

TELEVISION

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THE JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS
AND SCIENCES

Published by The National Academy of
Television Arts and Sciences with the
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TELEVISION QUARTERLY

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THE TELEVISION ARTS

Definition of television's role as a dramatic medium was complicated at the outset when, in 1947, the Jerry Fairbanks Studios in Hollywood produced the first "filmed-for-television" program. This event, and the chain of events it precipitated, went relatively unnoticed in the great burst of "live" dramatic television of the early 50's, and it was 1958 before the industry realized that television drama had, indeed, "gone West." Since then, the issue of television's proper dramatic form has grown to major proportions.

The significant questions, however, are not whether there is enough *good* drama on television or whether this drama should be "live" or filmed. The fact is that there is *some* good "live" drama and *some* good filmed drama on TV, and that there are *some* men upon whom the responsibility for perpetuation of such quality has fallen. What needs to be articulated, therefore, are the standards of quality which these men have established, as well as the goals they pursue. In the dialogue that follows, *George Schaefer* and *Lewis Freedman* discuss their standards and goals from the special point of view of "live" production.

Paul Weston comes upon the television arts from another direction and treats the growth and development of popular music in television. He considers a less publicized but omnipresent creative problem: the achievement of higher standards of quality in musical programming.

George Schaefer heads Compass Productions, the producing company responsible for the *Hallmark Hall of Fame*, and has produced over forty major dramatic works for the medium, including his 1960 *Macbeth* and 1958 *Little Moon of Alban*. These two productions alone captured nine "Emmys." Mr. Schaefer has enjoyed similar success in musical-comedy production in California and Texas, as well as in the Broadway theatre, where he co-produced *Teahouse of the August Moon* and other plays.

Lewis Freedman brings long experience in theatre to his current assignment as producer of the NBC-TV *DuPont Show of the Week* dramas. He produced more than forty critically acclaimed presentations for *Play of the Week*; *Camera Three*, for which he produced and directed numerous programs, won both an "Emmy" and Robert Sherwood Award. "The New Girl," a motion picture which Mr. Freedman produced and directed, won First Prize at the 1960 American Film Festival.

Paul Weston has worked with many great popular musical performers during a varied career as a composer, arranger, and conductor with Capital Records and with Columbia Records, where he was Director of Artists and Repertoire. Among Mr. Weston's popular compositions are "Day by Day" and "I Should Care"; his serious compositions include "Crescent City Suite" and "Mass for Three Voices." He is founder and National President of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

DIALOGUE

GEORGE SCHAEFER

LEWIS FREEDMAN

In late March, George Schaefer and Lewis Freedman met with *Television Quarterly* in Mr. Schaefer's upper Broadway office. The conversation was initiated by quotation of a few sharply critical observations about television drama. These remarks, and the informal discussion they prompted, are written below.

Interviewer: Many serious critics want to write television off as a medium in its own right; they insist it serves no serious creative purpose. We hear that television drama is a debased extension of the film, that creators are stifled by quick production techniques and working conditions that would not otherwise be tolerated. How do you feel about this?

Mr. Freedman: This business about being rushed—I think that's true of any art and any artist. It is certainly true of the Broadway theatre. It is true of movies. When Michaelangelo came down from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel after nine years he probably complained about being rushed. I don't think you can create anything that *deserves* the name of creation; you never have enough time. You make the time you have do. Yet, my experience in television is that it is unnecessary to operate in a continual state of panic.

Mr. Schaefer: Strangely enough, I find that I have *more* time in television than I had in my last theatre experience or, in a certain respect, than one has in the movies. In the ninety-minute shows I do, we rehearse for three weeks. If you balance out rehearsal hours against each minute of performance—allowing time to rework and remold—you naturally have a full, but more than adequate, schedule. In television you have that wonderful feeling that you can go back and take a whole new approach. You say, “Gosh, why didn’t we think of this? Let’s go back and do the whole first act with this in mind.” And you *do* have the time to do it.

You can’t do this in the movies. The scene you shot that very first morning is what’s going to be in the final screening. You can’t go back. The most wonderful thoughts can conceivably develop out of your relationship with the actors by the second and third weeks of shooting, but they’re worthless to you. You’ve got to close your mind to them because if you make that change *now* the past two weeks are dead footage. And who can afford to go back and re-do two weeks of film shooting?

So it is true, I think, that all art forms present their own limitations. Things must be done under pressure and television at its worst *is* extreme pressure, but at its best it is certainly no more rushed than other media.

Mr. Freedman: I’ve found that many of my own productions were more leisurely than they might have been in other media. When I observed the preparation of productions for Broadway they held “casting emergency” sessions in *July* and weren’t even going into *rehearsal* until *September*! Their problem seemed as real to them as mine at this very moment—when I have to go into rehearsal on *Wednesday* and don’t have a leading man. Yet, the leading man I *will* get may turn out, because of the pressure, to be more *right* than if I had him weeks ago. Perhaps that extra pressure will help me work in greater depth than I would have otherwise. Pressure doesn’t have to hurt; it can help.

Mr. Schaefer: I’m amazed, and impressed, by the procedures followed in some of the filmed series that come from the coast. The speed with which they *cast* them! Even in live television, and under pressure, you will sit down and try to figure out *who* might be good for *this* part well in advance of rehearsals. Out there I think actors must *live* by their telephones. The casting department or producer will throw five or six “good ideas” at you, and in forty-five minutes the deals are closed and the casting is settled. It’s a different way of working.

It seems to me that the elements which contribute to panic in television are usually involved with, and stem from, the producer or director who must control time. Problems arise when a director hasn't sufficiently organized his plan of action, or when a producer delays decisions until the last possible moment and then tries to change everything a director has already done. This leads to chaos during the most precious period of rehearsal. The fine performances we see on the medium come not out of chaos but out of careful organization.

Interviewer: What new problems are posed by taping? Are there some advantages? Does the "security" of taping make much difference in achieving quality in TV drama?

Mr. Schaefer: I don't think it makes any difference. The basic problems are not helped that much by tape. Of course, if you're doing a show on tape you know that if the scenery falls on the actors, you can do the scene over again.

