

A STUDY OF PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS
THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA RATING SYSTEM

By

SYLVIA LYNN O'DELL

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Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

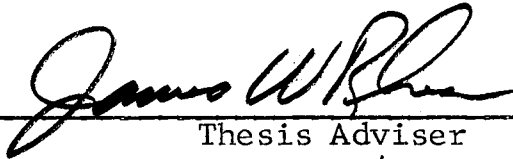
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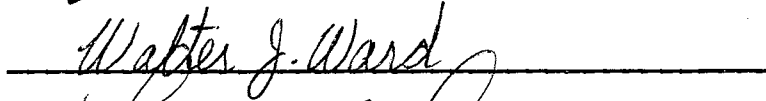
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Thesis Adviser






Dean of the Graduate College

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study was to evaluate parents' attitudes towards the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) rating system as a guide to the selection of films which would not contain material unsuitable for their children to view.

This study explored the meanings which the MPAA rating system and its individual ratings hold for Stillwater, Oklahoma, parents of four predominant age groups of children along Evaluative and Understandability dimensions. More specifically, this exploratory study was concerned with the question as to whether the MPAA or various magazines and religious organizations [Broadcasting and Film Commission (BFC) and the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures (NCOMP)] were closer to an accurate evaluation of parents' attitudes towards the MPAA rating system. While Jack Valenti, MPAA President, claims that the rating system is highly successful, many magazines, the BFC, and the NCOMP, contend that the MPAA ratings are unpredictable.

Many persons made significant contributions to this project. I am especially indebted to two members of the

Oklahoma State University faculty, my Thesis Adviser and Head of the Radio/TV/Film Department, Dr. James W. Rhea, and Dr. Walter J. Ward, Director of Graduate Studies in Mass Communication, for their guidance in my pre-thesis period, and their encouragement and assistance during the actual execution of this study. I further wish to extend my appreciation to Dr. Rhea for my appointment as Graduate Assistant in the School of Journalism and Broadcasting.

Thanks also go to the 99 participants in this study. Each took time from his or her busy schedule to complete the questionnaire, and many took additional time to verbalize their opinion of the MPAA rating system and "movies of today," following the completion of the questionnaire. Without their efforts, this study could never have been completed.

I am also deeply thankful to the following people and organizations who responded to my request for material in this non-illuminated area of study: Martin S. Dworkin, authority on the general influence of mass communication on education in its broadest sense, Lecturer in Philosophy, and Research Associate of the Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education at Columbia University; William F. Fore, Executive Director of the BFC; Willadene Price, Editorial Assistant for Social Education, Journal of the

National Council for the Social Studies; June Foster, Associate in Community Relations, MPAA; Michael Linden, MPAA; Leonard C. Milchuk, Jr., Opinion Research Corporation; and the NCOMP, United States Catholic Conference.

The individuals who must be thanked most for their sympathy, assistance, and understanding are my parents and numerous true friends. Without their support and sacrifice this project could not have been accomplished.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On November 1, 1968, as a "self-defense mechanism designed to forestall governmental interference,"¹ the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), with the cooperation of the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) and the International Film Importers and Distributors, established a classification system for commercial films. "It was court action that gave the needed leverage to persuade the industry to police itself."²

Two April rulings of the Supreme Court inspired the U. S. film industry with a salutary impetus to self scrutiny. The Ginsberg decision upholding right of states to ban sales of certain books to minors was seen in the industry as applicable to cinema as well. The Court's Dallas decision suggested to many movie people that the language of film ordinances barring minors from unsuitable films could be sharpened to make them constitutional. Together these providential court decisions seem to have exerted a pinger-like pressure on the U. S. cinema empire.³

The MPAA is well aware of the consequences should they meet strong public disapproval of their handling of the rating system. In a speech given by Jack Valenti, President of the MPAA, before members of NATO, in New York,

October 28, 1971, he told those present:

My counsel is: Consider the alternative to the rating program.

There is only one alternative and it is government intervention into this industry. No sane person imagines any other result.

The rating system gave the movie industry "more creative freedom than ever before."⁴ Films are no longer banned and seldom subjected to the "blue scissors" of local censorship committees, as they were before the film industry adopted the rating system. The public, therefore, is no longer "limited to viewing bland children's fare."⁵

Valenti, in the New York Times (July 18, 1972), summarized what the MPAA rating system was doing and why:

1. The rating program aims to help parents decide the movie-going of their children.
2. It gives parents some indication of the content of specific films. The parents can get more information about that film before letting their children attend, if there is any question of consent.
3. G means a film which the entire family can view without parents finding anything in the film objectionable for their children. G does not mean a children's picture, but merely that the film will not be embarrassing to families viewing the movie.

PG means 'parental guidance suggested - some material may not be suitable for pre-teenagers.' There will not be explicit sex or excessive violence in PG films, but parents are urged to give further scrutiny to PG films before they allow their pre-teenagers to attend.

R means 'restricted' - under 17 requires an accompanying parent or adult guardian (such as a

school teacher). This is an adult film in theme and possibly in treatment.

X means 'under 17 not admitted.' This is an adult film in theme and treatment.

The rating system is not what is under fire, since, as Jacob Brackman says:

The ratings, in theory, are no more than a labeling device - like those lists of ingredients which the law requires on food and drug packages - to give us an idea of what to expect inside. Ratings don't presume to 'fix' movies, only to alert people - parents, specifically - when they contain indigestible material.⁶

The allocation of ratings by the rating board is what may be good or bad. The MPAA originally won the support of the two major religious groups in the United States, the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures (NCOMP) and the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches (BFC), on this premise.

Original support of the rating system was based on both religious groups' 'opposition to governmental regulation, combined with [a] primary interest in parental guidance.'

The NCOMP and the BFC withdrew their support in May, 1971, preceded by a joint decision by the two groups that the ratings, as allocated by the MPAA Rating Board, were "clearly unrealistic."⁸ The two religious groups are not alone in their disapproval of the credibility of the MPAA's administration of the rating system. An article in Time states, ". . . there has been increasingly vehement

criticism that the categories G-GP(PG)-R-X are just so much alphabet soup."⁹ McCall's publishes monthly listings entitled "McCall's Movie Guide for Puzzled Parents."

Valenti, in defense of the system, wrote an article for Harper's Bazaar in which he stated:

The rating system is not perfect. No program that deals in subjective opinion can ever be 100 percent correct. But the rating system is the sanest approach free men can devise to inform parents about the suitability of movies for their children. . . . Frankly, I think that parents were perhaps more correct than we were on some of these particular ratings, but that is a personal judgment and not necessarily a fact.¹⁰

Valenti's statement does not enhance the credibility of the rating system, yet it is credibility upon which the rating system must rely if it is to survive.

The success of any rating program involves two responsibilities. First, the ratings themselves should be clear, reliable and credible. This is the industry's obligation. Second, parents need to understand what the ratings mean and to use them knowledgeably in exercising their responsibility on the moviegoing of their children. This is the parents' obligation.¹¹

This is the MPAA's definition of the responsibilities of the system. The second responsibility cannot be fulfilled without the presence of the first, thus placing the entire responsibility of the success of the rating system in the hands of the MPAA.

The NCOMP and the BFC believe that the MPAA Rating Administration is unable to furnish parents with reliable

guidance. They do not believe that the general public understands the rating program and they are not alone in their feelings. Time magazine has stated, "Critics in and out of the industry are often mystified by the board's assessments of the relative immorality of sex and violence."¹²

On numerous occasions, Valenti has referred to the MPAA rating system as "alive and well, and performing a service for parents of this nation."¹³ His statement is backed by studies conducted at the MPAA's request by Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton in 1969, 1970, and 1971, which showed that "some 55% of moviegoing adults think our (the MPAA's) ratings are 'very useful' or 'fairly useful' in helping parents decide what films children ought to see."¹⁴

On the one hand, the MPAA views the system as being appreciated by the public, while the NCOMP and the BFC raise doubts as to the system's reliability. Further, the parent magazines display their doubts concerning the MPAA rating system by publishing supplementary guides for parents. Both sides cannot be right. This study hopes to shed some light on the attitude of parents towards the MPAA ratings and be able to give the MPAA an idea of where they are failing, if they are.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to discover parents' opinions of the MPAA rating system as a guide in the selection of films which they would allow their children to attend. It will also provide a definition, in terms of credibility and clearness, for each of the ratings as well as the rating system as a whole.

Questions for which this study hopes to find answers are:

1. Does the age of the parent's children have a significant effect on the parent's attitude towards the rating system?
2. Is there a significant difference between parents' evaluation of the MPAA rating system and how well they feel they understand it?
3. Do parents hold different attitudes towards the different MPAA ratings?
4. Does the ranking of the two semantic meaning dimensions (Evaluative and Understandability) vary with the four MPAA ratings?
5. Does the ranking of the two semantic meaning dimensions vary with the predominant age of the parents' children?

6. Do parents' attitudes towards the MPAA ratings vary with the predominant age of their children?
7. Do the predominant age groups of the children, the two semantic meaning dimensions, and the four MPAA ratings work upon each other to significantly affect parents' attitudes?
8. In what esteem is the MPAA rating system held?

This study does not intend to decide what form of censorship is better or worse than any other, nor does it seek a description for what the MPAA ratings stand - what a movie must contain to receive a certain rating. This study is solely concerned with the parents' attitudes of the MPAA ratings, not what type of movie the individual rating may represent to parents.

The only studies which have been conducted were merely on the usefulness and approval of the system as a whole, not based on parental reaction to individual ratings. One of the studies was conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation in 1969, 1970, and 1971, but only offered "very useful," "fairly useful," and "not useful" for the respondent's selection. The other study was a survey conducted among readers by The National Council for the Social Studies in 1969. It offered only "Favorable to the New Film Code," "Opposed to the New Film Code," and "No strong

feelings either way," as foils for the respondents.

In both studies, the results showed the respondents to substantially "favor" the MPAA rating system, although the total respondents in the survey conducted by The National Council for the Social Studies numbered only 29, and the respondents of the Opinion Research Corporation survey were as young as twelve years old. Neither study offered any form of breakdown of the system into individual ratings, nor any form of demographic breakdown, thus the lack of hypotheses in this exploratory study due to the absence of previous studies along these lines.

Hopefully, where this study reveals potential areas of low esteem for the rating system, the MPAA may use this information to improve their communication with the public, as well as strive for more consistency in that area.

FOOTNOTES

¹"Rating the Rating System," Time (May 31, 1971), p. 72.

²"Film Classification," America, CXIX (1968), p. 311.

³Ibid., p. 310.

⁴Thomas Thompson, "Film Ratings Flunk Out," Life (August 20, 1970), p. 57.

⁵Philip C. Rule, "Booed in Boston, Ditto in Detroit," America, CXXV (1971), p. 404.

⁶Jacob Brackman, "Films," Esquire (December, 1971), p. 114.

⁷From a speech delivered by Jack Valenti before the Convention of the National Association of Theatre Owners in Bal Harbour, Florida, November 21, 1972.

⁸Brackman, p. 114.

⁹"Rating the Rating System," p. 72.

¹⁰Jack Valenti, "In Defense of the Voluntary Film Rating Program," Harper's Bazaar (July, 1971), pp. 68-69.

¹¹From the MPAA flyer, Film Rating Guide for Parents and Their Children (March, 1972).

¹²"Rating the Rating System," p. 72.

¹³From a speech delivered by Jack Valenti before the Convention of the National Association of Theatre Owners in Bal Harbour, Florida, November 21, 1972.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

History of Motion Picture Censorship

The purpose of the rating system is best understood within the framework of the industry's historical censorship problem. From the outset, the movie industry has had to face censorship problems due to its quasi-public nature, its broad appeal and its undeniable influence on its audience. "That films directly or indirectly have some influence on the habits . . . of these people . . . hardly requires substantiation."¹

Between 1907 and 1909, "pre-exhibition censorship of the movies was introduced in Chicago and New York."² "The first concerted attempt to restrict the exhibition of motion pictures occurred in New York City in 1909."³ As a result of the mayor's closing of all motion picture theatres in the city, the first national censorship board was formed, not by irate citizens, but by the exhibitors.

The exhibitors of the city appealed to the late Dr. Charles Sprague Smith, founder and director of the People's Institute of New York, a citizen bureau of social research. In response, he formed

a volunteer citizens' committee to inspect films before they were released to the public. The membership of this committee, known as the National Board of Censorship, included representatives of civic, social, and religious agencies, all cooperating on a voluntary basis. This organization was to become one of the chief advocates of regulation of motion pictures by the industry itself.⁴

In 1914, the People's Institute found the expense of censoring too great, so the motion picture producers offered to pay a fee for each reel of film submitted to the committee. This resulted in the withdrawal of several members of the various social organizations.

These members, it was stated, held that they would be unable to secure an improved quality of product if their efforts were subsidized. The producers, on the other hand, contended that financial assistance was offered to make possible the development of an organization to perform adequately all pre-viewing without delay and to assume the burden formerly carried by the People's Institute.⁵

That same year, the National Board of Censorship's stamp of approval was necessary for a film to be shown. The Board later changed its name to the National Board of Review. The Board felt that this new title was more in keeping with the goals and purposes of the Board which were actually "selection" and not "censorship" of films.

The Board then organized the Better Films National Council, whose function was 'both to liberate and formulate thought regarding motion pictures, their uses and possibilities and the best way to achieve a free screen of a most desirable kind.' It sought to accomplish this by furnishing a leadership which placed at the disposal of women's clubs,

religious and social groups, and others working on the problem of film regulation, advance information regarding the better and the exceptional films. It supplied information through correspondence and by the publication of a weekly bulletin. The Council stated its policy to be primarily one of 'selecting the best' pictures and 'ignoring the rest.'⁶

Minority groups sprang up charging the Board with deceiving the public by posing as a government body; that the Board was subsidized by producers and, the most fundamental criticism of all, "that its work had not prevented the exhibition of films of alleged immoral character."⁷

In 1916, the New York State Legislature passed a film censorship bill, but the legislation was vetoed by the governor. In 1917, an investigation of motion pictures was made by the New York Legislature. It reported that immoral pictures were being produced. These brushes with state censorship legislation caused the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry, which represented a majority of the producers and distributors, to vote to censor their own films in an endeavor to satisfy reform groups before legislation was passed on such a scale as to have the industry virtually lose control of its products.

Things went fairly well until 1921 when organized social groups once again began seeking censorship laws to control the flood of "salacious, criminal, and indecent films."⁸ According to Wids Year Book for 1920, censorship

bills were to be "fought in 36 states during the winter of 1921."

The National Board of Review was functioning as vigorously as ever, but criticism mounted. The National Association of the Motion Picture Industry adopted a number of resolutions in a desperate attempt to meet these charges. Forbidden by these resolutions were:

1. Sex appeal, white slavery, commercialized vice, illicit love affairs making virtue appear odious and vice attractive, nakedness, suggestive bedroom and bathroom scenes, exciting dances, and unnecessary prolonging of passionate love scenes.
2. Underworld and crime scenes, except when part of an essential conflict between good and evil, and scenes making attractive drunkenness, gambling, use of narcotics and other unnatural practices dangerous to social morality.
3. Stories or scenes ridiculing or depreciating public officers and governmental authority, sects or creeds, and emphasizing bloodshed.
4. Stories or scenes with vulgar portrayals, salacious titles, sub-titles, or advertising matter.⁹

Producers displayed little effort to comply with these standards.

Before the adoption of this code, several states had already enacted censorship statutes. In 1915, the Supreme Court, acting on the cases of the Mutual Film Company, had declared, "both statutes (Ohio and Kansas) are valid exercises of the police power and do not abridge public opinion."¹⁰

The Court, speaking with reference to the Ohio statute, stated:

The argument is wrong or strained which extends the guarantees of free opinion and speech to the multitudinous shows which are advertised on the billboards of our cities. . . . The judicial sense supporting the common sense of the country is against the contention. . . . The police power is familiarly exercised in granting or withholding licenses for theatrical performances as a means of their regulation.

This decision on the part of the Supreme Court prompted several other states to adopt similar censorship statutes, giving rise to the situation which confronted the motion picture industry in 1921.

While states were fighting for censorship laws, the industry found itself faced with another opponent. In 1921, action was taken by the Federal Trade Commission.

