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PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE WHITE HOUSE BY GORDON PARKS

Cutting red tape and the mustard

Some time ago, a Palm Beach lady, deeply concerned over the President's back ailment, decided to send him a mustard plaster, her own favorite remedy. To make sure it got to him, she gave it to the one man who, in her opinion, could cut his way through White House red tape—NBC News correspondent Ray Scherer. She couldn't have made a better choice. Scherer (who isn't saying what happened to the mustard, though we notice the President's back is better) has covered the White House for NBC through nine history-crammed years. He has known three Presidents. He has lived their lives...taken their vacations (and all too seldom his own, he stoically admits). It was Scherer who rode with Truman on the lonely trip back to Missour in 1953...Scherer who gave America the first details o Eisenhower's illness...Scherer who went with Ike to th Paris Summit. More recently, it was Scherer who sat up or Election Night with John F. Kennedy. With this rich experience, Ray Scherer gives NBC audiences an author itative view of the world's most important news source Knowledgeable, articulate, alert, Scherer is typical of the magnificent team of reporters who consistently attract the largest audiences to NBC News—whenever news occurs.

it happens on

TELEVISION QUARTERLY

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Published by The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in cooperation with the Syracuse University Television and Radio Center

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Those who are associated with the planning of this
Journal believe it is time for a penetrating, provocative and
continuing examination of television as
an art, a science, an industry, and a social force.

Accordingly, our purpose is to be both independent
and critical. We hold that the function of
this Journal is to generate currents of new ideas
about television, and we will therefore
try to assure publication of all material which stimulates
thought and has editorial merit.

This Journal has only one aim—to take a serious look at television.

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TELEVISION AND GOVERNMENT

It has been less than a year since Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton N. Minow, in his first speech before the National Association of Broadcasters, characterized much of what he saw on television as "a vast wasteland." In this period the basic issues related to the extent of government control and influence over broadcasting have been argued from all points of view, and heated debate has raged over the proper role of the Commission and its individual members.

Television Quarterly takes no stand and favors no argument in this controversy. It feels, however, that much of the quarreling has produced more heat and less light than is required for an issue of this magnitude. It has, therefore, asked two informed observers to open discussion of this topic by considering, in light of their own experience, the degree to which government can, or should, control broadcasting's ultimate product—its programs. *Walter B. Emery* sets the historical framework of government's relationship to broadcasting and points out that although the Commission's powers are limited, its members rightfully retain some legal and persuasive weapons with which to encourage a more effective use of the airwaves. *W. Theodore Pierson* takes a forceful and distinct point of view toward recent activities of the Commission, maintaining that censorship may take many forms but is to be abhorred in all of them.

Dr. Emery is a professor in the Television and Radio Department at Michigan State University. He earned his law degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1934 and his Ph.D. from Wisconsin in 1939. Over the years he has combined a career of teaching at various universities with several years of service in key legal posts with the Federal Communications Commission. He now serves as an educational and legal consultant to both educational and commercial broadcast stations and has recently published a book, *Broadcasting and Government: Responsibilities and Regulations*, which is reviewed in this issue. *Mr. Pierson* received his LL.B. from George Washington University. He is a member of the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, the District of Columbia Bar, The Federal Communications Bar, and the law firm of Pierson, Ball and Dowd.

GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF BROADCASTING

WALTER B. EMERY

I should like to say at the outset that the role of government in American broadcasting is a limited role. There is a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding as to what the FCC may and may not do regarding radio and television programs. Recently, an erudite gentleman in the academic world vehemently protested the broadcast of a network commercial immediately following the announcement of the death of a great public official. He said to me that he thought Mr. Minow at the FCC ought to tell the network officials to avoid this kind of programming. While I agreed with him that the placement of the commercial was not in good taste, I explained to him that if Mr. Minow were to do this, as an official act, he would violate the law against censorship.

A short time ago, I had a conversation with an outstanding commercial broadcaster who complained that he had received a letter from the FCC, in connection with his renewal application, raising some questions as to the over-all operation of his station during the preceding license period. He was angry because he felt that the Commission was unduly meddling in the affairs of the station. While I could sympathize to some extent with his unhappy feelings (nobody enjoys having his judgment questioned by governmental officials),

I pointed out to him that the Commission, under the law, is *directed* to grant licenses *only* if the public interest will be served. I further pointed out to him that if the FCC Commissioners had any question in their minds as to whether a station's program performance or technical operation had served the public interest, they, in my opinion, would violate their oath of office if they failed to make further inquiry to resolve their doubts.

While the law itself may be ambiguous as to the *precise* extent of the Commission's regulatory power over broadcast programming, I don't think there is any question but that it has *some* authority and some positive responsibilities to exercise it. The legislative history of the Communications Act plus administrative practice and court opinion unequivocally confirm this.

The original Federal Radio Commission, established in 1927, assumed from the beginning that it was required to consider program proposals and service in carrying out its licensing functions. The application forms which it prescribed contained questions as to the amounts of time devoted or proposed to be devoted to various types of programs.[1] From time to time, this Commission made reports to Congress regarding this practice. And by the time Congress was considering the replacement of the 1927 law with the Communications Act of 1934, there appeared to be little doubt that the government did have authority and responsibility to consider programs before granting or renewing broadcast licenses.

In Congressional hearings on one of the bills which culminated in the 1934 law and the establishment of the FCC, the National Association of Broadcasters presented the following statement:

> It is the manifest duty of the licensing authority in passing upon applications for licenses or the renewal thereof, to determine whether or not the applicant is rendering or can render an adequate public service. Such service necessarily includes broadcasting of a considerable proportion of programs devoted to education, religion, labor, agricultural and similar activities concerned with human betterment. In actual practice over a period of seven years, as the records of the Federal Radio Commission amply prove, this has been the principal test which the Commission has applied in dealing with broadcasting applications.[2]

In hearings on the same bill, the Chairman of the Federal Radio Commission testified that "it is the duty of the Commission in passing on whether or not that station should be re-licensed for another period, to say whether or not its past performance during the last license period has been in the public interest."[3]

When the 1934 Act was being debated in Congress, there was a great deal of public agitation and pressure for a provision in the law which would require stations to set aside substantial portions of their broadcast time to be used by educational institutions and other non-profit organizations. In fact, the public feeling was so strong that 23 Senators voted for the Wagner-Hatfield Amendment which proposed to allocate 25 per cent of all radio broadcasting facilities to educational, religious, agricultural, labor, cooperative, and similar non-profit-making interests. While Congress did not adopt the amendment,[4] it did pass section 307(c) of the Act directing the FCC to make a study of the proposal and report to Congress its findings and recommendations.[5]

The Commission did make a study and, in its report to Congress in 1935, advised against the adoption of the legislative proposal. Its main reason for opposing the proposal was that the Commission already had adequate authority to achieve the ends that Congress had in mind.[6]

This point of view had been supported not only by legislative history and prior administrative practice but by court opinion as well. In the famous KFKB case, in which the FRC denied the application of Dr. Brinkley for renewal of his license, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia stated that the Commission was "necessarily called upon to consider the character and quality of the service to be rendered and that in considering an application for renewal of a license an important consideration is the past conduct of the applicant."[7]

In a 1932 case the Court of Appeals reaffirmed this position. The commission had denied the application of a Reverend Dr. Shuler for renewal of his station license on grounds that he unjustly attacked individuals, organizations and public officials and that, in general, his programs tended to be "sensational" in character rather than "instructive and entertaining."[8] The appellate court sustained the Commission's decision and, on appeal, the U. S. Supreme Court found no grounds for reversing the decision.[9]

Some years later, in reviewing the network regulations, the Supreme Court held that the Commission's licensing function cannot be discharged "merely by finding that there are no technological objections to the granting of a license. . . ." The Court further stated that "since the very inception of Federal regulation of radio, comparative considerations as to the service to be rendered have governed the application of the standard of 'public interest, convenience, or necessity.' . . . we are asked to regard the Commission as a kind of traffic officer,

policing the wave lengths to prevent stations from interfering with each other. But the Act does not restrict the Commission merely to supervision of the traffic. It puts upon the Commission the burden of determining the composition of that traffic."[10]

While these court opinions did sustain the Commission's power to regulate programming, it should not be overlooked that this power is *definitely* a limited one. Section 326 of the Act specifically prohibits the Commission from censoring radio and television programs. It reads:

> Nothing in this Act shall be understood or construed to give the Commission the power of censorship over the radio communication or signals transmitted by any radio station and no regulation or condition shall be promulgated or fixed by the Commission which shall interfere with the right of free speech by means of radio communication.[11]

There are differences of opinion as to what this provision means. Some say that it implements the First Amendment to the Constitution and guarantees broadcasters the same rights of free speech as those enjoyed by the press. They argue, therefore, that it precludes any concern on the part of the Commission with the program service of licensees, except in cases where there may be violations of specific laws such as those prohibiting lotteries and obscene programs.[12] However, in my opinion (and it is confirmed by administrative practice and court decisions), the provision means that the Commission is prohibited from telling a station what program or programs it shall or shall not carry, but is not prohibited from evaluating past program service when the station applies for renewal of its license. In the Brinkley case, the Commission argued before the Court of Appeals that it had made no attempt "to scrutinize broadcast matter prior to its release" and that administrative review of the station's past conduct was not censorship. The Court agreed.

In the Shuler case, the same court, after referring to the types of programs that had been carried by the station, upheld the Commission's refusal to grant a license renewal, stating that "this is neither censorship nor previous restraint, nor is it a whittling away of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, or an impairment of their free exercise. . . ."[13]

While these early court cases did sanction administrative review of station performance, it must not be overlooked that these cases were decided thirty years ago, before the FCC was created. It has been about twenty years since the Supreme Court, in the network

regulations case, upheld the FCC's power and responsibility in the program field.

Since these court opinions, the Commission has issued statements of policy specifying service criteria to be applied in deciding whether to authorize new broadcast stations or renew licenses of those on the air.[14] Application forms have been modified requiring the submission of detailed information in terms of program categories set forth by the Commission. In a proceeding now pending, the Commission proposes to extend further these forms and require additional information along this line.[15] Some broadcasters contend that these proposed regulations go too far—are too detailed and prescriptive in character and, if adopted in their present form, will constitute censorship in violation of Section 326 of the Commissions Act. Since the courts have never had an opportunity to review this proposed type of regulation, we can only speculate as to what their attitude might be.

As the Commission has recognized, however, the manner and the extent to which the Commission exercises its programming powers could raise serious legal questions.[16] And, conceivably, program "guidelines" and application forms could be made so detailed and prescriptive that they might unduly invade the discretion of licensees —an invasion which the Commission has consistently sought to avoid,[17] and to which courts might very well object on constitutional and statutory grounds.

In my opinion, the Commission does a service to broadcasters and the public at large when it states the general principles by which it will be guided in deciding whether station operations have served the public interest. As one of the Commissioners has said, "It is highly unfair for the Commission to lie in ambush, so to speak, while practices are developing which violate concepts of public interest, convenience and necessity, and then make an example of an uninformed broadcaster." He further stated that he thought it was the Commission's duty "to inform the public through appropriate orders or reports of the criteria" to be applied in advance of any action against an individual broadcaster.[18]

This would seem to make sense, and I do not believe such regulatory action is an unreasonable exercise of power under the Communications Act. However, the criteria adopted and the regulations that implement them should never constitute a rigidly prescriptive and inflexible mold for station performance. They should be considered only as indicia of the types and areas of service which, on the basis of experience, have generally been thought to be related to

community needs and interests. The broadcaster, in my opinion, should be free to deviate from these "guidelines," so long as he can show that he has knowledge of and concern for his particular community and can prove that what he proposes will more effectively serve its needs and interests.

Recently, more individual citizens and organizations have been voicing their opinions regarding radio and television programs. Many have become dissatisfied with the low quality and stereotyped character of some programs carried by networks and stations, and they have honestly and emphatically said so. The result, I believe, has been a marked improvement generally in broadcast material presented. New types of entertainment features, showing more creativity and imagination on the part of producers and performers, have appeared. New dramatic formats, finer music, more informative and exciting news and public affairs programs—these and other types of educational and cultural offerings are occupying important positions in network and station schedules.

We can be grateful to Governor Collins and the National Association of Broadcasters for doing what they can to encourage this trend. There is evidence that the industry is becoming more research-minded in terms of finding out more clearly areas of human need in which broadcasting can be made more effective, and is exploring new means of drawing upon the resources of educational institutions to achieve this objective.

At the same time, the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, the Educational Television and Radio Center, and other important educational organizations concerned with broadcasting, are seeking new and more effective ways to cooperate with industry and government to the end that the public interest will be more fully served.

Section 303(g) of the Communications Act requires the FCC to "study new uses for radio...and generally encourage the larger and more effective use of radio in the public interest." I believe Mr. Minow and his associates at the FCC are to be commended for using what legal and persuasive powers they have to carry out this statutory mandate. But as helpful as they may be, what they can do is limited. In the final analysis, the real strength of the American system of broadcasting (and I am sure Mr. Minow would be one of the first to admit it) does not lie in governmental authority but, as Justice Douglas has said, lies "in the dignity, resourcefulness and intelligence of the people."[19] No one segment of society can do the job that needs to be done. It will require the intelligent, responsible

and cooperative efforts of many citizens and their leaders in government, industry, education, religion, and other important areas of our national life.

NOTES

1. *Hearings on Jurisdiction of Radio Commission*, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries (1928), p. 26.
2. Report by Federal Communications Commission, *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees* (March 7, 1946), p. 10.
3. *Hearings on H. R. 8301*, 73rd Cong., p. 117.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 350–352.
5. 48 Stat. 1084.
6. Federal Communications Commission, *Report to Congress Pursuant to Section 307(c) of the Communications Act of 1934*, January 22, 1935.
7. Transcript of Record, No. 5240, in *KFKB Broadcasting Association, Inc. v. Federal Radio Commission*, 60 App. D. C. 79, 47 F. (2d) 670, 672.
8. Transcript of Record, No. 5561, in *Trinity Methodist Church South v. Federal Radio Commission*, 61 App. D. C. 311, 62 F.(2d) 850(1932).
9. 288 U. S. 599, January 16, 1933.
10. *National Broadcasting Company v. United States*, 319 U. S. 190, 216–17 (May 10, 1943).
11. 48 Stat. 1082–83.
12. A spokesman for this point of view is FCC Commissioner T. A. M. Craven. See his dissenting opinion *In the Matter of Amendment of Section IV (Statement of Program Service) of Broadcast Application Forms 301, 303, 314 and 315*, FCC Docket 12673, 1RR 98:21.
13. *Trinity Methodist Church South v. Federal Radio Commission*, 61 App. D. C. 311, 62 F. (2d) 850(1932).
14. See *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees* issued by FCC, March 6, 1946; and *Report and Statement of Policy Re: Commission en banc Programming Inquiry*, 25 F. R. 7291, issued August 3, 1960.
15. See FCC Docket 12673, *supra*.
16. *Report and Statement of Policy Re: Commission en banc Programming Inquiry, supra.*
17. *Captain James E. Hamilton*, 16 RR 170 (1957). Other cases in point: *Brush-Moore Newspapers, Inc.*, 11 RR 641 (1956) *Appalachian Broadcasting Co.*, 11 RR 1327 (1956); *Travelers Broadcasting Service Corporation*, 12 RR 689 (1956); *WKAT, Inc.*, 22 FCC 117, 12 RR 1 (1957).
18. "The Role of the Federal Communications Commission in Programming," address of Commissioner Frederick W. Ford before the West Virginia Broadcasters Association, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, August 28, 1959.
19. *Public Utilities Commission v. Follak*, 343 U. S. 451, 468, Dissenting Opinion.

THE ACTIVE EYEBROW—A CHANGING STYLE FOR CENSORSHIP

W. THEODORE PIERSON

The Federal Communications Commission in recent months has expertly used every device at hand to effect changes in the content of broadcast communications. And, without indulging legalistic rationale or definitions, it seems that logical persons ought to conclude that changes in the content of television programs resulting from the exercise of Commission power and leverage amount in ultimate terms to centralized dictation and control by government. And, if the First Amendment[1] and Section 326 of the Communications Act[2] were not intended to avoid this result, then those legal mandates have no practical content and must be dismissed as mere pious expressions that the skillful use of form and procedures can subvert.

For one to say that the Commission is only doing what it must do to perform its duties under the law is to state an excuse for censorship, not a justifiable cause. In the first place, Section 326 in express terms makes it clear that no duties imposed or powers vested by the Act can be the occasion or the excuse for censorship. In the second place, the Commission's current campaign of television program reform has no clear connection with any problems or difficulties with which it has been confronted in the exercise of its conceded regulatory powers. Third, television program reform appears to have become a

special and discrete project that is carried forward through the leverage the Commission can achieve in the combined use of public pronouncements, rule-making and application procedures.

Let me briefly describe the means and methods the Commission has combined to employ its power and leverage to drastically change the content of broadcast communications. First, a very articulate and eloquent Chairman publicly condemns, approves and suggests: Adventure-action, family-situation, quiz and old movies are disfavored. Educational, children's and public affairs programs are favored. The time for, the purpose, and the quality of network children's programs is described in substantial detail. The time for additional news programs is suggested. These are almost always coupled, however, with two irreconcilable expressions—one, that censorship is anathema to the Chairman and, two, that it is the Commission's duty to review and oversee program performance.

Now perhaps the broadcasters should not infer that, in performing their program duty to the public, they must pay heed to the programs the Chairman condemns, approves or suggests. But since most licensees, in paying him heed, can avoid problems at renewal, stay in business and make money, the bulk of broadcasters will naturally conform to his program ideas. And if conformity is our goal, I completely misapprehend the American scheme.

