policies and Black Britons*.

The BBC and its critics: the 'radio column' in the British press in the 1930s

Sian Nicholas, Aberystwyth University, Wales, UK

This paper explores the role of radio critics in the British press in the 1930s. The role of the radio critic as a contemporary source of information about broadcasting 'outside the BBC's considerable public relations apparatus' has been briefly addressed by LeMahieu (*A Culture for Democracy*, 1988, pp. 275-6), and the radio critics of the 1930s are also mentioned in passing by Briggs (*Golden Age of Wireless*, 1965), and Pegg (*Broadcasting and Society*, 1981). However there has been little direct study of the ways in which the radio pages of the British press, in the popular newspapers in particular, articulated a vision of broadcasting in Britain in the 1930s. The introduction of regular radio pages in the inter-war newspaper and periodical press underlined the institutionalisation of radio throughout British society. Reading the radio pages was arguably as much a part of

broadcasting culture in the 1930s as listening itself. And at a time when the popular press (notably Beaverbrook's *Express* newspapers) consistently attacked the BBC's monopoly and output, and even proposed themselves as alternative competitor broadcasters, the radio page was perhaps the key outlet and forum for such views.

The paper therefore explores the function of the contemporary radio critic in articulating and influencing public attitudes of listeners (and non-listeners) to the broadcasting system of the day. It addresses in particular the careers as radio critics of Collie Knox of the *Daily Mail* and Jonah Barrington of the *Daily Express*. Knox in particular became an inter-war celebrity largely on account of his radio column in the *Daily Mail*, and his trenchant criticisms of the BBC shaped much of the contemporary debate about the BBC as an unrepresentative, hidebound and elitist medium, not only in the pages of the *Daily Mail* itself but as widely purchased published collections. Jonah Barrington's radio column was, likewise, a key feature of the most popular and widely-read newspaper of the age, and again articulated widely-held attitudes to the BBC's inter-war output. The positions of other newspapers and other radio critics, such as Graham Greene and W.E. Williams, will also be addressed, to build up a picture of the scope and function of radio criticism in 1930s Britain.

The paper hopes in particular to bring out the ways in which one mass medium (the press) sought to influence public attitudes to another (the wireless) in the 1930s through its day-to-day coverage of the other's output. To what extent can we say that the radio critics of the popular press expressed the views of listeners themselves? How far did contemporary criticism of the BBC represent an attempt to shift the BBC's output in a more populist direction, or indeed underpin an attempt to challenge its monopoly status as the nation's broadcaster? Or, conversely, was it the newspapers who needed the radio pages, in order to meet their readers' own demands for more information about and discussion of radio in the 1930s?

Sian Nicholas is Senior Lecturer in History at Aberystwyth University, Wales, UK. She is the author of *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC*, and has researched widely in the history of the wartime and pre-war BBC, as well as the inter-war press.

The War of the Airwaves in Portugal during the 1930s

Nelson Ribeiro, the Catholic University of Portugal, Lisboa, Portugal.

The "war of the airwaves" first appeared in Portugal during the second half of the 1930s. Interest in influencing Portuguese public opinion led a number of countries to seek out special relations with Portuguese radio stations and to produce shortwave broadcasts that could be listened to in the country that had been under the rule of an authoritarian regime since 1933 – the Estado Novo (New State).

The paper, which is based on archive research in Lisbon, London and Caversham, will describe and analyse the impact of the shortwave broadcasts to Portugal during the 1930s by the Soviet Union, Germany, Italy and United Kingdom. Furthermore, this will be presented in the context of the Portuguese media landscape in the 1930s, which was marked by a strong censorship apparatus and very incipient broadcasting. Portuguese radio stations were amateur throughout the 1930s. The sole exception was the state-run Emissora Nacional, which started to operate in 1935 and, besides being severely controlled, had only a small budget on which to operate since the Head of Government, Salazar, did not understand the need for or have any interest in creating a powerful official radio station.

The paper will start by addressing the Soviet Union's broadcasts in Portuguese. Radio Moscow's transmissions started in 1932 and were dedicated to spreading the Bolshevik ideology, which made them mostly of interest to those who defended communism, an ideology that had been identified by the Portuguese Head of Government as the main threat to humanity. Despite being the first foreign broadcasts in Portuguese, their impact on Portugal was minimal.

Broadcasting in Germany, similar to its role in the Soviet Union, played a particularly important role in the internal and external championing of National Socialist regime. Besides being the country that invested most in broadcasts in Portuguese during the 1930s, Germany was the major power that expressed most interest in cultivating regular contact with the state-run Emissora Nacional station. The Germans clearly dominated this period of propaganda in Portugal, with a reach extending beyond radio to include diverse cultural activities.

The German shortwave broadcasts in Portuguese started in 1936 and were the first to have a significant impact in the country, even though the number of radio sets in Portugal at that time was still very small. Nevertheless, the German broadcasts in Portuguese were reported in the press and they received considerable attention from radio enthusiasts. Following the end of the Berlin Games, the transmission of news bulletins in Portuguese resumed in 1937. This led the British Ambassador in Lisbon to express his concern regarding the impact such broadcasts would have on influencing Portuguese public opinion. Moreover, the Axis powers' shortwave broadcasts to Portugal were not limited to those of the Reichs Rundfunk Gesellschaft (RRG), the Italians too began broadcasting a Portuguese news bulletin in January 1938.