The FTC issued a formal complaint against the Famous Players - Lasky Corporation and five other organizations, charging, after a thorough investigation, that block booking as practiced in the motion picture industry was in restraint of trade. One of the complaints against block booking was that the exhibitor was obligated to show all pictures listed on his contract. This obligation, together with the then rapidly developing producer-director-exhibitor integration, was held to be largely responsible for the presentation of poor pictures regardless of public opinion.¹¹

Out of fear of even more stringent censorship laws being passed on both the state and national level, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. (MPPDA), representing more than eighty percent of all

motion picture producers, was organized.¹²

In March, 1922, the movie industry reached into President Harding's Cabinet to hire the Postmaster General, Will H. Hays, and put him at the head of a new organization, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America. His was a twofold task: to launch a public relations campaign, and to persuade individual moviemakers to tone down their more sensational and lurid films for the good of the entire industry. As a national figure and a Presbyterian elder, as well as a man of considerable persuasiveness, Hays was well suited for the job.¹³

The Congressional investigation threatened by the Myers' Senate resolution, the complaint and investigation begun on August 31, 1921, by the Federal Trade Commission, the Appleby bill in Congress for the Federal Regulation of Motion Pictures, and the New York State Motion Picture Law which went into effect August 1, 1921, and the censorship laws in many states made the services of an experienced politician like Mr. Hays, who had been chairman of the National Republican Committee, seem very desirable.¹⁴

One of the major causes of the public relations breakdown which preceded the hiring of Mr. Hays was the failure of film executives to appreciate the magnitude of the task of regulating the films which they produced. The other major cause was the lack of desire to organize in order to meet the demands of reformers. Another factor was the large number of Hollywood scandals which lessened the public's faith in the industry.

Under the guidance of Will Hays, things went smoothly for awhile. The MPPDA began to be called the "Hays Office." A public relations committee was established,

consisting of representatives of 62 national welfare organizations representing social, educational, commercial, and religious groups.

This body was to function in an advisory capacity, assisting the industry in the interpretation of public demands and moral standards. The underlying purpose was not censorship; rather it was to have these organizations tell their respective members what pictures to patronize.¹⁵

In 1924, Will Hays' refusal to "black-list" a well-known actor of questionable moral character caused an upheaval in the committee. Due to Mr. Hays' action, several members of the committee referred to the committee as a "smoke screen, an obvious camouflage, an approval stamp for salacious films and for the questionable, if not criminal, conduct of the industry and its employees."¹⁶

While the Hays Office was suffering a temporary disruption, the National Committee for Better Films, affiliated with the National Board of Review, adopted a resolution (January, 1925), which presented its viewpoint as being opposed to legal censorship of motion pictures. (See Appendix A.)

In 1924, while the Hays Office was experiencing a period of turmoil, in New York alone, local censors "suppressed as indecent 624 films, as inhuman 924, as immoral 816, and as tending to crime 1,318."¹⁷

Groups which had previously supported state and local

legislation became convinced that federal legislation was the only answer. These groups included parent-teacher associations, women's clubs, YMCA's, law and order societies, home missions, and women's independent voters' associations. Many of these small groups banded together to form the Federal Motion Picture Council of America, Inc. It was generally concluded by these groups that city and state censorship would not eliminate the objectionable scenes nearly as well as some means of preventing their inclusion when a picture was produced.

In 1926, due to pressure from the above-named groups, Congressman William David Upshaw (D.-Ga.) introduced a bill to create a federal censorship commission.

The Upshaw bill, among other things, provided definite standards governing the production of films. The standards were practically the same as those adopted by the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry in 1921. The bill provided also that all films entering interstate or foreign commerce should be licensed or given a permit by the commission. Provisions were made also for the inspection of scenarios, and for supervisors to assist producers and directors in the process of production, especially in applying the standards of the act as interpreted by the commission. A licensing system was expected to effect prompt previewing of those films entering interstate or foreign commerce which were submitted to the commission voluntarily. The bill provided that permits could be granted without supervision of the film, upon the presentation of an affidavit made by the producer stating that he had conformed with the standards specified in the bill. A violation would result in confiscation of the film.¹⁸

The Federal Motion Picture Council of America, Inc. was pushing hard for the passage of Congressman Upshaw's bill, and in so doing, published sixteen reasons for federal supervision, thirteen of which pertain especially to censorship. (See Appendix B.)

Adversaries of the bill were of the opinion that voluntary censorship was improving. They also contended that self-regulation was in keeping with the American conception of self-government, that federal supervision, because of political character, would only increase the alleged abuses existing in state and municipal censorship boards, and that repudiation of censorship in Massachusetts, where a film censorship bill was defeated in referendum by almost three to one in 1921, indicated that the people of this country opposed it. Opponents of the bill ridiculed the idea that political censorship suppressed crime. As an instance, they cited Chicago, where rigid censorship for over twelve years excluding films showing bootleggers, hold-ups, and the carrying of firearms had scarcely made Chicago a model city.

Finally, in 1926, President Coolidge declared himself opposed to the Upshaw bill.

Mr. Coolidge believes, it was stated, that the Congress should not undertake the creation of a national censorship board unless the states themselves specifically approve.

It was pointed out that Mr. Coolidge, as governor of Massachusetts, vetoed a film censorship act passed by the state legislature. He took this action on constitutional grounds.

Of late, the President has heard no material criticism of the character of motion picture production. This he attributes to the fact that the producers themselves undertook to reform their industry, and in his opinion they have taken long strides in the right direction. Will Hays, former Postmaster General and now 'movie Czar,' has been a most helpful influence in this work, it was stated.¹⁹

New problems arose with the creation of talking pictures. Up until 1927 and the birth of the "talkies," censorship had been rather simple, mechanically speaking.

Sequences could be deleted without seriously hampering the films, and titles could be rewritten at the distributors' local exchanges for approximately \$5 each. The usual fee charged by state and city censorship boards ranged from \$2 to \$3 per reel; a similar amount was charged for each print thereof shown locally. One writer estimated that the annual cost of censorship process, both voluntary and legal, was about \$3,500,000; this amount was borne by the industry.

Censoring the talking picture, however, presented a much more complex problem. Dialogue, as well as the pictorial effects, was subjected to censorship. From a mechanical standpoint, the deletion of a few words often required the cutting of an entire sequence. When such an operation was necessary, three alternatives were open to the distributor: to present a possibly less effective and sometimes ridiculous product; to request a retake from the studio, though this course was not always possible because of the unavailability of the actors; or to abandon exhibition in the territory in which a picture had been censored. The cost of correcting dialogue film to coincide with the demands of the many different censorship boards was many times that of correcting the silent product.²⁰

With the advent of sound, the forces in favor of regulation changed their procedure. The following is an excerpt from Responsibility for Better Motion Pictures by Mrs. Robbins Gilman, late president of the Federal Motion Picture Council of America, Inc.:

. . . The programs for previewing, selecting, 'endorsing the best and ignoring the rest' are futile processes because they can have no influence upon production or distribution and only an accidental or incidental effect upon exhibition of films. The effectiveness of these programs has been thoroughly demonstrated so that during the past two years (1928, 1929) the policy of ignoring the great increase of undesirable films is being abandoned by welfare organizations interested and active upon the subject. Several of the largest and most influential organizations have not only given up such inconsequential work, but they have also repudiated these suggestions of the industry and are developing programs to oppose them. The plan now being suggested is federal supervision of the standards of production and regulation of undesirable trade practices of the industry.

All studies of the subject as well as all efforts of welfare agencies have led to the fact that exhibitors have little control over the character of the films shown in their theaters. Therefore, they cannot cooperate effectively with welfare and religious groups because they cannot yield to the requests made. This is due to certain trade practices (block booking, etc.) which have grown up in the industry.

Confronted with this attitude, the motion picture industry, through the MPPDA, decided to oppose censorship openly for the first time and to prove to the public that self-regulation was the only practical solution to the

problem. One of the political leaders strongly opposed to censorship was Governor Carl Elias Milliken of Maine.

Governor Milliken charged that censorship reduces an art or medium of expression to the capacity of political appointees who cannot be expected to exercise any judgment other than that which their own individual experiences and mentalities provide. 'It is not to be presumed,' he added, 'that any 3, 5, or 50 persons in this country . . . have the ability to determine what the other 120,000,000 citizens are to see or hear.'

He pointed out that each week an average of about 54 miles of film are released in the United States. Members of the censorship boards themselves neither can nor do see even 10% of this total. They must delegate much of the work to subordinates.

As a further safeguard against the presentation of objectionable films, Governor Milliken cited the intramural 'supervision' which the moving picture industry has been maintaining since the establishment in 1922 of the so-called movie 'chamber of commerce.' As a result of the consultations between this body and individual producers, the production of about 200 popular books and plays has been prevented after the production contracts had actually been signed.²¹

In 1926, the MPPDA had created an advisory bureau, which, in 1929, was known as the Studio Relations Committee whose duty it was:

. . . to exercise centralized supervision over the quality of plays and books accepted for production, to advise producers with regard to possible deletions in advance of general release, and to do everything possible, in a friendly way to preserve the industry from missteps . . . advice was given to men and women actually engaged in writing, directing, or acting in the pictures in process of production.

Public opinion was expressed through the Public Relations Department of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Incorporated. Local opinions were relayed by representatives of 46 prominent social organizations which had agreed to assist the industry. In addition, duly appointed representatives of these national groups were to be maintained in Hollywood to preview pictures immediately upon their release from the studios.²²

The Committee was composed of sixteen persons, each representing a production studio. It was not only established to advise the industry, but also to guide the family on the selection of films by calling attention to outstanding and deserving productions. Their function, in this respect, was very similar to the first censorship board, the National Board of Review.

It was not until 1930, however, that the 'Hays Office,' as the MPPDA came to be called, took up the task of formal self-regulation with the creation of the Motion Picture Production Code.²³ (See Appendix C.)

Of this new system of pre-production self-censorship, Will Hays was quoted by the Motion Picture News (April 12, 1930) as saying:

The new system binds the studios for the next six months. Under it, producers submit scripts to a reading department organized for the purpose. The reading is done under the direction of the Hays Organization, Public Relations Department, headed by Col. Jason Joy.

The staff covers all features and comedies produced by members of the Producers Association. Recommendations are made for revising scripts where situations and dialogue are not in good

taste, or where they might possibly offend a particular nation or country. After a script is passed, there is a follow-up in viewing the completed picture.

By this system the Public Relations department covers every picture, whether feature or short subject, via a double check to keep objectionable material down to a minimum.

The code was subscribed to by twenty leading production companies and governed the production of films portraying crimes against the law, sex, vulgarity, obscenity, profanity, costumes, dances, religion, and repellent subjects.²⁴

The code became effective in January, 1931, and in that year alone there were numerous violations of the code. The production companies adhered to the letter of the code, but the spirit of the code was ignored.

The turning point in self-regulation came in 1934, when American Catholic Bishops formed the Legion of Decency to review and rate films. At the same time, they threatened the industry with a general boycott by Catholic patrons if the moral tone of films did not improve. This pressure resulted in the MPPDA's formation of the Production Code Administration (PCA), as a quasi-independent, self-supporting body charged with enforcing and interpreting the code.

Authority of the PCA was based on a provision for a \$25,000 fine of any MPPDA member who sold, distributed, or exhibited a film not bearing the PCA's seal of approval. . . . The PCA became, in effect, the private government of the industry.²⁵

The film industry operated under the Production Code, which had been amended several times, until an over-all

revision in 1966, although the erosion of authority had begun even before the code's inception in 1930. The Supreme Court's decision in the 1915 case, Mutual Film Co. v. Ohio, that films were not protected by the First Amendment of the United States' Constitution, nor free speech guarantees of state constitutions, opened the door for local and state censorship. What came about as the result of this decision was "absolute censorship or something very close to it."²⁶

The reversal of the Mutual Film decision did not occur until 1952 with the Supreme Court's decision concerning the suitability of the film, The Miracle, for public viewing.²⁷

We conclude that expression by means of motion pictures is included within the free speech and free press guarantees of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. . . . We hold only that under the First and Fourteenth Amendments a state may not ban a film on the basis that it is 'sacrilegious'.²⁸

Subsequently, the Supreme Court included ". . . obscenity, undermining of law and order, and almost anything except hard core pornography (which still remains to be exactly defined) " as uncensorable in certain films.²⁹

While the Supreme Court was whittling away the censor's authority during the 1950's, the film industry was easing the restrictions of its own production code. Little by little, the Motion Picture Association of America (new name of the former MPPDA) removed most former taboos - such as taboos against stories about narcotic traffic, about interracial marriage, about violence, about

sex, religion and other themes and stories with vulgar dialogue.³⁰

By 1966, the motion picture industry realized the uselessness of the old code and set about creating a new, more streamlined code. The revision was done "to keep in closer harmony with the mores, the culture, the moral sense and the expectations of our society."³¹

Production standards set forth in the 1966 code (see Appendix D) were as follows:

The basic dignity and value of human life shall be respected and upheld. Restraint shall be exercised in portraying the taking of life.

Evil, sin, crime, and wrong-doing shall not be justified.

Special restraint shall be exercised in portraying criminal or antisocial activities in which minors participate or are involved.

Detailed and protracted acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture and abuse shall not be tolerated.

Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented.

Illicit sex relations shall not be justified. Intimate sex scenes violating common standards of decency shall not be portrayed. Restraint and care shall be exercised in presentations dealing with sexual aberrations.

Obscene speech, gestures or movements shall not be presented. Undue profanity shall not be permitted.

Religion shall not be demeaned.

Words or symbols contemptuous of racial, religious or national groups shall not be used so as to incite bigotry or hatred.

Excessive cruelty to animals shall not be portrayed and animals shall not be treated inhumanely.³²

In an article in the December, 1967, issue of The Reader's Digest, Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R.-Me.) wrote of the code adopted by the MPAA a year earlier, "This is a step in the right direction. But, unfortunately, the major Hollywood studios are treating such 'voluntary classification' with an attitude bordering on hypocrisy." As early as the spring of 1966, the senator had introduced legislation calling for a study of the various classification proposals, saying, "The actual classifying can be done by industry, government, or by some group combining the two."³³

Finally, under the threat of federal censorship, MPAA President, Jack Valenti, announced the adoption of a classification system by the motion picture industry which would apply to all films released or imported after November 1, 1968. (See Appendix E.)

Martin S. Dworkin, a professional writer in the area of the general influence of mass entertainment, remarked:

In practice, the new categories are intended to supplement and extend the Code Seal procedures of the Motion Picture Production Code Administration . . . providing for denotation of films as:

'G - suggested for general audiences'; 'M - suggested for mature audiences . . . parental discretion advised'; 'R - restricted. Persons under 16 not admitted unless accompanied by parent or adult guardian'; 'X - persons under 16 not admitted. This age restriction may be higher in certain areas . . .' In this last category are two classes of films: Those submitted to the Code and Rating Administration that do not qualify for the Code Seal because of their 'treatment of sex, violence, crime, or profanity'; and those not submitted to the Code and Rating Administration, whether by members or non-members of the MPAA who are to 'self-apply' the 'X' classification.³⁴

After describing the new system, Dworkin added:

If film classification is to be more than a device whereby the major film companies evade their responsibilities while appearing to meet them, it must work so that the differentiation of film material and potential audiences implicit in the classification idea is truly served and encouraged.³⁵

The code was, in fact, obsolete before the creation of the rating system in 1968. In the May 30, 1970, issue of the Catholic Film Newsletter, it was stated that, "as a guide to production the Code and its Standards are today pure fiction. . . . For some time now it is only the Rating Program that influences production."

George N. Boyd, a professor of religion at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas, remarked in 1970 that, "The ratings are subject to rapid change."³⁶ His comment merely echoed those of others, including those of members of the motion picture industry, itself, such as:

One of the favorite indoor sports in movie

circles these days is second guessing the Production Code Administration on its allocation of audience-suitability labels under the industry's newly introduced voluntary rating system.³⁷

But Boyd was not only referring to the allocation of the ratings, but to the ratings themselves. In 1970, two substantial changes were made. First, the 16-year-old age was raised to 17 for both "R" and "X" rated films. Second, the unrestricted rating "M," which had been taglined in 1968 as "Suggested for Mature Audiences - Adults and Mature Young People," was changed to "GP" to escape association with the 1966 code's "Suggested for Mature Audiences."

As a result of considerable pressure, especially from exhibitors who allegedly complained that parents misunderstood the meaning of the rating and were keeping their children from attending, . . . the rating was changed to GP, 'All Ages Admitted. Parental Guidance Suggested.' This 'softened' definition was further confused by the popularly accepted interpretation that GP actually stood for 'General Patronage.'

Coincidentally, this shift in rating symbols was accompanied by a general relaxation in the application of the ratings, so that even more adult material and treatment were allowed in GP rated films.³⁸

In a speech given before the annual convention of the National Association of Theatre Owners, at the Americana Hotel, New York, New York, on Thursday, October 28, 1971, Jack Valenti said:

I say again: In this most difficult art of voluntary rating of motion pictures for the benefit of parents, so they can guide the movie-

going of their children, the rating program is behaving with integrity, with a decent regard for mothers and fathers, and with a record of accuracy that is splendid by any gauge you choose to apply.

This speech came less than six months after the withdrawal of support by the national film agencies of the Catholic (NCOMP) and Protestant (BFC) churches, "giving as substantive reason for this action the inability of the Rating Administration to furnish parents with reliable guidance, especially in the GP category."³⁹ Such charges came from within the industry as well. One disenchanted veteran producer said, "The game these days is to bring in a movie that gets away with as much as possible and at the same time inveigles a GP which insures you more or less wide-spread distribution."⁴⁰

In an effort to appease the church groups, the MPAA appointed Aaron Stern to the position of Director of the Rating Administration in June, 1971.