But the action is not limited to eloquent rhetoric by the Chairman. In rule-making proceedings that ostensibly deal only with forms and records, questions are asked and records required that can have no other purpose than to provide the Commission with information as to program categories that it has indicated it favors or disfavors. Now a timorous licensee, naturally eager to please his licensor, might conclude that the Commission is only compiling a sort of historical record. But it is much more natural and prudent for him to think that the Commission is duty-checking and that his license might be delayed or in jeopardy unless his program performance and proposals show a healthy quantity of the categories favored by the Commission.

Moreover, when a renewal is filed and either past or proposed program performance shows a dearth of the favored programs, the licensee is attacked by a mass of questions from the Commission, most of which tend to imply that he has done things he ought not to have done and has not done things he ought to have done in his program performance. Even when he has no application pending, field investigators may invade his station with highly active eyebrows and a series of loaded questions.

The broadcaster is not without perceptive and deductive powers. And since his life is more secure when he is *persona grata* at the Commission, the proverbial ton-of-bricks is more force than is needed to bend him to the Commission's will; a menacing stare is sufficient.

I ask this question: Can any reasonable and logical person conclude that the expert mixing and timing of these Commission activities has any other purpose but to dictate programming to the extent that it can be done by indirect and disguised means? If affirmative, can this purpose and effect be legally or philosophically justified because done by indirect rather than by direct means? If the means make no difference in either the constitutional or philosophical sense, why play hide-and-seek longer?—why does not the Commission directly specify program formats? Moreover, if these subtle pressures by the Commission have no significant effect upon programming, why should the Commission waste time on a thing so futile and burdensome? If Commission efforts are effective, it's censorship; if ineffective, it's silly.

One thought occurs to me—the avoidance of constitutional sanctions is more probable if disguised means are used, simply because clear and explicit justiciable issues are less likely to be drawn and understood. Which I think is unfortunate, because I believe that the Commissioners who have enthusiastically supported this project sincerely believe that they are merely doing their honest duty and that no constitutional questions are involved. They may be right, but I submit that the issue is sufficiently arguable that the courts should be given a fair opportunity to understand and decide the questions in context.

Let me make it clear—there is nothing wrong with a Commissioner making speeches that exhort broadcasters to do better. There is nothing wrong with rule-making on forms and record-keeping. There is nothing wrong with the Commission asking questions in application proceedings. What is wrong is for these seemingly innocent actions to be used as disguises for program control by the Commission. That the form is legal veils the censorship; it does not eliminate it.

It is my view that serious constitutional questions are involved, because I believe that the First Amendment and Section 326 were expressions of the American ideological goal: a free and open society. And in spite of the doubts of many of the intellectual elite, I believe that a free and open mass society should be our goal. But such a society cannot exist if mass communicators must conform to a central authority.

There have been numerous justifications and excuses offered for

Commission intrusion into broadcast programming. They range from denials that the Commission actions constitute program interference to implied admissions that it does interfere but that the interference is an excusable consequence of the Commission's performance of its lawful functions. I submit that upon analysis these justifications and excuses are nothing more than euphemisms for censorship.

One of the reasons frequently advanced for Commission dictation of program formats is that a scarcity of facilities exists, since all who would like to communicate to the public and all of the special wishes of the public cannot be accommodated.[3] When advanced, this argument treats broadcasting as uniquely scarce compared to other media and, as a consequence, government control of its programs has a unique legal and constitutional justification. I submit that broadcasting is not unique with respect to the scarcity factor, though the causes of scarcity in other media may not in all cases be identical.

Someone must select what is distributed to the public on a mass basis simply because it would be and has been impossible for society to provide facilities for all the messages that anyone might want to direct to the public at any given time. Since all who desire to communicate through the daily press, periodicals, motion pictures, lecture and concert halls cannot be assured of access to such media, a scarcity exists in every instance. As a consequence, a selector of the messages that shall be communicated has always been an absolute necessity. The broadcast licensee, the newspaper editor, the magazine editor, the motion picture producer, distributor and exhibitor, and the book publisher, day in and day out, exercise this function of selection, the results of which are to grant a few and deny many access to these media—all because facilities necessary to meet all demands are not available.

The scarcity in broadcast facilities can be technical or economic, or both. The scarcity in other media can be technical, economic, or both. There is no reason, on the basis of the scarcity factor, to control the selectors of one and not the other.

The arguments that have raged over the centuries have never been whether facilities are scarce or whether selectors are a necessity, but whether there should be one centrally controlled selector or many and diverse selectors.

In unfree and closed societies, the single selector—government—has been the choice; or it might really be better stated to say that unfree and closed societies, at least in substantial part, have resulted from the government controlling or being the selector.

In free and open societies, the choice has been for many free and

uncontrolled selectors. Again it might be better stated to say that free and open societies have resulted from the choice of free selectors.

Of course, history and the present afford examples of many gradations between these two extremes, but it can also be suggested that there is a direct relationship between the freedom and number of the selectors and the freedom and openness of the society.

One thing more ought to be said—no single aspect of the American social, economic and political revolution was so unique and noble as the extreme degree of liberty for mass communicators it sought to grant and guard.

It seems unthinkable to me that we, almost without second thought, would blithely trade any free communicators for controlled communicators and start merrily down the road to government control of the selectors, just because we thought there was too much violence on television or the fare was, in some respects, dull and uncultured. It remains unthinkable, in spite of how loudly some theorists and politicians advance their unproven thesis that the net effect of present fare is socially bad.

Human institutions are, at best, a fairly good example of amateur craftsmanship. The broadcaster as a mass communicator is hardly unique either on the side of good or bad. He is uniquely exposed, however, to being the boy whose whipping works off the annoying sense of guilt of many other imperfect individuals and institutions.

I am not suggesting that it is wrong for others to criticize the broadcaster merely because the imperfect performance of these others contributes substantially to a lot of the things for which a broadcaster is blamed. In a free society even unfair criticism from soiled hands is essential; but when a medium of communication is singled out as the cause of most of the juvenile delinquency, cultural mediocrity, political immaturity and general immorality of our society, we are coming dangerously close to the type of mass psychology of scapegoatism that supported and sustained Adolf Hitler.

When the parents who bore the juvenile delinquents, their neighbors who contributed to their delinquency, the educators who fall short in educating, the church whose moral influence is challengeable, the Comstocks who fear the profanity of reality, the pundits of a press that peddles brutal culture, the politicians who must always have an answer, all converge on the broadcaster as the scapegoat, I think it is time to be gravely concerned about the future of free mass communicators.

I should think that competitors in other media who support governmental control of broadcast programs would pause to consider

whether this is not really a cannibal's picnic—that while they may eat at this one, they might be eaten at the next.

Another justification for Commission interference with programming is that it must interfere because broadcasters use the public domain. This justification simply cannot stand analysis or analogy.

I had always understood that one of the primary purposes of public facilities was to promote commerce and communication among our people. I have never understood that our liberties depended upon our avoiding use of the public domain.

If use of the public domain deprives a communication medium of its right to be free from government censorship, then what medium today has the right to be free? With the explosion of electronic and space satellite developments, it is not too far-fetched to suggest that in a few years no substantial or important communications medium will function without using the public's radio frequencies to a substantial degree.

Another justification for government intrusion into broadcast programming has been the fact that broadcasters are licensed. It is difficult to find any medium of communication that, in some part of its business, does not operate pursuant to one or more governmental licenses or permits. In any event, there is no judicial precedent for the use of the fact of licensing as a justification to whittle away freedom of speech or press. On the contrary, the very fact that the licensing mode of regulation has been used, which by definition is a prior restraint, in the past has caused the courts to be extraordinarily diligent in making certain that the licensing instrument was not used to abridge liberty of speech or press.

Another defense of Commission program activities has been that it is only attempting to enforce "balanced programming" and this does not violate the constitutionally protected liberties of the broadcaster, since such a violation occurs only when the Commission singles out a given program and orders the broadcaster to broadcast or not broadcast such a program. While I have been unable to find any precedent for the distinction that it is wrong to interdict one program but not wrong to interdict a whole category of programs, the fact is that the Commission, in examining proposals and performances of broadcasters with the view of determining balance, actually coerces broadcasters into carrying many programs they would not otherwise carry, with the necessary consequence that the broadcaster does not carry many programs that, but for Commission coercion, he would have carried.

The balanced programming goal that is urged upon the Commission

can result only in conformed stereotyped formats by broadcasters throughout the country, in place of the highly diverse formats that diversified selection and competition can and will bring about.

Free competition and free judgment among many and diverse selectors of broadcast programs ultimately results in a balanced program yield from the industry as a whole, as has been proven by radio in its maturity. It is true, of course, that highly specialized formats have not been adopted at this stage of television's development, but there is every reason to believe that as television stations proliferate, more and more specialized formats will be broadcast, just as has been the case in radio, magazines and motion pictures.

Our impatience with the failure of this youngest of mass communication media—television—to reach the full potential of maturity in its youth ought not to be an excuse for departing from a basic American principle of free mass communicators.

Another explanation for the Commission's intrusion into programming is that it merely requires a broadcaster to broadcast what he has promised to broadcast. This is simply not true. It is impossible for a licensee to meet his obligation to constantly respond to the needs and interests of his community and still predict three or four years in advance what his program format is going to be. The only predictable certainty about public needs and tastes is that they are eternally and constantly changing. Program sources likewise are constantly opening and closing. Jockeying between competitors for advantage is an hour-to-hour process. So a licensee simply cannot, with any honesty or feeling of responsibility, make specific promises as to the programs or types of programs he will broadcast over a long period of time. And the Commission, in its application forms and in many decisions, has clearly recognized this to be the case.

The most ludicrous excuse for government censorship is that private censorship abounds. It is alleged that a few advertising agencies, talent agencies, networks and rating services share control and dictation of television programming and that, therefore, government is excused for taking control.

If diversity and an open society are our goals rather than conformity and a closed society, then our move should not be toward more centralization and conformity but toward more decentralization and diversity. And how, pray, can we minimize decentralization and diversity and maximize centralization and conformity more than to substitute one government for the several private interests who now are accused (though far from convicted) of sharing control? If a few in control is bad, is it not worse to reduce the few to one?

Imperfect men staff both governmental agencies and private institutions. The corruptive influences of power and personal aggrandizement permeate both; for while all government may not be evil, popular government reflects with depressing fidelity the evil of the society it governs just as mass communication reflects the cultural level of its society. This is not to criticize either popular government or mass communication as instruments of popular will but, rather, to suggest that to substitute the former for the latter has no conceivable advantage to a free society.

NOTES

1. Congress shall make no law * * * abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press * * *. U.S.CONST. Amend. I.
2. Nothing in this Act shall be understood or construed to give the Commission the power of censorship over the radio communications or signals transmitted by any radio station, and no regulation or condition shall be promulgated or fixed by the Commission which shall interfere with the right of free speech by means of radio communication. 47 U.S.C. s 326.
3. The scarcity factor as presented by its most sophisticated proponents is apparently not based upon the contention that our society can economically afford more broadcast outlets than are technically available, but rather upon the contention that scarcity results simply from the circumstance that not every person can broadcast what and when he chooses; and it seems to be a matter of indifference whether a person's inability to do so arises from technical, economic or some other cause. Of course, the limitation on the number of broadcast outlets probably is and will be economic rather than technical, as evidenced by the Commission's current concern about the surfeit of radio stations and NAB President Collins' concern about the same thing developing in television. In terms of the volume of its yield of things communicated, broadcast communications are not scarce compared to other media, since in sheer volume the industry's yield is obviously greater than any other medium, and perhaps greater than all of the other media combined.

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THE TELEVISION ARTS

Concern with the quality of television's product originates with the medium's practitioners, many of whom are constantly striving toward a more fundamental understanding of the complex form of their medium. Three television producers express their concerns and discoveries here.

Gordon Hyatt argues that the medium really has no form to call its own, but that it might bring the "telementary" approach to a point where it could rightfully become the "true" art of television. *Burton Benjamin* reviews the documentary heritage of television, emphasizing the contribution of the theatrical film documentary to the medium. He suggests that television must build upon its foundation with fundamental themes reflecting "man against his world." *Hubbell Robinson* sounds a challenge to the industry reminiscent of President Kennedy's 1960 "time to get moving again" call to the nation. Robinson's plea for television to "start imagining again" was first made in an address before the Radio and Television Executives Society in New York City in late 1961. Although important excerpts of his speech have been recorded or reported upon elsewhere, *Television Quarterly* felt it deserved reproduction in its entirety.

Gordon Hyatt, a native of Springfield, Massachusetts, is a *Magna Cum Laude* graduate of Boston University. He joined the staff of WCBS TV as Associate Producer in 1961, and was promoted to Staff Producer for the station's Documentary Unit within the same year. Among programs he has been associated with are included the special documentaries "Eichmann and Israel," "The Invisible City," and "The Newburgh Dilemma." *Mr. Benjamin* has been a newsman since high school days, when he worked as a stringer for the Cleveland *News*. He was associated with United Press and Newspaper Enterprises Associated before World War II. After Coast Guard service in the North Atlantic during the war, Benjamin joined RKO Pathe, where he spent ten years as a writer-producer-director before joining the Public Affairs Department of CBS News in 1957 to develop *The Twentieth Century*. Now in his fifth year as Executive Producer of this distinguished series, Benjamin lays proud claim to two "Emmy" awards for his work. *Hubbell Robinson's* service in the industry has qualified him for admission to that small group whose creative vigor has given the medium some of its greatest moments. He has held high level executive positions with Young and Rubicam, NBC Radio, Foote Cone and Belding, and CBS. He terminated his association with CBS, where he held the position of Executive Vice-President in Charge of Network Television Programs, in 1959 and since then has formed the production company which bears his name.

A FORM FOR TELEVISION

GORDON HYATT

In 1959 the *Chicago American's* drama critic said, "I don't know how to criticize television, for it hasn't any form of its own." This is the hard and simple truth, for no matter how closely one examines the medium, it seems that every type of presentation is basically derived from another medium.

Consider these five categories: (1) theatrical film, (2) the game show, (3) live coverage, (4) studio drama, and (5) news. Each of these forms had an independent origin in a medium outside television, and yet every kind of TV presentation can be classified within these broad "forms."

Into the theatrical film category may be fitted every dramatic or situation program now on celluloid. They are all, in essence, simply "small" movies, made to fit a specific time and format. The only essential distinction between today's *Laramie* and yesterday's *Riders of the Purple Sage* lies in the method by which it is exhibited before an audience.

What of the game shows and live coverage now on television? The game shows, of course, are all holdovers from radio, with a few visual elements added. Most of the current programs are direct descendants of *Doctor I.Q.* and *Can You Top This?* In live coverage, whether it be vaudeville on the *Ed Sullivan Show* or a Thanksgiving Day parade, nothing essentially new is added by television other than an immediacy of presentation. While immediacy may be highly prized at World Series time, the techniques of camera placement and proper alternation of visual images were established by newsreel men in the 20's and 30's. The electronic camera replaced the film camera, and nothing else has been added.

Studio drama has all but disappeared from the video scene, despite

the fact that some of TV's most memorable moments, and its greatest writers, emerged from early experiment. But the mere fact that men like Gore Vidal, Tad Mosel and Paddy Chayevsky have moved easily from TV to motion pictures or Broadway suggests that they never were creating a "new TV drama," but had merely admirably crafted and adapted stage plays and playlets or motion picture shooting scripts.

In news alone are new techniques of reporting evolving and new technical equipment being perfected. It is here that television seems to be shaking the Alistair Cookes out of its stew and creating a form of its own. The medium's highest refinement of technique to date is the television documentary. *Variety* calls it the "telementary," which is a useful name for our purposes here.

The telementary usually includes certain ingredients. First, there is a commentator, host or correspondent—a man whose personality and delivery sets the overall tone of the presentation. He usually speaks from a studio, and graphic arts and scenic elements derived from the program's material often supplement his appearance. To this is added film—shot in any number of ways, from the revealing "candid" methods to production interviews filmed on locations appropriate to their subjects. The live and film portions may be counterpointed by the use of sound, also recorded on location; or with special sound effects designed to enhance or comment upon the meaning of the images; or with music, originally written or prerecorded material, carefully synchronized to underscore and understate the mood of the entire piece. Superimposed titles, animation, and all other tools of film and television technique can be used to point up the intent of the presentation. But it is the *intent* that holds the key to successful telementary presentation. The intent, the point-of-view, when combined with all of the techniques, makes the new form.

The form is that particular combination of original film documents and original writing, edited and presented with a sharp and critical point-of-view which attempts to discover the truth of a situation. The situation may reflect the public world, hitherto the province of newsmen; or it may concern the private world, hitherto the province of writers, poets, and artists. The telementary is not documentary film in the theatrical sense—it is the unique product of television's techniques and personalities which, in the final analysis, constitute its form.

Producing telementaries has become a serious and dedicated profession. No one could disagree with this observation after seeing an accurate telementary indictment of inhumanity, of prejudice, of

short-sightedness in public life or indifference in private individuals. As in any serious work which communicates the ideas, feelings and vision of the creative man, it is the aim of the telementary to reach the audience's intellects, their emotions, their senses of righteousness and humor—the sum total of their sensitivities. It should produce an emotional response from the viewer. What results from this depends on the intent of the presentation. Viewers may be aroused to action. They may develop a new personal insight into a subject or merely be made more aware. An individual's response is usually conditioned by his own inner resources. It is the purpose of both art and communication to reach those resources and stimulate response.

Dramatic television at its best evokes such response. So does a dedicated newspaper editorial, a memorable speech, a significant film or a drama of integrity. These are the forms of mass communication, the ways we approach the truth, and the ways we make our fellow man sensitive and aware. With the telementary, television has entered this search for meaningful expression. It has joined with dedication, with eyes wide open, and with the strength of moral conviction.