The British response to the German and Italian broadcasts in Portuguese was very effective. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that the BBC broadcasts in Portuguese appeared much later than those of the Axis powers. Although the BBC Empire Service was one of the first in the world to produce regular broadcasts aimed abroad, the usage of radio broadcasting in foreign languages for propaganda purposes was considered to be something that only dictatorships and not democratic regimes did, due to the derogatory meaning that the concept of "propaganda" had acquired in Britain following the First World War. Furthermore, contrary to its rival stations, the BBC had to deal with a shortage of money, which meant that each language service established by the BBC involved discussions with the Foreign Office for a supplementary budget.

In 1939, the number of countries covered by the BBC Empire Service grew from six to fourteen, including Portugal and Spain, where the main aim was to counterattack the

German RRG. In actual fact, shortwave broadcasts to the Iberian Peninsula only began on 4 June 1939, following insistent requests by the British Ambassador in Lisbon. Influencing Portuguese public opinion was a primary aim of all foreign propaganda services operating in Portugal. On the British side, besides counterattacking German propaganda, getting the message across to the Portuguese public was particularly important since the Estado Novo seemed to be ideologically closer to the continental authoritarian regimes. Against that background, the British Ambassador in Lisbon and the Foreign Office considered the broadcasts by the BBC to be essential to strengthen propaganda activities in Portugal.

As will be demonstrated, the German, Italian and British interest in Portugal can only be explained by the nature of its political regime, its geographical location and its relationship with Franco's Spain. The number of wireless receivers was low compared to most European countries and if the number of potential listeners were in actual fact the only factor of import, then broadcasts to Portugal would not have been considered a priority. Therefore, similar to what had occurred with the Axis broadcasts, the quick investment made in the BBC Portuguese Service was politically motivated. This hypothesis is sustained by the fact that the British Embassy in Lisbon was very concerned that the Estado Novo might not support the British in the event of a crisis that was becoming more inevitable and foreseeable as time progressed.

The research presented in the paper is essentially document-based, drawing on sources that have hitherto been unexplored or that have never been used for a study of radio broadcasting. Since written documents were the major source for the research, these were submitted to triangulation. The representativeness, authenticity and credibility of the documents were also taken into account.

Nelson Ribeiro is author of two books and several articles on the history of Portuguese radio, focusing on the influence of politics in broadcasting during the Estado Novo dictatorship (1933-1974) and in the period that followed the Carnation Revolution in 1974.

The Lone Ranger: Building the national market one icon at a time.

Avi Santo, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, USA

Historical accounts of the popularization of early 20th Century icons like the Lone Ranger, Little Orphan Annie, or Buck Rogers tend to presume that these properties successfully took advantage of the national networking possibilities emerging out of the radio and publishing industries in order to become overnight "American" heroes. In actuality, the Lone Ranger's path to becoming a national cultural icon was quite literally forged town by town, or more accurately, market by market, and not because of the reach of a centralized national delivery system.

Throughout the late 1930s, the Lone Ranger, Incorporated (LRI) went market-to-market contracting independent radio stations to purchase the transcribed radio program on a sustaining basis while offering them marketing assistance in order to procure a sponsor. By 1938, the Lone Ranger was heard coast-to-coast on 107 different radio stations without the benefit of a national network and had procured 42 separate sponsors,

mostly regional bakeries in non-competing markets. More than a mere broadcasting phenomenon, LRI sought to use the Lone Ranger radio series as a catalyst for building localized synergistic brand communities that worked together to promote the Lone Ranger as a cultural and business icon. Soon after the radio series would be introduced, the Lone Ranger film serial, comic strip, and other myriad consumer products often found their way into these towns. In the absence of a horizontally integrated media system, LRI sought to coach its diverse clientele, consisting of local radio stations, film exhibitors, newspaper publishers, retailers and sponsors, to work together to cross-promote one another's product(ion)s, thus steering consumers across media and merchandizing platforms and collectively elevating the Lone Ranger above any of these distinct sites. This was not always an easy task since some local media providers perceived one another as direct competitors for consumer attention and advertiser spending.

In order to cultivate these localizable synergies, LRI had to first convince independent radio stations, regional sponsors and other local media outlets that the Lone Ranger was a viable alternative to centrally-distributed national network programming, and that the property could address local market tastes and values without sacrificing its national reputation. In effect, LRI had to demonstrate that the Lone Ranger could become a valuable contributing member of the communities it sought to profit from. Thus, LRI had to be attuned to the needs and concerns of sponsors, broadcasters and retailers targeting local communities, especially as these coalesced around fears that the national networks would hijack promotional outlets and resources from local businesses and that discreet populations would reject content and marketing that did not speak to their local identities. The Lone Ranger Safety Club (LRSC) would prove the lynchpin in LRI's efforts to extend the property into these new markets.