Under Dr. Stern, the Rating Administration endeavored to solve the problem of the GP by the introduction of what essentially was a new category, the asterisked GP (GP*) with the special tagline, 'This film contains material which may not be suitable for pre-teenagers.' The previous unqualified GP continued to be applied to certain films. While it was frequently unclear what the distinction was between films which received the GP* and those that received the unembellished GP, the added problem was that few people outside the industry were ever informed of this innovation. As a consequence, any clarification that might

have been intended was lost to the public, and confusion concerning the GP symbol persisted.⁴¹

In January, 1972, Jack Valenti presented a third replacement for the original "M" rating, as well as another new tagline. The new rating, the one now in effect, is "PG" with the definition: "Parental Guidance Suggested - Some Material May Not Be Suited For Pre-teenagers.

This latest innovation came in response to pressure from exhibitors who were increasingly faced with the problem of irate patrons who had brought their children to a GP rated film under the impression that GP meant 'General Patronage.' Ironically, the coverage in most of the trade press accorded this change made reference only to the reversal in the letters of the symbol and the tag phrase 'Parental Guidance Suggested.' The introduction of the cautionary statement regarding pre-teenagers went largely unnoticed. Was this lack of emphasis the fault of the MPAA or the news media? If the former, then one wonders how clearly the MPAA understands its own new PG rating.⁴²

Although the "PG" rating appears to be the least understood, there is also confusion between the "R" and "X" rated films. A parent can take a child to an "R" rated film, so the question of the rating being a proper guide is also relevant here. Two examples of "X" rated films being lowered to an "R" rating are Midnight Cowboy, which received the more lenient rating after winning an Academy Award, and Last Summer, which began as an "X" rated film, then "R," and finally "PG." Ironically, until 1972, "When

a producer was dissatisfied with an "X" rating given his film, the rating could be overturned by a one-third-plus-one vote of the members of the Appeals Board."⁴³ In other words, "the minority ruled." A two-thirds majority is now required for a rating to be overturned.

Stern has said:

Make anything you want, but if you make an X picture be man enough to take your X. The industry has more creative freedom than ever before, but if certain members of it behave like the teenage child who has just learned to cuss, but who yells bitterly at having to go to the office, then nothing will be gained and much will be lost.⁴⁴

Even though an "X" rating is more difficult to have overturned, films which a few years ago would have received an "X" are receiving "R" and "PG." It seems that the "X" rating is becoming reserved for exploitation films, and there is an adjustive shift downward for the other ratings.⁴⁵

Related Studies

All previous studies concerning public attitude toward censorship and the classification system of motion pictures has been of a survey nature, and all have shown the public's attitude as more favorable than unfavorable.

A survey taken just after World War II, released May 24, 1947, concerning the public's attitude toward censorship,

revealed that the majority of people felt that the censorship was "about right." The study was limited to California and was conducted by the California Poll. The results were as follows:

TABLE I
RESPONSE TO SURVEY CONCERNING
MOTION PICTURE CENSORSHIP*

	Men	Women	Total
About right	47%	46%	46%
Too strict	11	9	10
Not strict enough	26	37	31
No opinion	16	8	13
Total	100%	100%	100%

*Question: Do you think movie censorship is about right, or is too strict, or not strict enough?

Source: Leo A. Handel, Hollywood Looks At Its Audience (Urbana, 1950), p. 128.

In the February, 1969, Social Education, a questionnaire was published, asking readers for their reactions to the New Film Code. The magazine found the response

very disappointing. The results of the survey are in Table II.

TABLE II
RESPONSE TO NEW FILM CODE QUESTIONNAIRE

Total responses	29
Favorable to the <u>New Film Code</u>	20
Opposed to the <u>New Film Code</u>	6
No strong feelings either way	3

Source: "Responses to Reader Reaction Surveys," Social Education (January, 1970), p. 82.

The Motion Picture Association of America commissioned the Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, New Jersey, to conduct scientifically-sampled surveys in 1969, 1970, and 1971, on the public attitude to the rating system. The principal points determined by the surveys, according to Michael Linden, Director of Research for the MPA, in a letter dated December 19, 1972, are as follows:

1. There is a high degree of awareness of the rating system (95% of the moviegoing public, age 12 and over).

Allowing for misunderstandings, this is virtual saturation.

2. In 1972, 55% of moviegoing adults, age 18 and over, regarded the system as very or fairly useful as a guide for deciding what movies children should see. About one-third thought it was not very useful. The remainder expressed no clear opinion. These factors have not changed significantly since the previous year.

The survey was done with a national probability sample of about 2,500.

Of the two studies done on the MPAA rating system, neither broke the system down into the individual ratings, nor was the study limited to parents, for which the rating system is supposedly designed. Therefore, there is no scientifically-based background concerning parents' attitude towards the MPAA rating system, thus making this study an exploratory one.

The Semantic Differential

Charles E. Osgood and his colleagues at the University of Illinois many years ago developed a measuring instrument, the semantic differential, which is objective, reliable, valid, and sensitive enough to measure semantical meaning, i.e., the relation of signs (the MPAA ratings)

to their significants ("meanings" or attitudes parents attach to the signs).

Further, the semantic differential attempts to subject meaning to quantitative measurement by comparing the responses of different parent group's attitudes of the same ratings and indicates the degree of similarity or difference in attitudes.

Osgood et al. indicate that prerequisites to linguistic encoding as an index to meaning (attitude) are:

1. a carefully devised sample of alternative verbal responses which can be standardized across subjects,
2. alternatives to be elicited from subjects rather than emitted so that encoding fluency is eliminated as a variable,
3. alternatives to be representative of major ways in which meanings (attitudes) vary.⁴⁷

The above prerequisites are necessary so that selection among successive pairs of common verbal opposites should gradually isolate the "meaning" (attitude) of the stimulus sign (the MPAA ratings).

The semantic differential is essentially a combination of controlled association and scaling procedures. The subject is provided with a concept to be differentiated and a set of bipolar adjectival scales against which to do it, his only task being to indicate for each item (pairing of a concept with a scale) the direction of his association

and its intensity on a seven-point scale.

Osgood's research indicated that there are certainly other factors or dimensions besides Evaluative, Potency, and Activity. Jum C. Nunnally, Jr., found a factor which he calls Understandability that he termed "invaluable" in determining social attitude.⁴⁸ "The investigator may often need only one factor, most likely the Evaluative factor . . . in studies of attitude and values."⁴⁹ Therefore, by combining Osgood's Evaluative factor with Nunnally's Understandability factor, this study of parents' attitudes should be able to index certain aspects of meanings which parents hold for the MPAA ratings.

The principles of semantic differential methodology may be summarized as follows:

1. Rating on bipolar adjective scales - whatever the number and variety of scales used - largely a function of a few dimensions of judgment.
2. These dimensions or factors are meaningfully related to affect.
3. A few appropriate scales can be used to obtain reliable measurements of any one dimension.
4. Measurements made on a given dimension are comparable for stimuli of greatly different character (words, colors, sounds, etc.).

The semantic differential has proven to be an accurate instrument for recording effective associations of stimuli, particularly to the extent that such associations are culturally or sub-culturally defined so that measurements may be averaged over groups or individuals.⁵⁰

FOOTNOTES

¹Howard T. Lewis, The Motion Picture Industry (New York, 1933), p. 365.

²Richard S. Randall, Censorship of the Movies (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1968), p. 11.

³An open letter to Congressman William I. Swoope from the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, February 6, 1926, cited by Howard T. Lewis, The Motion Picture Industry (New York, 1933), p. 366.

⁴Lewis, p. 366.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 367.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 368.

⁹William Sheafe Chase, Catechism on Motion Pictures in Interstate Commerce, p. 46, quoted by Howard T. Lewis, The Motion Picture Industry (New York, 1933), pp. 368-369.

¹⁰Mutual Film Co. v. Ohio Industrial Commission, 236 U.S. 230 (1915); Mutual Film Co. v. Kansas, 236 U.S. 248 (1915).

¹¹Lewis, p. 371.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Randall, p. 16

¹⁴Broken Promises of the Motion Picture Industry, a publication of the International Reform Federation (1922), quoted by Howard T. Lewis, The Motion Picture Industry (New York, 1933), pp. 371-372.

- ¹⁵Lewis, p. 372.
- ¹⁶A Survey of the Motion Picture Problem, a publication of the Federal Motion Picture Council of America, Inc. (Washington, D. C., 1924), p. 5.
- ¹⁷Lewis, p. 370.
- ¹⁸Ibid, p. 376.
- ¹⁹United States Daily (April 21, 1926), quoted by Howard T. Lewis, The Motion Picture Industry (New York, 1933), pp. 378-379.
- ²⁰Lewis, p. 380.
- ²¹E. W. Hullinger, "Free Speech for the Talkies?" North American Review, CCXXVII (1929), pp. 742-743.
- ²²Lewis, pp. 383-384.
- ²³Randall, p. 16.
- ²⁴Lewis, p. 385.
- ²⁵Randall, p. 200.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Burstyn v. Wilson, 343 U.S. 495 (1952).
- ²⁸William H. Hartley, "R/X - Prescription for Movie Morals: Comments on the New Film Code," Social Education (February, 1969), p. 152.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰"Clean Up or Cover Up?" Senior Scholastic (October 28, 1968), p. 8.
- ³¹William L. Rivers and Wilbur Schramm, Responsibility in Mass Communication (Rev. ed., New York, 1969), p. 209.
- ³²Ibid., pp. 209-210.
- ³³Senator Margaret Chase Smith, "'Sick Movies' - A Menace to Children," The Reader's Digest (December, 1967), p. 141.

³⁴ Martin S. Dworkin, "Classified Matter," The Educational Forum, XXXIII (1969), p. 380.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 383.

³⁶ George N. Boyd, "Movies and the Sexual Revolution: Should the Ratings Be Revised?" The Christian Century, LXXXVII (1970), p. 1124.

³⁷ Moire Walsh, "Of Ratings, Psychos, etc.," America, CXX (1969), p. 343.

³⁸ "Let the Sun Shine In, The MPAA Rating System: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Catholic Film Newsletter, XXXVII (1972), p. 19.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Thomas Thompson, "Film Ratings Flunk Out," Life (August 20, 1971), p. 57.

⁴¹ "Let the Sun Shine In," p. 19.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Thompson, p. 57.

⁴⁵ Boyd, p. 1124.

⁴⁶ Charles Osgood, George Suci, and Percy Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana, 1957), pp. 50-64.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁸ Jum C. Nunnally, Jr., Popular Conceptions of Mental Health (New York, 1961), p. 43.

⁴⁹ Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York, 1964), p. 569.

⁵⁰ David R. Heise, "Semantic Differential Profiles for 1000 Most Frequent English Words," Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, LXXIX (1965), p. 1.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The author utilized the Motion Picture Association of America's four classifications which make up the MPAA rating system. On each page of the questionnaire (see Appendix E), a different one of the four ratings (labels and respective definitions) was presented to be judged. Beneath each rating was a set of scales. The same eight scales were used for each of the four ratings. The public has been well exposed to the ratings, which appear in all forms of media carrying film advertisements, as well as at the beginning of each film, and each film preview.

The independent variables were the four MPAA ratings, the four types of respondents (parents of predominantly pre-school, elementary school, middle school, and high school children), and the two semantic differential dimensions: Evaluation and Understandability. The dependent variable was the meaning scores of the ratings assigned by the respondents along eight 7-point semantic differential scales.

From this point, the term "concept," will be used in a sense to refer to any of the four ratings to which the subjects responded by checking on the adjective scales. The scaling against which the subjects' attitudes of the concepts were being rated included the Evaluative scales: good-bad, valuable-worthless, harmonious-dissonant, successful-unsuccessful; and the Understandability scales: predictable-unpredictable, understandable-mysterious, familiar-strange, simple-complicated.

Osgood has pointed out that:

. . . the secret to the semantic differential method lay in selecting the sample of descriptive polar terms. Ideally, the sample should be as representative as possible of all the ways in which the subjects' meaning judgment can vary, and yet be small enough in size to be efficient in the experiment.¹

Jum C. Nunnally, Jr., felt that "Understandability, or rather the lack of it, is a very important component of public reaction to the mentally ill."² Understandability may also be considered as an important component in parents' reaction to the MPAA rating system, since their reaction is guided by their understanding of the system. These eight scales were shown to be objective, reliable, valid, and sensitive by Osgood and his colleagues,³ and the instrument in which they were incorporated for this study was also shown by Osgood and his colleagues to be reliable and valid.⁴

The scales were selected by the author on the basis of their relevance to the concepts being judged, their factorial composition, and their semantic stability for the concepts.⁵

Analysis of Data

The raw data obtained from the semantic differential were a collection of check marks on the bipolar adjective scales. Each of the seven positions was assigned a digit. An example of this digital set-up is shown below in Figure 1. A subject's meaning score on a particular rating was the digit corresponding to the scale position he checked.⁶

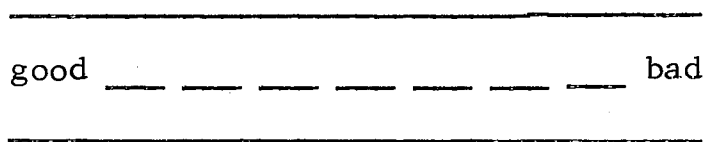


Figure 1: Semantic Differential
Bipolar Adjective Scale

Each of the subjects in each of the four parent groups was exposed to the four MPAA ratings. He rated them along the eight adjective scales, each group generating a

4 x 8 = 32 score matrix. This study was concerned with the scores of the subjects in each group contrasted against those of the other three groups, thus checking the attitude for the MPAA ratings along the same semantic differential dimensions.

A second concern of this study was among the scores of the two semantic differential dimensions, Evaluative and Understandability. Statistics were computed to determine the relationship between the two dimensions.

A third and final concern of this exploratory study was among the four MPAA ratings. Statistics were again computed to indicate relationships among ratings.

A multi-factor analysis of variance showed the independent variables (parent groups, MPAA ratings, and semantic differential dimensions).

Fred Kerlinger has pointed out that in a multi-variable analysis of variance, two or more independent variables may vary independently or interact with each other to produce variation in a dependent variable.⁷ This is to say that a subject's rating of an MPAA rating may be influenced by a semantic differential dimension and/or the predominant age of the children of the subject, as well as the MPAA rating itself. The following 4 x 4 x 2 crossbreak (Figure 2) illustrates how the levels of independent

variables were juxtaposed for the multi-group analysis of variance.

		PARENT GROUPS							
		Pre-School		Grade School		Middle School		High School	
		SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL DIMENSIONS							
		Ev.	Und.	Ev.	Und.	Ev.	Und.	Ev.	Und.
M P A A R A T I N G S	G	_____							
	PG	_____							
	R	_____							
	X	_____							

Figure 2. Analysis Paradigm Juxtaposing Parent Groups, Meaning Dimensions, and MPAA Ratings

In essence, the author attempted to find out if there was any relation between the subjects' rating of the four MPAA ratings, the predominant age of the subjects' children and the two different meaning dimensions. The interaction crossbreak in Figure 2 provided for tests between the respondents' dependent meaning scores in the 32 cells.

To clarify the over-all analysis, seven statistical tests were run:

1. A test for differences among the mean scores of Parents of Predominantly Pre-School Children, Parents of Predominantly Grade School Children, Parents of Predominantly Middle School Children, and Parents of Predominantly High School Children.
2. A test for differences between the mean scores of the Evaluative Meaning Dimension and the Understandability Meaning Dimension.
3. A test for differences among the mean scores for the four MPAA ratings (G, PG, R, X, and their respective definitions).
4. A test for interaction between the mean scores of the four MPAA ratings and the two Meaning Dimensions.
5. A test for interaction between the mean scores of the four types of Respondents and the two Meaning Dimensions.
6. A test for interaction between the mean scores of the four types of Respondents and the four MPAA ratings.

7. A test for interaction among the mean scores of the four MPAA ratings, two types of Meaning Dimensions and the four types of Respondents.

The results indicated variations of subjects' responses toward the four MPAA ratings along two semantic differential meaning dimensions. The F-ratios indicated whether the between and interactional variances of respondents' meaning scores were greater or less than could be expected by chance.

Selection of Sample

Utilizing a table of random numbers, 100 pages were selected from the Stillwater, Oklahoma, telephone directory. Two listing positions were then selected, using the random numbers table, and used for each of the 100 pages. Each listing selected was limited to three call-backs and was then discarded. Of those reached by phone, only those with one or more children seventeen years of age or less were retained. Listings were discarded due to the lack of children in the required age bracket and were replaced with the listing directly below the one discarded. Replacement was limited to the two listings directly below the listing selected at random, thus allowing three chances for the obtaining of a suitable respondent per random selection.

Those selections discarded after three call-backs were treated the same as the listings eliminated due to the lack of children in the required age bracket.