Interviewer: Does the use of tape make any difference in scheduling? Is the schedule opened out a bit, allowing more freedom and time?

Mr. Freedman: No. The trap one gets into in tape—and of which we're all aware—is that people begin to use tape *like* film. They take an infinite amount of time to make an infinite number of repeats. I think this is a mistake, and I think it is bad for the performer. He knows he is going ahead ten lines, then back three, then ahead for ten more. *Then* you begin to get cliché performances—superficial performances. If tape is controlled, as it can be and as many of us have tried to prove, you can get the same tension, the same immediacy, which advocates of "live" TV performance say you cannot get out of an electronic or mechanical device.

Interviewer: Let's turn to the question of the writer in television. Despite the critical onslaught under which the "Golden Age" has been buried by those who have started to look seriously at the "kines," we know that over three hundred *original* hour long-plays were written for three series during the 1950-1955 period, and that a small but significant share of them were fine, enduring works. At least there were enough of them to say, "Yes, Virginia, there *was* a 'Golden Age' in television." What is happening now? Who is writing TV drama now?

Mr. Schaefer: There are a number of writers who would like to do nothing *but* original plays for television. The most obvious fact is that there is no place to use them any longer. The whole problem

is complicated by the economics of the industry, combined with the degree of network and sponsor security that comes in a filmed series. These series have really taken over the hour dramatic form. I think that in all probability good authors are writing for filmed series. But with the limited time they can give to any one work it is very seldom that you will find a distinguished script.

Mr. Freedman: That's a problem for the producer. Five years ago a producer was deluged with scripts and ideas for TV shows because there were TV shows and series that might use them. A producer could scan the field and select material to work with. We now find that we are producing a series of dramatic shows for which all sources of supply have dried up. Too many writers have gone to the coast, where they are writing *on order*. If they have an original idea they try to turn it into a stage play and then aim it toward the films.

My job as a producer, I find, has become that of meeting as many writers as possible and trying to suggest to them that there *could* be a market. I'm afraid I don't make a very convincing case for it. It's a funny position to be in. I find it's forcing me closer to my concept of what a producer should really be—the man who creates. A producer is a magician. He comes out with nothing up his sleeve and five minutes later he's got a rabbit. Which is, I suppose, better than an egg.

Interviewer: What conditions would have to exist to promote the development of an original anthology drama for television again?

Mr. Schaefer: I'm not sure, but some good things are happening. This year the *Dick Powell* and *Alcoa* shows have moved into anthology writing, and some of the writing on these series has been remarkably distinguished. Of course it's all filmed, rather than "live" or taped "New York type" of production, but it's very healthy. It is *not* "writing to specifications." You know that the writer is not curbed by what has gone before. No one tells him to "do this because this is the way the characters have to behave."

The problem of the moment, I think, is to get the "live" hour and ninety-minute series *on*. As soon as there is an outlet for this kind of writing it will burst forth. The writers are still around.

Mr. Freedman: Yet, if you pause to consider, there is probably more fiction—that's the only word I can use—more *fiction* on television than ever before. We have fictitious characters involved in fictional situations, working out their problems. So when they talk about a "Golden Age," they are really referring to a *New York* "Golden Age" of "live" drama.

Interviewer: But isn't the distinction which is pinned upon the "Golden Age" such that it offered the original, self-contained works as opposed to "writing-to-order"—to the established formats and characterizations of situation strips?

Mr. Freedman: Yes. The "fiction" we now talk of has moved away from a conflict of psychology or character, or a conflict of morality, to a conflict in *action*, and that's why we've had the move to film—because film is the best medium for activity. The "live" studio can't do it, with or without tape. That's why "live" TV and the theatre are better suited to a static form in which the action is *interior*.

Mr. Schaefer: I think the first *Alcoa* show this season, "People Need People," was almost group therapy. It was very adult subject matter, and very well done. It couldn't have been more exciting in its performance if it had been part of the "Golden Age" of "live" TV. I thought it was a fine use of changed conditions.

Mr. Freedman: Let me ask you a question, George. We've both worked with stage plays, and then in TV. Do you find some in-built problems in bringing a stage play into TV?

Mr. Schaefer: Tremendous problems. As long as they are *serious* plays—really *dramatic* vehicles—the problems are minimal, because these were originally written to have an individual, personal impact, and that's what you're dealing with in television, too. But the comedies or farces written for the theatre—those things designed to tickle the collective funnybone of a lot of people sitting together—create terrific problems in TV. You rarely sweep somebody away in television. The kind of disbelief that is needed for this broad stuff can't be found in the home. When you're in a full theatre, watching from beginning to end, you accept the silliest kinds of jokes in the third act of a good comedy. You howl at them in the theatre, but at home you'll say, "Oh, come off it!"

Even satire is different on television. I can only compare it with a *New Yorker* cartoon. It's very close to that. The message of a cartoon is purely personal. It hits or it doesn't. Ten people may look at the same cartoon and have quite different reactions. That's what happens with comedy on television. Those whose sense of humor matches the style of the person who makes the joke may be amused, and others just say "hmfff." And you are absolutely dead if you try to please them all. Many TV shows have been trapped in this way.

The most successful workers in TV comedy have been able to get past this block, usually with tongue in cheek. Sid Caesar at his best does it. Ernie Kovacs was brilliant at this. He would take off on an idea, often a wild one, and make it *work*. You accept the fact that

people with a certain sense of humor are not going to buy this, and you still forge ahead. You must try not to lose confidence in your own sense of humor. This means disaster, because then you, and everyone else, begin to tamper with the comedy—and no one will be amused.

Mr. Freedman: I like Bergson's definition of laughter—a gesture from one person to another which shows how they feel about something. When you're sitting alone at home with no one there to make the gesture to—or with people with whom you share such identical attitudes that you don't need that kind of communication—then the idea of comedy is altered. You need the group for *funny!* The most you can aim for on TV dramatic shows is just *fun*. Chuckles and smiles. But it's too hard to get that out-loud laughter which lets people know, let's them hear *you* say, it's funny.