LRI sought to heighten consumer investment in the Lone Ranger by encouraging radio sponsors to invest resources in launching local chapters of the LRSC, which promoted traffic awareness amongst children. Safety Clubs were (paradoxically) designed to provide targeted sites for merchandizing, to off-set parental concerns over children's commercial culture by using the Lone Ranger's popularity to teach appropriate civic and moral lessons, and most importantly, to transform the Lone Ranger from a mere set of products and texts that children could consume into a friend and community leader that children could build their daily lived experiences around. Marketing for the LRSC was designed to simultaneously emphasize the Lone Ranger's national success and local presence, with ad copy that quite literally played upon the masked man's imminent arrival into every new town and direct address to particular chapters. The LRSC boasted membership in the millions and local chapters encouraged retailers to stalk up on Lone Ranger merchandise, film exhibitors to screen the Lone Ranger film serials, and newspaper publishers to order the Lone Ranger comic strip, all of which generated royalties for LRI. The traffic safety angle convinced local civic leaders to not only endorse the clubs, but to partner with the Lone Ranger and his sponsors to promote traffic awareness, essentially transforming the hero into an honorary and honored member of the communities in which he circulated (and by extension, his sponsors as well). Finally, Safety Clubs were designed to respond to New Deal rhetoric that manufacturers had become alienated from their consumer base and required federal oversight to regulate their practices. Safety Clubs modeled an alternative relationship between industry and consumers that branded sponsors as civically engaged and essential to community growth.

Despite LRI's engagement with these local concerns the company did not forsake a national market. Rather, it chose to pursue an alternate route in attaining it; one which allowed LRI to maximize profits amongst licensees within each market while utilizing

the merchandizing fanfare it generated to cultivate interest in adjacent markets. In 1939, LRI's gross receipts from licensing the rights to the Lone Ranger radio series exceeded \$1,000,000. These earnings did not include income from merchandising (\$100,000), premium development (\$50,000), or other media adaptations (\$100,000 for the comic strip alone). In total the LRI's net worth was estimated as \$400,000 (that's \$62,652,494 when converted to 2008 monies). While each of its licenses separately ensured that the Lone Ranger had national coverage in a variety of media and product forms, it was LRI's market-by-market attempts to generate cross-promotional brand synergies that transformed the Lone Ranger into a national brand. More than this, it was LRI's tactical customization of the Lone Ranger radio program to meet local market needs and concerns that allowed the property to become culturally iconic.

Avi Santo is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Theatre Arts at Old Dominion University. He is currently finishing a book manuscript titled *Selling the Silver Bullet* on the licensing and merchandizing of the Lone Ranger, 1933-2008.

“These Four Men”: NBC’s Alternative Propaganda Model

Michael J. Socolow, University of Maine, Orono, USA.

On the evening of September 7, 1941, the National Broadcasting Company aired the first in a “series of living biographies,” designed to educate American listeners about “four world dominant figures” in “a world in agony.” (National Broadcasting Company, 1941, 3) The four programs, aired weekly, dramatized the lives of Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, and Franklin Roosevelt. The series – titled “These Four Men” - is notable for its intentions, its production values, and, perhaps most importantly, its modeling of a specific radio propaganda format for United States.

When “These Four Men” aired, the United States was officially neutral and not yet a declared belligerent in the world crisis. Yet the broadcast’s production values and placement in a lucrative time slot (Sunday evenings at 7:00pm on the Red Network) attest to the belief, among network executives, that such a dramatic series possessed much political and regulatory utility. The series was far from neutral; in contrasting the heroic figures of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt with the psychotically unstable Hitler, NBC’s political position on the global conflict closely echoed the Roosevelt administration’s stance. To further promote the political influence of the program, the network published the program’s scripts and distributed them to libraries throughout America.

Despite such promotion and the enormous audience interest in war programming, the series attracted minimal contemporaneous press attention, and it has generally been ignored in the scholarship of American radio propaganda. (Horten, 2002; Socolow, 2007; Sweeney, 2001). Other dramatic war-themed programs aired in this period – such as “This Is War!” and “The Fall of the City” – have attracted far more attention. (Lenthall, 2007, pp.181-193; Spiller, 2004).

This paper offers a close reading of the four scripts of “These Four Men.” In doing so, it places the dramas within the programmatic context of the contemporary network radio industry and the political and regulatory atmosphere in which that industry

operated. “These Four Men,” is generally forgotten today, but its existence provides evidence that network executives considered its structure useful for propagandistic and pedagogical functions. The series is most remarkable as an example of a path not chosen; ultimately, America’s propaganda planners and network executives (often the same people) decided such isolated, dramatized war programming was less effective than other means of educating the American people by broadcasting.