FOOTNOTES

¹Charles Osgood, George Suci, and Percy Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana, 1957), p. 20.

²Jum C. Nunnally, Jr., Popular Conceptions of Mental Health (New York, 1961), p. 43.

³Osgood, pp. 50-64.

⁴Ibid., pp. 192-193.

⁵Ibid., pp. 78-79.

⁶Ibid., p. 86.

⁷Fred Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York, 1964), p. 213.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The variance analysis revealed several meaning differences among the two semantic differential meaning dimensions, the four MPAA ratings, and the four parent groups. Table III, page 50, indicates how these three levels of independent variables varied independently and interacted with each other to produce variations in attitude. In short, Table III shows the variations within and between independent variable levels.

The seven F-ratios indicate whether the variations among the independent variables exceeded chance expectations. In other words, a significant F-ratio indicates that a difference among the independent variables was caused by some factor other than chance, such as the two semantic differential meaning dimension scales, the four MPAA ratings, and four parent groups or the interaction among various combinations of these three independent variable levels.

The results from the seven tests in Table III are individually interpreted.

TABLE III

TABLE OF F-RATIOS OF MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F-Ratio
Between Parent Groups	3	67.5583	22.5194	7.6443 (p* < .001)
Between Semantic Differential Meaning Dimensions	1	20.0455	20.0455	6.8045 (p < .01)
Between MPAA Ratings	3	1591.2956	530.4318	180.0576 (p < .001)
Meaning Dimensions x MPAA Ratings	3	11.6185	3.8728	1.3146 (N.S.**)
Meaning Dimensions x Parent Groups	3	28.0009	9.3336	3.1683 (p < .025)
MPAA Ratings x Parent Groups	9	24.0513	2.6724	.9072 (N.S.)
MPAA Ratings x Parent Groups x Meaning Dimensions	9	7.4324	.8258	.2804 (N.S.)
Within (Error) Variance	3136	9238.4167	2.9459	
	3167	10988.4192		

*Probability of chance occurrence

**Not significant

Differences Between Meaning Dimensions

Referring to Table III on page 50, the F-ratio of 6.8045 between the two dimensions was significant at the .01 level. This implies that differences as large as those obtained between the mean scores of the Evaluative dimensions, 4.3460, and the Understandability dimensions, 4.5051, shown below in the right margin of Table IV, would be expected to occur by chance less than 1 time in 100. In other words, the respondents tended to assign different intensities of meaning to the two meaning dimensions. This tendency was consistent across the four MPAA ratings and the four parent groups.

TABLE IV

MEAN SCORES OF THE TWO SEMANTIC
DIFFERENTIAL MEANING DIMENSIONS
BY THE FOUR PARENT GROUPS

Meaning Dimensions	Parent Groups				Mean
	Group I (Pre)	Group II (Grade)	Group III (Middle)	Group IV (H.S.)	
Evaluative	4.2216	4.4848	4.4896	4.1755	4.3460
Understand- ability	4.7244	4.5360	4.6285	4.1947	4.5051
Mean	4.4730	4.5104	4.5590	4.1851	4.4255

Parents appeared to differentiate the MPAA ratings less along the Evaluative dimension than the Understandability dimension with the exception of parents of predominantly high school age children on the "PG" rating and the parents of predominantly middle school age children on the "X" rating. Therefore, parents generally tended to differentiate the ratings more along the Understandability dimension.

Osgood et al. found the Evaluational factor usually the highest in differentiation concepts and accounted for the attitudinal variable in human thinking by basing it on a system of reward and punishment, both achieved and anticipated.¹ Nunnally also found the Evaluative factor to be the highest in differentiation in his study of public attitude towards the mentally ill.² Yet in the case of public reaction to the MPAA rating system, this was not so. The Understandability dimension was generally higher than the Evaluative factor in differentiating the concepts (MPAA ratings). It is relatively safe to assume, based on the findings of Osgood and his colleagues, that the reason for the lower Evaluative mean is that the MPAA rating system is not rewarding parents, i.e., not providing parents with a sufficient or satisfactory guide which is the purported purpose of the MPAA rating system as defined by Jack Valenti and the MPAA. The relationship of the two semantic

dimensions will be analyzed further in the interpretation of interaction between parent groups and semantic differential dimensions.

In summation, parents generally felt that the MPAA rating system was more comprehensible than they felt it was valuable, i.e., parents valued the MPAA rating system less than they felt they understood it; yet, as exemplified in Nunnally's study of public attitude towards the mentally ill, understanding should enhance evaluation in cases where an improved understanding should elicit more positive attitudes on the part of the public in general.³

Differences Among Parent Groups

As shown in Table III on page 50, the F-ratio of 11.491 representing the differences among the mean scores of the four parent groups was significant at the .001 level. This highly significant F-ratio indicates that the school level (age) of the children made a significant difference in their parents' opinion of the MPAA rating system.

Standard error of the difference among the means of the four parent groups (bottom margin of Table IV, page 51), exhibited the following significant differences:

Group I	(4.4730)	Group II	(4.5104)	(N.S.)
		Group III	(4.5590)	(N.S.)
		Group IV	(4.1851)	(p < .001)
Group II	(4.5104)	Group III	(4.5590)	(N.S.)
		Group IV	(4.1851)	(p < .001)
Group III	(4.5590)	Group IV	(4.1851)	(p < .001)

Parents of predominantly high school level children think significantly less of the MPAA rating system than do parents of predominantly pre-school, grade school, and middle school children. The first three parent groups tend to cluster, sharing a significantly higher opinion of the rating system than do parents of predominantly high school age children, though none of the four groups holds what could be considered a favorable attitude towards the MPAA rating system with the highest mean only 4.5590, placing it just above the neutral point of 4.0000.

It is interesting to note that the esteem in which the MPAA rating system is held rises from pre-schoolers' parents to parents of predominantly middle school age children, although the difference between these three parent groups is not large enough to be significant and, therefore, could be a chance occurrence.

The significant difference between the parents of predominantly high school age children and the other three

groups gives definite indications that the presence of teenagers in a household lowers the parents' opinion of the MPAA rating system, since the other three parent groups are predominantly pre-teenage households. Whether this is due to an increased concern of the parents of children when they are in their teens in regard to matters of sex or other variables not encompassed in this exploratory study is merely a matter of speculation. It is, however, safe to assume that the low evaluation of the MPAA rating system was not due to a lack of concern by parents of teenage children. The parents of predominantly high school age children expressed more concern, generally, than did the other parent groups. Parents of predominantly pre-school children seemed the least concerned and also the least informed. This will be enlarged upon later in the discussion of interaction between parent groups and meaning dimensions.

Differences Among MPAA Ratings

Referring again to Table III on page 50, a significant difference (F of 180.0576) at the .001 level exists. This indicates differences as large as those observed between the mean scores of "G," 5.6275; "PG," 4.2525; "R," 3.8611; and "X," 3.9609 (mean scores in the right margin of Table V, following), would be expected to occur by chance less than 1 time in 1000.

TABLE V
 MEAN SCORES FOR THE FOUR MPAA RATINGS
 ALONG THE TWO SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL
 MEANING DIMENSIONS

MPAA Ratings	Meaning Dimensions		Mean
	Evaluative	Understandability	
G	5.4672	5.7879	5.6275
PG	4.2626	4.2424	4.2525
R	3.7828	3.9394	3.8611
X	3.8712	4.0505	3.9609
	4.3460	4.5051	4.4255

Standard errors of the difference among the means showed significant differences as follows:

G (5.6275)	PG (4.2525)	(p < .001)
	R (3.8611)	(p < .001)
	X (3.9609)	(p < .001)
PG (4.2525)	R (3.8611)	(p < .001)
	X (3.9609)	(p < .001)
R (3.8611)	X (3.9609)	(N.S.)

The parents rated the "G" rating higher on the adjective scales than the three remaining MPAA ratings, at a $p < .001$ level of significance which infers that the difference between "G" and each of the other three MPAA ratings would occur less than 1 time in 1000.

The rating "PG" was rated significantly lower than the "G" rating as indicated in the preceding paragraph, but was significantly higher than the "R" and "X" ratings. The difference in both directions is significant at a $p < .001$ level of significance; i.e., not only is the rating "PG" rated lower than the "G" rating on the adjective scales but is rated higher by parents than the "R" and "X" rating to such a degree as would not occur by chance more than 1 time in 1000.

Although the difference between the "R" and "X" ratings is not large enough to be considered significant, i.e., beyond the realm of chance, the "X" rating was consistently higher than "R" across all four parent groups (Table VI, page 58). The ranking of "X" as higher than the rating "R" by all four parent groups is strongly indicative that the parents were rating each MPAA rating and not the type of movie which it represented. If the parents were rating the movies, the "X" rating would logically have been held in less esteem by the parents than would the rating "R," since a movie rated "X" would be considered "dirtier" than one with the less severe rating of "R."

TABLE VI
 MEAN SCORES FOR THE FOUR MPAA RATINGS
 ALONG THE FOUR PARENT GROUPS

MPAA Ratings	Parent Groups				Mean
	Group I (Pre)	Group II (Grade)	Group III (Middle)	Group IV (H.S.)	
G	5.5852	5.8295	5.7431	5.3269	5.6275
PG	4.4943	4.1970	4.3333	4.0625	4.2525
R	3.8693	4.0038	3.9306	3.6250	3.8611
X	3.9432	4.0114	4.2292	3.7260	3.9609
Mean	4.4730	4.5104	4.5590	4.1851	4.4255

Considering the MPAA rating system as a guide for parents in selecting movies for their children to see, parents definitely held the rating "G" in the highest esteem, compared to the other three MPAA ratings. The mean of 5.6275, Table VI, above, indicates that the parents felt that the "G" rating was relatively credible and was, therefore, held in relatively high esteem since 4.0000 is neutral and 7.0000 is the highest level of esteem possible on the seven-point scale utilized. Referring to Table V, it is seen that the rating "G" was scored as 5.4672 indicating

that "G" was considered by parents as good, valuable, harmonious, and successful. Table V also reveals that parents rated the rating "G" at 5.7879 on the Understandability dimension, inferring that parents felt "G" was predictable, understandable, familiar, and simple.

Parents' feelings towards the "PG" rating were nearly perfectly neutral. In Table V, both the Evaluative and Understandability dimensions were indicative of this with scores of 4.2626 and 4.2424, respectively. The mean score for the "PG" rating confirms this with a score of 4.2525. In Table VI, the neutral feelings towards the "PG" rating persist across the four parent groups. In both the case of parent groups and meaning dimensions, all scores were above the perfectly neutral 4.0000.

Although "PG" is neutral, it is consistently on the positive side as opposed to the "R" and "X" ratings which, although also neutral, do not consistently fall on either side of the neutral point on the seven-point scale but do lean strongly to the negative side. The inconsistency and negative tendency can be seen between the meaning dimensions of the "X" rating in Table V and among the parent groups of both the "R" and "X" ratings in Table VI. The negative neutrality is further established by the mean scores of 3.8611 for "R" and 3.9609 for "X" in Tables V and VI. ("R" and "X" are dealt with together since the

difference between these two ratings was not significant.)

Although "PG," "R," and "X" are all considered neutral, the difference between "PG" and both "R" and "X" is large enough that it would occur by chance less than 1 time in 1000. "PG," therefore, is held in significantly higher esteem ($p < .001$) than "R" and "X" which are held in significantly lower esteem, even though "PG" is only barely considered by parents as useful as a reliable guide to movies for their children. "R" and "X" ratings, however, are just below the neutrality point, and although not considered to any degree useful as guides, neither are they to any significant degree considered useless nor held in low esteem since they are only 0.1389 and 0.0391 below 4.0000. "PG" is considered useful and held in high esteem with its mean 0.2525 above 4.0000.

Interaction of MPAA Ratings and Meaning Dimensions

Table III indicates that differences among the mean scores of the four MPAA ratings interacting with the two semantic meaning dimensions was not significant, with an F-ratio of 1.3146. In other words, mean attitudes towards the MPAA ratings were not differentially affected by the two meaning dimension scales. All four MPAA ratings

generally were the same along a particular meaning dimension, as indicated in Table V, page 56. Table VII shows the interactive effects of variable levels. As illustrated, some interaction among the dimensions and MPAA ratings did tend to occur. Along the Evaluative dimension, the most significant interactive tendency occurred with "G" (-.0808). In brief, the combination of the "G" rating interacting with the Evaluational dimension was a result of the parents evaluating the MPAA rating lower in relation to the Understandability dimension than the remaining three MPAA ratings. However, the rating "R" also exhibited a smaller tendency (-.0102) to interact with the Evaluative dimension.

The "PG" rating, -.0897, and "R" rating, -.0013, indicated more interaction on the Understandability dimension than other MPAA ratings. Perceived differences of the "PG" and "R" ratings exhibited a slight tendency to depend on the occurrence of the two meaning dimensions (Evaluative and Understandability).

Inferences as to why these specifically mentioned interactions occurred will be discussed later in greater detail.

TABLE VII
 INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF MPAA RATINGS
 AND MEANING DIMENSIONS*

MPAA Ratings	Meaning Dimensions	
	Evaluative	Understandability
G	-.0808	+.0808
PG	+.0896	-.0897
R	+.0012	-.0013
X	-.0102	+.0100

*The easiest way to spot the most significant interactive effects in the crossbreak is to scan across the rows and columns and select the odd sign.

Interaction of Meaning Dimensions
 and Parent Groups

Table III, page 50, shows significant interaction between the two semantic differential meaning dimensions and the three parent groups. The F-ratio of 3.1683 was significant at the .025 probability level. This implies that differences among the mean scores in the eight cells in Table VIII would occur by chance less than 2.5 times in 100.

TABLE VIII

INTERACTION BETWEEN PARENT GROUPS AND SEMANTIC
DIFFERENTIAL MEANING DIMENSIONS

Meaning Dimensions	Parent Groups			
	Group I (Pre)	Group II (Grade)	Group III (Middle)	Group IV (H.S.)
Evaluative	-.1719	+.0539	+.0101	+.0699
Understand- ability	+.1718	-.0540	-.0101	-.0700

Standard errors of differences between the means indicated that the Understandability dimension was significantly higher than the Evaluative dimension. The Understandability dimension was consistently higher than the Evaluative dimension across all four parent groups; i.e., parents felt that the MPAA rating system was not as good, valuable, harmonious, and successful as it was predictable, understandable, familiar, and simple, as shown in Table III, page 50.

The most significant interaction occurred with parents of predominantly pre-school age children (-.1719), along the Evaluative dimension, as can be seen in Table VIII above. In brief, the combination of parents having predominantly pre-school age children interacting with the

Evaluational dimension was a result of the parents evaluating the MPAA rating system lower in relation to the Understandability dimension than the remaining three parent groups.

Table VIII indicates that the MPAA rating system was rated significantly higher on the Understandability dimension by parents of pre-school age children while the MPAA rating system was rated higher on the Evaluative (attitudinal) dimension by parents of predominantly elementary, middle, and high school age children. Table VIII indicates that interaction was operating between the two meaning dimensions along all four of the parent groups.

A point to be remembered is that parents of predominantly pre-school age children are probably more familiar with the motion pictures and the rating system since they generally fall in the age group (30 years and younger) of more frequent movie-goers, as opposed to parents of older children. Age of parents is one of many variables which may be acting in this limited exploratory study, and which further studies should include.

Interaction of Parent Groups and MPAA Ratings

The interaction of the four parent groups with the four MPAA ratings produced still another insignificant F-ratio, 0.9072; in other words, mean attitudes towards the four MPAA

ratings. Each of the four MPAA ratings was not generally differentially rated along each of the four parent groups; i.e., each MPAA rating was evaluated essentially the same by all four parent groups. This consistency is illustrated in Table VI, page 58. The unweighted crossbreak on page 66 further serves to illustrate the lack of interaction.

Being parents of predominantly pre-school age children tends to interact most significantly with the rating "PG" (+.1943). Any attempt to interpret this tendency in an insignificantly interactive crossbreak would be purely speculative and is better left to those conducting further studies in this area, since there is insufficient information within this exploratory study with which to work. All that can be said is that when parents of predominantly pre-school children evaluate the rating "PG," their evaluation of the rating may be positive, while parents of predominantly grade school and middle school age children may evaluate "PG" negatively, and parents of predominantly high school age children will tend to be neutral.

Having children in the predominantly grade school age group tends to make parents evaluate the ratings "G" and "R" in a positive manner as opposed to parents of children predominantly pre-school and middle school age evaluating the same ratings negatively, and the parents of predominantly

high school age children having an essentially negative attitude toward the "G" rating and a neutral attitude towards the rating "R," keeping in mind that these are merely tendencies in an insignificant interaction.

