are morons. That may not seem like the vast majority of the population cause it implies not merely that with his definition of quality— that people who watch 'trash' (that is 'quality' is superior to 'trash', but It's a thoroughly elitist doctrine, be­ class, Left-liberal circles probably do. which most people in white middle­ Littlemore appears to be 'our' pom­ it seems that some are more entitled to their opinion, but in this case titled to their opinion, but in this case level of objective fact. Everyone's en­ what is and what is not 'quality'. That's a perfectly defensible posi­ what is and what is not 'quality'. What isn't defensible is for those judgements to be raised to the level of objective fact. Everyone's ent­ to the program under discussion is something you don't care for your­—say Hinch. But Littlemore's partiality becomes much more ob­vious when he ridicules something you yourself enjoy; Sport was the real eye-opener for me. He obviously despises it. What's more, he profes­ses not to be able to tell the difference between a rugby league State of Origin commentary by HG Nelson and the genuine Channel Nine article. If this is true it betrays an awe­inspiring absence of humour; if not, an extraordinary capacity for disingenuous snobbery. I suspect both.

For people who share Littlemore's views on sport, perhaps the easiest way to avoid being seduced by his illusion of objectivity is to imagine his reaction to your favorite 'downmarket' American comedy. I find The Simpsons and Cheers particularly helpful in this respect. Bet­ter still is to place him actually in the bar at Cheers. Does the lip curl with distaste? I think so. It's a salutary experience to find that contempt directed at you, rather than some hapless sub-editor on a provincial newspaper who can't spell the name of the prime minister.

The problem with MediaWatch isn't just that Littlemore demands a shared set of values. It's also that too often he fails to put into practice the sceptical approach demanded of others, particularly when it comes to people and projects which he instinctively feels he should be in sympathy with. Three examples come to mind. The first was the spectacle of Lit­tlemore and that other thoroughly civilised critic John Mortimer dis­cussing the virtues of 'quality British TV' (ie Rumpole) as though it were fine wine or classical music. The second is his uncritical (even cring­ing) attitude to foreign publications such as the New Yorker and the Sunday Times. (The latter hasn't been a quality paper in the sense that Lit­tlemore imagines for at least ten years.) The third was a more recent feature on the remote communities satellite TV service, Imparja. By most accounts (Michael Meadows in ALR 134, for example), Imparja has been by no means an unqualified success. Yet Littlemore's trip to the Alice produced nothing more than a puff for what he evidently saw as a good cause, rather than a story.

It's a pity that the show demands such a conformist and essentially ABC-centred view from its audience, since many of its more detailed criticisms of the media are valid and important. The observation that a reporter from one of the commercial stations kitted himself out in a paramilitary-style jacket to report a car chase incident was a recent case in point.

But the value of such comment is viti­ated by Littlemore's acerbic (and too often downright petty) high­mindedness—a state which leaves no room for self-deprecation, or in­deed any acknowledgement that he himself is part of the media. He presents the case against shoddy journalism like the barrister he is. What he is after is not so much an understanding of the media as a con­viction. The presentation of the evidence may be cogent enough, and highly entertaining, but the overall effect is dulled by the knowledge that, when it comes to judging quality, it's Littlemore himself who makes the laws.

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