Mr. Schaefer: While watching TV, I'm never amused by either canned laughter or "live" laughter. In fact, for me it slows it all up. If a comic is amusing me, and I have to wait for a studio audience to laugh, I get impatient. I say, "Get on with it. Be funny again." This is different from the theatre, too. There, the playing style is different, and it's geared to the audience. You don't mind the wait, because you're part of it, really.

Mr. Freedman: The problem we've always had is the first act. That long stretch of mood-setting which you can afford when you've got people sitting in a theatre who have paid \$8.80 for their seats. They're not going to get up and leave, but in TV, people will walk out.

Mr. Schaefer: We finally decided that if they're going to watch for ninety minutes they're going to have to give us ten minutes in order to know what they're seeing. I don't think we ever lose an audience because of the necessity for exposition. It's a greater problem in the hour-long show, however. But on the very special shows, certainly on *Play of the Week*, audiences were willing to stay around and get to know what was happening.

Mr. Freedman: If people are really willing to wait ten or fifteen minutes while you're getting acquainted, the show has a chance to really develop and be a rock-crusher.

Mr. Schaefer: Sometimes, after I've read the reviews, I've said to myself, "I can't believe that the critic really gave it his attention beyond the first getting-acquainted period."

Mr. Freedman: It's probably true that no matter how great your ending is, if the show is a slow starter a lot of people won't be there for the finish.

Mr. Schaefer: You can *try* to use production techniques, but how far you can go before losing every bit of honesty is another matter.

Mr. Freedman: In *Victoria Regina*, I thought everything went absolutely clean from the beginning.

Mr. Schaefer: That was difficult because the first scene consisted of just the three characters—the mother, the daughter, and the nurse—sitting in the library reading the Bible and talking about the King who was going to die. It was a scene that was considered so static and dull that it wasn't even done in the stage version.

Mr. Freedman: But it had that *quietness* of something that's going to be important.

Mr. Schaefer: Well, it worked in that case. With such a quiet scene you've got to say that if it's worth doing at all it's worth doing all the way.

Interviewer: Is there something important about the continuous "live" performance of the stage, as against the rush of television or the doing it by odd-and-bits as it must be done in the film?

Mr. Schaefer: It's an entirely different thing. When people say that television is an actor's medium in a way that films are *not*, they're completely right. A non-stop "live" TV performance has the same quality of a theatre performance simply because actors are carrying the ball. The pulse of the thing—the believability, truth, and excitement of it—are in the hands of the performer. Of course the influence of the writer and director are there too. But at the moment, the performers are telling the story and making the points. This isn't so in the movies. The tempo, the whole impact of a scene, is often set by the director and the editor when the actors are miles away doing another picture.

Mr. Freedman: And with tape, there's a matter of compromise. We tried to reach it on *Play of the Week* and are trying on the *DuPont* series. We tape an entire act at a time, and no one can stop it except the director or producer. Once the actors begin, whether it's for nine minutes or twelve minutes or, in the case of *Iceman*, forty-five minutes for a single scene, it has to *go* and nothing can stop it. Now, if the actors know this, they can give a performance. They can't *help* it, because if there's anything *there* at all they're caught up in it themselves, and it begins to have a cumulative thrust that you can get in theatre. There's nothing in the nature of tape which makes it impossible to get the impact and continuity of "live" performance. You go wrong only if you begin to chip away at it.

Mr. Schaefer: It's impossible to use tape like film. Mechanically you can't edit tape that well. But something worse happens. I remember a show this season in which they just went wild. It was

full of roll-overs and bursts and flashes, and I'm sure the average member of the audience didn't know what was causing it; he was probably trying to adjust his set all through the show. Ignoring mechanics, it's just foolish to attempt to do with tape what you can do with film. Film editing is a precise art in which you can deal with single frames, and all of your sound effects and dialogue and music can be added separately and with utmost control. You're working in an exact, scientific way, and it's one of the most exciting elements of film work. None of this is possible on tape.

Mr. Freedman: I remember that show. It was an hour-and-a-half special, and it was edited almost minute by minute. It was a brilliant editing job, but the show lost all of its *lifelikeness*. You could almost say it had seeped away between the splices. In between the pieces, the life just went out of it.

Mr. Schaefer: The result is like a first rough-cut of a film. None of it is *right*; nobody's really answering anybody else. It's all wrong, and yet it's sort of all there. But in film you can spend weeks, sometimes months, picking up the beats and the breaths and the changes and the looks, and then *finally* you make it all of a piece. You add the sound later, and with its tremendously unifying capacity you ease over things which are still pictorially bumpy. In tape you don't have this. You just cut the tape and put a little strip behind it and hope it stays together. It goes bim, bam, bump—it just can't *flow*.

Certainly the best thing television can do in entertainment—not in news or public affairs, which is an exciting world to itself—is to catch actors and actresses performing in a good play at the very peak of their abilities, with the scene flowing, taking off, going back and forth, building in that wonderful interplay that great actors and actresses have. The audience is able to be on the spot and catch this in closeup, where you can almost *see* the actors *think*. The great moments of television happen then—as in *Days of Wine and Roses* and in some of the things we've been able to catch on *Hallmark*, where actors were communicating at a level of performance that you could see nowhere else *but* on television.

Mr. Freedman: And when television gets that good it *becomes* actuality. You have that kind of excitement—when top actors are *going* and they know nothing's going to stop them—which you might get at an actual event like a McCarthy trial or a parade up Broadway.

Mr. Schaefer: And this is only possible in the theatre on different terms. There may be some *truth* taking place, but actors are trying to reach a balcony and play to thousands of people. They're projecting, talking louder, signaling to the audience with their bodies and

their attitudes. Now here is something distinct that *only* television can do: to catch that glowing, growing kind of performance you might see on the stage if you were a bumblebee buzzing around everywhere you wanted to be.

This is a *distinct* contribution of television. In this unique way, the medium does something beyond the living stage and something films can't do at all.

Mr. Freedman: And in a way it's just beginning. We're at an historical point comparable to about 1570 in London. We sit around and say, "Do you think *The Globe* will ever come to anything, George? Will anyone really be able to write for it?"