TABLE IX
INTERACTION BETWEEN PARENT GROUPS
AND MPAA RATINGS

MPAA Ratings	Parent Groups			
	Group I (Pre)	Group II (Grade)	Group III (Middle)	Group IV (H.S.)
G	-.0898	+.1171	-.0179	-.0602
PG	+.1943	-.1404	-.0527	+.0504
R	-.0393	+.0578	-.0640	+.0043
X	-.0652	-.0344	+.1348	+.0055

A tendency towards interaction exists between parents of predominantly middle school age children and the rating "X." Parents of predominantly middle school age children tend to react in a positive way to the rating "X," opposed to negative reactions on the part of pre-school and middle

school age children's parents and a neutral attitude by parents of predominantly high school age children.

The rating "G" tended to interact with parents of predominantly high school age children in a negative way, while it tended to interact with parents of predominantly grade school age children in a positive way. Parents of pre-school and middle school age children tended to hold negative attitudes towards the "G" rating.

In spite of the insignificant F-ratio, it can be seen that the age of parents' children tends to interact differentially with the various MPAA ratings, a tendency which should be further explored.

Interaction Among Parent Groups, MPAA Ratings, and Meaning Dimensions

Table III indicates that differences among the mean scores of the four parent groups, the four MPAA ratings, and the two meaning dimensions were not significant with an F-ratio of .2804 for this triple, second-order interaction. In other words, the obtained difference among the mean scores of the 32 cells shown in the master crossbreak (represented in Table X on page 68) fell within chance or random fluctuation limits.

TABLE X

MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES OF PARENT GROUPS FOR COMBINATIONS
OF MEANING DIMENSIONS AND MPAA RATINGS

MPAA Ratings	Parent Groups								Mean
	Group I		Group II		Group III		Group IV		
	Eval.	Under.	Eval.	Under.	Eval.	Under.	Eval.	Under.	
G	5.2386	5.9318	5.7273	5.9318	5.5556	5.9306	5.2692	5.3846	5.6275
PG	4.3864	4.6023	4.2576	4.1364	4.2778	4.3884	4.1538	3.9712	4.2525
R	3.6818	4.0568	3.9924	4.0152	3.8611	4.0000	3.5481	3.7019	3.8611
X	3.5795	4.3068	3.9621	4.0606	4.2639	4.1944	3.7308	3.7212	3.9609
Mean	4.2216	4.7244	4.4848	4.5360	4.4896	4.6285	4.1755	4.1947	4.4255

In order to facilitate an easier recognition of the lack of interaction existing among the 32 cells, unweighted interactions were computed and appear in Table XI on page 70. No detectable tendency of sufficient magnitude to warrant attention existed. It is relatively safe to assume that the three independent variables did not work upon each other to a degree which could create significant differences in parents' responses in this study.

TABLE XI

UNWEIGHTED INTERACTION OF PARENT GROUPS, MEANING DIMENSIONS, AND MPAA RATINGS

MPAA Ratings	Parent Groups							
	Group I		Group II		Group III		Group IV	
	Meaning Dimensions							
	Eval.	Under.	Eval.	Under.	Eval.	Under.	Eval.	Under.
G	-.1850	+.0054	+.0405	+.1938	-.1360	+.1001	-.1083	-.0121
PG	+.3378	+.0509	-.0542	-.2266	-.0388	-.0666	+.1513	-.0505
R	+.0246	-.1032	+.1720	+.0436	-.0641	-.0641	-.0630	+.0716
X	+.4646	+.4646	+.4646	+.4646	+.4646	+.4646	+.4646	+.4646

FOOTNOTES

¹Charles E. Osgood, George Suci, and Percy Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana, 1957), pp. 72-73.

²Jum C. Nunnally, Jr., Popular Conceptions of Mental Health (New York, 1961), p. 45.

³Ibid., p. 50.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The Motion Picture Association of America's study on public attitude towards the MPAA rating system maintained that the public favored the system. Conversely, both the Catholic and Protestant associations concerned with film and broadcasting (NCOMP and BFC) maintain that the MPAA rating system is failing in its stated purpose of serving as a guide to parents in respect to the attendance of motion pictures by their children. The purpose of this exploratory study was to attempt to determine which of the two "camps" was closer to an accurate evaluation of parents' attitudes towards the MPAA rating system by assessing the esteem in which the MPAA rating system and the individual ratings were held. This exploratory study went a step further by attempting to determine if the predominant age of the children affected parents' attitudes towards the system as a whole or to the different ratings which composed the system and, if so, how.

The problem of determining parents' attitudes in terms of the meaning and/or credibility of the MPAA rating system was approached by questioning 22 parents of predominantly pre-school age children, 33 parents of predominantly grade school age children, 18 parents of predominantly middle school age children, and 26 parents of predominantly high school age children, all parents having been randomly selected from Stillwater, Oklahoma, residents. The four parent groups judged all four MPAA ratings along the same eight semantic differential scales, four scales representing each of the two dimensions used: Evaluative and Understandability.

The subjects' scores for the four MPAA ratings along the two semantic meaning dimensions for each of the four parent groups were then statistically analyzed by means of a three dimensional factorial analysis of variance to find where significant differences and similarities existed and to determine parents' attitudes towards the MPAA rating system and its ratings. The variance analysis pinpointed where significant meaning gaps existed among the four parent groups, as well as the four MPAA ratings.

Significant differences were observed among the four parent groups. Parents of predominantly high school age children held the MPAA rating system in significantly lower

esteem than the three other parent groups which were not significantly different from one another. It cannot, however, be concluded that as children's ages increase their parents' evaluation of the MPAA rating system decreases, since the parent group holding the MPAA rating system in the second lowest esteem was that of parents of predominantly pre-school age children. Esteem tended to rise as the predominant age of children rose, until the children reached teenagehood. It is a relatively safe assumption that the age of parents' children has a significant effect on parents' attitudes towards the MPAA rating system.

A significant difference was also found between the two meaning dimensions: Evaluative and Understandability. Across all parent groups and the four MPAA ratings, the Understandability dimension was generally rated higher than the Evaluative dimension. It has already been explained that this could only occur where the anticipated reward, offered in this case by the MPAA rating system, was not received, strongly indicating that parents did not feel that the MPAA rating system was adequately serving as a guide to movies.

In addition, a significant difference among the four MPAA ratings was also perceived by the subjects. The "G"

rating was rated significantly higher than the other three ratings. No significant differences existed among "PG," "R," and "X." A significant difference between "G" and "PG," which are both open to all ages, is an important finding of this exploratory study, especially since "PG" is grouped with restrictive ratings "R" and "X."

Another interesting aspect of this part of the study is the fact that "X" was consistently held in higher esteem than "R" across all four parent groups and both meaning dimensions, although "R" is a rating which allows children under 17 years of age to attend when accompanied by a parent or adult guardian while "X" is a rating which allows no one under the age of 17. This strongly indicates that the testing instrument used was working as it was intended, eliciting parents' attitudes towards the MPAA ratings rather than the type of movies which the ratings represent. If the films were being rated, the "X" rated movies which allow no one under 17 years of age to attend and are in general considered "dirtier" than "R" rated movies would have received the lower ranking of the two ratings.

Significant interaction occurred only between the meaning dimensions and the parent groups. The interaction indicated that the parents of predominantly grade, middle, and high school age children perceived the MPAA rating

system as more valuable than did parents of predominantly pre-school age children; however, the parents of pre-school age children judged the MPAA rating system better along the Understandability dimension than did the three other parent groups.

The various extraneous variables which may have entered into this exploratory study must not be ignored. Parents' attitudes may have been influenced by various miscellaneous stimuli other than those incorporated in this study. Several independent variables of potential influence, but which were not included in this study's design are: sex of children, sex of respondents, age of respondents, religious affiliations of respondents, income bracket, educational level, etc.

Conclusions

Findings from this study indicated that parents do not find the MPAA rating system as reliable as Valenti would have one believe. With only the "G" rating considered credible, this left 75 percent of the system lacking credibility, and even a greater percentage of movies. "Of the first 655 movies rated, 188 were "G" (28.7 percent); 259 were "GP" (39.5 percent); 171 were "R" (26.1 percent); 37 were "X" (5.7 percent)."¹ With the exception of "G"

rated films, there existed a general feeling, across all four parent groups, that the rating of a movie did not give one a reliable idea as to what a person or person's children was going to be exposed. Many respondents said they only let their children attend Walt Disney films. This, of course, could generally hold true for pre-teenagers over which parents could maintain relatively strong control. One father who was interviewed said that he only took his children to John Wayne movies because he could trust John Wayne. The contention that the MPAA ratings are only "alphabet soup" seemed to be lent further credence by this study.

Questions and Findings

Question No. 1. The first question of this study was to determine if the age of the parents' children has a significant effect on the parents' attitude towards the MPAA rating system.

A significant difference, which would occur by chance less than 1 time in 1000, was found in attitudes towards the MPAA rating system between parents of children of predominantly high school age children and parents of the three other parent groups. Parents of predominantly high school age children have a significantly lower opinion of the MPAA

rating system than do parents of predominantly pre-school, grade school, and middle school age children. The three parent groups of predominantly younger than high school age children tend to cluster, though they do not share what could be considered a favorable attitude; it is merely significantly more favorable than that held by parents of predominantly high school age children. The highest opinion of the MPAA rating system (a mean of 4.5000 with 4.000 as neutral) was held by parents of middle school age children.

Esteem rose from parents of pre-schoolers to parents of predominantly middle school age children and then plunged when it reached parents of predominantly high school age children. This is an indication that the presence of teenagers in a household lowers the parents' opinion of the MPAA rating system, since the other three parent groups are predominantly pre-teenage households. The low esteem can be contributed to an increased concern of parents regarding teenagers' film viewing and their concern that the MPAA is not serving its function of helping them to prevent their children's exposure to what they as parents feel is unsuitable. The age of teenagers' parents lessens their probable movie attendance and, therefore, familiarity.

Question No. 2. The second question to which this exploratory study hoped to obtain an answer was concerned

with the potential presence of a significant difference between parents' evaluation of the MPAA rating system and how well they feel they understand it.

Differences as large as those obtained between the Evaluative and Understandability dimensions would be expected to occur less than 1 time in 100. A significant difference, therefore, does exist between parents' evaluation of the MPAA rating system and how well they feel they understand it. The tendency to assign different intensities of meaning to the two meaning dimensions was generally consistent across the four MPAA ratings and the four parent groups.

The Understandability dimension was generally higher than the Evaluative factor in differentiating the concepts (MPAA ratings). In other words, parents strongly indicated that they felt they understood the MPAA rating system more than they valued it.

Question No. 3. The third question of this study dealt with the possibility of parents holding different attitudes towards the four different MPAA ratings.

Parents assigned significantly different intensities of meaning to "G," "PG," and "R" and "X" ("R" and "X" were not significantly different and will be treated as one).

Parents ranked the "G" rating the highest on the adjective scales with "PG" and "R" and "X" both ranked

significantly lower. "PG" received the second highest ranking with "R" and "X" significantly lower. The differences between "G" and "PG," "G" and "R" and "X," and "PG" and "R" and "X" would have occurred by chance less than 1 time in 1000 and were highly significant. Therefore, parents held significantly different attitudes towards the different MPAA ratings, which, if the MPAA rating system was working properly, would not have existed, since it is the value and understandability of the ratings and not the type of movies which the ratings represent which is being scored.

Question No. 4. The fourth question of this study was, "Does the ranking of the two meaning dimensions (Evaluative and Understandability) vary with the four MPAA ratings?"

Attitudes of parents towards the four MPAA ratings were not significantly affected by the two semantic meaning dimensions. All four MPAA ratings were generally the same along a particular meaning dimension.

Question No. 5. The fifth question towards which this study directed itself concerned the possibility of the ranking of the two meaning dimensions varying with the predominant age of the parents' children.

Significant interaction existed between the two semantic meaning dimensions along all four parent groups.

The differences which occurred would happen by chance less than 2.5 times in 100.

A highly significant interaction occurred with parents of predominantly pre-school age children, along the Evaluative dimension, with the other three parent groups (parents of predominantly grade, middle, and high school age children) interacting with the Understandability dimension. The combination of parents having predominantly pre-school age children interacting with the Evaluational dimension was a result of the parents evaluating the MPAA rating system lower in relation to the Understandability dimension than the remaining three parent groups. Whether it is the generally younger age and, therefore, greater familiarity with the current movies by the parents of predominantly pre-school age children which causes them to rate the MPAA rating system as more predictable, understandable, familiar, and simple than do the other three parent groups, or less concern due to the young age and, therefore, limited movie attendance potential of their children is a matter for further study.

In either case, reaction of parents of pre-school age children is significantly different than the other three parent groups, in which parents generally fall in the above-30 age group which makes up only 26 percent of the

movie audience and whose children have a greater movie attendance potential. These three parent groups feel that the MPAA rating system is stronger along the Evaluative scale than do the parents of pre-schoolers, thus feeling that the MPAA ratings are better, more valuable, more harmonious, and more successful than do the parents of predominantly pre-school age children.

Question No. 6. The sixth question asked is, "Do parents' attitudes towards the MPAA ratings vary with the predominant age of their children?"

The combination of a specific rating and parenthood of a specific age group does not create a significant effect in parents' attitudes.

Question No. 7. The seventh question deals with over-all interaction among the predominant age of children, the two semantic meaning dimensions, and the four MPAA ratings.

The three independent variables did not work upon each other to a degree which could create significant differences in parents' responses in this study; therefore, no triple action, second order interaction occurred, nor did any detectable tendency of sufficient magnitude exist to warrant attention.

Question No. 8. The final question to which this study seeks an answer is, "In what esteem is the MPAA rating system held?"

With 75 percent of the rating system ratings ("PG," "R," and "X") clustered around the neutral point of the seven-point scale, and only "G" considered a credible rating, the MPAA rating system cannot be considered to be held in high esteem, but neither can it be considered in low esteem. One might say that it is held in no esteem. Only with "G" films did parents feel that they knew what their children would not see. With the other three MPAA ratings, parents did not feel they knew what their children would see. With the exception of the "G" rating, parents do not feel the MPAA rating system can be relied upon to "prevent children from seeing films which are unsuitable for them."²

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the author recommends that the MPAA should take another look at their present rating system, especially the "PG," "R," and "X" ratings which parents did not consider credible. This author feels that a study should be conducted to determine a consensus of expectations for each of the ratings. This could be used as a basis for the ratings which the MPAA rating system incorporates.

Thought should also be given to the possible necessity of regional ratings, since (for example) consensus obtained in the East dealing with what should constitute an "R" rating might not be the same as a consensus obtained in the Western United States.

Guidelines for what constitutes a specific rating should be reviewed and modified, perhaps annually, thus keeping up with the changing mores, social and cultural, of the public.

This exploratory study indicated that only one rating, "G," was generally considered credible and that children's age significantly affected parents' attitudes towards the ratings. This author, therefore, recommends further study be made of the relationship between age of children and credibility held for the ratings by their parents. The results would further aid the MPAA in its rating of films.

Another recommendation which might clarify ratings' significance for parents might be the addition of taglines, such as a "PG" rating with a tagline, "short segment of tasteful nudity," added when the rating board deems it necessary for clarification. A study should be conducted, in the opinion of this author, to determine public reaction to the employment of such explicit taglines.

Studies directed towards developing general consensus ratings, uncovering relation of children's age to parents'

attitudes towards specific ratings, and public opinion of additional short taglines accompanying the ratings, could enable the MPAA to better fulfill its role by aiding parents (more successfully than parents feel the MPAA is doing at present) in preventing their children from seeing films whose subject matter, or a certain scene within the film, is unsuitable for them, without personal previewing of every film their child sees. Only a credible rating system would permit this, and at present the MPAA rating system, as indicated by this study, is not credible.

FOOTNOTES

¹Gene Shalit, "Rating Game." Look (November 3, 1970), p. 87.

²Ethel Whitehorn, "Motion Picture Review," PTA Magazine (January, 1969), p. 39.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL
COMMITTEE FOR BETTER FILMS (1925)

1. It is political in its nature and arises from the demand of the organized minority who are desirous of imposing their interpretation of motion picture values, in the matters of morals and of good and evil, on the opinion of the vast majority.

2. It presupposes that the American public are willing to patronize an entertainment which is vicious in its tendencies and likely to corrupt their morals - a state of mind in the individual American picture-goer that this Conference does not believe exists, unless one is ready to admit that the whole nation is already corrupt and decadent.

3. It seeks to shift personal responsibility and the responsibility of parent toward child to the shoulders of politically appointed public guardians, who are no more likely to have special qualifications for the exercise of such guardianship than the ordinarily intelligent man or woman; and such shifting of moral responsibility, this Conference believes, makes for slovenly spiritual habits both in the individual and in the nation.

4. It is a makeshift at best, in nowise securing the end sought (that of improving motion pictures), and tending psychologically to invent the alleged reason for its existence, as well as to perpetuate as an alleged necessity what is in reality a politically paying institution - legal censorship.