Those methods included live (censored) news broadcasts from war-torn Europe and a more subtle integration of war messages within existing broadcast channels. No dramatic broadcast, a reviewer in the *New York Times* (Hutchens, 1941, p.10) noted, could compete with the intense, theatrical offerings heard daily via shortwave. “With the vibrant reality of the real Churchill ringing in one’s ears, it was difficult to be impressed by the imitation,” on “These Four Men,” he concluded. This central question – of whether the most effective propaganda would rely on broadcasting’s established realities or dramatic, theatrical, stylized representations of reality – was still undecided in the fall of 1941. Ultimately, the U.S. government and the networks elected to go with the former, but an analysis of the scripts for “These Four Men,” demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of the latter, alternative model. Such an analysis speaks not only to the state of radio drama in this transitional period, but to basic issues of broadcasting’s utility for information delivery and emotional motivation.

To some extent, “These Four Men,” represents a synthesis between the realism of rooftop broadcasts from the London blitz and the intense, anxiety-creating radio dramas that flooded the American airwaves in the late 1930s. (Miller, 2003) While this hybridization could be considered a weakness – the programs sounded like such dated news-entertainment hybrids as “The March of Time!” – the program’s genre should not obscure its value as a conveyance of information on the global conflict. For example: the following comes from the conclusion of the Adolf Hitler profile, aired on September 21, 1941:

NARRATOR: The house painter had become a god – and in that book he had dedicated to Rudolf Hess – he had given the world fair warning of what he would do when he had become a god.

(Screams)

TROOPER: (Spits it out) Jüden!

(Lash of whip)

(Wails, etc. – Fade for)

(Music.... In heavy Jewish theme – takes up whip and wails, continue for ten seconds, then fade for)

NARRATOR: The fury that lashed the Jews in Germany went on to strike and envelope the whole of Europe. (National Broadcasting Company, 1941, pp.51-2)

The National Broadcasting Company has been criticized for its neutrality in presenting Nazi atrocities both before and during the war, yet this scene – airing on the number one network in the United States, at an hour with a large audience – demonstrates that the plight of European Jewry was not entirely absent from the American airwaves. (Obler, 1942, p.239; Weinstein, 2007)

But to only evaluate “These Four Men,” from a pedagogical standpoint obscures the craftsmanship of the scriptwriting. The scripts are well-written and rely on a variety of dramatic techniques to impress the listeners. However, the thirty-minute length of the programs forced them to exploit stereotypes in order to quickly establish characters and move the narration along. Hitler, for instance, is feminized as a shrill hysteric, shown

crying upon hearing of the defeat of Germany in the First World War. Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt, in contrast, are notable for their stoicism in the face of defeat.

This paper will conclude by showing how “These Four Men” has much to tell us about the state of American radio in the fall of 1941. This was a period notable for the regulatory activism of the Federal Communications Commission, and thus, it should be no surprise that the Roosevelt administration’s political agenda began appearing on the network airwaves more prominently. “These Four Men,” thus served an important regulatory and political function, by preparing the American people for the war deemed inevitable by the Roosevelt administration. But to dismiss the program as simply a political vehicle ignores the interesting and innovative model it represented for integrating the genres of broadcast journalism and radio drama for propaganda purposes.

Michael J. Socolow is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of Maine. His research examines political, regulatory, and social aspects of network operation in the first two decades of chain broadcasting in the United States.

Transnational Radio and Public Broadcasting in Canada in the Early 1930s

Mary Vipond, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.

Modern Canadians have always been exposed to the transnational flow of American mass media. Bordering the United States, but with one-tenth the population and economy, and sharing in large part the same language and social characteristics, Canada was a prime market for overflow American cultural products from the nineteenth century on. With a slight caveat regarding newspapers, all early mass media (popular fiction, mass market magazines, and especially movies) not only easily crossed the border but dominated the Canadian market. Radio was no exception. From the era of the amateurs through the beginnings of broadcasting in the 1920s, many (probably most) Canadians could tune in to American radio, and from all accounts did so with great enjoyment.

According to the theories of cultural imperialism popular in the 1960s and 1970s, in Canada as much as elsewhere, this penetration by the cultural products of another country was fundamentally damaging to the development of a national identity among Canadians, who were assumed to be passive and unresisting consumers of the flood of foreign ideas and ideology. In the specific case of early Canadian radio, the narrative was framed by the proponents of the creation of a Canadian public broadcaster. As Graham Spry famously put it, the choice was “The State or the United States.” In this scenario, the “bad guys” were the Canadian private broadcasters who aped American practices and borrowed American content. Significantly, two of the major private stations in each of Canada’s two largest cities, for sound business reasons of attracting audiences and advertisers, became affiliates of American networks in the late 1920s, and the trend toward full integration into American broadcasting seemed inexorable.

In recent decades theorists have modified and complicated the rather stark polarization of the cultural imperialist model. Terms such as “asymmetric interdependence,” “hybridity,” “globalization” and “cultural transnationalism” are utilized to theorize cultural relationships that are more complex, contextualized, and fluid

than those posited by the cultural imperialism school. Demands have grown for scholarship that is more rooted and empirical, and which combines awareness of the structural economic power of the dominant cultural producers (especially the United States) with anti-essentialist concepts of indigenous cultures and interest in audience reception theory. While still concerned with fundamental matters of identity, the nation-state and communications, they offer a more sophisticated if not yet fully realized analysis of the ever-increasing transnational flow of communication media.