The fields of expression for the new form have just begun to be explored. They have ranged far and wide, from the portentous *CBS Reports* presentation, "The Year of the Polaris," to the sharply critical study by NBC's *White Paper* of "The U-2 Affair," or the sensitive, highly personal ABC *Close-Up* examination of the American negro, "Walk in My Shoes."

These programs begin to compare in significance with some of the best of television's studio drama. The latter were subjective presentations of literary integrity approaching essential truths as the producers *saw* them, not as the producers *found* them. These men aimed at understanding and communicating human experience. Critics must decide whether the drama of the negro as viewed in a documentary study has the validity of the insights evoked by a Langston Hughes. Will some forthcoming study of tenement life reach the same quality of insight, humor and truth attained in Paddy Chayefsky's "Marty"? Perhaps not, but the telementaries will at least aim that high. At moments they will suggest a poet's vision; at times they will suggest a dramatist's power.

Perhaps the telementary is one of the most acceptable approaches we have today for getting at the truth. Our highly developed world of communications continually pushes hard facts at us. We are brought into contact with news and newsmakers faster and in greater-documented detail than ever before in history. The President's state-

ments are no longer only reported; we see his news conferences. We are brought into the United Nations, into hearing rooms, into courtroom corridors. As a result, first-hand material and actual presence is becoming commonplace. The telementary is one significant attempt to move beyond the mass of surface representation by adding meaning to cold evidence.

Consider the opposite editorial directions being taken by *The New York Times* and *The New York Herald Tribune* as evidence of this growing need to deal with masses of fact. The *Times* daily grows in bulk and weight, fulfilling its calling as "the paper of record." Meanwhile, the "Trib" moves hesitatingly but significantly in another direction as it seeks a format which will provide an overlay of analysis and understanding upon these facts. Its aim is to distill and pinpoint the meaning of facts and provide a form of daily news interpretation based upon facts.

But the daily paper cannot always bring the sum total of a situation to the reader. News has a continuity. It unfolds slowly, as life itself does. The total meaning of a developing situation, as in life, may completely elude the daily reader. For example, it took weeks before the real and subtle issues at stake in the Newburgh, New York, welfare dilemma were made clear. At first it appeared to be a simple case of too many free loaders. In time it was shown to be rooted in local, state and national problems—a complicated story. To grasp the meaning of the Newburgh welfare situation a reader would need a total presentation. He could have turned to a news magazine like *The Reporter*—or he could have turned to television. We can hope that he compared both. To understand life, man turns to the forms of mass communication and chooses from them in light of his own experience. Mass communication must provide the choices.

Finally, two observations about what the telementary is *not*. First, it is essentially different from the documentary film. Great documentary films like Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, Pare Lorentz's *The River* or the *March of Time's* "Battle of Britain" are basically studies of place and event recorded at a particular time of history.

Nor is the telementary an expanded theatrical newsreel. Remember the newsreels? Think back and you will recall those glimpses of a king and queen on tour or a dictator reviewing his army. These snippets were mere visual supplements to facts already reported by newspapers and radio. You saw them days after the event, when you got to the theatre. Imagine, for instance, a documentary-newsreel of an incident of the thirties—say the Panay Gunboat affair. By the

time a significant, cumulative report of its material reached the public it would have resembled *Nanook of the North*. It would have become an historic document.

But television has a place and a time for a single effect, a total effect. It creates, if you like, an "instant audience." It reaches the viewers much in the same way that a periodical reaches the newsstand; not in the way a history book reaches the bookshelves. Its effect can be calculated in direct proportion to the timeliness of its appearance.

Each telementary that you see is a new attempt in the use of this new form. It is a distinct form, separate from news magazines, from documentary films, from the public forum, from the broadcast speech and from daily journalism. When a medium has begun to perfect its form, endless variations will develop for the men who use it and who attempt to create a style within form. We can hope that the style will continue to develop and mature.

We have found out our mistakes too late. We have put too much emphasis on the film form, with the result that we have had too much repetition and too little experimentation. I am perfectly willing to say, though, that there *was* a time when we had too much original drama on the air—twelve, fifteen original dramatic shows. I suppose that's a terrible thing to say—to have too much original drama on the air—but there were many of the series that went on all year long that didn't produce a single important drama out of 52 telecasts.

Mike Dann*

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*From "The *Playboy* Panel—TV's Problems and Prospects," *Playboy*, Nov. 1961. By permission of the publisher.

THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

BURTON BENJAMIN

This is to be the year of the documentary. Every advance indication points to an unprecedented level of factual programming by the networks and a concomitant upsurge on the local level. Whether the documentary will prove to be a great whale of an idea or merely a "minow" in a sea of mediocrity remains to be seen. One thing is reasonably certain: a mere numerical increase in such programs will not in itself provide salvation or solution for television's ills.

Not that the documentary is a come-lately to be thrust into the video limelight, feet-scraping and abashed. The documentary is a proud and established movement that did not need television to give it birth but did need television to give it support, circulation and vital impetus. It is interesting to note that the documentary movement is said to have been born in 1922 when Robert Flaherty made his masterpiece, *Nanook*. This was exactly one year before V. K. Zworykin invented the iconoscope. The documentary was an art when television was still a laboratory phenomenon.

Yet, in its relatively short life span, television has done more for the documentary than the motion picture industry did in six decades. The documentary was the stepchild of the commercial cinema, particularly in this country, where it was patronized as a "selected short subject." With the notable exception of the *March of Time*, which flourished theatrically from its inception in 1935 until the end of World War II, the documentary in this country generally was

economically beset and sustained chiefly by the ingenuity and dedication of its practitioners. Films were intensely personal creations. A man made a film—not a company, network or "team." Audiences were small and frequently as loyal and dedicated as the film-maker himself. It was a far cry from the television producer today who in answer to the inevitable question, "How many saw your show?" may count ten, twenty, even forty million viewers.

In those days the only solution was government subsidy, which made possible such films as Pare Lorentz' *The River* and *The Plow That Broke the Plains* in this country, and the notable films of John Grierson in Britain. World War II provided another sort of subsidy and resulted in such memorable films as Frank Capra's series, *Why We Fight*, John Huston's rarely seen but unforgettable *Let There Be Light*, and William Wyler's *Memphis Belle*.

At war's end, government subsidy tapered off to practically nothing. The theatrical market all but vanished. *March of Time* and *This Is America*, which had been conceived by Frederic Ullman, Jr., became victims of that theatrical abomination, the double feature. Film costs rose sharply and union restrictions stood in the way of the personal film-making of the 20's and 30's. It required the public-spirited largesse of an oil company to enable our greatest documentarian, Robert Flaherty, to complete his last film, *Louisiana Story*. The documentary seemed to have reached dead end.

Then along came television with its bright new future, its voracity for product and, most important, its ability to reach a vast audience. Its owners and managers came from radio and had an appetite for better things. They were interested in news and its adjunct, the awkwardly named "public affairs." They were certainly a more responsive and amenable group than the theatrical distributors and exhibitors, who had kept the documentary confined to the art houses and film societies for so many years. It can be argued that without television the documentary would have been hard put to survive in the post-war years.

The current season is a case in point. It is difficult to calculate how many millions the three networks will pour into documentary programming. If figured on a "time-and-talent" basis, it is not inconceivable that it would pay for all of the documentaries of Flaherty, Grierson, Rotha, Wright, Legg, Lorentz, Van Dyke, Cavalcanti, Ruttman and Eisenstein. These gentlemen, all active in the 30's, would have found the present documentary scene unbelievable. They might not have found it entirely attractive, but the budgets would have been irresistible.

Despite its current affinity for the form, television did not invent the documentary, as some of its practitioners today maintain. It did recast it sharply and will continue to mould it in its own image. "The documentary of today will be unrecognizable in ten years," writes John Crosby, and all of the evidence seems to prove him right. The television documentary is constantly evolving; this is a mark of its vitality. Yet it was not born without an umbilical cord. It does have a heritage.

One of the landmarks of the television documentary as it evolved was the bold and brilliant Murrow-Friendly series *See It Now.* It had its roots in the *March of Time* as pictorial journalism, making free use of natural sound and selecting provocative subjects. But *See It Now* really began where *March of Time* left off. With a better method of transmission and a weekly, rather than a monthly, deadline to meet, it moved its materials from scene to air with incredible speed. It made *March of Time's* vaunted journalistic pace seem ox-like. It wisely eschewed *March of Time's* contrived dramatizations, stuck to the facts, and was tough and unrelenting in its reportage. It approached controversy with appetite. Where *March of Time* had tackled Huey Long and Father Coughlin, *See It Now* took on Senator Joe McCarthy in his heyday. There had been nothing like it before, and there has been nothing like it since.

Other documentary film forms, familiar in the 30's and 40's, came to television to be developed and refined. *Victory at Sea,* the history of the U. S. Navy in World War II, had its roots in such splendid wartime documentaries as Capra's *Why We Fight,* as well as *Desert Victory, Fighting Lady, With the Marines at Tarawa, The Battle of San Pietro* and *The True Glory.* Richly produced by the late Henry Salamon, it had a score by Richard Rodgers, a fine script by Salamon and by Richard Hanser, and masterful editing by Isaac Kleinerman. Again, television had not created the form but had enormously enhanced it.

The same might be said for the use of still pictures, rather than motion-picture films, in television documentary, a technique utilized by *Project 20* in such programs as "Meet Mr. Lincoln" and "The Coming of Christ." As Louis Stoumen pointed out recently in *The New York Times,* the approach is hardly new, having been pioneered by men like Curt Oertel and himself in the cinema. It had been exploited in superlative fashion by the Canadians, Walter Koenig and Colin Low, in *City of Gold* for the National Film Board of Canada. It has certainly been advanced by television, not only in execution but in the scope of its subject matter.

The historical documentary or compilation film is another case in point. It is most regularly represented on television by the series which I have been producing, *The Twentieth Century*. It is also represented on an irregular basis by *Project 20*. It is a documentary form created, before television, in such films as De Rochemont's *The Cry of the World*, *The Ramparts We Watch*, and *The Golden Twenties;* in *This Is America*, the 1933 feature produced by Fred Ullman and Gilbert Seldes; in Nicole Vedres' remarkable *Paris 1900*; in the post-war German film *In Those Days*; and in British Pathe's *Scrapbooks*.

Television, in my judgment, has contributed a great deal to the advancement of this form. If nothing else, it has produced for the ages an invaluable record of our times, not only in its broad, sweeping outlines but in its significant details of the men and the events that have shaped our times. It is living history in its most dramatic form. Some critics have on occasion criticized these compilations—ours and others—as "just a collection of newsreel clips," which only demonstrates a rather painful lack of understanding of just how these films have to be made. The historian preparing a book on Woodrow Wilson today must begin with the realization that he cannot interview his subject. He must go to the libraries of the world, collect all of his material, organize it, digest it, give interpretation and point of view to it, and then write it. The historical film-maker has an almost identical problem. He cannot photograph his subject. He must collect all the materials on him—namely library film—organize it, digest it, give it interpretation and point of view and then produce his program. If the compilation film is "just a collection of newsreel clips," then the history book is "just a collection of library clips," and no history makes any sense.

The thesis here is that television has materially advanced the documentary art but owes a debt to its past. It is because of this that I am impatient with those in television today who want to call what they are doing by another name. There are two schools of thought on this. There are those who maintain that the documentary was born with television—"we have discovered all of this, before us there was nothing"—and those who maintain there is an onus attached to the name documentary.

"Documentary," Grierson wrote, "is a clumsy description but let it stand." For years there have been those unwilling to do so. At one time Bosley Crowther suggested "Think Films." Jean Benoit-Levy plumped for "Films of Life." The semantic argument persists. Not long ago, a quite prominent documentary producer was complaining to a New York television critic that the label had to be changed. It

frightened viewers, inhibited sponsors and made network executives see red ink. His recommendation: Non-Fiction Programming. A newspaperman pointed out that this would also fit *What's My Line?*

Other producers have suggested "telementaries," "docudramas," "factdramas" and "actuality dramas with a hard spine." All of these are a bit Orwellian, but understandable in a medium where an hour show is an hour show and an hour-and-a-half show is a spectacular. With television's flare for euphemism, ballet could be changed to "grace dance" and serious music to "non-jazz." Let us all look forward to the day when the major concern will be the contents, not the label on the can.

One innovation television has brought to the documentary is the star—the reporter-narrator. In the 30's and 40's the star was either the subject of the film or the producer. The narrator was a disembodied anonymity. Westbrook van Voorhis represented the unknown voice of doom on the *March of Time*. Unless you recognized his voice, you would not have known that Walter Huston was the narrator of *Let There Be Light*. Beginning with Mr. Murrow—through Messrs. Cronkite, Huntley, Brinkley, Smith, Sevareid, McGee and others—television has changed all of that. The reporter-narrator-star is a fixture on the video scene—and screen.

What about tomorrow? Producers asked this question often deal with it technically. They talk of new lightweight portable cameras, vest-pocket sound recorders, the infinite capacities of video tape and global communications via satellites. They are understandably fascinated by the instruments or tools that will contribute to the swifter, more lucid and more penetrating telling of the documentary story.

Perhaps this observer will be forgiven if, instead of looking forward, he glances backward. For there is a kind of film that we are not making today and which I think we ought to be making, for it is a part of our heritage. It is the "little" film about man himself.

It may be said that the issues of our times are too cataclysmic for us to deal with the life of an Eskimo in Canada. We are dealing with war and peace, life and death—with survival. We are dealing with emerging nations and the billions of Asia and Africa. The problems are so large, and the people seem so small.

But are the people ever small? Look at Flaherty's *Nanook*, *Moana* or *Man of Aran* today and ask how many of the documentaries we are making will survive this test of time. Can it be that we are so absorbed with viewing the world from the outside in, we have no time to look at man from the inside out?

As Frances Flaherty wrote of these three films by her husband: "(They) are three films on the same theme, a theme as old as man and as new as the atom bomb: the spirit by which a people comes to terms with its environment. What he is saying in these three films is that the spirit by which these primitive, machineless peoples come to terms with Nature is the same spirit by which we in our turn shall come to terms with our machines—that the continuity of history throughout its changes is written in the human spirit, and that we lose sight of that continuity at our peril."

Is this too small a theme for our times? Hardly. It is a theme that gets to one of the basic issues of our times. It derives from our documentary heritage as so much of what we have done and are doing derives from it. What I am suggesting is that in the months ahead we explore man against his world, rather than the world against man.

If I owned a television station, with the responsibility for what was aired there across a year—16—18 hours a day to fill that screen, I'm sure I would have, couldn't escape having, some stuff of low merit. I know that I would have, oh, I would say five or six travel pictures a day...Five or six travel pictures. Scenes from foreign lands, and from our own country. There are people who will never get to the Grand Canyon, and there are couples that are going to honeymoon that would be interested in seeing Niagara Falls before they go there. ...And history—TV out of the past. It seems to me they are showing more of that. All that was filmed at Normandy Beach ought to be shown once a year.

*Carl Sandburg**

*From "An Afternoon with Carl Sandburg," *Telefilm*, Fall, 1961. pp. 30–31. By permission of the publisher.

TELEVISION'S PURPOSE

HUBBELL ROBINSON

When I was a very young man my grandfather, an archetype Vermont Republican, once said to me, "Hubbell, the trouble with the Democratic Party is it's all top and all bottom—no middle."

Out-dated as that label is politically in 1961, it seems to apply rather neatly to television today. The top is represented formidably by the networks' continually expanding and effective thrust in informational programming.

In these years of incredible complexity, the very nature of the American democratic process make it self-evident that never did so many need to know so much. And I think by any measurement you wish to choose, more Americans know more about themselves, the world around them, their allies, and their enemies than ever before in the 185 years of the Republic's existence. I find it hard to believe any objective critic could question that this accumulated awareness is almost entirely due to those creative and imaginative talents the broadcasters have assigned to this task. We are deeply in debt to Fred Friendly, David Brinkley, Chet Huntley, David Schoenbrun, Frank McGee, Paul Newman, Don Hyatt, Burton Benjamin, Reuven Frank, their peers and their managements who provided the dollar sinew to do the job.

Television entertainment is, to put it gently, something else again. To put it precisely, it has become in recent years, with occasional exceptions, the bottom grandfather sighted from his Bennington cracker barrel.

Although I was happily 3,000 miles away during last June's Foley Square turkey shoot, all of us out there in the land of the vertical pronoun followed the battle reports as closely as five-day shooting schedules permitted.

Whatever the avowed purpose of that opportunity for soul-baring and breast-beating in protest against Madison Avenue's Brass Curtain, its apparent concern seemed, from that distance at least, an attempt to reach for some of the reasons as to why television programming today is the "vast wasteland" that man in Washington so aptly tagged it as being. I would have found the responses of the distinguished wanderers in the wasteland more persuasive if more of them had been practitioners who had not only demonstrated convincingly their ability to use this medium with consistent and impressive success, but had evidenced any sure understanding of its real potential and how to energize it.

For that, it seems to me, is central to the dilemma facing those of us whose high hopes for television entertainment still endure despite its debasement by the belt-line merchants of mediocrity, imitation, and their final, inevitable bed-fellow—boredom.

Television is a mass medium. Its overwhelming characteristic is its size. The audiences that make it national and are rapidly making it international are mass audiences. The advertisers whose dollars provide the major share of its support make products designed to reach those masses. Mass sales are the blood stream of their existence. Anyone who loses sight of that basic condition of creative life in television is losing sight of the bulls-eye; he is ignoring not television's greatest creative handicap, but its greatest opportunity and challenge. Any creative team—producer, director, writer, cameraman, performer, designer—that has something worth saying can say it to more people more compellingly than ever before in the history of man. But as communicators they must realize the tender in which they deal has to be designed to attract, hold and engage mass audiences.

And I would like to urge upon you with all the vigor and resolution of which I am capable that there is no categorical antithesis between quality and entertainment for millions. For it is in its efforts to entertain that television's balance has been destroyed.