5. It has never taken into consideration the fact that the motion picture is primarily not an entertainment for children, but that at its best it is directed at an adult audience and that it must be recognized and supported as a form of expression for mature minds if it is to fulfill its possibilities both as an art and as an educator; at the same time, in its aim to make all pictures harmless for children, legal censorship has failed to provide alike for any recognition of those pictures suitable to young people and those pictures suitable to adults; again, because of the small fraction of the public who are weak-minded or vicious it would distort or mutilate a great popular form of expression which can safely be left to the great majority of virile, wholesome people, young and old, of normal reactions;

and in the opinion of this Conference it is spiritually weakening to the healthy majority to attempt to protect them by concealment of those things which are deleterious only to society's sick few.

6. It has often resulted in the mangling or destruction of that which is essentially wholesome rather than unwholesome, because it has failed consistently to grasp the real causes of psychological reaction to what the eye sees, and has often confused what may be a stimulus to good with what may be a stimulus to bad - in other words, it has failed, and always will fail, since it is whimsical rather than thoughtful and scientific - to apprehend the psychological laws of suggestion.

7. It has gone on the assumption - largely because the very justification of legal censorship rests on that assumption - that there is continuously running through motion pictures an element of the vicious, whereas, in the opinion of groups who have studied the great proportion of motion pictures over a long period of time, this element can be said to exist but sporadically and can be discovered as in nowise inherent in the medium itself.

8. It has failed to recognize, and dared not recognize, because it is based on the theory that there are final, unchanging universal standards of good and evil and of good and evil influences, that fundamental in the whole question of the motion picture is a legitimate and inevitable difference of opinion between sections, communities, groups and individuals of equal intelligence and moral integrity; and has sought to define, often with lamentable discrepancy in the actions of different legal censorship boards upon the same given picture, interpretations and opinions to apply arbitrarily to all minds and all tastes - interpretations and opinions that are nothing but the individual pronouncements of the censors themselves, arising out of their own feelings and notions.

9. It has tended, through fear, on the part of screen writers, artists, and creators, of its arbitrary dictums and misconceptions, to pervert rather than to benefit the nature of the motion picture; it has created a state of mind in these individuals that has often resulted in the befuddling and corruption in narration on the screen of what has gone not only unchallenged but approved in literature and on the stage; it has been a powerful aid in the distortion of even the best literature and drama transferred to the screen and

in the distortion of life that legitimately has a place on the screen, and should have a place there, if motion pictures are to become an art, albeit a popular one; it has thus been a partner in responsibility for much that is false, shoddy and insincere in motion pictures, and has been a prominent factor in the discouragement of such authors and artists as are necessary to bring to the motion picture the truth and beauty of great art.

10. Legal censorship, for the above reasons, may be said to have defeated the very thing that, in the alleged circumstances, it was supposed to do (improve the motion picture); it has destroyed and not remedied; it has won neither the support nor the confidence of the masses or of the great proportion of thoughtful people; it has been defeated at the polls when the question has been put to the test; it strikes at the common decency of the individual; it spurns the intelligence; it corrupts the imagination; it is a tool to prejudice and to political contrivance; it can never be made different, because the fallacy is inherent in the institution.

With all of the above in mind, it is the sense of this Conference, composed of private disinterested citizens, most of whom have been active in studying the motion picture over a long period of time and in dealing with the social problems it has raised in their several communities, and who at present have at heart the best interests of the several groups and communities they represent, and are engaged in a constructive and unified effort to procure for the motion picture screen all that is wholesome and best and most desirable for the American people, that the foregoing be set forth as evincing this Conference's convictions in the matter.

APPENDIX B

REASONS FOR FEDERAL SUPERVISION PROPOSED
IN 1926 BY THE MOTION PICTURE
COUNCIL OF AMERICA, INC.

1. To prevent improper political activities of the trust.
2. To maintain the freedom of the screen from the strangle grasp of a few covetous men.
3. To secure conformity to moral standards before the films are produced.
4. To save expense and make censorship unnecessary.
5. To provide a centralized neutral distributing agency and furnish a fair market for meritorious films owned by independent producers and also for nontheatrical teaching and religious films, now impeded by about 10 trust-owned exchange systems each in about 26 key cities all over the United States.
6. To lessen the danger of graft possible in local and state censorship boards and to secure better moral supervision of films than through such boards.
7. Because local and state censorship, which can only cut out evil from the films after they are produced, is inadequate and because the industry has broken its various promises to reform itself.
8. To enable the nation to assist parents in protecting their children from movie exploiters of youth.
9. To compel the motion picture industry to conform to the laws and ideals of America, and thus properly train the future citizens of our country.
10. To preserve American business in other lands through films acceptable in foreign countries. Otherwise other nations, like Russia, may adopt government ownership of films and exclude American films.
11. To protect exhibitors from the producers and distributors and to develop the industry to its largest capacity to maintain a broad open field of endeavor in its every branch.

12. To prohibit the block system of renting films and the producer ownership of theaters as unfair business methods contrary to the antitrust laws.

13. To provide wholesome films for the world and insure universal peace.

APPENDIX C

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE CODE (1930)

A CODE

Regulating Production of Motion Pictures

Formulated by the Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc., and the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Incorporated

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence, the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

PARTICULAR APPLICATIONS

I. CRIMES AGAINST THE LAW. These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

1. Murder.

- a. The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.
- b. Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.
- c. Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.

2. Methods of crime should not be explicitly presented.

a. Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., should not be detailed in method.

b. Arson must be subject to the same safeguards.

c. The use of firearms should be restricted to essentials.

d. Methods of smuggling should not be presented.

3. Illegal drug traffic must never be presented.

4. The use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown.

II. SEX. The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

1. Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively.

2. Scenes of passion

a. They should not be introduced when not essential to the plot.

b. Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.

c. In general, passion should so be treated that these scenes do not stimulate the lower and baser element.

3. Seduction or rape.

a. They should never be more than

suggested, and only when essential for the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method.

b. They are never the proper subject for comedy.

4. Sex perversion or any inference to it is forbidden.

5. White slavery shall not be treated.

6. Miscegenation (sex relationships between the white and black races) is forbidden.

7. Sex hygiene and venereal diseases are not subjects for motion pictures.

8. Scenes of actual childbirth, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.

9. Children's sex organs are never to be exposed.

III. VULGARITY. The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects should be subject always to the dictate of good taste and a regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

IV. OBSCENITY. Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.

V. PROFANITY. Pointed profanity (this includes the words God, Lord, Jesus, Christ - unless used reverently - Hell, S.O.B., damn, Gawd), or every other profane or vulgar expression, however used, is forbidden.

VI. COSTUME.

1. Complete nudity is never permitted. This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any lecherous or licentious notice thereof by other characters in the picture.

2. Undressing scenes should be avoided, and never used save where essential to the plot.

3. Indecent or undue exposure is forbidden.
4. Dancing costumes intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.

VII. DANCES.

1. Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passion are forbidden.
2. Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

VIII. RELIGION.

1. No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith.
2. Ministers of religion in their character as ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains.
3. Ceremonies of any definite religion should be carefully and respectfully handled.

IX. LOCATIONS. The treatment of bedrooms must be governed by good taste and delicacy.

X. NATIONAL FEELINGS.

1. The use of the Flag shall be consistently respectful.
2. The history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly.

XI. TITLES. Salacious, indecent, or obscene titles shall not be used.

XII. REPELLENT SUBJECTS. The following subjects must be treated within the careful limits of good taste:

1. Actual hangings or electrocutions as legal punishments for crime.
2. Third degree methods.

3. Brutality and possibly gruesomeness.
4. Branding of people or animals.
5. Apparent cruelty to children or animals.
6. The sale of women, or a woman selling her virtue.
7. Surgical operations.

APPENDIX D

CODE OF SELF-REGULATION - MOTION PICTURE

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (1966)

The Code of Self-Regulation of the Motion Picture Association of America shall apply to production, to advertising, and to titles of motion pictures.

The Code shall be administered by an Office of Code Administration, headed by an Administrator.

There shall also be a Director of the Code for Advertising, and a Director of the Code for Titles.

Nonmembers are invited to submit pictures to the Code Administrator on the same basis as members of the Association.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE
CODE OF SELF-REGULATION OF THE
MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION

This revised Code is designed to keep in closer harmony with the mores, the culture, the moral sense and the expectations of our society.

The revised Code can more completely fulfill its objectives, which are:

1. To encourage artistic expression by expanding creative freedom and
2. To assure that the freedom which encourages the artist remains responsible and sensitive to the standards of the larger society.

Censorship is an odious enterprise. We oppose censorship and classification-by-law (or whatever name or guise these restrictions go under) because they are alien to the American tradition of freedom.

Much of this nation's strength and purpose is drawn from the premise that the humblest of citizens has the freedom of his own choice. Censorship destroys this freedom of choice.

It is within this framework that the Motion Picture Association continues to recognize its obligation to the society of which it is an integral part.

In our society the parents are the arbiters of family conduct.

Parents have the primary responsibility to guide their children in the kind of lives they lead, the character they build, the books they read, and the movies and other entertainment to which they are exposed.

The creators of motion pictures undertake a responsibility to make available pertinent information about their pictures which will enable parents to fulfill their function.

An important addition is now being made to the information already provided to the public in order to enable parents better to choose which motion pictures their children should see.

As part of the revised Code, there is a provision that producers, in cooperation with the Code Administration, will identify certain pictures as suggested for mature audiences.

Such information will be conveyed by advertising, by displays at the theatre, and by other means.

Thus parents will be alerted and informed so that they may decide themselves whether a particular picture, because of theme, content or treatment, will be one which their children should or should not see, or may not understand or enjoy.

We believe self-restraint, self-regulation, to be in the tradition of the American purpose. It is the American society meeting its responsibility to the general welfare. The results of self-discipline are always imperfect because that is the nature of all things mortal. But this Code, and its administration, will make clear that freedom of expression does not mean toleration of license.

The test of self-restraint . . . the rule of reason . . . lies in the treatment of a subject for the screen. The SEAL of the Motion Picture Association on a film means that the picture has met the test of self-regulation.

All members of the Motion Picture Association, as well as many independent producers, cooperate in this self-regulation.

All members of the Motion Picture Association, as well as many independent producers, cooperate in this self-regulation. Not all motion pictures, however, are submitted to the Production Code Administration of the MPA, and the presence of the Seal is the only way the public can know which pictures have come under the Code.

We believe in and pledge our support to these deep and fundamental values in a democratic society:

Freedom of choice . . .

The right of creative man to achieve artistic excellence . . .

The role of the parent as the arbiter of the family's conduct.

The men and women who make motion pictures under this Code value their social responsibility as they value their creative skills. The Code, and all that is written and implied in it, aims to strengthen both those values.

STANDARDS FOR PRODUCTION

In furtherance of the objectives of the Code to accord with the mores, the culture, and the moral sense of our society, the principles stated above and the following standards shall govern the Administrator in his consideration of motion pictures submitted for Code approval:

The basic dignity and value of human life shall be respected and upheld. Restraint shall be exercised in portraying the taking of life.

Evil, sin, crime and wrong-doing shall not be justified.

Special restraint shall be exercised in portraying criminal or antisocial activities in which minors participate or are involved.

Detailed and protracted acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture and abuse, shall not be presented.

Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented.

Illicit sex relationships shall not be justified. Intimate sex scenes violating common standards of decency shall not be portrayed. Restraint and care shall be exercised in presentations dealing with sex aberrations.

Obscene speech, gestures or movements shall not be presented. Undue profanity shall not be permitted.

Religion shall not be demeaned.

Words or symbols contemptuous of racial, religious or national groups, shall not be used so as to incite bigotry or hatred.

Excessive cruelty to animals shall not be portrayed and animals shall not be treated inhumanely.

STANDARDS FOR ADVERTISING

The principles of the Code cover advertising and publicity as well as production. There are times when their specific application to advertising may be different. A motion picture is viewed as a whole and may be judged that way. It is the nature of advertising, however, that it must select and emphasize only isolated portions and aspects of a film. It thus follows that what may be appropriate in a motion picture may not be equally appropriate in advertising. This must be taken into account in applying the Code standards to advertising. Furthermore, in application to advertising, the principles and standards of the Code are supplemented by the following standards for advertising:

Illustrations and text shall not misrepresent the character of a motion picture.

Illustrations shall not depict any indecent or undue exposure of the human body.

Advertising demeaning religion, race, or national origin shall not be used.

Cumulative overemphasis on sex, crime, violence and brutality shall not be permitted.

Salacious postures and embraces shall not be shown.

Censorship disputes shall not be exploited or capitalized upon.

STANDARDS FOR TITLES

A salacious, obscene, or profane title shall not be used on motion pictures.

PRODUCTION CODE REGULATIONS

I. Operations

A. Prior to commencement of production of a motion picture, the producer shall submit a shooting, or other script to the Office of Code Administration. The Administrator of the Code shall inform the producer in confidence whether a motion picture based upon the script appears to conform to the Code. The final judgment of the Administrator shall be made only upon reviewing of the completed picture.

B. The completed picture shall be submitted to the Code Office and if it is approved by the Administrator, the producer or distributor shall upon public release of the picture place upon an introductory frame of every print distributed for exhibition in the United States the official Seal of the Association with the word "Approved" above the Seal, and below, the words "Certificate Number," followed by the number of the Certificate of Approval. All prints bearing the Code Seal shall be identical.

C. The Administrator, in issuing a Certificate of Approval, shall condition the issuance of the Certificate upon agreement by the producer or distributor that all advertising and publicity to be used for the picture shall be submitted to and approved by the Director of the Code for Advertising.

D. The Administrator, in approving a picture under the Code, may recommend that advertising for the picture carry the informational line Suggested for Mature Audiences. If the Administrator so determines, the distributing company shall carry the line Suggested for Mature Audiences in its advertising. The Administrator shall notify the Director of the Code for Advertising of all such pictures.

E. The title of an approved motion picture shall not be changed without prior approval of the Director of the Code for Titles.

F. Nonmembers of the Association may avail themselves of the services of the Office of Code Administration in the same manner and under the same conditions as members of the Association.

G. The producer or distributor, upon receiving a Certificate of Approval for a picture, shall pay to the Office of Code Administration a fee in accordance with the uniform schedule of fees approved by the Board of Directors of the Association.

II. Motion Picture Code Board

A. A Motion Picture Code Board is established with these two principal functions:

To hear appeals from decisions of the Code Administrator.

To act as an advisory body on Code matters.

1. The Code Board shall be composed of the following:

(a) The President of the Motion Picture Association of America, and nine other directors of the Association appointed by the President;

(b) Six exhibitors appointed by the President upon nomination by the National Association of Theatre Owners; and

(c) Four producers appointed by the President upon nomination by the Screen Producers Guild.

2. The President of the Motion Picture Association of America shall be Chairman of the Code Board, and the Association shall provide the secretariat.

3. The President may designate not more than two pro tempore members for each category as substitutes for members unable to attend a particular Board meeting or a hearing.

4. The presence of ten members shall constitute a quorum of the Board for meetings and hearings.

5. The members of the Board required to travel to attend a meeting shall be reimbursed for transportation and

subsistence expenses, which shall be paid to them from funds of the Office of Code Administration.

B. Advisory

The procedures governing meetings of the Board in its advisory function shall be as follows:

1. The Board shall meet upon call of the Chairman at a time and place he may designate.

2. Members may submit suggestions for an agenda, which shall be prepared and circulated by the Chairman in advance of meetings. Upon majority vote, additional items may be submitted and brought up for discussion at meetings.

3. The Board through the Chairman may request the presence of the Code Administrator at meetings; may request oral and written reports from its distributor, exhibitor and producer members on the status of the Code; may call for advice and reports upon others in a position to contribute to a better understanding and more efficacious operation of the system of self-regulation; and may perform such other functions of an advisory nature as may redound to the benefit of the Code.

C. Appeals

1. Any producer or distributor whose picture has not been approved by the Code Administrator may appeal the decision to the Motion Picture Code Board by filing a notice of appeal to the Chairman of the Board.

2. The procedures governing appeals before the Code Board shall be as follows:

(a) The Board, upon being called into meeting by the Chairman, shall view an identical print of the picture denied a Certificate of Approval by the Code Administrator.

(b) The producer or the distributor and the Code Administrator, or their representatives, may present oral or written statements to the Board.

(c) The Board shall decide the appeal by majority vote of the members present and its decision shall be final.

(d) No member of the Board shall participate in an appeal involving a picture in which the member has a financial interest.

3. The jurisdiction of the Board is limited to hearing the appeal and it is without power to change or amend the Code.

4. The Code Board, if it authorizes the issuance of a Certificate of Approval, may do so upon such terms and conditions as it may prescribe.

ADVERTISING CODE REGULATIONS

1. These regulations are applicable to all members of the Motion Picture Association of America, and to all producers and distributors of motion pictures with respect to each picture for which the Association has granted its Certificate of Approval.

2. The term "advertising" as used herein shall be deemed to mean all forms of motion picture advertising and exploitation, and ideas therefor, including the following: pressbooks; still photographs; newspaper, magazine and trade paper advertising; publicity copy and art intended for use in pressbooks or otherwise intended for general distribution in printed form or for theatre use; trailers; posters; lobby displays, and other outdoor displays; advertising accessories, including heralds and throwaways; novelties; copy for exploitation tieups; and all radio and television copy spots.