This paper will discuss some of the issues of transnational media flow and the response of the recipient country by using the case of Canadian radio in the early 1930s. More specifically, it will examine how the public broadcasting body that Graham Spry lobbied for, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC), negotiated the fact that American radio, and Canadian commercial radio modelled on American practices, already dominated the Canadian marketplace and listeners' expectations when it was created in 1932. I will use two principal types of sources. First, CRBC officials, especially Chairman Hector Charlesworth, wrote and spoke from time to time about what they believed to be the contribution of the CRBC's national network to Canadian listeners and to the nation. Two claims stand out: the CRBC's network enabled Canadians to speak to one another, and it enabled the presentation of special programs of national and imperial significance. Both assertions, it may be noted, concerned fostering internal unity, not addressing external threats. While a few of the scripts for these special programs have survived, almost nothing of the regularly scheduled fare has done so. Therefore my second source is a database I have constructed of a sample of CRBC program schedules from 1933 to 1936, when the Commission was disbanded and replaced by the CBC. It provides a more macro-level source through which one can study what genres of programs were most utilized, where they originated, and how the schedules changed over time. For comparative purposes a similar database of the evening schedules of CBS and NBC in the same period is analyzed. Preliminary findings indicate that when it could the CRBC aired programs very similar to those on the U.S. networks, but sometimes with a time lag. Where they differed most starkly was in the origination of programs, which was much more diverse for the CRBC than was the case in the U.S. at the time.

Three general conclusions are reached. First, the CRBC's practices must be understood in the context of a long history of cross-border media flow, the result of basic economic and social structures that had shaped Canadian popular culture for many decades. Secondly, in the competitive continental context, the CRBC had little choice but to offer its audiences programming genres and routinized schedules imitative of those on the American networks. Thirdly, the CRBC's national network did provide two programming elements that distinguished it from the U.S. networks. The first was a judicious sprinkling of special events programs that celebrated the nation and, especially, the link to the empire/commonwealth. Secondly, ninety per cent of the programs originated in Canada, and from many different centres. Although such programs often borrowed American genres, they provided Canadian artists with employment, and they sometimes directly reflected local and regional cultural specificities. As Paul Rutherford put it a number of years ago (*The Making of the Canadian Media*, 1978, p. 102), American media may have been foreign in Canada, but they were not alien. They were deeply interwoven with indigenous communications in what he called a "hybrid" system. While the concept of "hybridity" has subsequently been developed and theorized in a very different context, its applicability to the Canadian case deserves further exploration. Such studies, however, must place the cultural analysis within the framework of the

fundamental asymmetry of the political, social, economic and institutional forces moulding media flow in North America.

Mary Vipond is Distinguished Professor Emeritus in the Department of History, Concordia University, Montreal. Her research centres on the history of Canadian mass media, especially early radio. She is the author of *The Mass Media in Canada, Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting, 1922-1932* and numerous articles on the CRBC and other topics. She is currently writing a book on censorship and propaganda at the CBC during World War II.

The promotion of “Volk”, „Heimat“, and “Nation” in the literary programme offers by the “Norag” and the „Reichssender Hamburg“ in the 1930s

Hans-Ulrich Wagner, the Hans-Bredow-Institute for Media Research and the University of Hamburg, Germany.

Mass Medium Radio in Germany

The proposal at hand takes as a starting point the mass medium radio, which had its break-through at the beginning of the 1930s and in the years of the “Third Reich“. Of special interest is primarily the twofold tension that shaped the face of radio in those days: a) the struggle between regionalism and centralism and b) the tension between references to the respective regional cultural areas and the establishment of an overall national identity.

a) In the 1920s the broadcasting system in Germany was built up by different regional stations. Opposing this organisation, there was an ongoing process of centralisation. With the broadcasting reform of the “Reichskanzler” Papen in 1932 and the new-established control system of the “Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda”, there was a shift towards central state control. But the individual “Reichssender” remained mainly in charge of their programmes and were given decided region-related tasks (this was often referred to as special “Landschaftsarbeit”). – Whereas a lot of research has been done on the institutional and political circumstances of the broadcasting system at the end of “Weimar” and in Nazi Germany as a whole, there are only few studies focussing both on these special tasks of a regional station.

b) In the German tradition broadcasting is a cultural phenomenon, i.e. it is inextricably linked to regional cultural areas. It however also takes up the role as a mediator of national identity. Cultural studies have been engaged with this mass medium both as a mirror and moulder of social developments. Broadcasting has played an important part in the process of mediatisation, and especially the radio was engaged in this process from the 1930s to the 1960s (in Germany the period of the ‘radio-boom’ or the ‘radio-times’). Media history therefore has to analyse public spheres as crucial social categories which are constituted by public communication. Due to this fact, we have to deal with various actors, e.g. the producers, the programme offers, the users – to name only a few.