I am referring here, specifically and particularly, to quality of concept and ideas. Even television's severest critics have recently remarked that in terms of the craftsmanship, directing, and performance in its endless parade of totally forgettable drama and comedy there is some degree of competence.

It is in its almost total refusal to cope with themes of depth and significance that television entertainment reduces its audience to the ranks of the emotionally and mentally underprivileged. The great bulk of television drama, serious or otherwise, consumes hours of our

citizens' time while saying precisely nothing. I am aware of the thunderous chorus proclaiming that in these times, which again seem destined to try the souls of men, audiences want only to escape from reality. I have no quarrel with the medium for providing that escape. I should like to contend as militantly as I can, however, against the fable that this is the *only* kind of entertainment that can involve the interest of a mass audience. The whole history of the entertainment business cries out against such conceptual myopia. As far back as the Greeks, the most successful playwrights commanding the largest audiences were writing dramas with a purpose. To the Greeks, Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles were entertaining because they dealt with problems, crises and values which the Greeks understood and which affected their daily lives. They were hits.

While Sir Walter Scott was beguiling readers with spectacular sugar-plums about brave knights and fair ladies, Charles Dickens was matching his success with a collection of work as purposeful as that of the most fanatic tract writer. *Bleak House* assaulted British jurisprudence. *The Old Curiosity Shop* knifed at the evils of the industrial revolution. *Nicholas Nickleby* hammered at the sanctity of the English public school system. Dickens was a hit.

And across the North Sea, Henrik Ibsen was writing plays which held as their basic theme the distinction between the idea of rectitude and the idea of respectability. He was a hit.

In the 20's, while Ethel M. Dell and Michael Arlen were detailing the fripperies of sheiks and ladies with Green Hats, Sinclair Lewis was presenting American culture and American attitudes towards its culture to the world and doing it so entertainingly, so grippingly, so compellingly, that a bulging bankroll as well as a Nobel Prize were his by-products.

In the first 26 weeks of *Playhouse 90* we dealt with religious discrimination and communism; with experimental marriage and sexual consummation out of wedlock; with a story whose key figure was an illegitimate child. We did not lose listeners because of these themes; our audiences grew. Lord Chesterfield, in addition to inventing an overcoat, said, "There are few things that may not be said if they are said well enough." I submit the examples I have cited indicate television *can* say almost anything if it says it well enough.

John Crosby has set down as one of "Crosby's Laws" that there are two mass audiences: one is that audience who will look at nothing that is thoughtful, and the other that audience who will look at nothing unless it is thoughtful; and that one audience is as substantial as the other. It may be possible arbitrarily to fragmentize all

people in that way, but it is my deep belief there is also the opportunity to fuse those audiences. I am quite aware that such fiery demolitionists as Kierkegaard and Dwight McDonald have despaired of the mass taste and have dedicated themselves to the proposition that mass audiences will always and inevitably seek out and embrace the second-rate, the obvious and the shoddy. Any cynical producer, capitulating totally with the easy way to success, can align himself with this philosophy.

But such attitudes totally ignore the fact that great masses of people have also made the reputations of creators whose achievements stand as monuments today. Let me suggest to you that the burgeoning growth of the publishing business as an investment stock and the prairie fire expansion of the community theatre, which now approaches 7,000 separate projects, would scarcely be possible if the American public's only interest was Mickey Spillane, the Carpetbaggers, and comparable products of the cabbage patch.

I hold no brief for sagas of neuroses and neurotics or sexual deviationists, an area in which the mind staggers at adding to Mr. Tennessee Williams' definitive, exhaustive and exhausting labors. I do not have in mind resurrecting the all too frequent trivia about trivial people with which I am afraid *Philco* and *Studio One* wrote their epitaph. I do not have in mind stories pleading special causes for special groups no matter how eloquently Rod Serling and the few others of equal talent write them.

But I truly believe that television audiences *en masse* will not turn away from strong and sober themes if they are skillfully and absorbingly presented, if the characters and the dilemma in which they are involved have honesty and bite, if they relate to areas of experience with which an audience can actually or possibly identify. It is the playwright's magical gift to do exactly that, and I know as a matter of fact that there *are* television writers today capable of that kind of accomplishment—with specific and tangible ideas for achieving that very goal if they could find an arena in which to perform. Charles A. Dana, legendary editor of the old *New York Sun*, once said, "People are more interested in people than anything," and applied this principle in building mass circulation.

It is the dramatists' responsibility to interest people in people; to create characters that capture and compel an audience's attention in situations with which they can feel personal involvement. At no time in our history has there been so rich an opportunity to create that kind of drama; drama of sharp conflict, deep emotional value, and irresistible excitement. For I take it that the drama's greatest

responsibility is to probe and explore the world around us and to reduce it to terms which will be understanding, meaningful, stimulating, and entertaining to transplanted and somewhat bedraggled Dodger rooters in Los Angeles, to denizens of the industrial and business community, even to those who stalk the halls of ivy. Only television offers the opportunity to do this for *all* the people. And only television, of all the arts, is, as of this writing, totally devoid of any continuous, steady effort so conceived and so dedicated.

A great many well-intentioned and articulate people have taken to wishing that television was something it is not and never will be. They see it as a medium which must address itself largely to the audiences reached by the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The Partisan Review*, *The Paris Review*, and other distinguished quarterlies of that kind. This, in my view, is not only a duplication of effort, but a tremendous waste of this medium's giant potential. For as Jacques Barzun has said, "It's work to be cultured—few people are willing."

Television's opportunity is to reach the people who are *not* willing; to inform them, to enlarge their areas of enjoyment, to broaden their interests and, in so doing, to enrich their lives. But this must be done by words and methods of presentation that are within the tender of their understanding. One must communicate with them in terms of emotion, uniqueness, and excitement.

In doing this, I should like to see television comedy abandon its preoccupation with the split-level family on Elm Street; its fixation that only oppressively wholesome people can be fun; its stereotype addiction to the half-hour. People who live by the subway, who occasionally find the golden rule a trial, and whose personalities and problems with living are too expansive to be bobtailed into a half-hour can be fun too. Television seems to be almost totally unaware that a new wave of satire—the main current of American humor in the fine tradition of Mark Twain, Mr. Dooley and Fred Allen—is aborning. I would like to see television delve into the rich mother lode of biography, concerning itself with figures less removed and less saintly than the founding fathers and the American hero myths. I would like to see the cameras of television entertainment roam as widely in the world as its informational producers have taken theirs. Once the decision to buy a program is made, I would like to see advertisers and their agencies either get completely in or completely out of television's creative process. It is too massive and too demanding a task for part-time practitioners.

I would like to see television tackle the American family, not as a

source of endless giggles—a unit whose most grinding difficulties spin off junior's marks, sister's dates, dad's boss and mother's struggle with budget—but as a microcosm reflecting the urgent and bewildering problems that confront us all in a world of shifting and transitory values. Variations upon such themes as juvenile delinquency, geriatrics, and the loss of individuality—to name only a few urgent issues—need to be played more often.

In short, I would like to see television start imagining again. I would like to see it start wrestling with projects which, at the outset, must seem "the hard way" and which, I am afraid, is always the "best" way. The world of Spinoza may seem far away from Madison Avenue, Broadway and the movie lots of Hollywood, but when he said, "All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare," he spoke for all men in all times. Five years ago I said, "The biggest gambles produce the biggest successes." I see no reason to alter that statement.

I am asking that creators start thinking first of what will give the medium vitality, reach, and an excitement which will last in the viewer's mind beyond the moment of broadcast. I ask the creators to think of values before they think "Will it sell?" This is not starry-eyed idealism. It is the most pragmatic kind of showmanship. I guarantee that one of every six ideas of genuine freshness and virility *will* sell. I cannot guarantee that any one of six saleable ideas cut to pattern and formula, and which only echo originality, will have the essentials of excitement. Originality, impact and permanence are what create important success—the kind of success the medium must bring forth again if it is to grow, prosper, and secure, enlarge and deserve its position as America's major recreation.

It seems to me that drama of the kind I have dwelt upon here today is one of the immediate and practical ways to restore to television some of its glitter, to transform the starers into lookers, listeners, and reactors, and to give television entertainment balance.

It seems to me that a conspicuous opportunity exists, not just for the creative elements of the industry, but also for the advertiser with the vision and understanding to seize it. Good programming can be good business. It seems to me that creating exciting new drama should be at least a part of television's immediate purpose.

For I believe, with Thomas Jefferson, that "We are always equal to what we undertake with resolution—it is part of the American character to consider nothing as desperate."

THE INDUSTRY—A CHANGING OUTLOOK

It is now clear that our system of communication must admit both "art-for-art's-sake" and "cost-per-thousand" philosophies; and while it is fashionable in some circles to maintain that sponsors' demands for large audiences must inevitably corrupt the quality and value of television output, some patient and reflective people continue to think in terms of peaceful coexistence. Two men express such sentiments here. *Robert L. Foreman* candidly describes the dilemmas which advertisers in television must face and urges that more attention be given to the matter of "program climate." *Lawrence Myers, Jr.* offers a thorough analysis of ratings and their meaning for both artist and businessman, laying equal stress upon those areas where the reliability of ratings is indisputable and where there is considerable room for improvement.

Robert L. Foreman began his advertising career at BBDO in 1939, and was named a vice-president there in 1948. He was elected to the Board of Directors in 1955, and in 1957 was made Executive Vice-President in Charge of Creative Services. He also serves as Chairman of the BBDO Plans Review Board. *Foreman* has written several articles for popular magazines as well as two recently-published books. *Lawrence Myers, Jr.* is Associate Professor of Television-Radio at Syracuse and Director of Research for the S. U. Television and Radio Center. He received his Ph.D. in Education at Syracuse in 1956. He has developed graduate courses in television research methods for the Television and Radio Department and has also supervised a number of commercial research projects. Myers has been awarded research grants from the Twentieth Century Fund, the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, The National Educational Television and Radio Center, and the U. S. Office of Education. He has published articles in various scholarly journals.

THE DILEMMA OF THE TV ADVERTISER

ROBERT L. FOREMAN

I listened, unhappily, the other day to the testimony of a television producer as he fumed how his sponsor, whose background was chemistry, was wont to read scripts. Why didn't the chemist go back to his test tubes and leave art to us artists, the producer asked. Implied was a far larger indictment: since *all* businessmen inject themselves in television programming this way, how could the medium have anything but a sub-standard aesthetic level?

The man who did the testifying happens to be a friend and business associate of mine, and the man he was talking about is also a friend and business associate. So I'm going to use this space to try to reconcile my friends, who I know are *not* incompatible. Nor are their aims in television.

There is a dilemma which confronts every businessman, chemist or otherwise, when he approaches TV advertising. He asks himself, can I do *better* TV programming, programming that is *more responsible*, that performs as a more *useful servant* of the public, yet does a sound selling job for my products?

The majority of the heavy users of television are engaged in selling what we in advertising call "low-ticket" items—fast-turnover products usually bought on impulse. These are the advertisers who are least concerned with program *climate* and most concerned with program *popularity* (audience size). Since theirs are the most "mass-distributed" of products, they need to reach the most people. These advertisers, by the way, account for 75 per cent of the more than a billion dollars spent in network and national spot television.

In my opinion, most of these advertisers would be willing, perhaps even glad, to divest themselves of any program control they may now have in return for three assurances which they receive when ad-

vertising in a print medium: 1) guaranteed circulation, 2) freedom from any editorial responsibility, and 3) ready access to the medium when their products need it.

I say this because the primary reason the manufacturer of a mass-distributed product involves himself in TV programming is to *make sure* he can reach a maximum number of consumers. Further, he is not overly pleased at being held to task for whatever surrounds his commercial copy. Finally, control of programs enables him to obtain enough time slots in high-circulation vehicles at the right time of year for exposure of his full line of products.

Most of these advertisers are now using their television properties solely as "spot" carriers. Their advertising takes the form of one-minute commercial inserts. There is no corporate identification at all, not even in the main title. This is what "works." This is why these advertisers are deeply involved in programming, not because they want the vicarious pleasure of playing "show-biz" angel.

Consider, if you will, what little pleasure an advertiser's involvement in TV actually provides him. Today he has the federal government—in addition to his company treasurer—breathing on his neck. It is the only medium he buys which is subject to federal licensing and regulation. (I'm excepting radio for obvious reasons). It is the only medium in which he must make a choice of editorial matter and *be held responsible for what the editorial content is or is not.*

Now let's contrast how comforting it is for this advertiser to spend his money in magazines and newspapers. Here he can, if he chooses, select certain positions entirely apart, editorially speaking, from the publisher's words and pictures. More important: there is no circulation gamble whatsoever.

Over the years the advertiser and his agency have learned to evaluate printed media with precision. They prepare what is called a "media mix" with supreme confidence: combining data on total circulation, geographic coverage, median age, income level, duplication, primary and pass-along readership, page traffic, cost-per-thousand readers, the seen-associated and the thorough-reading of past advertising.

For so doing no one has ever criticized the advertiser, dubbed him insensitive, or cursed him for having a slide-rule for a mind and an adding machine for a heart. Rather, he is considered to be extremely business-like.

Let me emphasize that *in every instance* our advertiser *knows* how many people are going to get the magazines and the newspapers he buys. This is *guaranteed* him.

But things are very different for him when he plunges into television. Here he must engage in an activity quite like that which thousands go to Las Vegas to enjoy. He is immediately committed to buying 26 programs. He must judge the quality of the 26 from a single, and often atypical, episode called a "pilot." He must then try to place the series in a time period that follows a blockbuster of a show and is opposite anemic competition. Now all this would be difficult at *any* time of year, but the advertiser must make his decisions in March, knowing he will have to live with them for the entire year that begins the following October!

By the way, I neglected to mention that this gamble will cost his company $3,000,000. It might also cost him his job, and his agency the account.

Will the program be a flop or a hit? There is quite a difference you know. In 1960–61 season, 52 new shows appeared. In the current season (1961–62), 33 of these, or 63 per cent, did not return.

Last season two new half-hour situation comedies made their debut, each costing $57,000 per program. One got an audience of 5,159,000 homes per minute. The other delivered 14,070,000 homes per minute.

Another case in point. Last season the 7:30–8:30 Saturday night time period on one network had competition from the other two networks which averaged 25.1, while the 7:30–8:30 time period on the same network on Thursday night had competition averaging 16.4. The time cost of both slots was identical, but there is obviously quite a difference in value.

Now—despite everything I've said—I can assure you that most advertisers are not only full-time businessmen but are full-time fathers, concerned about their children, and full-time citizens, concerned about their country. For these reasons they are aware that television programs ought to be better. They really don't like to sponsor "just another western," or a one-too-many mayhem epic, or some insipid day-time strip.

But what is the *added* risk they encounter if they try something new—assuming *that* rare commodity is offered them? They've seen sufficient evidence to know that they will attract smaller audiences with something that is more "worth-while." They know the grave dangers of sponsoring something controversial—the consumer boycotts, the loss of distribution, the indignant mail from stockholders.

But even if our advertiser personally considers Horton Foote to be the greatest playwright since Ibsen, Paddy Chayefsky the most inventive dramatist of the decade, and Rod Serling able to reproduce

the idiom of the day better than anyone since Shakespeare, he also knows that not one of the three understands or appreciates what it's like to have a product boycotted in a thousand supermarkets. He also knows that these artists aren't even vaguely concerned about what sells *or unsells* cola, coffee, cars, or cigarettes.

This is why businessmen and/or their representatives put their grimy little fists to scripts. If Foote, Chayefsky, or Serling were an ad manager, chances are he'd do the same.

Mind you, I'm not defending such indefensible editing as elimination of the Chrysler building from the backdrop of a show sponsored by a competing auto, or avoidance of any word because it might remind the viewer of a competing product.

As to subject matter, I will admit *I* would advise an advertiser against sponsoring something like the Emmett Till story. This is due less to lack of guts than to common sense. An advertiser pays his money to *enhance* his company's status nationally, *not to harm it.* Until the American public is adult enough to face these facts no network advertiser can afford to underwrite the teaching.

By this I do not mean I condone what happened to Till any more than I believe television doesn't owe a broadcast of this story to the country. But such a program must be sustaining, not sponsored.

I'll go even further. I feel that large doses of overly sordid drama, whether written by some hack from a syndication factory or by Tennessee Williams, can be very unwise programming for any advertiser. This doesn't mean that I believe pap makes the best vehicle. Nor does it mean that I endorse the idiocy of the sponsor who demanded that "every program begin with a kiss." But downbeat, slum-ridden drama, however realistic, is not a compatible back-drop week after week for most products.

Which brings us to the big subject of proper editorial climate for advertised products. How important is climate? What portion of an audience can be sacrificed for the "right" climate? I think it's very important—and worth more than mere numbers of viewers. I believe this whole area of program climate is one of TV's most effective, and least explored, sales strengths. But thus far there are very few criteria by which to judge climate.

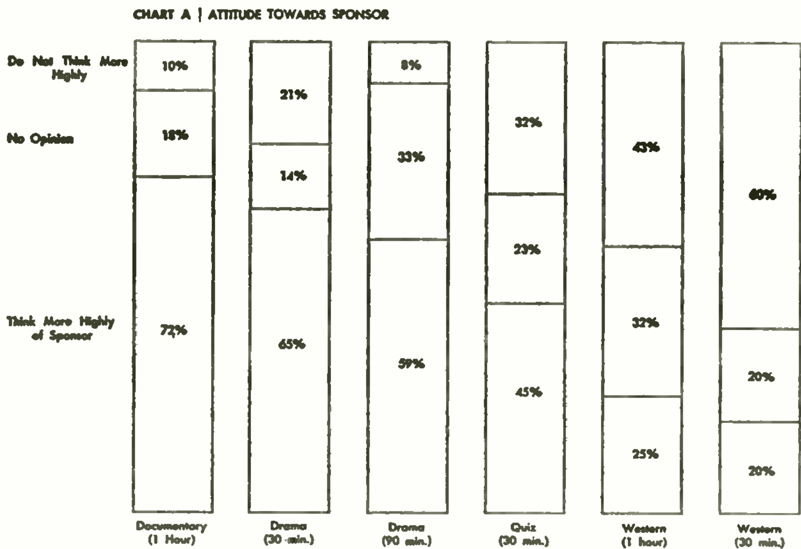
My own experience in network radio has taught me that close rapport between a sponsor and the "right" type of program led more of the public to purchase his products. Major Bowes, Jack Benny and Harlow Wilcox, of the *Fibber McGee Show,* were outstanding examples.