I have a theory which is absolutely indefensible—that TV won't really reach its greatness until the generation that watches it as kids grows up and carries a belief in it. A belief such as we had for the movies, or for radio when we listened to it under the covers after the lights were out. Until that generation grows up and is really working at it, it won't be all that it can be. When I was a kid, I hid my Emerson radio under the covers and listened until midnight. I heard everything from *Little Orphan Annie* to *Fibber McGee and Molly*, and all of that was an absolutely real world for me.

Mr. Schaefer: Yes, there was a reality about them. You believed it was really happening.

Mr. Freedman: There was that moment when you went into a movie theatre and somebody took your ticket and you suddenly took a step forward into the darkness. From that moment on nothing else existed; somebody had to take your arm and pull you to a seat. You were up there *alone* with them! Until a generation grows up with *that* kind of belief, TV can go only halfway. We can't discover all of the forms for it yet.

Interviewer: What can a producer do when he isn't certain he has found the real techniques to hold an audience?

Mr. Freedman: The only answer is conviction about what you're saying, through the property you're producing. You have to have this, and you have to say it in a way that is totally *commanding*.

Mr. Schaefer: If you *start out* by saying how can I make this particular show so clear, so simple, so *redundant*, that people will stop and watch it no matter what they're doing, you're beaten. You have to assume that if they want to get something from a ninety-minute or two-hour play they'll just have to damn well sit there and *listen* and be quiet and pay attention. The ones who aren't willing will tune away and there's nothing you can do about it.

Interviewer: And what of the future of good drama on television? Will it grow, and will you find the support to *keep* it growing?

Mr. Freedman: After all the generalizations are dragged up, it's obvious that sponsors are finding that the audience *does* prefer fiction to non-fiction; if your fiction is believable, people will watch it.

Mr. Schaefer: If the sponsors think so, and if they can afford it, it will happen. They're much maligned, really. I think there are many who would be interested in doing better things.

Mr. Freedman: But even this can't hold producers back. The producer has got to do the things he wants to do despite everything else. He's got to treat television as a writer treats a sheet of paper in a typewriter. There are many things against him, things that stand in his way. There are ratings, there are audiences, there are other producers, problems of getting it on, getting scripts. But if his selfishness is strong enough he can finally use all of those ingredients to give it true meaning. If he works passively, and lets these things control him, then he shouldn't be in the business. That's a credo, not a program of action. I wouldn't say that in public.

Interviewer: You just did.

Mr. Schaefer: A producer has got to have a great deal of passion for what he is doing because he has to fight so many things along the way.

Interviewer: Do you have confidence that there will really *be* stories worthy of this conviction and dedication?

Mr. Freedman: Yes. There is a kind of test I have for good drama. It must have a sound of reality—almost in its quietness, perhaps—but a sound that tells you, the moment it begins, that it's real. Not the realism of cops and sirens. That's another thing. But sometimes, when I am in another room and I hear something, I *know* it's television because of the sound it creates. Just by the way the people are talking. It's a world of its own. And the *good* shows—whether they are lyrical, or expressionist, or what we call realism—have a sound that relates to the sound of the real world. The success of an *Iceman Cometh*, despite what we said about problems of getting a stage play under way in TV, came from the fact that you could be in another room and actually hear actors talking, and think you were hearing real people. But who is to *write* these dramas about real people? New properties will *have* to come. The great white hope of dramatic television is in original writing. I, for one, will be delighted when all the "classics" have been used up, and I live in fear that when the last one is used up someone will announce that they're starting all

over again with *David Copperfield*. On *Play of the Week* I sometimes felt more like a *curator* than a producer. It is certainly valuable to have these plays put on, of course, but nothing is as exciting for the producer as the development of an original.

Mr. Schaefer: I agree. And I think we will get originals. There are places to get them. The *Hallmark* contest drew thousands of scripts from all over the country, and many of them were very interesting. We did one that year, a play by Jerry McNeely, and it was most successful.

But you can't overlook the problem of financing originals. It costs just as much to produce an untried original as a standard and accepted piece. When *Hallmark* approves *Teahouse of the August Moon*, as they have for our season opener this year, they know precisely what they are going to have. This will never be the case with originals.

Mr. Freedman: I'm not so sure it's all bad to take the old, so long as you re-make it!

Mr. Schaefer: Of course, as creative people we would rather do original plays. The question is: Can you ask the sponsors who are footing fantastic bills to gamble with you at the frequency with which television cries out for these things? In the theater you search for four or five years and finally find a play. You say, "This is it," and you go out to raise \$125,000 to put it on; if you're lucky you will be a success, or at least get part of your money back. In television, you go to a sponsor and say: "Look, next November *this* goes on the air. There can be no postponement, you can't wait another year while it's rewritten. At that moment, ready or not, it goes!" It's then that you've got to have the courage of your conviction that the piece of original material you are buying is going to impress people the way the best of them did. It is not an easy thing. You aren't even talking about \$125,000 any longer, but about \$250,000.

Mr. Freedman: It's a problem, and you *do* have to fight.

Mr. Schaefer: Yes. You have to keep at it...

THE FORGOTTEN ART: MUSIC FOR TELEVISION

PAUL WESTON

The move from the motion picture or recording field into television can be a depressing experience for a composer, director, or arranger. He has come to expect an effective set-up, whereby the orchestra is properly spread out for good balance, but discovers in television that the musicians are huddled into an incredibly small corner of the studio. The trombone player must exercise reasonable care each time he extends his slide. Violinists are packed together like musical sardines, and a wandering bow can easily cause a permanent eye injury. If the conductor is particularly aggressive—or if musical stars happen to have some concern about how they sound, then a half-hour may grudgingly be allowed for purposes of gaining audio balance. If the time cannot be spared, the audio man (who is huddled in a booth of woefully inadequate size) fights the battle alone, hoping that orchestrations will not be too thick and that the singer will project sufficiently to prevent orchestral spill into the boom microphone. The show goes on, and if the sound has even half the quality a hi-fi listener might demand of his own phonograph, an enormous victory has been won.