Programme analyses and cultural studies

How to tap information of mediated experiences of spaces? Within the approach of programme history we analyse programme offers as bearers of meaning (“Träger von Sinnangeboten”). In this case they constitute representations of “Volk”, “Heimat”, and “Nation”. They build up and transmit regional and national narratives that (re)act on different experiences of crisis. These programme offers are at the centre of medial and social processes. On the one hand they are medial reflections, on the other hand they respond to social developments. In consequence, the results of a detailed programme analysis can perfectly be fitted into cultural studies, especially dealing with the tension of nation and provincials (Celia Applegate) or “nationale Zugehörigkeit” and Heimat” (Alon Confino).

Cultural studies on German broadcasting in the “Third Reich” are rare. The volume “Zuhören und Gehört werden. Radio im Nationalsozialismus. Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung“ by Inge Marszolek and Adelheid von Saldern (1998) offers an intriguing study on the utilisation of the radio during the Nazi regime. A groundbreaking study on the issue is given by Adelheid von Saldern in her article “Volk und Heimat in Radio Broadcasting during the Period from Weimar to Nazi Germany”, published in the “Journal of Modern History” (2004). But here the remarks on the “Third Reich” are rough and the data base, she had, was rather limited.

Why Hamburg?

The programme offerings of the “Reichssender Hamburg” between 1933 and 1940 will be taken as a case study. The paper will operate on the grounded base of data (see preliminary work below) as well as on the original files and the sound documents in the German archives. There is a landmark position of the “NORAG” as a centre of the “Volk- und Heimat”-Movement in Germany (see also A. von Saldern, 2004). This invites further research for the continuities or ruptures, for the breaks and transition of the anti-modern regional and the ideological national movements within a medium that is regarded as a medium of modernism.

Basic and preliminary works

The proposal is based on some current sub-projects conducted by the “Research Center for the History of Broadcasting in Northern Germany”.

- In 2009/10 the Research Center has started a research project on the “Nordische Rundfunk AG” (NORAG). It focuses on the growing importance of this broadcasting station as an influential actor in the cultural field of the metropolis Hamburg. The results will be published in April/May 2010 in a catalogue titled: “Himmel auf Zeit”. Kultur der 20er Jahre in Hamburg. They will lay down the groundwork for questions for continuities and ruptures around 1933.

- In 2009 some preliminary studies have been conducted as a preparation for a larger project dealing with the literature programme offers of the “Reichssender Hamburg” 1933-1940. Most notably, a data base of 4.989 radio segments has already been established.

- In May 2010 a paper will be given for the workshop “Space, Identity and National Socialism” at Loughborough University/University of Leicester. It focuses especially on space-related identities in the “Third Reich”.

Hans-Ulrich Wagner is head of the Research Center for the History of Broadcasting in Northern Germany, a co-operative project of the Hans-Bredow-Institute for Media

Radio remotes and the nightlife of the big city.

Tim Wall, Birmingham City University, UK.

So called ‘remote’ broadcasts from night clubs were a notable feature of early broadcasting practice, and they were a key characteristic of the emerging commercial stations by 1930. These were classic cases of intermedia relations between the emergent music industry, radio and the nightclub, as well as having ambiguous relationships to Hollywood film and recorded music. This paper explores the reasons for the rise of this type of broadcasting – a combination of cheap content, the popularity of jazz and dance musics, and a move to target specialist audiences in low listener dayparts – and the ways that these programmes were integrated into the cycle of daily broadcasts. By comparing late 1920s remotes with those of the early 1930s a sense of radios developments can be explored.

In many ways these remotes contained a number of the ingredients and cultural resonances of later forms of music radio, but in this earlier form it is strongly linked to the romance of the nights club, the jazz band, and dance music. It is no coincidence that this period is at the overlap between the ‘jazz age’ and the ‘radio age’. Much is made in jazz histories of the role of radio in propagating jazz as a new music, and its artists as American national stars. This narrative is based upon the assumption (and implicit proposition) that jazz was a coherent musical genre, that radio gave the dance bands and their leaders extensive exposure, and that radio as a national system of communication established a continental reach. I will show that this is an over-simplification at best, and a post-hoc mis-characterisation at worst.

It is certainly the case that from the mid-1920s onwards dance became a key element of public entertainment, and the nightclub evolved as a space in which new forms of public entertainment would evolve. They offered a distinctive, but connected, forms of entertainment from the variety stage along with elements of burlesque, but centrally they enabled the development of the dance band (and the band leader) as a new form of musical ‘star’, along with the development of new forms of vernacular dance as a participation activity. Although much of this form of cultural communication was visual, the centrality of the music as an index of the exoticism of the urban nightclub, and as an aural experience in its own right, made the sounds of the clubs technologically, logistically, economically and culturally ideal for off-peak broadcasting. The clubs were in the same neighbourhoods as the radio stations, reached their peaks when the radio stations had their lowest listenership, and offered a glimpse of a world usually out of the reach of many outside the central urban world of the city entertainment districts.

However, this also meant that these broadcasts attracted a very specialist, very male, listenership. They were characteristic of small, entrepreneurial stations and radio groups, rather than the emerging major networks more strongly linked to Hollywood. The band most strongly associated with the radio remotes in jazz histories – Duke Ellington’s – I

will argue, was atypical of most bands involved in remote broadcasting, and his later international success was the result of other changes in music and stage entertainment, and the repositioning of jazz as an American vernacular art. The radio-jazz link was a tentative and momentary one in the development of these two new forms of American popular culture, and the remote became a far less significant part of radio quite swiftly.