There's evidence, too, in *printed* media, which indicates that edi-

torial surroundings "rub off" effectively on the advertising which appears along with it. Merely being in such respected publications as *The Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal, McCall's, Look,* and *Life* cloaks products with added sales appeal. Also, the immediacy and newsworthiness brought to advertisements which appear in newspapers illustrates another well-established advertising principle.

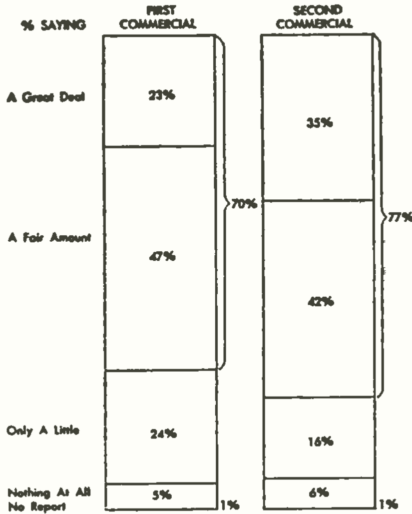
In the medium of television itself, I have seen encouraging examples of what a superior show climate can bring to commercials.

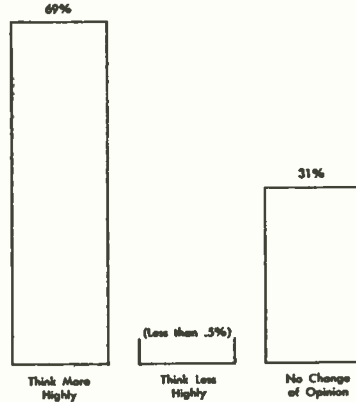
Chart "A" traces the results of a study concerning the effect on attitude towards the sponsors of six different types of programs.



Another study investigated an advertiser who sponsored a timely space documentary which was included in the *CBS Reports* series. The results, in terms of "learning from commercials," are shown in Chart "B". From the same study, the response to "attitude towards sponsor" was equally impressive, as indicated in Chart "C".

On the other side of the coin, it is my opinion that the wrong climate can definitely be harmful to a product. For example, advertising modern convenience products such as automobiles, toasters, or transistor radios in a series of period-piece dramas may be an error. Similarly, commercial copy for a product that's meant to be enjoyed or to improve health or looks does not fit with sordid, pistol-whipping drama. This, I believe, is destructive rather than constructive selling.





I say this despite any success a rating-happy sponsor of such vehicles may think he has achieved.

If the artists in this medium will recognize the problems of sponsorship, and *if* the advertisers will recognize that their entry in the medium means they are making use of facilities that operate in a public right-of-way—with the added responsibilities of such operation—I think TV programming would improve noticeably and quickly.

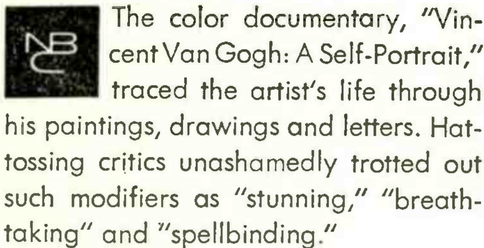
At the same time I would charge the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the Association of National Advertisers, the individual advertising agencies and the research departments of the networks to begin a comprehensive investigation of all evidence which suggests that good television makes good advertising and better television makes better advertising. This is not only feasible—but urgent.

QUALITY AND DEADLINES

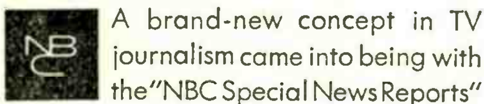
There are people who adored the song, "Bali Ha'i," until they learned that Richard Rodgers had written the melody in ten minutes.

This is pretty much the same bunch (an ever-dwindling minority, we're happy to add) which insists there can be no genuine artistry or quality in any field that must regularly fill schedules and meet urgent deadlines. Like television.

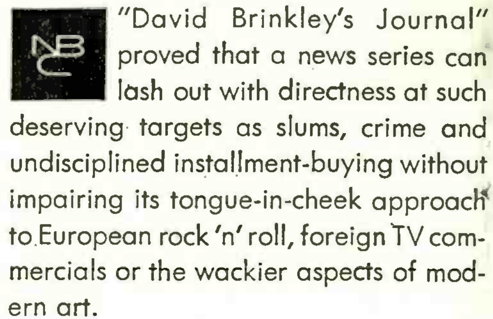
Well, rather than argue the point on a theoretical level, we'd like to cite just a few of the programs that have made this past year one of NBC-TV's most distinguished seasons:



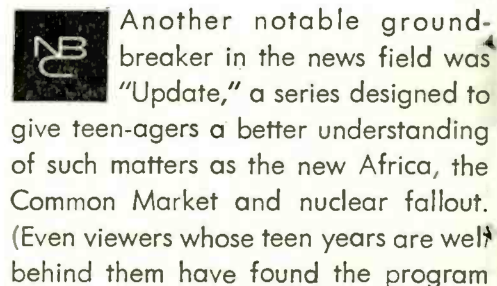
The color documentary, "Vincent Van Gogh: A Self-Portrait," traced the artist's life through his paintings, drawings and letters. Hat-tossing critics unashamedly trotted out such modifiers as "stunning," "breathtaking" and "spellbinding."



A brand-new concept in TV journalism came into being with the "NBC Special News Reports" —known more colloquially as the "Instant Specials." A good many of these expertly-produced documentaries ("Russian Pandora," "Chimp in Orbit") were based on a news event that had occurred just a few hours before. ("Piracy in the Caribbean" reached viewers while the captive luxury-liner Santa Maria was still being pursued by the ships of three Navies, and you can't get much more current than that.)

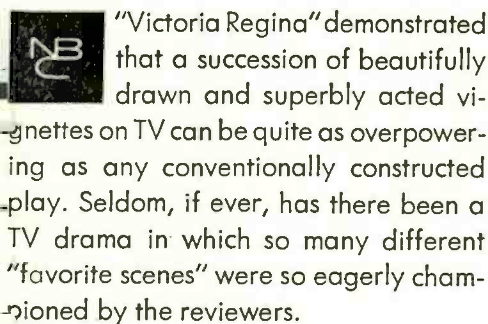


"David Brinkley's Journal" proved that a news series can lash out with directness at such deserving targets as slums, crime and undisciplined installment-buying without impairing its tongue-in-cheek approach to European rock 'n' roll, foreign TV commercials or the wackier aspects of modern art.

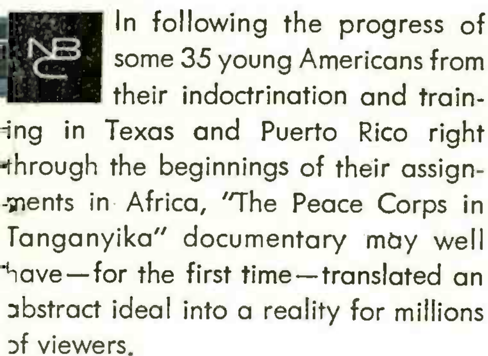


Another notable ground-breaker in the news field was "Update," a series designed to give teen-agers a better understanding of such matters as the new Africa, the Common Market and nuclear fallout. (Even viewers whose teen years are well behind them have found the program

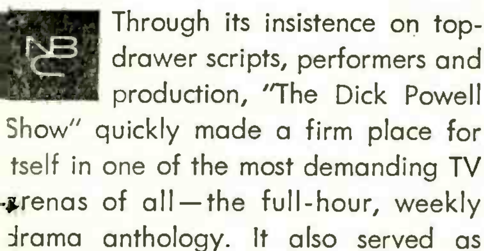
wonderfully enlightening.)



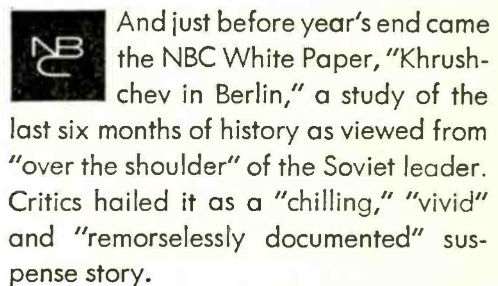
"Victoria Regina" demonstrated that a succession of beautifully drawn and superbly acted vignettes on TV can be quite as overpowering as any conventionally constructed play. Seldom, if ever, has there been a TV drama in which so many different "favorite scenes" were so eagerly championed by the reviewers.



In following the progress of some 35 young Americans from their indoctrination and training in Texas and Puerto Rico right through the beginnings of their assignments in Africa, "The Peace Corps in Tanganyika" documentary may well have—for the first time—translated an abstract ideal into a reality for millions of viewers.

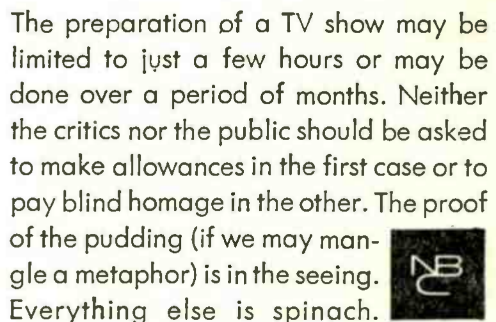


Through its insistence on top-drawer scripts, performers and production, "The Dick Powell Show" quickly made a firm place for itself in one of the most demanding TV arenas of all—the full-hour, weekly drama anthology. It also served as further confirmation of NBC's long-held belief that "professional" is not a dirty word.



And just before year's end came the NBC White Paper, "Khrushchev in Berlin," a study of the last six months of history as viewed from "over the shoulder" of the Soviet leader. Critics hailed it as a "chilling," "vivid" and "remorselessly documented" suspense story.

Television does have its heavy schedules, and it does have its uncompromising deadlines. But this is one network that will not allow such factors to rule out the conscientious pursuit—and frequent attainment, we hope—of excellence.



The preparation of a TV show may be limited to just a few hours or may be done over a period of months. Neither the critics nor the public should be asked to make allowances in the first case or to pay blind homage in the other. The proof of the pudding (if we may mangle a metaphor) is in the seeing. Everything else is spinach.

ON THE RELIABILITY OF RATINGS

LAWRENCE MYERS, JR.

One of the distinguishing features of television is the complex nature of its signal. For the first time, an artistic creation can be visually transmitted instantaneously to entire nations. Universal exposure creates problems for creators unknown to their progenitors.

The ancient Greek craftsman was concerned ultimately with meanings and values. He believed, after all, that the function of art was to make man a better citizen in his community, whether by influencing man's intellectual level, moral standards, or aesthetic sensitivities. The Oath of the Athenian City-State was subscribed to by all citizens and reminded them of their responsibility, among other things, to "transmit this city not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted...." The artist therefore created for a purpose. Nevertheless, when a sculptor honored an athlete in marble, he was interested primarily in a creative process and secondarily in a communications effect.

Predilection for creation rather than communication has long been evident in most artistic fields. When a Northwest American Indian carved a totem pole, he was using an unusual medium to create a message, but the artistic form of the message was doubtless of greater significance to him than the communicative effect of the message. When Beethoven created a symphony, or Van Gogh a starry night, or Shakespeare a sonnet, each was concerned with creative processes and ultimate values. Communication effect was of secondary, and in some instances negligible, importance. In certain of the arts such as music, dance, or drama, audience favor was courted and cherished; but quality of expression still constituted a criterion of greater significance than momentary audience adulation.

By contrast, most attempts to increase the efficacy of communication were made at the expense of the artistic form of the original message. An Indian might describe his totem by tom-tom to another tribe; but the form of the new message placed severe restrictions on the communicator who attempted to affect an accurate transfer of information. The invention of movable type was hailed as one of the most significant of technical advances; but the invention provided only for an improved distribution system. With the advent of an electronic era, the telegraph key replaced the pony express rider. In each case technological advance imposed limitations on the message to be communicated. The science was, at times, incompatible with the art; more efficient communication did not insure more effective communication. One may contrast the technological triumph of the completion of a cable linking England to India with John Ruskin's answer when asked to comment upon the historic event, "What have you to say to India?"

The rapid development and acceptance of television during the past fifteen years has resulted in new relationships between art and science. By means of television much art may now be transmitted instantaneously without significant change to unlimited numbers of people. During this process television may be considered essentially a neutral instrument that acts as a conveyor belt for message transmission. This is not to say that television operates exclusively as an efficient distribution system for miscellaneous arts and crafts, because the medium does possess certain characteristics and limitations that serve to define a unique art form. However, accurate, universal, instantaneous reproduction is possible. Very often, television audiences see broadcasts of political speeches, vaudeville acts, circus routines, orchestral selections, comedy monologues, Broadway plays, or news events in the identical forms as they were originally intended by the artists, performers, or participants. At least for this reporting function, art and science seem compatible. That the two represent distinct but mutually contributory aspects of a common activity is recognized in the title of a sponsoring organization of this Journal, The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

As with other arts, television art should be concerned with ultimate values, goals and purposes. To this end, the artist who presents his material on television may fairly ask that his work be judged on the basis of long established criteria. But television science has the single objective of efficient communication. Its function is to operate so as to reach as many people as possible in order to expose them to the art product. The mass medium of television must reach masses. A

perfectly valid criterion, therefore, is the size of the mass. The television profession has developed "ratings" and "shares of audience" as unique measures of audience size.

In one regard, broadcasting is a lonely business. Those engaged in programming send their products into the ether with no immediate knowledge of effect. It is important for proper evaluation that they hear coming back the pipe of the critic. It is also important that they have available appropriate audience data. Television needs both qualitative and quantitative measures in order to make reasonable judgments of accomplishment.

The difficult task is to maintain a proper balance between the two kinds of criteria, lest perspective be lost; for the nation is the loser in the process. Too often quantity overshadows quality; that is, ratings overshadow artistic merit. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton N. Minow, accused by some members of the television industry of desiring to censor programming, recently suggested that a form of censorship based on ratings was being exercised by some licensees who worked, planned, and lived "by the numbers—always striving to reach the largest possible audience..." and who excluded programs with limited mass appeal as a result.

If the record of the past several years shows, as it does, that many program deletions have been made as a result of quantitative rather than qualitative criteria, it is no wonder that the sources of quantitative data should be subjected to scrutiny by those most affected.

In our society men are fond of collecting figures and drawing conclusions, legitimate and otherwise, from them. We respect the man who says "Give me the figures." But inability to interpret data once collected has led to suspicion of the data itself, as if it were the root cause of subsequent problems. The statistician who produces the data is looked upon with awe and suspicion. The man who needs his services usually knows little about statistical method beyond what is ordinary common sense. He is inclined to accept Disraeli's dictum that there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics. He wonders, with Senator Mike Monroney, whether existing audience measurement methods are sufficiently adequate or accurate for the types of decisions to be made. He wonders, with Representative Oren Harris, whether statistical procedures employed by the rating services are appropriate, even though he is unsure that he understands the procedures in the first place. He probably feels as inadequate as a famous newspaper columnist and television personality whose column once identified a professor of mathematics as being "up on computations and permutrations." He may even agree with Eddie

Cantor who, in one breath, claims that rating systems are silly because they can't really tell who is listening and, in the next breath, says that a network can tell who is listening by making twenty telephone calls in each city in which it has an affiliate.

It is reasonable and appropriate for artists to ask the scientists for proof of performance. As a matter of fact, assuming that the validity of the criterion of audience size is accepted, then all practitioners should be concerned with the validity of the data collected to determine audience size. To state the problem, however, is not to solve it. The use and value of the statistical methods involved is limited more by understanding than by the intrinsic fitness of the tools. How does one describe *variance*, for example, without first teaching some statistics? Popular presentations such as this paper will undoubtedly be unsatisfactory, but the attempt must nonetheless be made.

To begin at the beginning, a few definitions must be understood. The size of audience associated with a given program will depend upon the number of available homes, the proportion of those homes who are using their television sets, and the proportion of set users who choose a particular program. All of the audience size measurement services produce a variety of indexes which describe television viewing activities of homes within some geographical area.

At any instant, a certain number of homes will have their television sets turned on to some program. The fraction, or proportion, of homes using television may be called *homes using television* by some services and *sets in use* by others. The meaning of each is the same: the proportion of all television homes in which at least one television set is turned on.

The *rating* of a program is defined as the fraction, or proportion, of all television homes that is exposed to the program. The definition is complicated by the meaning of "exposure." The fact that a television set may be "tuned" to a program or station is satisfactory evidence of exposure in some instances; while in others, "viewing" is accepted as evidence of exposure. Either definition is probably acceptable as insignificant differences occur between ratings of the same program produced by methods requiring the two definitions.

Beyond the tuning-viewing dichotomy, a more important distinction relates to the length of time that a television set is required to be exposed to a program in order to be considered a member of that program's audience. Two methods of defining audience membership are in use. *Average audience* is defined as those homes exposed to a program during any given instance while the program is being pre-

sented. The term "average instantaneous audience" is sometimes more precisely used. Audience size may fluctuate during a program as homes tune in or out; and the average audience may be considered as an average of all instantaneous audiences obtained by the program. The computation is easier to perform than to describe. Telephone interviews completed during a program that inquire about set tuning at the time of the call automatically produce an average audience estimate. *Total audience* is defined as those homes exposed to a program segment for an arbitrary minimum period of time, usually five minutes per quarter-hour or half-hour. In the unlikely case where every home tuned to a program is tuned for the entire program, total audience will equal average audience. If any homes remain tuned for only a portion of the program, then total audience will exceed average audience. The greater this flow of audience during a program—that is, the greater the tune in or tune out—the greater the difference between total and average audience ratings. When comparing ratings provided by different services, one must know whether the services are reporting average audience or total audience figures.