3. All advertising shall be submitted to the Director of the Code for Advertising for approval before use, and shall not be used in any way until so submitted in duplicate with the exception of pressbooks, which shall be submitted in triplicate.

4. The Director of the Code for Advertising shall proceed as promptly as feasible to approve or disapprove the advertising submitted.

The Director of the Code for Advertising shall stamp "Approved" on one copy of all advertising approved by him and return the stamped copy to the Company which submitted it. If the Director of the Code for Advertising disapproves of any advertising, the Director shall stamp the

word "Disapproved" on one copy and return it to the Company which submitted it, together with the reasons for such disapproval; or, if the Director so desires, he may return the copy with suggestions for such changes or corrections as will cause it to be approved.

5. All pressbooks approved by the Director of the Code for Advertising shall bear in a prominent place the official seal of the Motion Picture Association of America. The word "Approved" shall be printed under the seal. Pressbooks shall also carry the following notice:

"All advertising in this pressbook, as well as all other advertising and publicity materials referred to therein, has been approved under Standards for Advertising of the Code of Self-Regulation of the Motion Picture Association of America." All inquiries on this procedure may be addressed to: Director of Code for Advertising, Motion Picture Association of America, 522 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10036.

6. When the Code Administrator determines that any picture shall carry the informational line "Suggested for Mature Audiences," the Director of the Code for Advertising shall require this line to appear in such advertising for that picture as the Director may specify. When the advertisement is limited in size, the Director may authorize the initials SMA to stand for "Suggested for Mature Audiences."

7. Appeals. Any Company whose advertising has been disapproved may appeal from the decision of the Director of the Code for Advertising, as follows:

It shall serve notice of such appeal on the Director of the Code for Advertising and on the President of the Association. The President, or in his absence a Vice President designated by him, shall thereupon promptly and within a week hold a hearing to pass upon the appeal. Oral and written evidence may be introduced by the Company and by the Director of the Code for Advertising, or their representatives. The appeal shall be decided as expeditiously as possible and the decision shall be final.

8. Any Company which uses advertising without prior approval may be brought up on charges before the Board of Directors by the President of the Association. Within a reasonable time, the Board may hold a hearing, at which

time the Company and the Director of the Code for Advertising, or their representatives, may present oral or written statements. The Board, by a majority vote of those present, shall decide the matter as expeditiously as possible.

If the Board of Directors finds that the Company has used advertising without prior approval, the Board may direct the Administrator of the Code to void and revoke the Certificate of Approval granted for the picture and require the removal of the Association's seal from all prints of the picture.

9. Each Company shall be responsible for compliance by its employees and agents with these regulations.

APPENDIX E

THE MOTION PICTURE CODE AND RATING PROGRAM:

A SYSTEM OF SELF-REGULATION

(NOVEMBER 1, 1968)

Declaration of Principles of the
Code of Self-Regulation of the
Motion Picture Association

This Code is designed to keep in close harmony with the mores, culture, the moral sense and change in our society. The objectives of the Code are:

1. To encourage artistic expression by expanding creative freedom; and
2. To assure that the freedom which encourages the artist remains responsible and sensitive to the standards of the larger society.

Censorship is an odious enterprise. We oppose censorship and classification by governments because they are alien to the American tradition of freedom.

Much of this nation's strength and purpose is drawn from the premise that the humblest of citizens has the freedom of his own choice. Censorship destroys this freedom of choice.

It is within this framework that the Motion Picture Association continues to recognize its obligations to the society of which it is an integral part.

In our society parents are the arbitrators of family conduct. Parents have the primary responsibility to guide their children in the kind of lives they lead, the character they build, the books they read, and the movies and other entertainment to which they are exposed.

The creators of motion pictures undertake a responsibility to make available pertinent information about their pictures which will assist parents to fulfill their responsibilities..

But this alone is not enough. In further recognition of our obligation to the public, and most especially to parents, we have extended the Code operation to include a nationwide voluntary film rating program which has as its

prime objective a sensitive concern for children. Motion pictures will be reviewed by a Code and Rating Administration which, when it reviews a motion picture as to its conformity with the standards of the Code, will issue ratings. It is our intent that all motion pictures exhibited in the United States will carry a rating. These ratings are:

G SUGGESTED FOR GENERAL AUDIENCES

This category includes motion pictures that, in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration, would be acceptable for all audiences, without consideration of age.

M SUGGESTED FOR MATURE AUDIENCES - ADULTS AND MATURE YOUNG PEOPLE

This category includes motion pictures that, in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration, because of their theme, content and treatment, might require more mature judgment by viewers, and about which parents should exercise their discretion.

R RESTRICTED - PERSONS UNDER 16 NOT ADMITTED, UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN

This category includes motion pictures that, in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration, because of their theme, content or treatment, should not be presented to persons under 16 unless accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.

X PERSONS UNDER 16 NOT ADMITTED

This category includes motion pictures submitted to the Code and Rating Administration which, in the opinion of the Code and Rating Administration, are rated X because of the treatment of sex, violence, crime or profanity. Pictures rated X do not qualify for a Code Seal. Pictures rated X should not be presented to persons under 16.

The program contemplates that any distributors outside the membership of the Association who choose not to submit their motion pictures to the Code and Rating Administration will self-apply the X rating.

The ratings and then meanings will be conveyed by advertising: by displays at the theaters; and in other ways.

Thus, audiences, especially parents, will be alerted to the theme, content, and treatment of movies. Therefore, parents can determine whether a particular picture is one which children should see at the discretion of the parent; or only when accompanied by a parent; or should not see.

We believe self-restraint, self-regulation, to be in the American tradition. The results of self-discipline are always imperfect because that is the nature of all things mortal. But this Code, and its administration, will make clear that freedom of expression does not mean toleration of license.

The test of self-restraint - the rule of reason - lies in the treatment of a subject for the screen.

All members of the Motion Picture Association, as well as the National Association of Theatre Owners, and International Film Importers and Distributors of America, and other independent producer-distributors are cooperating in this endeavor. Most motion pictures exhibited in the United States will be submitted for Code approval and rating, or for rating only, to the Code and Rating Administration. The presence of the Seal indicates to the public that a picture has received Code approval.

We believe in and pledge our support to these deep and fundamental values in a democratic society:

Freedom of choice . . .

The right of creative man to achieve artistic excellence . . .

The importance of the role of the parent as the guide of the family's conduct . . .

Standards for Production

In furtherance of the objectives of the Code to accord with the mores, the culture, and the moral sense of our society, the principles stated above and the following standards shall govern the Administrator in his consideration of motion pictures submitted for Code approval:

The basic dignity and value of human life shall be respected and upheld. Restraint shall be

exercised in portraying the taking of life.

Evil, sin, crime and wrong-doing shall not be justified. Special restraint shall be exercised in portraying criminal or anti-social activities in which minors participate or are involved.

Detailed and protracted acts of brutality, cruelty, physical violence, torture and abuse shall not be presented.

Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented.

Illicit sex relationships shall not be justified. Intimate sex scenes violating common standards of decency shall not be portrayed.

Restraint and care shall be exercised in presentations dealing with sex aberrations.

Obscene speech, gestures or movements shall not be presented. Undue profanity shall not be permitted.

Religion shall not be demeaned.

Words or symbols contemptuous of racial, religious or national groups, shall not be used so as to incite bigotry or hatred.

Excessive cruelty to animals shall not be portrayed and animals shall not be treated inhumanely.

Standards for Advertising

The principles of the Code cover advertising and publicity as well as production. There are times when their specific application to advertising may be different. A motion picture is viewed as a whole and may be judged that way. It is the nature of advertising, however, that it must select and emphasize only isolated portions and aspects of a film. It thus follows that what may be appropriate in a motion picture may not be equally appropriate in advertising. Furthermore, in application to advertising, the principles and standards of the Code are supplemented by the following standards for advertising:

Illustrations and text shall not misrepresent the character of a motion picture.

Illustrations shall not depict any indecent or undue exposure of the human body.

Advertising demeaning religion, race, or national origin shall not be used.

Cumulative overemphasis on sex, crime, violence, and brutality shall not be permitted.

Salacious postures and embraces shall not be shown.

Censorship disputes shall not be exploited or capitalized upon.

Standard for Titles

A salacious, obscene, or profane title shall not be used on motion pictures.

Regulations Governing the Operation of the Motion Picture Code and Rating Administration

1. The Motion Picture Code and Rating Administration (hereinafter referred to as the Administration) is established to be composed of an Administrator and staff members, one of whom shall be experienced in the exhibition of motion pictures to the public.

2 a. All motion pictures produced or distributed by members of the Association and their subsidiaries will be submitted to the Administration for Code and rating.

2 b. Non-members of the Association may submit their motion pictures to the Administration for Code approval and rating in the same manner and under the same conditions as members of the Association or may submit their motion pictures to the Administration for rating only.

3. Members and non-members who submit their motion pictures to the Administration for approval and rating should, prior to the commencement of the production of the motion picture, submit a script or other treatment. The

Administration will inform the producer in confidence whether a motion picture based upon the submitted script appears to conform to the Standards of the Code and indicate its probable rating. The final judgment of the Administration shall be made only upon reviewing of the completed picture.

4 a. When a completed motion picture is submitted to the Administration and is approved as conforming to the Standards of the Code, it will be rated by the Administration either as G (Suggested for General Audiences), M (Suggested for Mature Audiences - Adults and Mature Young People), or R (Restricted), according to the categories described in the Declaration of Principles.

4 b. Completed motion pictures submitted by non-members for rating only will be rated according to the categories described in the Declaration of Principles as G, M, R, or X.

5. Motion pictures of member companies or their subsidiaries which are approved under the Code and rated G, M, or R shall upon public release bear upon an introductory frame of every print distributed in the United States the official seal of the Association with the word "Approved" and the words "Certificate Number," followed by the number of the Certificate of Approval and the symbol of the rating assigned to it by the Administration. So far as possible the Seal of the Association and the rating shall be displayed in uniform type, size and prominence. All prints of an approved motion picture bearing the Code Seal shall be identical.

6. Motion pictures of non-member companies submitted for Code approval and rating or for rating only which receive a G, M, or R rating shall bear such ratings upon an introductory frame of every print distributed in the United States in uniform shape, type, size and prominence. Prints of such pictures may also display the official Seal of the Association if application is made to the Association for the issuance of a Code Certificate number.

7. If the Administration determines that a motion picture submitted for approval and rating or rating only should be rated X in accordance with the description of that category in the Declaration of Principles, the symbol X must appear on all prints of the motion picture distributed in the United States in uniform type, size and prominence and in all advertising for the picture.

8. The Administration, in issuing a Certificate of Approval and Rating or a Rating Certificate, shall condition such issuance upon the agreement by the producer or distributor that all advertising and publicity to be used for the picture shall be submitted to and approved by the Director of the Code for Advertising.

9. The producer or distributor, upon applying for a Certificate of Approval for a picture or a Rating Certificate for those pictures receiving a rating only, shall advance to the Administration at the time of application a fee in accordance with the uniform schedule of fees approved by the Board of Directors of the Association.

10. The Standard for Titles for motion pictures shall be applied by the Administration in consultation with the Director of the Code for titles to all motion pictures submitted for approval and rating only and no motion picture for which a Certificate of Approval or Rating Certificate has been issued shall change its title without the prior approval of the Administration.

Advertising Code Regulations

1. These regulations are applicable to all members of the Motion Picture Association of America, to all producers and distributors of motion pictures with respect to each picture for which the Association has granted its Certificate, and to all other producers and distributors who apply the X rating to their motion pictures and voluntarily submit their advertising.

2. The term "advertising" as used herein shall be deemed to mean all forms of motion picture advertising and exploitation and ideas therefor, including the following: pressbooks; still photographs; newspaper, magazine and trade paper advertising; publicity copy and art intended for use in pressbooks or otherwise intended for general distribution in printed form or for theatre use; trailers; posters, lobby displays and other outdoor displays; advertising accessories, including heralds and throwaways; novelties; copy for exploitation tieups; and all radio and television copy and spots.

3. All advertising for motion pictures which have been submitted to the Code and Rating Administration for approval and rating, or for rating only, shall be submitted to the

Director of the Code for Advertising for approval before use, and shall not be used in any way until so submitted and approved. All advertising shall be submitted in duplicate with the exception of pressbooks, which shall be submitted in triplicate.

4. The Director of the Code for Advertising shall proceed as promptly as feasible to approve or disapprove the advertising submitted.

The Director of the Code for Advertising shall stamp "Approved" on one copy of all advertising approved by him and return the stamped copy to the Company which submitted it. If the Director of the Code for Advertising disapproves of any advertising, the Director shall stamp the word "Disapproved" on one copy and return it to the Company which submitted it, together with the reasons for such disapproval; or, if the Director so desires, he may return the copy with suggestions for such changes or corrections as will cause it to be approved.

5. The Director of the Code for Advertising shall require all approved advertising for pictures submitted to the Code and Rating Administration by members of the Motion Picture Association of America and their subsidiaries to carry the official Code seal and a designation of the rating assigned to the picture by the Code and Rating Administration. Uniform standards as to type, size and prominence of the display of the seal and rating will be set forth by the Advertising Code Administration.

6. Approved advertising for pictures submitted to the Code and Rating Administration by companies other than members of the Motion Picture Association of America and their subsidiaries, for Code approval and rating or for rating only, may bear the official seal at the distributor's option, but all such advertising shall bear the assigned rating.

7. Approved advertising for pictures rated X by the Code and Rating Administration shall bear the X rating but may not bear the official seal.

8. All pressbooks approved by the Director of the Code for Advertising shall bear in a prominent place the official seal of the Motion Picture Association of America and a designation of the rating assigned to the picture by the Code and Rating Administration. The word "Approved" shall

be printed under the seal. Pressbooks shall also carry the following notice:

Director of Code for Advertising
Motion Picture Association of America
522 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10036

9. Appeals. Any Company whose advertising has been disapproved may appeal from the decision of the Director of the Code for Advertising as follows:

It shall serve notice of such appeal on the Director of the Code for Advertising and on the President of the Association. The President, or in his absence a Vice President designated by him, shall thereupon promptly and within a week hold a hearing to pass upon the appeal. Oral and written evidence may be introduced by the Company and by the Director of the Code for Advertising, or their representatives. The appeal shall be decided as expeditiously as possible and the decision shall be final.

On appeals by companies, other than members of the Motion Picture Association of America and their subsidiaries, the President shall, if requested, decide the appeal in consultation with a representative of International Film Importers and Distributors of America, as designated by its Governing Board.

10. Any company which has been granted a Certificate of Approval and which uses advertising without securing the prior approval of the Director of the Code for Advertising, or if such advertising does not include the assigned rating, may be brought up on charges before the Board of Directors by the President of the Association. Within a reasonable time, the Board may hold a hearing, at which time the Company and the Director of the Code for Advertising, or their representatives, may present oral or written statements. The Board, by a majority vote of those present, shall decide the matter as expeditiously as possible.

If the Board of Directors finds that the company has used advertising for a Code approved and rated picture without securing approval of the Director of the Code for Advertising, or without including the assigned rating, the Board may direct the Code and Rating Administration to void and revoke the Certificate of Approval granted for the

picture and require the removal of the Association's seal from all prints of the picture.

11. Each company shall be responsible for compliance by its employees and agents with these regulations.

Code and Rating Appeals Board

1. A Code and Ratings Appeals Board is established, to be composed as follows:

- (a) The President of the Motion Picture Association of America and 12 members designated by the President from the Board of Directors of the Association and executive officers of its member companies;
- (b) Eight exhibitors designated by the National Association of Theatre Owners from its Board of Directors;
- (c) Two producers designated by the Producers Guild of America; and
- (d) Two distributors designated by the International Film Importers and Distributors of America.

2. A pro tempore member for any particular hearing to act as a substitute for a member unable to attend may be designated in the same manner as the absent member.

3. The President of the Motion Picture Association shall be Chairman of the Appeals Board, and the Association shall provide its secretariat.

4. The presence of 13 members is necessary to constitute a quorum of the Appeals Board for a hearing of any appeals.

5. The Board will hear and determine appeals from:

- (a) A decision of the Code and Rating Administration withholding Code approval from a picture submitted for approval and rating and which consequently received an X rating.

- (b) A decision by the Code and Rating Administration applying an X rating to a picture submitted for ratings only.

On such appeals a vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be required to sustain the decision of the Administration. If the decision of the Administration is not sustained, the Board shall proceed to rate the picture appropriately by majority vote.

6. The Board will also hear and determine appeals from the decision of the Code and Rating Administration applying any rating other than X to a motion picture. Such appeals shall be decided by majority vote. If the decision of the Administration is not sustained the Board shall proceed to rate the picture appropriately.