Using recently accessible archives of station programme schedules, the traditional stories of jazz on radio, and insights into the process of radio networking that came to dominance during this time, the paper will map out some of the issues which are central to our understanding of the radio, music and popular culture of the early 1930s.

Tim Wall is Professor of Radio and Popular Music Studies, and Director of the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research, at Birmingham City University in the UK. He has written and presented widely on the relationship between the media, and particularly radio, and music (including jazz) culture.

"See Television at its Best on Stand No. 19". Display of technology and construction of symbolic meaning: The public presentation of televisual dispositifs at the *Radio Show at Olympia* (London) and at the *Grosse Deutsche Funkausstellung* (Berlin), 1928-1939

Anne-Katrin Weber, University of Lausanne – New York University

The 19th century utopia of seeing by electricity becomes reality at the mid-1920s as the development of first televisual prototypes starts in different countries. The audience for these technological novelties is mostly limited to circles of technical experts, who follow the latest scientific advances through the specialized press. However, the annual Radio Shows held in major European and American cities are some of the rare occasions on which a broader public has the opportunity to experience the devices and to “see at distance”. For media historians today these events thus are a welcomed – but still very neglected – object of research for studying the appearance of television in public space. Organized by the radio and electronics industry to present their newest products, the Radio Shows are dedicated to wireless technology and its components, and include televisual dispositifs from 1928 on. The Shows extend the tradition of 19th century World fairs and honour industrialized modernity for which radio, and thereafter television, are some of its most powerful symbols. As spectacular exhibit pieces, the televisual dispositifs are meant to contribute to the celebration of scientific progress, to the cult of technology and to materialize evidence for the national leadership in these matters. Furthermore, in succeeding to radio as a domestic appliance, television enfoldes the promise of a new consumer good for which the Radio Shows present a first advertisement platform.

Nevertheless, despite the similarity of devices developed in Europe and the U.S. and despite the common issues of their public presentation through industrial fairs, the symbolic meaning of televisual dispositifs differ within the political, social and cultural contexts prevailing in particular countries. Indeed, as Fickers has convincingly shown in his comparison of the Paris and New York World’s Fairs, the definition and signification

of television as communicated through its display largely depend on the national frame (Fickers 2008).

This paper proposes to analyse more closely the exhibition of television at two different industrial events, the *Radio Show at Olympia* (London) and the *Grosse Deutsche Funkausstellung* (Berlin) between 1928 and 1939. By studying the scenographic setting and the discursive presentation of televisual devices at these important fairs, I will discuss how the political contexts of both nations and their technological and political competition are translated within the exhibition space, and more particularly how the presentation of television reflects these issues. Since the twelve-year period considered for this study embraces important political events, namely the arriving at power of the national-socialist party in Germany and the increasing tensions in the immediate pre-war years, it articulates this interrelation between the display of technology and the construction of symbolic meaning in a chronological perspective that reflects the “time of crisis” of the 1930s.

The methodological frame answers the problems arising from the suggested topic and is based on two main theoretical approaches. The concept of “dispositif” as used in contemporary film studies allows to analyze television and media on their material, semantic and symbolic level context and to articulate them as mobile networks and hybrid forms instead of invariable categories (Albera/Tortajada, 2010; Kessler, 2003). Defined as an interrelation of machine, audience and media content, the notion helps to understand technical artefacts as social and historical constructs and therefore allows to revisit the history of early television beyond the (often adopted) narrative of grand inventors and misjudged genies. Choosing a comparative approach of two events offers the advantage of shedding light on the transnational character of televisual development, and helps to explain similarities and differences regarding political and cultural meanings of televisual dispositifs for each nation (Bignell/Fickers, 2008). Eventually, this specific angle of research in early television permits to work with historical sources that are rarely considered, such as iconographic archival material that makes it possible to reconstitute the display of technology at the shows.

My presentation will be organised in three parts. First, I will rapidly outline the context of the two Radio Shows and present the televisual devices and their relation to other media and the media system in general. I will then examine the early years of the exhibitions during which – this is my current hypothesis – the dispositifs are presented mainly as technological feats with little attraction to the audience outside the exhibition halls. Finally, I will focus on the second half of the 1930s. As I am going to discuss it here, the announcement of the “first regular television broadcast in the world” by national-socialist official Eugen Hadamovsky in 1935 marks a shift in German and British television history that fundamentally changes the role and place of television in both societies. The German declaration evidently is a sign of national affirmation towards its international concurrence and it indicates the increasing awareness of national-socialist officials about the potential of television as a new propaganda tool. In Britain, the German launching of a regular broadcast is closely observed by the BBC and British state representatives, and serves as an important argument for the opening of a British television programme in November 1936. The following exhibitions of television at the Radio Shows reveal its new political and social function as they differ considerably in their “mise en scène” from the former events, and the exhibition becomes henceforth an important place for the renegotiation of television’s meaning and signification within Great Britain and Germany.