At any time in most areas, a number of television homes will be tuned to different programs. The *share of audience* obtained by one program is the fraction, or proportion, of all sets in use tuned to that program. Thus, a rating and a share of audience differ because of different bases on which the computations are made. A rating is based on the total number of television homes in an area, while a share of audience is based on the number of homes using television during an interval of time.

An example will clarify the relationships between these audience size measures. Consider an area containing one hundred television homes. Fifty homes are using television; twenty homes are tuned to Program A and thirty homes to Program B. The *sets in use* fraction is 50/100, or 50 per cent. The *rating* of Program A is 20/100, or 20 per cent, and the *rating* of Program B is 30/100, or 30 per cent. The *share of audience* of Program A is 20/50, or 40 per cent, and the *share of audience* of Program B is 30/50, or 60 per cent. One may observe that the base for computation of the sets in use and the rating is the number of television homes, while the base for computation of the share of audience is the number of homes using television. The latter base is always much smaller than the former base.

If the three basic audience size definitions are understood, less confusion will result among users. In this connection one may justifiably deplore the frequency with which trade journal advertisements by television stations purport to show popularity in a market

by means of audience size data by presenting, as ratings, share of audience figures.

The assumption has been implicit in the preceding discussion that a television home is a satisfactory unit of measurement. One cannot deny that the comparatively limited audience size data described by sets in use, ratings, and shares of audience provide no direct evidence relating to particular individuals within the audience, reactions to programs, or even an indication of overall satisfaction with programming. The oft-heard defensive remark that "they can turn the set off if they don't like what they see" is unsupported by audience size data. As a general rule, sets in use in single-station markets are approximately the same as sets in use in multiple-station markets, indicating that vast numbers of people will watch television programming hypnotically no matter what the nature or quality of the program. The home unit therefore has limited application. However, from a broad marketing point of view, the assumption that a television home is an adequate unit of measurement is generally valid.

How accurately is the audience size data obtained by the rating services; that is, how near the truth are the figures? A "true" measure of television audience size would necessarily be based on an examination of all television homes in a given geographical area. Technically, these homes would constitute a *population*, or *universe*, as these words are used to refer not only to groups of people but to groups of measurements associated with any collection of objects. Such a census would, of course, be prohibitive in terms of cost in time and money. We must therefore be content with investigating a portion, or *sample*, of the universe; that is, a number of members of the population selected to represent it. We assume that it *is* possible to draw valid inferences about a population from the results of a sample drawn from that population, believing that the data from a good sample are closely related to data about an entire population. As R. A. Fisher has pointed out, inductive inference is the only process known to us by which essentially new knowledge comes into the world. For example, if we wished to estimate the percentage of homes that owned a color television set, statistical inference would infer the population content from the observed content of a sample.

Since, from necessity, the audience measurement services must draw inferences about television set usage from what is known of a sample taken to represent the population, and since the sample drawn is only one of an infinite number that the services might happen to choose, all concerned need to know how much reliance can be placed on the sample as a miniature of the universe in which all are interested.

One of the most important of problems is the selection of a sample so that it may yield dependable or precise information about the population of television homes. The sample, in other words, must be representative of the population. The best way to select a representative sample is by a *random* method in which every member of the population has an equal or proportional chance of being selected independently of all others.

A number of methods are available, and all audience measurement services use a random procedure or acceptable modification thereof. Random selection, however, will not always insure a representative sample. The size of the sample may be so small that all elements in the population may not be represented even though they had the opportunity to be selected initially. The more heterogeneous the population, the larger the sample required to represent it adequately; the more homogeneous the population, the smaller the sample required. Thousands of artillery shells may be accepted as satisfactory by the armed forces on evidence gained from firing only a few rounds. A dozen rats may suffice to disclose useful facts concerning a population running into millions. The classic case of homogeneity is represented by a person's blood, about which a physician makes inferences after examining only a single drop.

Members of a television audience are far more heterogeneous, at least in terms of demographic factors, than are the cases cited above. We can say without fear of contradiction that no sample of 250 homes in New York City, or any other, can possibly be a perfect representation of that audience on all combinations of population characteristics because one can enumerate more characteristics than numbers of homes in the sample. The sample of homes may represent the population on such broad general characteristics as age of head of household, educational status, income level, and family size; but no audience measurement service can tell one whether its sample includes the "correct" proportion of redheaded females, stamp collectors, parakeet owners, baseball players, or ice skaters. Proper representation of these rather esoteric characteristics might be believed to be important for certain programs or products. The measurement services should properly answer that, for most purposes, their samples are *adequate* representations of the population in question; that is, the bias due to sampling is probably quite small in relation to the uses to which the data will be put.

A *biased* sample is one that differs systematically from the population in the characteristic studied. It is possible for a sample to be biased with reference to one characteristic and unbiased with reference

to another, if the two characteristics are entirely unrelated. A properly selected telephone sample may, for example, be biased on the characteristic of income of family unit with respect to all homes in the universe; but if income bears no relation to television viewing of a particular program, audience data obtained from the sample will be unbiased even though it is obtained from a biased sample.

Securing a representative sample of sufficient size does not solve all problems relating to sample validity. Another problem equally as important as sample selection is that of securing, from the sample, data that is a true reflection of normal behavior. Errors of response having no relation to sampling procedures may, in fact, be more important and more difficult to control than sampling errors. Each response error contributes to biased data. At every stage of survey procedure, biases may creep in. Sources of error may include errors in definitions, recording of responses or observations, editing or tabulating data, analyzing results, or errors arising from non-response or unavailability of designated sample elements. All research services are faced with the continuous problem of obtaining correct data from respondents. Some examples will illustrate the complexity of the audience measurement task.

People in Arbitron or Audimeter homes, as well as in homes that agree to keep diaries of their television set usage, certainly know that their television viewing habits are being closely observed! If this knowledge causes them to deviate from their normal viewing habits in any manner, then the rating service is obtaining less than the truth and bias is introduced into the answers. A large percentage of families approached to keep diaries refuse to cooperate, and others who initially agree to keep diaries fail to do so during the course of the survey. If these people differ with respect to television viewing from those who keep the diaries, then less than the truth is being obtained. If those families who agree to keep diaries for several consecutive months are more avid viewers than families not so disposed, then data collected will misrepresent total behavior. If a family forgets to fill in the diary for a day or two, and then tries to reconstruct its viewing from memory, a chance for response error is introduced. When an interviewer rings a doorbell to inquire about television viewing within the household, finds no one at home, and therefore selects a substitute nearby who is available, bias is probably introduced as people away from home much of the time exhibit different behavior patterns from those usually at home. If a respondent to a personal interview survey cannot remember, or does not know, what someone else in the household watched the preceding

evening, bias is introduced. If a respondent remembers that he saw some news on television, but is confused as to which news broadcast of five presented simultaneously he saw, then error may be introduced. If a telephone respondent is not watching television at the time of a call and is too lazy or busy to find out if someone else is watching, then answers may be less than correct. If a rating service utilizing the telephone survey method makes the erroneous assumption that "busy-signal" homes are similar to other households in the matter of television set usage, response error is introduced.

Some of the causes for bias may not significantly influence the findings as a whole; some may, in fact, offset others. Unfortunately, no one is likely to know the true situation from the sample data. While errors of response may actually be quite small, it is the responsibility of the audience measurement services to demonstrate the validity of the data collected and reported by each.

A common misconception is that response biases in samples can be overcome by increasing the size of sample. Sheer numbers can never guarantee correct results. Only fluctuations arising from random, or chance, factors described below tend to be reduced with an increase in sample size. Response errors are not compensating and cannot be corrected by enlarging the sample.

Another misconception is that the size of the universe from which the sample is drawn determines the size of sample necessary to yield accurate information. All sampling theory is derived from the assumption of an infinite population; but in practical terms, any geographic area in which one is interested in obtaining television set usage data is sufficiently large that it may be considered infinite. Thus, a properly selected sample of a given size is equally applicable to New York City with four and one-half million television homes and to Syracuse, New York, with four hundred and fifty thousand homes.

Audience size data must not only be valid in the sense that it contains relatively small response errors and is therefore in close agreement with population activity, but must also possess reasonably high reliability. Reliability, or precision, of data is related to the extent of fluctuations in observations due to the process of random sampling. Repeated sets of sample observations never exactly duplicate one another. At the same time, repeated measurements will ordinarily show some consistency. Because of inconsistency, an important problem is that of determining how much may be said about a population from what is known of a sample, or of ascertaining the degree of confidence which may be placed in the inferences drawn.

A *parameter* is a measure based upon an entire population and is

recognized as a "true" measure. It always has an exact value, but is seldom known. A *statistic* is a measure derived from a sample, and will vary from sample to sample. The task is to *estimate* the parameter by drawing a sample and calculating the corresponding statistic. For example, if the size of audience for a program is to be estimated from a sample, the rating, or statistic produced, is the best estimate of the parameter. If another sample of equal size were selected, the estimated program rating would not be identical to that derived from the first sample, but it would probably be very similar. Moreover, neither the first nor second rating would probably coincide exactly with the population parameter. If one hundred samples were simultaneously examined, there would result one hundred estimates of the true rating. Each would differ from the other and would be in error by some unknown amount. The best estimate of the population parameter, or the true rating, would now be an average of all the sample ratings. In practice, of course, a series of repetitions of the same measurement is not possible and estimates of error related to ratings must be computed indirectly by other methods.

The distribution of the errors of measurement may be described technically by a statistic known as the *standard error* of measurement. The English mathematician, De Moivre, first described the statistic in 1733 as a "Law of Errors," the errors being the deviations of sample observations from the true value. The standard error indicates the variation that can be expected of estimates from random sampling. The degree of confidence that one can place in estimates of population parameters, such as ratings, is closely related to the size of sample taken and the standard error of the statistic in question.

Precision of results is related to sample size. Sampling error decreases as sample size increases. A large sample is therefore highly desired, but the larger the sample, the greater the cost, and practical compromises are necessary. Nevertheless, the sample should be large enough so that estimates are sufficiently precise to be useful.

But precision is a relative matter. Since a sample rating will generally differ more or less from the true population rating, any estimate for the population rating should properly be quoted not as a single figure but as a *range* within which one is confident that the value lies. The range is determined from the standard error. Even here one cannot be certain that the data has not misled us. Certainty is rarely achieved in human affairs, and never in sampling operations. The question of the degree of confidence in the data can only be announced in terms of probability. The rating estimate must not only be reported in terms of a range but also with an *associated*

probability that expresses the confidence one has that the value lies within the range.

In this way the user of audience measurement data is assisted critically to evaluate the information produced by the rating services. He may observe, for example, that a difference between two ratings is no greater than a difference that might well be obtained by drawing two random samples from the same population. Even though two ratings differ by four percentage points, statistical error may allow for up to eight points variation before any real difference may be said to exist between the two ratings. Ignoring the random errors which are implicit in all sample estimates may lead to unwarranted conclusions and faulty subsequent behavior. When a program rating is computed and reported as 32.8 per cent, one is likely to equate the accuracy of the computation with the accuracy of the data collected. This delusion of accuracy is understandable, but hardly to be condoned. The rating does not mean, as some would believe, that 32.8 per cent of homes watched a certain television program; it means that approximately 32.8 per cent watched. The range of "approximately" is determined by the amount of statistical error that one is willing to tolerate. If the error were computed to be 3 per cent, one might more properly say that the true rating was somewhere between 29.8 per cent and 35.8 per cent.

But one cannot stop with this statement of range, because one needs also to state the chance, or degree of assurance, that one is willing to take that an error greater than the tolerable one may have occurred. In the illustration, when one says that the true rating lies between 29.8 per cent and 35.8 per cent, he might do so knowing that, on the average, he would be wrong in reaching such a conclusion one time in twenty. He may simply have encountered an extremely erratic sample. In other words, in the realm of estimation, we are never absolutely certain that the sample estimate will not exceed the permissible error; we can only demand a relatively high degree of probability as to the accuracy of the decisions made.

To take an actual case, one audience measurement service reported a rating of 27 per cent for the Red Skelton program in Syracuse in June, 1961. If one determined the size of error and associated degree of confidence in the statistic, the reported rating should be evaluated as follows: "The chances are 19 in 20 that the Red Skelton program had a rating greater than 19 but less than 35." One would probably be hard put to make a decision related to program change on the basis of this information. A rating of 20 might be considered as poor. A rating of 34 might be considered as excellent. The true rating of

the Red Skelton program might have been either, or somewhere in between. Conceivably, there was an outside chance that the true rating was above 34 or below 20, although the odds of one in twenty of such occurrence made that possibility somewhat remote.

Suppose that one wanted to be equally sure that the estimated rating of the Red Skelton program was within 3 per cent of the true value. In order to attain this increased precision, the sample upon which the estimate was based would have had to have been over five times as large as was actually used in the Syracuse study.

The size of sample necessary will of course depend upon the type of decision to be made. If it is sufficient to demonstrate that the true rating is something over 25, the sample size required will be considerably smaller than if one must demonstrate that the true rating is more than 25 but less than 30. In any case one must decide upon the necessary precision of the sample statistic; and that decision, in turn, depends upon two subsidiary decisions: (1) how much of an error in the sample estimate is permissible, and (2) how much assurance is required that the estimate will not exceed the permissible error.

This discussion has not attempted to answer the question of whether ratings reported by audience size measurement services are accurate, for "accuracy" is a relative matter. We have seen that, at best, ratings or other measures of audience size are only estimates; and, for most individual markets, rather inexact estimates. Services are constantly attempting to improve the quality and utility of their data. Most of them now provide means by which sampling errors associated with their data may be determined. As few as five years ago, many reports failed even to indicate the sample sizes from which ratings were estimated.

But the services still can do much to improve, as was recently noted by the report of the American Statistical Association Technical Committee on Broadcast Ratings in its report to the Subcommittee on Legislative Oversight of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. Because *House Report No. 193* received very little discussion in the trade press, it is appropriate to list six of the conclusions of the report here:

(1) The rating services do not publish in their reports or have available for distribution to clients or others sufficiently detailed descriptions of what they do, and of the quality of the ratings they provide.

(2) The rating services do not provide adequate information in

their pocket pieces and reports on the accuracy with which their estimates approximate the values estimated.

(4) The rating services have not performed sufficient research on the effects on both ratings and audience composition of the various factors that cause differences between the population they, in fact, survey, and the population living in well-defined geographical areas such as standard metropolitan areas or other areas.

(5) The rating services have not performed sufficient research on the effects on both ratings and audience composition of the various factors that cause differences between the desired household information obtained without error, and the household information actually obtained.

(6) Measures of variability are not computed that take into account the sampling and estimation procedures that are actually used.

(9) Small market areas may have samples too small or too poorly planned for the uses made of them.

There is also room for improvement from within other segments of the television profession. It is a well-documented fact that stations try to achieve exceptional, and therefore non-representative, audience sizes during "rating weeks." The best motion pictures are presented during that week; and for several weeks thereafter one is treated to mysteries and westerns that never made the grade in theatres twenty years earlier. The entire industry recognizes, yet appears to accept, this hoax; and one wonders if it is not the public that is "kidded" in the long run. Knowledge of the significance to be attached to ratings is abysmally low on the part of salesmen and programmers in most stations throughout the country. Their comment that "I don't really believe in ratings, but the boys in New York demand them" is indicative of the near-slavery status of the people involved. Critics within the journalistic and kindred professions also need to have a greater understanding and appreciation for the strengths and limitations of estimates of audience size in order to avoid shouting unwarranted epithets at users rather than abusers of ratings. All these previously mentioned could learn from their kinsmen in the networks and major agencies who do understand the nature of the problems described here even though they often receive the brunt of adverse comment.

It has been said that in a society where statisticians thrive, liberty and individuality are likely to be emasculated. Those of us in the television profession must make sure that we do not become slaves to numbers. The goal can best be achieved, not by eliminating the numbers, but by becoming their master.

TELEVISION AND EDUCATION

While a great deal of attention has been accorded the development of ETV stations as well as the growth of formalized instruction-by-television in the schools and colleges, little has been written of the important uses which educators are now making of existing commercial programs and series. For this reason *Television Quarterly* reproduces an excerpt from a significant but perhaps not widely recognized new book by *Neil Postman*, Associate Professor of English and Speech at New York University. Its rationale and uses are explained below in a brief introductory statement by *Louis Forsdale*, Professor of English at Teacher's College, Columbia University, and Chairman of the Committee on the Study of Television for the National Council of Teachers of English.

TEACHING WITH TELEVISION: A PROGRESS REPORT

Louis Forsdale

In the contemporary world of many media the teacher of English in our schools is faced with a new opportunity and a new set of problems: to teach multi-media literacy. It is no longer adequate that a citizen only be able to read with discrimination, although that problem is as pressing as always. Child and adult alike must be able to use all media intelligently, approaching film, television, radio, picture essays and the like with the conscious intent of applying critical standards to these as well as to the printed page.

Recognizing the importance of studying television as a form of literary experience, the National Council of Teachers of English many years ago appointed a Committee on the Study of Television to help guide the profession in taking positive, sensible account of television in our society. Last year members of the committee sought out Professor Neil Postman of New York University to write, with guidance of the committee, a book which was published under the title *Television and the Teaching of English*. This past summer the book was distributed to nearly 60,000 members and subscribers of the National Council of Teachers of English.