- 7. (a) An appeal from a decision of the Administration shall be instituted by the filing of a notice of appeal addressed to the Chairman of the Appeals Board by the party which submitted the picture to the Administration.
- (b) Provision shall be made for the screening by the members of the Appeals Board at the hearing or prior thereto of a print of the motion picture identical to the one reviewed and passed upon by the Administration.
- (c) The party making the appeal and the Administration may present oral or written statements to the Board at the hearing.
- (d) No member of the Appeals Board shall participate on an appeal involving a picture in which the member or any company with which he is associated has a financial interest.
- (e) The appeal shall be heard and decided as expeditiously as possible and the decision shall be final.

8. The Board will also act as an advisory board on Code matters and, upon the call of the Chairman, will discuss the progress of the operation of the Code and Rating program and review the manner of adherence to the Advertising Code.

APPENDIX F

THE RATING BOARD

(Motion Picture Association of America)

AARON STERN, M.D., Ph. D., Director, is a professional formally trained in the disciplines of Education, Behavioral Science, and Psychoanalytic Medicine. He was formerly a Supervising and Training Psychoanalyst at Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons. Presently, he is a member of the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at U.C.L.A. School of Medicine and the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute. He is also a member of the Center for Advanced Psychoanalytic Institute. He is also a member of the Center for Advanced Psychoanalytic Studies at Princeton, Educational Consultant to the United States' United Nations Association and Chairman of the Professional Advisory Board of the Foundation of Child Mental Health and Welfare. Dr. Stern has worked extensively with Youth in the United States and has taught at a number of universities and colleges, including Yale, New York University, Washington State College, College of the City of New York, Adelphi University and Brooklyn College.

He has lectured throughout the United States, particularly with reference to such issues as Community Education, Mass Media Communication, Drug Abuse and Child Development. He has written numerous professional articles. He has served as a consultant to the United States Public Health Service, as a Delegate to White House Conferences on Youth and Children, and as a commissioner representing Behavioral Science at the "International Cooperative Year." Dr. Stern received his Master's Degree and Ph.D. from Columbia University in the Discipline of Educational Psychology, with particular reference to Child Development. He completed his psychiatric training at Yale University which included a period of Fellowship at the Yale University Child Study Center.

ALBERT E. VAN SCHMUS was appointed to the staff of the Production Code Administration in 1949, after starting in production at RKO Radio Pictures in 1941. In 1942, he became an Assistant Director and received credits for four feature-length pictures before entering the U. S. Army Signal Corps in 1943. He served with a radar unit, assigned one year in the U. S. and two in the South Pacific. On his return to the movie industry in 1946, he received credits

for two more feature films at RKO, one at Republic Pictures and seven at Enterprise Studios before joining the staff. Mr. Van Schmus, a graduate of the University of Chicago School of Social Sciences, is married and has two children.

RICHARD R. MATHISON was appointed to the staff in 1965, coming directly from his position as Southern California Bureau Chief of Newsweek magazine, 1959-1965. In 1942, he joined the U. S. Marine Corps, serving as an Operations Officer and Commanding Officer of a headquarters squadron in the South Pacific. Following World War II, he was a staff writer for Associated Press, and in 1947 became one of the founders of a California news magazine, Fortnight. From 1958-1959 he served as religion editor of the Los Angeles Times. He has written articles for many national magazines and is the author of three books. Mr. Mathison attended the University of Idaho and George Washington University, majoring in pre-med.

RICHARD MCKAY was appointed to the staff in 1969. Son of a theater owner, Mr. McKay began his career as manager-booker for a theater chain in Cleveland, Ohio. He was a film buyer for Paramount Theaters (1940-52); Publicity Chief for Pacific Theaters (1952-56); and Director of Advertising and Publicity for American International Pictures (1956-1958). From 1958-68, he served first as Director of Publicity and Advertising and later as Vice President of Foreign Sales for Walt Disney Productions. Mr. McKay attended Fordham University and the University of Richmond, receiving a B. A. degree from the latter. He is married and has six children.

JANICE M. MONTGOMERY attended college in Oceanside and San Diego, California, and taught elementary school three years in Oceanside before coming to work at the Motion Picture Association to research films for the purpose of providing information regarding the content of films. She was appointed to the staff by Dr. Stern when he took over as Director in July, 1971.

HARRY R. (DICK) WIRTH was graduated from Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, in 1972 with a B. S. degree in Telecommunications and Visual Communications. He has been employed on the production crews of Cathedral Teleproductions, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, and National Teleproductions,

Indianapolis, and has served on the staffs of WQED-TV, WTTV-TV, WDST-Radio, and WKNT-Radio. From 1968 to 1970 he served with the U. S. Army assigned to American Forces Radio and Television Service in Vietnam and Germany.

BEEDY MARJOLYN JONES attended N. D. Taylor High School in Yazoo City, Miss., where she was graduated in May of 1967 in the top ten of her class. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in the field of Social Science at Alcorn A & M College in Lorman, Miss., in May of 1971. During her attendance at Alcorn, she was initiated into Alpha Kappa Sorority, as an undergraduate member, and also joined the Marching "200," Alcorn's nationally-known band. In September of 1971 she enrolled at Jackson State College in Jackson, Miss., where she worked on her Master of Science Degree in the field of Guidance and Counseling in Psychological Education until March of 1972.

CHARLENE A. BRILLIANDE is a 1972 graduate of Indiana University, Bloomington, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education. She has had experience teaching first, second and fourth grade children. She is a former member of the National Education Association and presently holds California Teaching Credentials. Born and reared in South Bend, Indiana, she later moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with her family. During her undergraduate studies, she was employed by Marquette University. She is married.

September, 1972

APPENDIX G

QUESTIONNAIRE

MPAA QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to measure the meanings of the Motion Picture Association of America ratings to various people by having them judge these ratings against a series of descriptive scales. In taking this test, please make your judgments on the basis of what your attitude is towards these ratings, NOT on the type of movies they may represent to you. On each page of this booklet you will find a different rating to be judged and beneath it a set of scales. You are to rate the MPAA rating on each of these scales in order.

Here is how you are to use these scales:

If you feel that the MPAA rating at the top of the page is very closely related to one end of the scale, you should place your check mark as follows:

fair X : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ unfair
 OR
 fair ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : X unfair

If you feel that the MPAA rating is quite closely related to one or the other ends of the scale (but not extremely), you should place your check mark as follows:

strong ___ : X : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ weak
 OR
 strong ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : X : ___ weak

If the MPAA rating seems only slightly related to one side as opposed to the other side (but is not really neutral),

then you should check as follows:

active ___:___: X :___:___:___:___ passive
 OR
 active ___:___:___:___: X :___:___ passive

The direction towards which you check, of course, depends upon which of the two ends of the scale seems most characteristic of your attitude towards the MPAA rating you are judging.

If you consider the MPAA ratings to be neutral on the scale--both sides of the scale equally associated with your attitude toward the MPAA rating, or if the scale is completely irrelevant--unrelated to your attitude of the MPAA rating, then you should place your check mark in the middle space:

beautiful ___:___:___: X :___:___:___ ugly

IMPORTANT: (1) Place your check marks in the middle of the spaces, not on the boundaries:

___: X :___:___:___: X ___
 THIS NOT THIS

(2) Be sure you check every scale for every MPAA rating--do not omit any.

(3) Never put more than one check mark on a single scale.

Sometimes you may feel as though you have had the same item before on the test. This will not be the case, so do not look back and forth through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the

test. Make each item a separate and independent judgment.

Work at a fairly high speed through this test. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your first impressions, the immediate "feelings" about the MPAA ratings that we want. On the other hand, please do not be careless, because we want your true impressions.

G

GENERAL AUDIENCES

familiar	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	strange
good	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	bad
harmonious	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	dissonant
successful	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	unsuccessful
simple	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	complicated
understandable	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	mysterious
valuable	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	worthless
predictable	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	unpredictable

R

RESTRICTED

familiar ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ strange
good ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ bad
harmonious ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ dissonant
successful ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ unsuccessful
simple ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ complicated
understandable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ mysterious
valuable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ worthless
predictable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ unpredictable

PG

PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED

familiar ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ strange
good ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ bad
harmonious ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ dissonant
successful ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ unsuccessful
simple ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ complicated
understandable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ mysterious
valuable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ worthless
predictable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ unpredictable

X

NO ONE UNDER 17 ADMITTED

familiar ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ strange
 good ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ bad
 harmonious ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ dissonant
 successful ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ unsuccessful
 simple ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ complicated
 understandable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ mysterious
 valuable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ worthless
 predictable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___ unpredictable

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

How many children do you have? _____

Please list the sex, age, and school level of your children
between 1 day and 18 years old.

Sex	Age	School Level
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(School levels are Pre-School, Grade School--which
includes Kindergarten, Middle School, and High School.)

APPENDIX H
INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT MEANING SCORES

Parent Group I: "G" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	21	24
2	23	23
3	20	20
4	22	22
5	20	26
6	13	19
7	26	26
8	25	25
9	26	28
10	22	26
11	19	18
12	22	27
13	11	20
14	28	28
15	26	26
16	21	19
17	18	23
18	9	20
19	20	22
20	23	28
21	20	25
22	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>
	461	522

Parent Group I: "PG" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	12	19
2	15	17
3	17	18
4	16	16
5	10	21
6	16	13
7	28	28
8	17	18
9	17	15
10	24	24
11	20	15
12	21	16
13	12	12
14	19	24
15	22	22
16	21	20
17	15	13
18	13	22
19	12	12
20	17	20
21	19	16
22	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>
	386	405

Parent Group I: "R" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	12	21
2	11	14
3	16	16
4	22	22
5	5	16
6	25	19
7	28	28
8	15	10
9	13	15
10	19	17
11	16	18
12	16	17
13	14	14
14	5	9
15	12	10
16	13	14
17	14	11
18	11	20
19	10	15
20	11	12
21	19	17
22	<u>17</u>	<u>22</u>
	324	357

Parent Group I: "X" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	12	21
2	13	18
3	16	17
4	22	25
5	6	13
6	25	26
7	28	28
8	18	17
9	20	19
10	14	13
11	18	16
12	14	19
13	11	16
14	9	10
15	9	5
16	16	16
17	14	11
18	9	23
19	10	17
20	7	10
21	18	16
22	<u>6</u>	<u>23</u>
	315	379

Parent Group II: "G" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	20	18
2	28	28
3	25	21
4	27	27
5	27	25
6	16	24
7	25	27
8	17	22
9	27	25
10	21	21
11	17	20
12	27	26
13	24	24
14	18	23
15	18	20
16	20	22
17	27	27
18	20	20
19	25	26
20	27	28
21	19	16
22	26	26
23	26	27
24	28	28
25	26	26
26	21	21
27	18	23
28	21	24
29	21	21
30	24	27
31	16	16
32	27	27
33	<u>27</u>	<u>25</u>
	756	783

Parent Group II: "PG" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	13	15
2	18	21
3	24	25
4	4	7
5	17	12
6	16	9
7	21	17
8	16	21
9	16	17
10	4	5
11	27	26
12	18	16
13	17	14
14	20	21
15	11	13
16	9	15
17	24	24
18	15	16
19	25	23
20	15	10
21	16	13
22	17	22
23	21	21
24	19	18
25	26	26
26	21	21
27	17	14
28	18	11
29	20	20
30	4	5
31	16	16
32	20	18
33	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>
	562	546

Parent Group II: "R" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	14	21
2	12	18
3	17	19
4	19	22
5	16	7
6	13	12
7	13	10
8	20	13
9	8	15
10	12	7
11	17	19
12	16	14
13	21	16
14	16	20
15	11	10
16	6	23
17	27	26
18	14	15
19	19	14
20	9	6
21	15	17
22	11	15
23	14	14
24	16	16
25	26	25
26	19	22
27	16	16
28	17	11
29	20	20
30	23	22
31	16	16
32	18	14
33	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>
	527	530

Parent Group II: "X" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	26	15
2	21	28
3	25	21
4	28	28
5	9	6
6	13	10
7	14	12
8	15	13
9	8	13
10	12	13
11	20	25
12	12	11
13	10	8
14	19	22
15	7	7
16	5	22
17	26	27
18	8	10
19	28	26
20	16	13
21	15	14
22	13	11
23	8	15
24	16	16
25	26	26
26	18	20
27	16	12
28	13	15
29	20	20
30	5	4
31	16	16
32	19	22
33	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>
	523	536

Parent Group III: "G" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	16	22
2	17	20
3	25	26
4	22	26
5	17	22
6	26	25
7	12	11
8	21	20
9	21	23
10	26	27
11	17	21
12	26	28
13	28	28
14	23	20
15	23	28
16	28	28
17	28	28
18	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>
	400	427

Parent Group III: "PG" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	12	13
2	13	18
3	11	11
4	15	20
5	21	19
6	17	22
7	4	4
8	9	7
9	17	18
10	22	24
11	19	20
12	26	20
13	28	22
14	15	14
15	22	27
16	4	4
17	28	28
18	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>
	308	316

Parent Group III: "R" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	4	7
2	17	16
3	17	21
4	22	25
5	16	13
6	16	14
7	24	24
8	4	7
9	21	26
10	22	21
11	13	15
12	17	14
13	9	4
14	11	9
15	21	28
16	4	4
17	16	16
18	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>
	278	288

Parent Group III: "X" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	4	7
2	15	15
3	12	15
4	25	27
5	16	13
6	6	10
7	4	4
8	15	13
9	23	24
10	23	23
11	22	13
12	17	13
13	16	7
14	5	7
15	20	27
16	28	28
17	28	28
18	28	28
	<u>307</u>	<u>302</u>

Parent Group IV: "G" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	24	22
2	20	20
3	24	21
4	21	18
5	24	24
6	27	27
7	18	20
8	16	16
9	28	24
10	21	19
11	16	23
12	16	16
13	27	28
14	18	16
15	20	17
16	24	24
17	23	28
18	25	26
19	16	16
20	11	11
21	26	25
22	18	22
23	25	26
24	26	24
25	18	25
26	<u>16</u>	<u>22</u>
	548	560

Parent Group IV: "PG" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	13	8
2	13	11
3	9	17
4	18	18
5	26	17
6	9	11
7	15	13
8	16	16
9	23	21
10	20	17
11	16	10
12	7	6
13	28	28
14	16	13
15	13	9
16	16	14
17	21	23
18	23	23
19	17	15
20	10	13
21	27	23
22	19	17
23	4	14
24	22	24
25	15	13
26	<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>
	432	413

Parent Group IV: "R" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	11	7
2	14	16
3	6	16
4	13	9
5	17	14
6	10	12
7	13	19
8	16	16
9	19	17
10	13	14
11	16	16
12	16	16
13	28	28
14	16	13
15	12	9
16	10	10
17	12	19
18	9	8
19	13	17
20	9	12
21	18	13
22	11	23
23	21	21
24	16	14
25	14	10
26	<u>16</u>	<u>16</u>
	369	385

Parent Group IV: "X" Rating

Subject	Evaluative	Understandability
1	9	6
2	20	12
3	7	7
4	17	12
5	9	28
6	6	10
7	9	8
8	16	16
9	8	8
10	19	18
11	13	22
12	16	16
13	28	28
14	16	13
15	19	15
16	9	9
17	8	21
18	14	4
19	15	17
20	8	10
21	17	12
22	25	23
23	28	27
24	22	19
25	14	10
26	16	16
	<u>388</u>	<u>387</u>

APPENDIX I

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES
OF CHRIST BROADCASTING AND
FILM COMMISSION



BROADCASTING and film commission

national council of the churches of CHRIST in the u.s.a.

475 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10027

telephone: 870-2567

William F. Fore
executive director

December 20, 1972

Miss Sylvia Lynn O'Dell
3713 N.W. 26 Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73107

Dear Miss O'Dell:

Thank you for your December 4 letter.

I am delighted to learn of your study. This is something we have felt needed to be done for some time and I think the results of your study could be helpful to us in understanding the effect and therefore the future of the MPAA classification system.

Unfortunately I know of no other study than the one you indicate. We have needed one for a long time. I hope you will let us know when you have completed yours so that we can secure a copy.

Cordially,

William F. Fore

William F. Fore

WFF:ek

VITA

Sylvia Lynn O'Dell

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY OF PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE MOTION
PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA RATING SYSTEM

Major Field: Mass Communication

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Damariscotta, Maine,
March 13, 1947, the daughter of Mr. and
Mrs. Gordon E. O'Dell.

Education: Graduated from Northwest Classen High
School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in May, 1967;
received the Bachelor of Science degree from
Oklahoma State University in 1971, with a major
in Radio/TV/Film; completed requirements for the
Master of Science degree in Mass Communication
in December, 1973.

Professional Experience and Organizations: Continuity
writer and radio announcer for student station
KOSU-FM, 1969-70, and continuity writer for
commercial radio station KVRO, 1969-1971;
assistant producer, director, and cinematographer
for Cinema Video of Hollywood; graduate assistant
for the School of Journalism and Broadcasting;
and member of Iota Beta Sigma.