Anne-Katrin Weber is preparing a PhD thesis on television exhibitions in Germany, Great Britain and the United States in the 1930s at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, under the supervision of Professor Olivier Lugon (Lausanne) and Professor Andreas Fickers (Maastricht). Currently, she is a fellow of the Swiss National Science Foundation and a visiting scholar at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin and, from July 2010 on, at the New York University. She is the co-editor of *La télévision du Téléphonoscope à YouTube : pour une archéologie de l'audiovision* (2009) and the author of several articles.

"Eddie Cantor Fights the Nazis"

David Weinstein, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, DC, USA.

During the 1930s, Eddie Cantor was one of the most successful performers in the country and one of America's best-known Jewish figures. He co-authored best-selling books, starred in popular movies, sold out theatrical houses nationwide, and helmed a weekly radio variety show that, at its height in the early 1930s, attracted more listeners than any other program.

Jewish celebrities usually did not draw attention to their religious background. In addition, while the 1930s saw workers in the film and radio industries becoming more politically active, most celebrities of Cantor's stature did not take controversial political stands. However, Cantor was strikingly proud of his Jewish identity and he expressed this pride through his politically courageous work fighting antisemitism. Cantor risked his career by leading fund-raising drives for Jewish causes and serving as one of the nation's most prominent critics of fascism. My paper will examine Eddie Cantor's response to the growing fascist movements in the United States and Germany.

One of the issues that my paper will explore is the way radio performers tailored their political content to fit different broadcast and non-broadcast venues. Cantor starred in a popular, weekly, comedy-variety show. Networks, sponsors, critical listeners, and government regulators carefully monitored prime-time comedy programs for political content. On his weekly shows, Cantor made only the occasional, carefully worded comment or statement about the dangers of bellicose "dictators in foreign lands." Cantor did not name specific individuals or even countries that might pose a threat to American freedom, democracy, and peace.

Cantor reserved his strongest fire for press interviews and fund-raising appeals delivered to Jewish organizations away from his primetime program. Several of these talks were covered by the country's daily newspapers and broadcast nationally as a public service on CBS or NBC. This work began with a March 1936 fund-raising speech for Youth Aliyah, an organization that facilitated emigration of people under age eighteen from Europe to Palestine, Cantor presciently described the dire situation in Germany and urged listeners to support the international movement to stop Nazism and antisemitism.

Cantor continued to sound these themes throughout the 1930s, making passionate and specific statements about fascistic and antisemitic threats in the United States and Germany. After Henry Ford accepted a medal from Germany in 1938, Cantor questioned Ford's patriotism and called Ford a "damned fool." In 1939, speaking at the World's Fair's Temple of Religion pavilion, Cantor implied that leading industrialists were bankrolling prominent antisemites such as Father Charles Coughlin and Senator Robert Rice Reynolds of North Carolina. Cantor paid a price for his outspokenness. Shortly after he delivered this speech, Cantor was effectively blacklisted. He lost his radio sponsorship and was taken off the air because of his off air political activity, missing the entire 1939-1940 radio season. It was only with the help of his friend Jack Benny and growing public acceptance of Cantor's anti-Nazi politics that Cantor returned to the air with a new sponsor, after nearly fifteen months, in October 1940.

My paper will analyze the challenges and limitations that even the most successful celebrities faced in assuming the conflicting political, ethical, and professional responsibilities of American Jewish identity during the 1930s. Cantor was a Jewish, anti-fascist celebrity. However, these labels of "Jewish," "anti-fascist," and "celebrity" defied easy classification and did not offer clear roadmaps for action. For example, the American Jewish community was divided on the question of how openly and directly Jews should speak against anti-Semitism in the United States and Europe. The anti-fascist left had many splits: isolationist versus interventionist; communist versus non-communist; Jewish versus non-Jewish. Radio celebrities had to follow network and sponsor rules, explicit and implicit, regarding politics, comedy, Jewish performance, and the ways in which stars should conduct themselves on and off the air. Cantor's attempts to navigate these structures and tensions, and to choose the affiliations and actions that best advanced his values, illustrate broader historical themes about the possibilities and limitations of activism for radio celebrities reacting to the horrible crisis facing Jews internationally during the 1930s.

My presentation will incorporate audio clips from broadcasts by Cantor and President Franklin Roosevelt.

As I have prepared this paper, I have been in contact with Kathryn Fuller-Seeley (Georgia State University), a colleague who is submitting a conference paper proposal on Jack Benny and Rochester. Kathryn and I are both looking at the construction of American radio star personas and the radio industry during the 1930s in the context of broader political and social issues. You may wish to consider putting us on a panel together. Thank you.

Please note: I also submitted a proposal to present a workshop about NEH grants at the WCFTR "On, Archives!" conference. The proposed Cantor paper is part of a larger biography on Cantor that I am writing independent of NEH.

David Weinstein is senior program officer in the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in Washington, DC. He joined the NEH in June 2000 after teaching at George Mason University and the University of Maryland College Park. He is the author of *The Forgotten Network: DuMont and the Birth of American Television* (Temple University Press, 2004) and several scholarly articles on cultural history.

