

It's not TV, it's *B'Tipul* [*In Treatment*]: On the quality of discourse in *B'Tipul*

Itay Harlap*

Abstract

This article analyzes the reception of the television series *B'Tipul* (*In Treatment*, HOT3 2005, 2007) in the Israeli hegemonic discourse and the reasons the series was commonly referred to in Israel as a work of art, or to follow the common terminology in television studies as "quality television". In order to study the status of the series as "quality television", the article argues that it is necessary to look beyond the characteristics of the text and to study its context, including various intertexts, and above all paratexts and metatexts, such as promos, opening credits, reviews, articles, and interviews. In addition, there are various connections between the series and certain aspects of Israeli society that render it as possessing "quality". The article thus looks not only at some of the central elements in the series *B'Tipul*, but also at Israeli society, in which the series was created and met with such success.

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Hybridity in Israeli television: *Arab Labor*, the first Israeli-Arab sitcom

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Abstract

Humor and satire on Israeli television constitute a tool for examining questions regarding Israeli identity. As recognition of Israel's multicultural fabric increases, Israeli television provides new spaces for presenting segments of society that had so far been marginalized. This raises several questions, however. Are such representations of previously sidelined segments able to undermine the existing hegemony, to criticize the hegemonic perception of culture, and to put forward new alternatives or do they actually conserve and shore up the hegemony? These issues are examined via a case-study of *Arab Labor*, the first satirical sitcom written by Sayed Kashua, an Israeli Arab that places at its center Arabic-speaking Israeli protagonists and attempt to find their place in a society that pushes its Arab minority to the sidelines. We explore how *Arab Labor* represents the hyphenated identity of Arab-Israelis. We argue that the series has led to a change in how Arab-Israelis are presented on Israeli television, both in terms of the amount and nature of their visibility. The episodes we analyze center on three conflict themes that express the situation of Arab Israelis: the role of the Israeli identity card as a tool for representing hybrid identity; the attitudes towards Jewish holidays and history presenting opportunities for role-playing; and the presentation of Independence/Naqba Day – the essence of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict – as a reflection of the polysemic perception expressed in the series. The discussion of these themes is intertwined with a comparison with Kashua's literary works.

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About boys and girls: Mapping gender and family in television programming for children in Israel

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Abstract

Derived from a comparative international study, the findings presented in this article offer a map of representations of gender and family depicted in a sample of children's television programs broadcast on cable and satellite in Israel. As in other countries, a quantitative content analysis revealed the dominance of imported programming and the centrality of animation programs. Second, the social world presented in the programs was comprised mainly of white middle class people with almost twice the proportion of boys than girls. Third, in a majority of the programs there were very few portrayals of families of any kind, and those portrayed reinforce traditional structures which do not reflect recent social changes in the spheres of family and occupation. These findings are discussed in the context of various television genres and their target audiences. The discussion focuses on the contribution of these images to children's gender socialization as well as our understanding of this phenomenon in relation to the globalization of children's popular culture.

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An encounter with the enemy: The reception of a television interview with a terrorist by Hawkish Jewish-Israeli adolescents

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Abstract

This study deals with the reception of an "interview with the enemy". Its objective was to investigate the ways in which a television interview with Shifa al-Qudsi, a Palestinian female terrorist, who was caught on her way to perform a suicide bombing in Israel, was received by a group of Jewish-Israeli youth with hawkish political predispositions, while focusing on the emotional reactions of the viewers to the televised interview. The study was conducted in the tradition of reception research with a sample of 71 high school boys and girls. The qualitative methodologies used included focus groups and open-text questionnaires that were thematically analyzed in order to understand the range of reception patterns to the communicative text. The findings present a complex picture of viewers' reactions towards the interviewee. The predominant feeling among the Jewish-Israeli viewers was a marked attitude of hostility. However, this reaction was accompanied by feelings of sympathy, pity and compassion triggered by the para-social contact with the interviewee – a fragile-looking female Palestinian. The study identifies and maps the different "softening" strategies employed by the viewers in order to resolve this emotional dissonance between hatred and compassion.

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