The 138 page paperback book is divided into two sections, of which the first is a general discussion of the educational significance of television. Here one finds chapters on the history of mass communication, the invention of television and nature of the industry, the effects of television and the literature of television. These chapters are intended to help the teacher understand enough about television to move sensibly into Part Two, an explication of ten procedures for approaching analysis of television in the English classroom. These procedures range from the very simple (announcing on a bulletin board or in class) through richer experiences (setting aside a brief unit either within or outside the regular curriculum) to the longer proposals (conducting an extensive unit, or offering a course or a workshop about television).

The brief excerpt from the book which is published here is one of the practical suggestions which is offered for use by English teachers. The technique—"cross media analysis"—is undoubtedly one of the richest of all devices for getting insight into the nature of media.

TELEVISION AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

An Excerpt*

NEIL POSTMAN

Brief Unit Within the Regular Curriculum

Some teachers will find that television can be included easily and effectively within a brief unit that is part of the curriculum. In this case, there is no need to shut the books in class and break the continuity of instruction. Probably the most fortuitous example of how classroom work can be combined with television is in the instance of a television adaptation presented at the same time that its original is being studied in class. Such coincidences are by no means rare, since there is no dearth of adaptations on television. But accidental simultaneity, while certainly possible, is much too restricting. The teacher, therefore, should create simultaneity by reversing the sequence; that is, by requiring his student to read a novel or short story or play that is scheduled to appear on television. In any given semester, three or four adaptations of stories the teacher would like his students to read anyway will appear on television. In the eighteen months prior to the spring of 1961, adaptations of the following works appeared on network television: *The Moon and Sixpence, Winterset, The Tempest, Arrowsmith, For Whom the Bell Tolls, The Killers, The Turn of the Screw, A Doll's House, Misalliance, What Makes Sammy Run?, The Devil and Daniel Webster, Ethan Frome, The*

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Fallen Idol, Oliver Twist, Victory, Hamlet, The Human Comedy, Billy Budd, The Browning Version, Our Town, Old Man, Jane Eyre, Nana, Camille, Macbeth, The Three Musketeers, Lost Horizon, The Scarlet Pimpernel, and *Winnie the Pooh.*

Whenever the teacher can arrange for his students to read the original of a television adaptation, he has an excellent opportunity to engage the class in a cross-media analysis. This term is used to describe the activity of comparing the content and form of a story presented in one medium with its content and form as presented in another. Obviously, adapting a story from one medium to another will involve changes. In analyzing the nature and extent of these changes, students can make considerable progress toward understanding the structure of literary form.

Teachers should not, however, make the mistake of assuming that an adaptation is necessarily and always the inferior of the original. In the first place, frequently such comparisons are analogous to the comparing of apples with oranges, which is to say that the adaptation may not be either better or worse, but different. Edwin Granberry's *A Trip to Czardis* is a sensitive, compassionate, and well-constructed short story. Robert Herridge's adaptation of it is a sensitive, compassionate, and well-constructed television play. The difference is not one of quality or integrity but of literary form. In the second place, adaptations are, in fact, sometimes better conceived and more movingly executed than their originals. Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* was an adaptation of a Greek myth; Shakespeare's *Macbeth,* while not strictly an adaptation, had as its original source a story that appeared in Holinshed's *Chronicles;* and Stanley Kubrick's film *Paths of Glory* was a brilliant re-creation of an indifferent novel. In any case, the primary purpose of a cross-media analysis is not to discover which story is "better" (although such evaluations certainly should be made) but to discover something about the literary forms under investigation.

Cross-media analyses may be conducted in terms of specific questions within particular categories, as follows:

CHARACTER

1. How has the leading character been changed? For example, has he been made more likeable, handsomer, younger, wealthier, more forceful, more unequivocal?
2. Have minor characters been eliminated, added, or substantially altered?
3. Have relationships between characters been changed? For

example, has a mistress in a book or play become a "friend" in the television adaptation?

4. Have other identifying characteristics been altered? For example, have specific religious, ethnic, or political affiliations been eliminated? Has a Communist become simply a "radical"?

SETTING

1. Has the place of the events been changed? Has Cuba become a "small Latin-American country"? Has Mississippi become "somewhere in the South"?
2. Have the settings been made more luxurious or more poverty stricken?
3. Have scenes been added or omitted?

LANGUAGE

1. Has profanity or obscenity been removed?
2. Have simpler or more explicit explanations been used?
3. Has dialogue been transferred from one character to another?
4. Has a descriptive passage been transformed into dialogue?

CONFLICTS

1. Has a single goal been substituted for the complex ends sought in the original?
2. Have complex motivations and solutions been reduced to single lines of action?

THEME

1. Have the philosophic or ideological bases for the action been removed? For example, has a man's political passion been replaced with a romantic one?
2. Has the original theme been eliminated or altered?
3. Has the theme been made more explicit?

STRUCTURE

1. Have incidents been added or omitted?
2. Have action sequences been expanded or compressed?
3. Has a descriptive passage been transformed into visual images?
4. Have symbolic images been visually communicated?

ETHICAL AND MORAL STANDARDS

1. Has virtue been made to triumph and sin been punished?
2. Have transgressions against contemporary values been rectified?

Several observations must be made about this list of questions.

First, most of the questions stated here imply their converse; that is, if we ask if the adaptation removed the philosophic basis of the action, we must be equally prepared to ask if it supplied one that was absent from the original. Second, the categories and questions above are by no means exhaustive, and teachers might wish to add their own. At the same time, no teacher will wish to have his students attempt to answer as many questions as are listed above. The teacher will need to be selective, as always, in posing questions for his students to answer. Third, and most important, none of these questions is significant in itself. Each is worth asking only if the question, once answered, is followed by another, namely, "Why?" Students must do more than establish that a single goal was substituted for complex ones in the television adaptation of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* or that several characters were added in the adaptation of Faulkner's *Old Man.* They must also consider why these changes were made, for in establishing the reasons for the changes, the students may obtain some clear glimpses of television's resources and limitations, as well as the resources and limitation of the medium with which television is being compared. In order to elaborate on this point, let us examine two examples of television productions that were adapted from highly successful short stories.

The Killers

In Ernest Hemingway's short story, *The Killers*, the intended victim, Ole Andreson, is directly involved in only one brief scene—when Nick Adams goes to Andreson's room to inform him of impending danger. The reader does not learn why Andreson is to be killed (Andreson says simply, "I got in wrong"), is not told what Andreson looks like (except that from his face one would not guess that he had once been a prize fighter), and is given only a few terse lines of dialogue as clues to what Andreson is feeling.

In A. E. Hotchner's television adaptation of *The Killers*, much of this is changed. Andreson is not only shown in several scenes and provided with considerable dialogue but turns out to be none other than attractive Ingemar Johansson, who at the time happened to be the heavyweight champion of the world. Andreson is given ample opportunity to explain why his future is uncertain. The explanation makes Andreson's threatened extinction seem doubly unjust since the audience learns that his "crime" was born of a basic sense of decency: he honestly fought and won a fight he had promised to lose. The audience is also given a full opportunity to enter into Andreson's thoughts and thus to commiserate with his problem.

Other differences between the original and the adaptation are also apparent. For example, Hemingway refers to Sam, the Negro cook, as a "nigger" and depicts him as a great deal more cowardly than Nick and George, both white men. In Hotchner's version, the derogatory term is eliminated, and the Negro is depicted as only slightly more cautious than George and certainly not abject. Also, in the short story, Nick Adams, after warning Andreson, decides it is best for him to leave town. On television, Nick warns Andreson, goes to to the police (who do not believe his story), and then arms himself with a rifle with which he hopes to defend Andreson.

At least a dozen other changes could be noted between the two versions, but let us consider some of the possible reasons for a few of the changes mentioned above Why, for example, are Ole Andreson's and Nick Adams' part in the television play expanded far beyond their parts in the short story? An obvious answer suggests itself immediately when one realizes that Hotchner was writing a play that had to run for approximately seventy-five minutes. (The entire program was "live" and ninety minutes long.) Yet Hemingway's *The Killers* is, after all, a brief short story, a form which by definition calls for economy. The form Hemingway employed did not require him to do more than suggest in minimum detail what his characters were like and, in particular, what motivated them. Hemingway allows the reader's imagination to supply the full particulars of the story.

Hotchner was working in a form which demands greater explicitness. A visual image is frequently more concrete and therefore more explicit than a verbal description. This does not necessarily mean that a visual image "tells more" than a verbal one. A visual image does, however, tell different and sometimes contradictory things. In this drama, Andreson's face, recognizable as that of a world's champion, clearly stamps the character as a successful fighter, not an indifferent one as the rest of the story suggests. Also, seventy-five minutes allows for greater specification of narrative detail, in fact, demands it.

Hotchner was required, accordingly, to make his story more narrative than philosophic. Hemingway's story is essentially one of ideas; Hotchner's version stresses action. Hemingway is chiefly concerned with the impact of one event on three people—and their symbolically different responses; Hotchner is chiefly concerned with Nick Adams' attempts to prevent the killing. Hemingway's Nick Adams is shocked by George's almost casual acceptance of life and is rendered passive by Andreson's resignation to his fate. Hotchner's is almost frenetically active, activity being better suited to a visual

medium than passivity, and he ultimately revives Andreson's will to survive (perhaps a concession to an audience accustomed to "happy endings"). This ending, of course, drastically transforms the theme of the story. Hemingway seems to say that there are some things that can be neither fully understood or changed, that must be accepted for what they are. Hotchner suggests almost the opposite, that no situation is beyond our understanding or improving if we are willing to expend a maximum effort.

Also, Hotchner uses the "flashback" as a means of revealing the events leading up to the decision to kill Andreson. In other words, in "present time" dramatic form, he discloses events preceding the basic story. Even if Hemingway had wished to inform his readers of how Andreson "got in wrong," it would have been difficult to do so within the form of his short story. Hemingway certainly would have had to sacrifice the rhythm of his story, for which he is justly renowned, for the sake of such detail. With more time at his disposal and using the standard techniques for signaling past events (the picture fades out and a new one fades in), Hotchner was able to supply the pertinent details of Andreson's ambiguous past.

We observed, also, that the character of Sam, the cook, was changed in the adaptation. The key question, again, is "Why?" Here we must keep in mind some characteristic differences between publishing and broadcasting, and, in particular, the greater artistic freedom that the former offers. That Hemingway's story first appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* in March, 1927, means, among other things, that it was read by a relatively small and probably homogeneous audience. Very likely there were few Negroes in the magazine's audience, and if there were many, that fact might not have made any difference to either Hemingway or *Scribner's*. Then too, it must be remembered that in 1927 audiences were not so sensitive to stereotyping or so repulsed by its effects as they are in our own times. In any case, the writer of short stories or novels is certainly freer to depict members of minority groups in any way he wishes than is the television writer. The television writer, in consideration of the heterogeneity of his "mass" audience, must be more cautious in dealing with ethnic stereotypes. One may concede at once that in referring to Sam as a "nigger" the killers are quite in character, as is George in making the same reference. Understandably, however, Hotchner omitted the term, giving social discretion priority over artistic integrity. At the same time, Hotchner took the opportunity that an expanded form afforded to make of Sam something more than the literary stereotype of the "frightened Negro."

Finally, we might briefly consider the question of why the world's heavyweight champion was selected to play the role of Andreson. Of course, the name of the character suggests that he is of Swedish background (although nothing in Hemingway's dialogue suggests that he speaks with a Swedish accent). Also, Johansson appears to have sufficient intelligence to play the role with at least a modicum of skill. But probably over-riding these considerations is the fact that Johansson is a celebrity. Celebrities attract large audiences, and large audiences are of more than passing concern to broadcasters, producers, and sponsors.

Having evolved from religious symbols, rituals, and proscriptions, the theater of ancient Greece was presided over by Dionysus—originally the god of fertility. Similarly, it may be said that the dramatic art of television is presided over by Hermes, god of commerce.

A Trip to Czardis

Edwin Granberry's short story, *A Trip to Czardis*, originally appeared in *Forum* magazine in April, 1932. It tells of the final journey of two young boys to their father's prison cell immediately before the father is to be executed. During most of the story, the sons are unaware of their father's (and their own) plight, and not until the boys and their mother are returning home does the older son, Jim, realize he will never see his father again. Like *The Killers*, *A Trip to Czardis* is highly condensed and subdued in tone; its elements are unfolded with reticence and, for the most part, by implication. The reader is never told what crime the father has committed, why it was committed or where. These facts, as in *The Killers*, are irrelevant to the point of the story and are left to the reader's imagination to ponder. Also, the reader is never directly informed of the purpose of the boys' tragic trip to Czardis. Awareness of this purpose comes to the reader gradually and only by suggestion, never by direct statement.

Robert Herridge's adaptation of *A Trip to Czardis* took approximately twenty-six minutes to perform, which is to say that Herridge was not required, as Hotchner was, to expand substantially the parts of any of the characters or to alter the pace of the story. Herridge did contribute dialogue not found in the original, but mainly for the purpose of informing the audience of facts that Granberry reveals in narrative form. For example, in the short story, the reader is told that Daniel, the younger brother, has "a sickness against food." Herridge made this known solely through dialogue. Granberry also

tells the reader that there are many wagons on the road to Czardis (suggesting, not actually saying, that they are carrying people who are curious to see the execution). Herridge, again, informed the audience of this only through dialogue. On the other hand, narratively, Granberry tells almost nothing about the mother, relying mostly on her grim and sparse language to communicate the singular strength with which she accepts the tragedy. To communicate this same fact, Herridge naturally relied heavily on his camera, which he persistently focused on the mother's face.

Perhaps the main difference between the original and the adaptation is in the addition of a "flashback" scene in the latter. Jim has apparently been to Czardis once before, a visit that was both happy and memorable for him and his father. He has, in fact, so often repeated the details of the trip to his younger brother that Daniel begins to believe that he, himself, was there. In the short story, the reader learns of all this through a brief exchange between Jim and Daniel:

> "All the way we are goen this time. We won't stop at any places, but we will go all the way to Czardis to see Papa. I never see such a place as Czardis."
>
> "I recollect the water tower—"
>
> "Not in your own right, Dan'l. Hit's by my tellen it you see it in your mind."
>
> "And lemonade with ice in it I saw—"
>
> "That too I seen and told it to you."
>
> "Then I never seen it at all?"
>
> "Hit's me were there, Dan'l. I let you play like, but hit's me who went to Czardis. Yet I never till this day told half how much I see. There's sights I never told."

Herridge apparently felt that the form in which he was working would permit a more detailed development of Jim's previous trip without sacrificing the compactness of the story. Thus, as Jim and Daniel sat in the back of the wagon which carried them to Czardis, Daniel asked Jim to recount once again the details of his previous trip. Jim obliged his brother, and in "flashback" a brief scene was enacted between Jim and his father. The father bought Jim a cup of iced lemonade and pointed out the impressive water tower to him. The scene did not add any important new facts to the story, but the juxtaposition of a happy moment of the past with the misery of the present had the effect of making the present even more painful than it was.

Another important difference between the original and the adaptation is that in the latter, Herridge omitted some brief but important images included in the short story. As mentioned previously, Herridge

did not show the other wagons that were journeying to Czardis. Neither did he show crowds of people walking toward the prison, nor a man sitting in the branch of a tree which overlooks the courtyard in which the father will be executed. These images are important in the short story, since they reveal the crowd's callous anticipation of the execution and thus make the family's isolation and sadness all the more poignant. Probably the best explanation for the absence of these visual images in the adaptation can be found in the limitations of television itself. The television camera, studio, and screen are not well suited to the projection of large groups or wide open spaces. More than five people on a set will involve constant regrouping and cutting in order to give the audience a clear view of faces. The farther the camera moves back, the less distinct are the faces and the less significant appears the crowd. Vastness is an illusion better achieved on a large movie screen. Within the confines of a television studio, it is even difficult to attempt. Herridge chose to "work in close," as is his custom, and no more than three people appeared on the screen at any one time. He limited the play almost entirely to scenes taking place indoors. Even the wagon which carried the family to and from Czardis was shot in "close-up" so that at no time could the audience see it in its entirety. In short, Herridge gave all of his attention to the faces of his main characters, alternately revealing little Daniel's bewilderment, Jim's growing maturity, the mother's disciplined misery.

Granberry concludes his story at the point where Jim realizes that he will never see his father again. Daniel does not know this yet, and on their return from Czardis, Daniel reminds Jim of the watch and chain their father gave them. The last line of the story is: *But Jim neither answered not turned his eyes.* Herridge concluded his adaptation at the same point but allowed a guitar's lonely sounds and the camera's lens to "speak" the last line to the audience.

In spite of inevitable differences between these two versions, each literary form, in its way, is successful in communicating an almost unendurable sense of the tragic. In this case, the adapter, like the author of the original, is an artist who understands both the resources and limitations of his medium.

A final observation to be made about a cross-media analysis is that the teacher need not limit to two the number of media under investigation. In a brief unit (perhaps a week or slightly more) the teacher may not have time to guide his students through a comparative analysis of a story in, say, three different literary forms, but the teacher may consider the possibility in a more extensive unit. Cer-

tainly the opportunities are tempting when we face the almost contemporaneous appearance of a story in the form of a novel, stage play, film, and television play (as happened with *The Caine Mutiny*).

In addition to cross-media analyses, there are other ways of directing classroom attention to the television screen. If a novel is studied in class, the development of character becomes a subject for analysis. This analysis can be extended to television for comparison and contrast even when the novel and television program have only a tenuous connection with each other. If Beret in *Giants in the Earth* emerges as a real woman, whose gentle, guilt-ridden soul shrinks from the reality of the prairie, then she can be compared with a woman in a television play, perhaps a western, although it need not be one. The teacher might discuss with students how a novelist achieves a sense of wholeness in a character and compare these techniques with those of the television writer or director. The difference between a real character and a puppet can be demonstrated in both media, for television characters, even in westerns, are not necessarily two-dimensional.