Any conductor who shies away from the television medium for these reasons is depriving himself of a rich experience to be found nowhere else in show-business. The conductor who has spent much time in television soon finds recording and motion pictures rather tame and unexciting by comparison. As in so many other facets of television creation, the fight is rough, but the victory offers twice the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that might be gotten in the clean, well-ordered recording studio. Further, the leisurely pace of the motion picture industry provides nothing comparable to the challenge of the TV "special," where the music must be arranged in three days, rehearsed in three hours, and balanced in three minutes.

But challenge of itself has no virtue unless there is a sense of accomplishment—a feeling that real progress has been made in the difficult task of bringing order out of chaos and quality out of the conditions that prevail. Television music has had a long history, and the significant strides which have been made ought to be catalogued here.

Since the earliest days of network television, many musical directors have tried to introduce some of those techniques which were successfully used in motion pictures and in recording studios. Their job has been made more difficult as a result of the “nobody-cares-what-it-sounds-like-as-long-as-the-picture-is-good” syndrome which has taken hold of so many industry people. Yet, many of the techniques which were ridiculed in 1952 are considered standard procedure today.

Pre-recording is perhaps the most important musical technique which has evolved in television. The artist or group records the musical number in advance of the program and then mouths the words while the recording is played during the actual airing of the show. Although this is customary procedure in motion pictures, many performers in television resisted it for a variety of reasons. Some performers were simply unable to synchronize their actions with their pre-recorded voice track. Others lacked the patience required to listen to the recording long enough to remember what had been done. A few probably honestly believed that the *immediacy* of “live” performance was more important than good sound.

No one would deny that for a slow ballad, which can be shot in close and thus permit the boom microphone to be kept fairly near the artist’s head, a live rendition is to be desired. The singer is free, and with proper orchestration the sound will be perfectly adequate. Trouble will normally occur in rhythm and production numbers; the artists must move freely, and the rhythm is naturally heavier. It is then that the band sounds may spill into the performer’s microphone and drown out the singer. The most unpleasant effect comes when the listener can actually hear two drum and two bass beats—one coming directly into the orchestra microphones and the other coming a fifth of a second later, after it has crossed the stage and been picked up in the performing area. No matter how good the picture may be in this case, the listener will feel uneasy about what he is *hearing*, and the situation must be made right at the outset.

An additional technique has been developed over the years, despite its taxing effect upon the conductor’s emotional system. This technique involves putting the orchestra in a different studio and having the singer’s voice piped through earphones to the conductor while

the orchestra is piped through speakers into the studio. If the singer can get used to working with speakers, which can be brought much closer to him than the orchestra itself, the effect will be excellent. There are no lags in sound, and no double bass and drum beats to worry about.

It is naturally safer to have two TV monitors and two headsets (both on separate circuits) at the conductor's desk, for if either a monitor or a headset fails to work during the show, panic and disaster will set in quite readily. This is one of the hard lessons those in TV music have learned over the years.

There is still another technique for improving quality. If the artist does not wish to pre-record a rhythm tune or a production number, the orchestra track *only* may be pre-recorded for playing in the studio while the performer sings live to this accompaniment. This procedure obviates concern about muddled sound or double orchestra pick-up.

One of the more exciting technical advances has come in the use of the radio microphone. Microphones concealed on the person of the singer broadcast a signal to be picked up in the control room. The problems of the boom microphone are thus eliminated. When radio microphones first came into use, there were a few exciting and confusing moments, as when a police call might suddenly join the singer's voice on the air. Now that equipment has been refined, these accidents no longer occur.

Technical achievements notwithstanding, the best sound can still be obtained by placing the microphone in full view of the audience, right in front of the singer. This is good old fashioned radio-style balance. For a long time it was considered very bad form to permit the microphone to be seen, but this taboo has been relaxed somewhat lately as a result, perhaps, of the very effective Perry Como medleys, which gave clear indication that the best sound treatment in television may lie somewhere between radio and motion picture approaches. Naturally, if a boy is singing a love song to a girl, the visible microphone would be distracting, but the "visible mike" taboo should be relaxed in other areas as time goes on.

Technical problems are frequently less trying than human problems. Of all those artists who make the television conductor's life a merry one, the "bar-skipper" is the worst. This peculiar breed of performer may simply skip a bar or a few beats without notice, leaving the conductor and a very confused orchestra behind. The situation must be caught immediately to prevent complete collapse.

The simplest and most effective solution to this problem may be to

force the performer's retirement from show business, but the impracticality of this solution is apparent, for some of the biggest singers in the business are "bar-skippers." A more practical solution is to provide the pianist with a set of earphones. Then, when the "bar-skipper" goes into his act, the conductor can wave out the band, have the pianist "radar in" on the errant vocalist, and let the band come in when the pianist and the singer are flying together. Since most of the "bar-skippers" are well known to the musical fraternity, forewarned is fore-armed.

Beyond the technical proficiency that has been accumulated over the years, what genuine accomplishments can television music point to, and what future achievements can it expect to attain?

Music for television has had a difficult time in holding its own. Under the tyranny of ratings, a musical show can have an audience of fifteen million people and still be judged a failure. Glowing reviews do not often help. Producers of musical and musical-variety programs often are forced to design shows of studied mediocrity, with the hope of creating a large enough segment of the viewing audience. Frequently this effort to boost ratings brings into musical programs singers and dancers who would provoke catcalls in any high school production, if they were to be judged only by their musical talent. So long as such performers deliver ratings, the quality of their performance is never questioned; this condition alone has wrecked more "specials" than any other single factor.

But it would be unfair to say that there have not been distinguished contributions in the field of musical television. Among the triumphs are the Leonard Bernstein music lectures *in toto*, the songs which Cahn and Van Heusen wrote for the Frank Sinatra production of *Our Town*, and the Henry Mancini scoring for *Peter Gunn*. It was the latter which really drew our attention to television scoring and which led to a decided improvement in the quality of most subsequent scoring of background music for the medium. The same Mancini *Peter Gunn* scoring heralded the first important use of jazz in television backgrounds.

