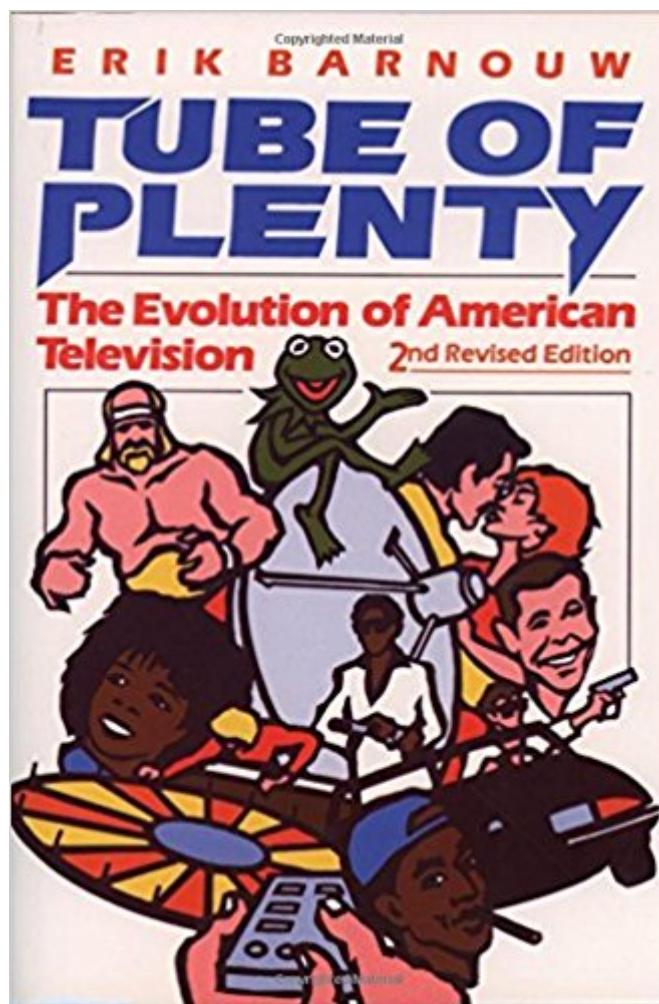


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# Tube Of Plenty: The Evolution Of American Television



## **Synopsis**

Based on the classic History of Broadcasting in the United States, *Tube of Plenty* represents the fruit of several decades' labor. When Erik Barnouw--premier chronicler of American broadcasting and a participant in the industry for fifty years--first undertook the project of recording its history, many viewed it as a light-weight literary task concerned mainly with "entertainment" trivia. Indeed, trivia such as that found in quiz programs do appear in the book, but Barnouw views them as part of a complex social tapestry that increasingly defines our era. To understand our century, we must fully comprehend the evolution of television and its newest extraordinary offshoots. With this fact in mind, Barnouw's new edition of *Tube of Plenty* explores the development and impact of the latest dramatic phases of the communications revolution. Since the first publication of this invaluable history of television and how it has shaped, and been shaped by, American culture and society, many significant changes have occurred. Assessing the importance of these developments in a new chapter, Barnouw specifically covers the decline of the three major networks, the expansion of cable and satellite television and film channels such as HBO (Home Box Office), the success of channels catering to special audiences such as ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network) and MTV (Music Television), and the arrival of VCRs in America's living rooms. He also includes an appendix entitled "questions for a new millennium," which will challenge readers not only to examine the shape of television today, but also to envision its future.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"On of the better texts on the history of TV. The writing is emotive and well informed. Students read this text with interest and many comment on its excellence."--William Prior, Ramapo College"Tube of Plenty has established itself as a book that every student of communications must read. It is also a book that every American citizen should read."--David Marc, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern CaliforniaPraise for previous editions:"A major achievement."--The Philadelphia Inquirer"By condensing his scholarly three-volume History of Broadcasting in the United States into a revised and updated paperback...Barnouw has produced an authoritative, well-informed, and highly readable account of the growth and present status of radio and television."--Backstage"A master of the on-point anecdote, Barnouw has provided us with an eminently readable guide to the forces and personalities, both on and off the air, that developed this nation's system of broadcasting. It is well worth turning off the set for three hours to read."--Fred Friendly, former President, CBS News"One of the most complete works on [television], a true history in the exact meaning of the word, thorough, and remarkably up-to-date."--Film Library Quarterly"Still the finest, most readable history of early TV we have."--Richard Gross, University of Wyoming"An excellent historical introduction to television's emergence in modern American life and culture. Useful for the undergraduate student interested in media/culture studies."--Mark Kosinski, Bradford College"The best single-volume history of radio and TV in this country."--The New York Times Book Review"The best single-volume history of television ever written."--Nathan Angell, Brown University"Barnouw's classic on the evolution of American television is a book worthy of n encore. In Tube, Barnouw achieves the most challenging of feats for a writer--he ennobles without pontificating. And he is as welcoming to the uninitiated as he is respectful of the well informed....With graceful and insightful storytelling, Barnouw also vividly illustrates how the medium's maturation has been intertwined with the course of American history. It's a brilliant stroke....With masterly elegance he crafts a compelling narrative tht simultaneously documents and evaluates television's past and gives us a framework for engaging the future. Understandably, every scholar examining TV history cites Erik Barnouw."--Television Quarterly"A condensation of much of the material in his monumental three-volume History of Broadcasting in the United States....Tube of Plenty is ideal for undergraduate reading....His is solid libertarian history based on careful reading of primary sources, years of work in the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcast, and Sound Division, and enormous skill in synthesizing huge amounts of material....Barnouw devotes a lot of space to the notion of White House news management. Just the chronology of that issue alone would make an important unit for an undergraduate history class."--American Journalism"The best general history of television available. An integrated social-institutional-content history. It doesn't fall