Character analysis can give way to the study of endings as a clue to artistic integrity and literary worth. In the Greek theater when a god was lowered onto the stage in a mechanical device to help resolve with authority and justice an otherwise impossible situation, the playwright was admitting an artistic defeat, perpetrating a kind of literary fraud which has one modern counterpart in the last minute arrival of the United States Cavalry but which also has many other manifestations. The phrase, *deus ex machina*, "the god from the machine," has become standard in criticism and refers, of course, to awkward, unconvincing, or arbitrary means of resolving a plot. The teacher might require his students to read or view specific short stories, novels, films, and television plays and lead the class in a discussion of types of endings and what they reveal of their creators' attitudes toward their art and audience. The teacher might distinguish among the surprise ending (as in much of O. Henry and De Maupassant and in Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*), the contrived ending (as in Herman Wouk's novel, *The Caine Mutiny*, Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, and, of course, in many television westerns), and the "natural" ending in which the climax grows out of elements already in the story (as in Willa Cather's *Paul's Case*, Walter Van Tilburg Clark's *The Ox-Bow Incident*, Carol Reed's film, *Odd Man Out*, and Rod Serling's *Playhouse 90* production, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*).

Units of this kind need not be sustained. If the process of analysis, comparison, and correlation seems unwieldy, the teacher can divide

the class into committees, each responsible for one aspect of the subject. One committee can watch a television program to note the development of character; another, the types of conflict depicted; a third, the use of dialogue; a fourth, the types of endings; a fifth, the general themes. Or, the teacher might have one committee analyze character, conflict, dialogue, ending, and theme of a particular television program, while another committee analyzes the same elements in a short story, and still another committee, the same elements in a play or film. A final report or a panel discussion at the end of the week can bring the unit to a satisfactory close.

I do not give one hoot either for the FCC or a few intellectuals that criticize television. I want a minimum of five million people to be *actively* critical. One thing I want to do, for instance, is to have the material of broadcasting, particularly television, studied in a school, and not only if somebody puts on Shakespeare. I would sacrifice the reading of *Ivanhoe*, writing a report on *Ivanhoe*, if students in every school in the country would write a report about *Have Gun, Will Travel* or *Maverick*. I want to go beyond that into colleges when you begin to study the nature of the mass media. If we had a GI Bill which said, among other things, that one course you've got to take, or you can take, is The Mass Media, we would now have these five million families who would be critical of what they're going to have.

*Gilbert Seldes**

*From "The *Playboy* Panel—TV's Problems and Prospects," *Playboy*, Nov. 1961. By permission of the publisher.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Zettl, Herbert. TELEVISION PRODUCTION HANDBOOK. San Francisco: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1961.

Mr. Zettl's book has so many things in its favor that it seems certain to replace Bretz's venerable *Techniques of Television Production* in college courses in television studio operations. For one thing, it is an out-and-out textbook, and well arranged for textbook use. For another, of course, it is eight years younger; in television, that is a lot of years. Most importantly, it stresses local-station operations and how-to-do-it, rather than attempting to cover all possible types of equipment and large-scale production problems. (Assuming no fantastic break-throughs by the engineers, it should therefore take longer to go out of date.) There is an excellent chapter on performing. Treatment of other areas, though mostly far less detailed than in Bretz, is generally adequate for undergraduate courses.

But many instructors will find it less than perfect. My own most serious complaint is that, though it intends to be a manual for hopeful producer-directors, it is precisely the production-direction aspects that are least satisfactory. There is essentially nothing on shot-planning, and little on program-building or types of programs. The material on editing (especially that on the use of the dissolve) is open to strong objection. Picture composition is scamped (worse, good composition is said to depend chiefly on the creative ability of the cameraman). In general, advice to studio crew members is very good, while advice to the control-room contingent is not. But these weaknesses are by no means incapacitating, and should hurt the sale of the book not at all. To repeat, this is really a text for college courses in television studio crew operations, and in my opinion is the best such text now available.

The price is attractive, too; though in that connection the publisher has let Mr. Zettl down a little here and there. A few of the (very numerous) drawings and photos are poor; and occasionally the editor has allowed the author to say things he certainly doesn't mean.

As for the inevitable comparison with Bretz: While instructors will unquestionably want to make a good many corrections in using this new book, they will need to take less time at correcting Zettl than in updating Bretz.

ARTHUR WELD

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Paulu, Burton. BRITISH BROADCASTING IN TRANSITION. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961.

Much is happening in what Dr. Burton Paulu calls "the laboratory of broadcasting" in Britain. The present Charter and Licence of the BBC, and the Television Act which created I.T.V., will both expire in 1964. Before next summer, the report of the Pilkington Committee will be published. Dr. Paulu has produced an excellent survey of the broadcasting scene on the eve of important developments. (This reviewer is commenting in the light of his 25 years with the BBC.)

Discussing the effects of six years of competition, Dr. Paulu sees improvement in Britain's over-all television program service. He gives equal credit to BBC and I.T.V. for schools programs, places BBC ahead in programs for children, and commends the television drama standards of each organization. BBC-TV, however, has established a clear superiority in sports and "is recognized as Britain's television sports network."

With the coming of I.T.V., says the author, the BBC "had to compete to some extent for the general audience." This reviewer would affirm that the BBC is in fact competing with growing vigour and effect: furthermore, this situation cuts both ways, with I.T.V. being forced increasingly to measure itself against the consistently high standards set by the BBC.

In the area of popular light entertainment, Dr. Paulu points to "BBC's achievement of higher standards than ever before" (demonstrated this year by its capture of the world's top award—the Golden Rose—at Montreux against international competition, and by the popularity of BBC's regular shows with Britain's leading comedians).

Recent figures have shown that BBC programs have been getting almost the same number of viewers as the commercial network. This despite the fact that, as Dr. Paulu points out, BBC schedules more serious (supposedly unpopular) programs in prime time than I.T.V.

Dr. Paulu's able analysis of the complex BBC structure follows the lines of his earlier volume, *British Broadcasting.* In his new book, he devotes close study to the I.T.V. system. He approves the separation of program material and advertisements, but he notes that "advertisers and agencies are apt to emphasize the short-term audience size, rather than the long-range public service aspect of TV."

This approach underlines the difference between the two competing systems. An I.T.V. spokesman remarked recently, "Profitability is the only measure of success"—a view which the Director-General of the BBC described as a denial of what should be the true purposes of broadcasting. The I.T.V. companies, Dr. Paulu remarks, are embarrassed by profits of up to 130%, which have drawn public criticism.

Dr. Paulu reviews the many problems facing the Pilkington Committee (including line standards, U.H.F., color TV, etc.). Some of his own recommendations:

"The BBC......a superb broadcasting organization, should be maintained and strengthened on its present basis, as a public corporation with license fee support...... both BBC and I.T.V. should be encouraged to introduce additional television services ......radio should continue under the auspices of the BBC....".

Burton Paulu's book will be of value to all who are concerned with the vital decisions facing broadcasting in Britain.

DEREK RUSSELL

BBC Representative
in the United States

Emery, Walter B. BROADCASTING AND GOVERNMENT: RESPONSIBILITIES AND REGULATIONS. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1961.

In the forward to his colleague's book, Dean F. S. Siebert states that it attempts to answer two questions: What has been and what should be the function of government in the regulation of broadcasting? Professor Emery answers the first question in commendable fashion, combining the hornbook approach with a dash, here and there, of journalism.

Professor Emery's book might well be read by any person contemplating entry into broadcasting. It presents the multitude of statutory laws, rules, regulations and Commission policy statements which envelop a broadcaster in action. After a cursory prologue of events leading to regulation and a summary of the basis and scope of governmental controls, the book explores the character, classification and utilization of radio frequencies, the qualifications for a license, and the procedures for securing authority to build a station and to get a license. Once on the air, the reader is reminded of the technical requirements in the operation of a station, of the regulatory provisions affecting the broadcaster's programming service, of the procedures involved in changes in ownership and control of stations, and of the remedial powers of the Commission. The reader is given a glimpse into the myriad problems with which the broadcaster is daily concerned in the intellectual property rights field. (One large area of importance to broadcasters, unfortunately, is not adverted to: labor and talent matters.) Every applicant for a broadcast license knows that he needs legal and engineering counsel. He will know it much better and with a deeper appreciation of why after he has read Professor Emery's book.

As to the second question the book attempts to answer, Professor Emery offers his comments on several proposals for change in the present laws and regulatory practices. But on a number of issues of continuing importance, such as the clear channel controversy, subscription television, community antenna television systems, and allocations, there is little development of and no probing inquiry into the basic factors and contentions embraced in the issues. On the vital question of the propriety of governmental intervention in programming, of government forcing a change (an "improvement") in programming, Professor Emery is wholeheartedly committed to the view that "the people through their government have a right to set the general standards for their (stations') operation." It is unfortunate for any serious student of broadcasting, particularly those in the academic halls, that he does not develop the pros and cons of this subject.

THOMAS K. FISHER

Vice-President
Columbia Broadcasting System

Costello, Lawrence F. and George N. Gordon. TEACH WITH TELEVISION— A GUIDE TO INSTRUCTIONAL TV. New York: Hastings House, Inc., 1961.

The focus of this book is upon "Instructional Television," or the use of television for direct and systematic instruction in formal courses of study. It is not primarily concerned with the broader and more general field of "Educational Television." It covers this use of television for direct instruction at all educational levels—elementary through university—and in both public and private systems. It is addressed to both teachers and administrators.

The selection of this focus is well justified and permits the authors to develop a clear and sharp emphasis upon the subject, without becoming involved in the other purposes and objectives to which television can be employed in education. However, in attempting to speak to both teachers and administrators, the book loses somewhat in the depth and intensity to which it could speak to either group alone. In this respect, the organization and presentation of the material is perhaps more satisfactory for administrators than for teachers. Chapters 1 and 2 apply to both audiences. Chapter 3 is of more interest to the professional production and technical staff, of some value to the administrator, but of limited value to the teacher. Chapter 4 is of major interest to the teacher, as are Chapters 6 and 7. Chapters 5, 8, 9 and 10 are of major interest to the administrator. Since teachers, both studio and classroom, are the ones most in need of the excellent analysis, definition and information which this book presents, it would have been a greater contribution to this group if the technical material could have been held to an even smaller margin to provide more room for depth and detail in the treatment of the processes of planning, teaching, and utilization. Also, in the effort to cover certain principles and situations over the range from elementary to higher education, certain distinctions between levels of instruction and the learning environments represented become blurred and lost at times. The differences and distinctions need to be pointed out and identified more clearly.

In general, however, this is a good basic book in the field. The practical experience and sound common sense of the authors is evident throughout. The approach is scholarly and unbiased without being pedantic or pretentious. The style is clear and direct. The treatment is honest and sincere. The authors do not try to "sell" or to represent any particular or "professional group" point of view, and they successfully avoid preoccupation with technical devices and "gadgetry."

The problems, issues, differences in point of view, and the variety of objectives and values in the use of television for direct instructional purposes are well defined and identified. However, a more thorough analysis and discussion of the issues and ideas would have been very much in order and very desirable. A more intensive treatment in depth of the issues would have given the book an even greater value to teachers and administrators who must make the decisions and develop the effective use of this medium within the educational system and process; but on the whole, this is a very sound and useful book, and one that will be a welcome addition to the resources in this field.

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COMMENT

Not so long ago there were only two subjects upon which every adult and civilized being considered himself a critical authority—acting and politics. Without question, television must now be added to this abbreviated list of institutions about which each man feels compelled to speak—or write—his piece. It is the purpose of this continuing department of *Television Quarterly* to seek out literate and stimulating comment about the medium and reproduce it for our readers.

THE WASTELAND—TWO VIEWS FROM PARNASSUS

What is the final responsibility of television in a free society? These two excerpts from the same issue of *Harper's* are of more than passing interest, for they focus directly upon the two essential needs of the audience.

> A few hours after I arrived in Toronto last spring I got into a taxi in front of the O'Keefe Centre, the city's brand new cultural market basket, and asked the driver to take me to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Studio 6.
>
> "You in the television business?" he asked me. He was a young man in his twenties.
>
> I told him I was not, that I was merely going to appear briefly on an interview show, "Seven-O-One."
>
> "What do you think of Canadian television?" he said.
>
> I admitted that I had never seen any Canadian television, though I had heard that it was good. I asked him what he thought of it. With not the slightest hesitation but with an after-taste of bile, he said: "They keep trying to hit us with culture—and they won't lay off it."
>
> There is almost surely a lesson in this for Mr. Minow, the new Federal Communications Commission chairman, who heats American television about the ears with such gusto for its lack of culture. It was the beginning of a cultural lesson for me.

Russell Lynes
"Culture-Struck Canada"
Harper's, August, 1961
pp. 16–18

Three-quarters of mankind still live in a poverty so grinding, in such pitiful conditions of health and livelihood, that the framework of their brief lives is not very distant from Hobbes' definition: "nasty, brutish, and short." But when Hobbes wrote, the rich minority contrived to overlook the spectacle. In France, the Court played at shepherds and shepherdesses while the peasants ate grass. Today we in America are the rich minority of world society. Are we any less prone than they to while away our most precious gift of time in pursuit of distractions fully as trivial as those of Le Trianon or Le Hameau? Indeed, we have in television an instrument of mass entertainment that does not even demand that we dress up as shepherds ourselves. We can watch other people doing it for us and sink to an even greater passivity of mind and spirit.

A nation of viewers, gazing at what FCC Chairman Newton Minow calls the "wasteland" of the television screen, is not likely to widen its sympathies or feel its instincts of justice and compassion deeply stirred. Yet no wealthy group in the modern age has finally resisted the inroads of popular misery and revolt while clinging to all the trivia of a self-indulgent existence. History is neither made nor changed by the complacent and the comfortable. On the contrary, it is made against them and at their expense.

Adlai E. Stevenson
"America Under Pressure"
Harper's, August, 1961
pp. 21–24

From our British counterpart, *Contrast* (The Television Quarterly of The British Film Institute), come some comments from an article by J. B. Priestly entitled "The Magic Beanstalk." Mr. Priestly's observations reveal that the criticisms directed at the medium are by no means confined to national boundries.

For after all this is the world of the H-bomb and the huge rockets that may fall out of the sky one morning. If, as I believe, it was both wicked and appallingly stupid to manufacture these things at all, it is nearly as wicked and stupid to assume, as all politicians seem to do, that their existence has no profound psychological effect on people in general. When vicious or silly lads stand in the dock, something is often said about the influence of TV, but I doubt if it is the shadowy violence on the screen that has done the mischief. It is the commitment of our whole society to violence on an unimaginable scale, together with the feeling many of the young have, that Doomsday is inevitable, which is really responsible. The bashing about of these lads and the huddling domesticity in which TV flourishes are both products of the same emotional climate.

It is usually held that television may be bad for children because it excites any over-stimulates them. Images of violence have a far stronger effect on them than thed have on adults. What they see, coming objectively as if from reality, is very different from what they merely read about, in what they may feel instinctively is an imaginary world. There is something in this, but unfortunately the real mischief cannot be remedied simply by removing violence and ugliness from the screen when children are viewing. If TV takes the place of reading—as it must have done in millions of homes—it can harm the young because it supplies the images that they should be creating for

themselves. Imagination, we may say, is not sufficiently exercised. However, there are signs already, as the first excitement of TV possession calms down, as the medium begins to be taken for granted, that reading may be preferred to staring and listening, children curling up with books again, to enjoy the enchantment of their inner world.

No longer identifying ourselves with the mass of viewers, let us see what can be charged against TV. First, its main appeal is to the visual sense. Is that a bad thing? It is, I think, if the visual appeal has been over-played all round for years. For example, Americans I know who are in education have told me that many American youngsters are now incapable of grasping abstract ideas. They have been so conditioned by visual education that there is no way to the mind except through the eye. What cannot be seen cannot be properly understood. And clearly this is not progressive but regressive.

J.B.P.

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TELEVISION QUARTERLY — LOOKING AHEAD

In this time and temper it is difficult to ascertain where "a serious look" at television ought first to be directed. The challenges and issues before our society multiply and grow more demandingly urgent, making it apparent that the content of this journal must range over a wide variety of specific topics and concerns. It is important, however, that *Television Quarterly* single out pressing problems and seek contributions which define, enlarge and clarify our thinking about them.

In these pages, two articles are devoted to the continuing problem of television's relationship to government, a relationship for which constant change is the inevitable touchstone. A new communications law may soon be written. Extensive revisions in existing regulation may be forthcoming. But all such change must arise out of the intelligent and responsible thinking of all, both governing and governed, who are concerned with the role of mass media in American life.

What kind of laws should, or should not, be written for the medium? What forces are involved in the struggle among the various culturally, economically or politically inspired philosophies toward television? Who defends which beliefs—and why? What can those who are

sincerely dedicated to the advancement of television say and do to influence and control the direction of actions and events which must inevitably dictate the kind of medium—and the kind of society—in which they invest their time, energy and professional concern?

It would seem that the following specific topics require a responsible body of opinion upon which government-industry interaction can be predicated, and from which Federal Communications Commission policies and practices, as well as any new legislation, can be formulated:

1. The "magazine concept" approach to television advertising.
2. The future and identity of radio in a television age.
3. Licensee responsibility in the telecasting of controversial material.
4. Government regulation of networks.
5. The financing of educational television.
6. Standards for issuance and renewal of licenses.
7. The role of the Federal Communications Commission in determination of "the public interest."
8. The desirability of a new communications law.

These might serve as points of departure. Each deserves to be given appraisal in the light of experience, wisdom and dedication to the medium which all of us serve. No considered opinion in these areas can be ignored, and it will be the business of *Television Quarterly* to see that these issues, among many others of importance, will be given full and fair hearing.

A. W. B.