Although jazz has been our only real American art form, it has yet to enjoy the kind of presentation on television which it enjoyed in recordings and radio. On those rare occasions when television has offered jazz, the success has been instantaneous. It is impossible to estimate the contribution made to the first Fred Astaire program by David Rose's jazz backgrounds and the carefully developed audio balance, but many of those who happily tapped their feet—and later voiced noisy approval—were aware that they had witnessed not only an incomparable performer, but had been treated to the proper use of music on television.

In the late 30's and early 40's, when the era of big bands gave us a pronounced quality of jazz in popular music, American popular music prospered. This era gave to the world the great standard songs which are being recorded over and over again in albums today. The current shocking state of our popular music should be a source of concern to everyone involved in any entertainment medium, whether it be radio, motion pictures, recordings, or television. The quality of this music can be improved only when we recognize the moral responsibility involved and work together for improvement.

In the days of radio's greatness the task was easier; cost factors were not so dominant then. A radio network could carry sustaining shows featuring fine music and good instrumentalists, but a television network could hardly be asked to devote hours of prime time in order to raise single-handedly the standards of American music. Nevertheless, an industry-wide effort is needed to do something about the state and condition of popular music. Television, because of its enormous impact on our culture, could provide the means whereby some improvement is made.

To be sure, we should not expect the average television viewer to exclaim aloud, "Listen to that wonderful balance!" or "Boy, is that jazz band ever swingin'!" Still, there can be no doubt that these elements make a major contribution to an effective television program; the viewer has just as much a right to expect them as he has to expect lavish sets, beautiful costumes, and well-rehearsed choreography. Only when the producer budgets money for time-consuming audio balance with the same degree of attention that he gives to non-musical items, will the viewer be given the rare opportunity to see and hear how great a musical show can be.

Those who have some responsibility for the future development of the television arts can make major contributions in two areas. First, they should look into the state of our popular music and see what efforts can be made to improve its quality and impact upon our own nation and upon the world at large. Next, they can give greater recognition to the fact that television requires the use of two senses, both sight *and* hearing, and insist that the latter be given proper attention, if only for the sake of the audience.

The American public's appreciation of hi-fi and stereo sound recordings is a certain indicator that listeners have become accustomed to better sound reproduction. Television can no longer expect its proper share of entertainment time, attention, and money from this public unless it is willing to take a long, hard look at the way in which TV music is presented.

TELEVISION AS A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FORCE

The very diversity of the contributions which follow attests to the breadth of interest in the cultural and social impact of television, and confirms what has often been said—that television is everybody's business.

Patrick Hazard is a specialist in American studies who maintains great interest in the mass media. He suggests that all is not as serene as it might seem in Academe, and that the intellectual, as well as the broadcaster, would do well to acquire some fresh instruction about the true nature of the medium. *John W. Evans* brings the analytic method of the social scientist to bear upon Matt Dillon, Wyatt Earp, et. al.—not to mention that great number of Americans who are devoted to the Western without, perhaps, knowing why. A former public servant with long experience in governmental uses of broadcasting, *Romney Wheeler* describes the significant uses of television as a weapon in the Cold War. *Yale Roe* enlarges upon a suggestion by FCC Chairman Minow, made in an address to the 1961 conference of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, that educational telecasters might acquire a little "showmanship" if they are to command the attention they deserve.

Patrick Hazard is Director of the Institute of American Studies, East-West Center for Technical and Cultural Interchange, at the University of Hawaii. For the past six years he has served as radio-television editor of *Scholastic Teacher*. He is a member of the Television Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, and has contributed articles on popular culture to *College English*, *College Art Journal*, *Variety*, *Nation*, and *The New Republic*.

John W. Evans is a graduate of Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, and earned his Ph.D. at Ohio State University in the fields of sociology and social psychology. After several years of teaching and research at Ohio State, he joined the staff of the Survey Research Division at the United States Information Agency, where he is presently in charge of research on motion pictures and television.

Romney Wheeler served as Director of USIA's Television Service from its inception November 2, 1958, until shortly before his recent resignation from the U. S. Information Agency. Previously, he served from 1950 to 1956 as London Director for NBC News, and from 1956 to 1958 as NBC's Director of European Operations, and President of NBC International, Ltd. He left USIA in April 1962 to return to private industry in the field of public relations.

Yale Roe earned a Master's degree in Political Science at Northwestern University before entering television. He served with the ABC owned-and-operated stations in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco before being called to an executive post with the ABC-TV network in New York City.

THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE BROADCASTER IN AMERICA

PATRICK D. HAZARD

In an address before the 1958 Baltimore Conference of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, President (then Senator) Kennedy made a remarkably perceptive analysis of the ethics of broadcasting. He said, as I recall, that a broadcaster was very much like a politician in a democracy: he had to stay elected by the votes of his constituency, but he wasn't a real statesman unless he led them more often than he followed them. But what really struck me in this, my first public impression of Kennedy, were the remarkable asides he offered his audience of broadcasters on the nature and significance of American history as it related to their professional concerns.

For example, he asked the public affairs broadcasters assembled there to think what might have happened to the course of American history had Woodrow Wilson been able to use radio to take the League of Nations to the American people. In his view the Harding-Cox election returns—broadcasting's first public service venture—seemed pathetically late. Had Wilson been able, by broadcasting, to avoid the shattering train schedule that broke his body, American history might have been different.

This kind of mature, though wistful, historical speculation appealed to me at the time on two counts. For one thing, it was very reassuring to hear a politician who had more than a Fourth of July sense of his country's past. For Kennedy, American history was more than a handy grab-bag of gaudy slogans to be waved in times of stress as a kind of magical therapy. For him, history was a complex and often confusing record to be profoundly studied with all one's intelligence

and imagination. This sense of the past is rare enough anywhere in future-centered America; it is almost non-existent in public life, at least in ways that are visible to the general electorate.

The other reason I was quite taken by the Kennedy speech at Baltimore was that in thinking freshly about the history of mass communication in America, the Senator was doing with considerable skill what for a variety of reasons professional historians were scarcely attempting. He was doing brilliantly, in effect, what the professional historian and communications educator weren't doing well enough when they were doing it at all, viz., developing in a business specialty a sense of its own professional past and the relationships between its own history and that of the commonweal.