into the traps of simplistic technological determination, nor does it ignore the importance of the industrial organization and development of the medium."--Michael Griffin, University of Minnesota" Lively, detailed and briskly written, this panoramic survey is the best I know. Accessible to undergraduates as well as more advanced students."--Stuart Liebman, Queens College, CUNY"Excellent."--Raymond Foery, Quinnipiac College

Erik Barnouw, Professor Emeritus of Dramatic Arts at Columbia University, co-founded and chaired Columbia's Film Division for many years. He also helped to organize, and headed, the Writers Guild of America. He is Editor in Chief of the International Encyclopedia of Communications and the author of several books, including Indian Film (with S. Krishnaswamy) and The Magician and the Cinema.

While the book does go into more detail than it needs to. You can expect this book not to skip any important details. I got this book because it was required for my class, but I do find it's descriptive telling on how television has evolved from radio to what it is now to be fascinating. While that could just be because of my love for television and film, I still rate this book a 4/5.

I had to read this book for a class and I was pleasantly pleased about the product. He gave a very thorough account on broadcasting up until the book was written. Some parts he had some tendencies to drag on, but for the most part he did a good job of even keeping a 19 year old girl like me engaged. He really tackled the facts well and sought to make them interesting, just went off on the occasional tangents. I especially appreciated that he remained neutral on matters of major controversy, just stating straight fact and not enforcing his opinion, especially with the emergence of politics, which was necessary as politics is a big part of the broadcast world.

Excellent product and seller.

It's amazing to understand the media's roll in the history of our country. Quite relevant today with the whole Murdock issue. I would suggest that anyone wanting to understand the issues of the day provide themselves with this background.

No issues with seller, this is just a s\*\*\*ty book

is on top of their game when it comes to making it easy and accurate for you to purchase and receive your product.

Written by a college prof. Thought it was about television but it is too much about race. It is too bad.

This used to be a standard text in media studies classes - I am not sure who the champ is now, but it is safe to say that this used to be the most popular history of American television out there. This is a condensed version of a longer history that Barnouw wrote. It seems that this endeavor probably seems a lot less vital than it once did, back when television was America's number one pastime and source of information about the world. It may still be that, but the advent of the internet has clouded the picture and cast doubt on what were widely accepted verities. I liked the first part of the book the most. It really is great to read a clear summary of the history of radio and television technology, how the first stations and networks came to be, and who were some of the big names in this great leap forward - David Sarnoff, Marconi, Edwin Armstrong, and others. It is also interesting to read a little about the first attempts at video technologies, such as the Nipkow disc. There is not a lot about the personalities involved, so in that sense the writing can be a bit colorless. Around the 1950s, Barnouw changes his approach. He shifts his attention more to the political side of things. There is a discussion of the Senator McCarthy affair, and the roles of Edward R. Murrow and his producer, Fred Friendly, and the infamous quiz show cheating scandal that involved Prof. Mark Van Doren. Barnouw follows the trends of what shows are popular - the vogues for Westerns, quiz shows, and spy thrillers for example - and lists what the top 10 shows are at various points. He delves into the role that television coverage of the Vietnam War played. The book becomes, in my opinion, not enough about television and radio, and too much about American political history. That topic has been covered extensively and better, in other books. It would have been interesting to read more about what happened in the executive suites of the broadcasting giants, and how the technology and the business side of things developed over the years.

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