That this confrontation took place at a conference sponsored by a commercial firm was an irony that took me somewhat longer to assimilate. The Westinghouse Conferences, I think, will go down in media history as one of the very few really significant American innovations—comparable in potential, if not yet in actuality, with the land-grant college, the county agent, and the comprehensive high school. My own faith in the self-correcting capacity of American commercial broadcasting began in 1957 at the Boston Conference. For the first time I met and observed in action a considerable number of broadcasting professionals who meant what they said (because they were willing to take the tough personal consequences) when they talked "freedom," "responsibility," "progress," "competition," "public service." These were not the intellectual bantamweights who intone the First Amendment whenever their status quo is seriously examined. "Taking the First" is a ritual that eliminates more thinking in American broadcasting than any other trade dodge I can think of.

The Westinghouse Conferences are so important, in my judgment, because they institutionalize the insight that a corporation must really be concerned about the intellectual and imaginative growth of its own community even to insure its own fiscal stability, not to mention fulfilling its own moral responsibility. That these conferences were so successful stems from several factors. They were a success because they filled a lack the universities have not yet taken care of. They made it possible for a practising broadcaster to combine searching intellectual self-criticism with equally sophisticated consideration of his craft. Universities have often been willing to provide the first; too often they are not skillful enough with media machinery to discuss the second at a level high enough to merit the broadcaster's respect.

If the universities have not yet grown up to this task, the trade magazines (another possible source of corporate conscience) don't even clearly see the problem. With a few notable exceptions in men like John McMillin of *Sponsor*, who combines deep knowledge of the industry with a courage to step on the tender toes of his subscribers, the broadcasting trade press too often degenerates into a cheering section for its industry.

In consequence, broadcasters have few responsible places in which to level with each other—to compare their serious misgivings as well as share their moments of professional triumph. The Westinghouse Conferences were held in cities with WBC stations (Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, Pittsburgh), which suggests the instinct to treat matters in a practical way; they were also twice held at universities (Johns Hopkins, Stanford), which attests to some serious intellectual purposes. The programs included distinguished educators and successful businessmen. This combination of business shrewdness with intellectual vigor is precisely what American broadcasting most critically needs.

Another crucial need is a sense of the past that disciplines our expectations for the future. Local history was always an integral part of the showmanship of these conferences: in Boston, a tour of Paul Revere's house and a bus trip to Lexington and Concord; in Baltimore, a trip by nineteenth century railroad to Harper's Ferry, W. Va., for a premiere screening of the Antietam battle program in the WBC series *The American Civil War*. There are weak spots in this historical series (it doesn't even come near Kennedy's Baltimore speech in historiographical acumen), but it's on the right track.

One might ask why commercial broadcasters should have to be supplying their own intellectual vigor to a basic industry? Where have the universities been? About one hundred of them give courses and degrees in radio and television. I think the answer comes in two parts. First, the academic community in general has fumbled grievously with respect to all the newer media, broadcasting included. A combination of causes (snobbery, distrust of big business, mediocrity) sufficiently explains this failure of vision. Because the most rigorously intellectual sectors of the university community chose to scorn the newer media, no really fundamental thinking took place to put broadcasting and other new art forms in broad enough perspective for sufficiently intelligent action.

Into the intellectual vacuum flew, for the most part, second and third-rate men with small minds and outsized ambitions. They were the tinkerers, the gimmick peddlers of higher education. Probably

incapable of high achievement outside the academic enclave, they were the patient ones, the interminable committee-sitters who so often shape the destiny of American higher education while the intelligent and imaginative ones are in the library writing books. In short, too much of the "higher education" in communications is neither very high nor very educating. Commercial broadcasters know this and rarely have as much respect for communications education as they have for the competence of their most creative peers in broadcasting.

The second reason why broadcasters have to develop their own self-criticism is that when academic intellectuals every now and again attempt to criticize broadcasting, they are so poorly informed they get nothing but laughs or sneers from the broadcasters.

Let me give two examples from personal observation. The first occurred at a Johns Hopkins luncheon during the Baltimore Conference. A distinguished teacher was trying to persuade the broadcasters to give their audiences credit for more capacity for intellectual and imaginative growth. And he singled out especially the housewife, bedevilled for a generation by the poms and *omnia opera* of Procter and Gamble. He started to outline a "new" program idea for daytime radio in which the hearts and minds of ladies would be appealed to. And a mighty eloquent program strategy it was. The only trouble was that Pat Weaver's then recently defunct *Weekday* had tried the pattern and found it wanting in Pulse.

It was as if a broadcaster were to address the Modern Language Association and encourage literature professors to find some really exciting drama to teach; say, plays about royal conflict written in Elizabethan English poetry. The reactions of Shakespearean authorities to such a plea can be anticipated. ("What does this guy think we've been doing!") My impression, gathered from talking with the broadcasters after that luncheon speech, was what you would expect: "Hasn't this man ever heard of *Weekday* and Pat Weaver?" Uninformed criticism, no matter how well motivated, is worse than useless. It doesn't lead to clarified policy, and it undermines the confidence of the broadcaster in the intellectual community's wisdom.

Another instance of this learned ignorance was even more depressing to me. It happened towards the end of the *Daedalus* conference on "Mass Culture," sponsored by the Tamiment Institute and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in June 1959. Sidney Hook was eloquently pleading for a Third Programme TV service for the United States. To this entreaty Robert Saudek quietly replied that there was no *TV* Third Programme in Great Britain, and a representative of the Metropolitan Educational Television Authority

added that there *was* a fourth network of (at that time) almost 50 stations providing an alternative minority television service in many major metropolitan areas.

The whole conference had an Alice in Wonderland quality because of the irony that the most thoughtful people there were the commercial media policymakers. They had done their homework, were doing high quality programming of the kind demanded by those academic intellectuals present, and, to my mind at any rate, seemed capable of causing the changes asked for by the critics. It seems to me that for the process of mutual self-discovery between intellectual and broadcaster to really begin at a decent level, the intellectual must go to school with the broadcaster.

What the Intellectual Could Learn from the Broadcaster

The first thing the intellectual must learn is that in a cultural democracy leaders must think of the people first and themselves second. What a great deal of the intellectual criticism of broadcasting really stacks up to is this: *Broadcasting isn't interested enough in me.* This attitude explains the "Third Programme" syndrome. Many intellectuals seem to think, judging from their actions or inaction, that society exists for intellectuals and not vice versa. This will be a humbling but necessary lesson for intellectuals, presumed and legitimate, to learn at the feet of the broadcaster as teacher. Society invests some of its surplus in the subsidization of intellectuals because of its conviction that the painful truth is hard to come by in the rush of events. Therefore, certain bright people are literally set aside from the productive mechanism to give all of us perspective. This is particularly true of a marketing society like ours in which the temptations toward self-delusion are as powerful as they are multifarious.

The second lesson the intellectual must learn is that academic freedom exacts a responsibility for courage greater than that manifested in most academic communications programs. The timidity of the teacher, even of full professors on tenure, is one of the most disillusioning experiences of those who remain in Academe. The broadcaster at his best risks his reputation and career on bold schemes. Most academic intellectuals figuratively shake in their boots about saying something in print that might appear to be too bold, or not "scholarly" (read "irrelevant" or "academic"), or offensive to powers within and without the university.

This is a particularly ironic question at the moment because so many communications programs have just received (or hope to receive) considerable money accumulated by men who were willing to take big risks. Here, I think, a word is in order for media business-

men anxious to upgrade the quality of media personnel and performance: Watch out for the intellectual Babbitts, the gray-flanneled academicians who are so immature or unsure of themselves that they must fawn before the very media policymakers and institutions they have presumably set up schools and institutes to judge. Beware these men for the same reason you would avoid "yes men" in your own business operation. Flattery is only meant to get the Babbitts someplace higher. It is an as yet insufficiently noted fact that the over-expansion of American higher education, combined with its minor league structure of monetary and status incentives in teaching, has brought into all academic life men whom you really wouldn't want on your payroll. What you need, and can exact, is the truth about yourselves and your enterprises. This truth will hurt in many cases, and you need men in communications education who will give it to you, unvarnished and whole. The only way you can get better is to put bigger men in power over communications education. This won't always lead to good public relations, but it will help your media and your country.

The third thing the academic communicators must learn from the commercial broadcaster is how to be eloquent and vivid. An Ichabod Crane complex smothers much of the significant information and wisdom of which the intellectual community is possessed. Only very rarely is educational communication as good as commercial communication at its best. "The Real West" (NBC's *Project XX*) did more to counteract the myths about the American frontier experience than a regiment of history professors. The book reviews and interviews on *Today* are literary criticism where it counts—because it has a reasonable chance of reaching the intellectually "unchurched." Leonard Bernstein and *Captain Kangaroo* are the greatest assets music education has in America. The *Purex Specials* are attempting the unbelievable: the transformation of the sudsy anti-intellectualism of afternoon weekday broadcasting into a powerful medium for letting the housewife live with reality. *Armstrong Circle Theatre* is dramatized documentary of the kind that every social science faculty ought to be producing but isn't. *Camera 3* is a humanities curriculum all by itself. And so on and so on down the list of television's achievements in its first fifteen years. This much has been achieved mostly without the active support of the American academic community.

There has been just enough superlative educational broadcasting to know that we are not idly dreaming when we demand eloquence of form as well as depth of substance from educational broadcasting. *A Time To Dance* (WGBH), *Heritage* (WQED), and several other TV

series show that ETV need not be dull and technically unproficient. NBC's pump-priming of ETV in *The Subject Is Jazz* and *Adventuring in the Hand Arts* attests to the practicality of commercial expertise being reinvested into educational channels. Indeed, the *Continental Classroom* experience further shows that ITV can learn a great deal from commercial traditions of audience attraction. In radio, still a shamefully underdeveloped educational medium, the most single interesting example is *Ways of Mankind*, produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation under Fund for Adult Education support. *The Hidden Revolution* (CBS) and *Image America* (NBC) are further examples of how compelling a substance can become when adequately staged.

In fact, the ludicrous regularity with which the CBC takes home the American bacon to Toronto from Columbus each spring suggests how little the American tradition of "know-how" is operative in the field of educational broadcasting. This doesn't have to be if we take a little better stock of our intellectual and financial resources. It also suggests at what point the commercial broadcaster ought to learn a few things from the educator.

What the Broadcaster Could Learn from the Intellectual

The broadcaster could learn, first and foremost, not to bellow "American Way of Life" whenever one of his current policies is brought under scrutiny. There is nothing on God's Drawing Board which says that the way American broadcasting is run is the only way. If the intellectual must give up his wistful dreams of the Third Programme, the broadcaster must base his defense of his policies not on super-Americanism but, rather, on a most careful study of the history of communications and an even more open-minded analysis of the public agenda in America. When the NAB published a pamphlet at the height of the "rock and roll" craze affirming how deeply committed post-Sputnik Americans were to "Excellence," every broadcaster in America should have blushed at the *chutzpah* of this document. Public service cannot be satisfied at station-break time. It has to inform the total style and performance of commercial radio and television.

The broadcaster must learn to take the Bill of Rights as seriously as political science professors do—which means *using* the First Amendment to shake up the community with thoughtful, continuing analyses of the shadow areas in American life—religion, business, politics, and mass communication. This won't be easy, but then the Bill of Rights was not written at a Sunday School picnic. It was

written by men of affairs who had both energy and ideals. And when a competing medium criticizes broadcasting, it is not right to invoke pseudo-history as CBS did in trade-paper ads to suggest how bad newspapers were at the turn of the nineteenth century. History, especially mass communications history, has a great deal to say that will clarify our current dilemmas, but only if we go to history with an open mind and not for easy "answers."

And the broadcaster must learn to take the bitter with the sweet in academic findings about mass communications. There needs to be established a "Truth Squad" which exposes those broadcasters and publicists who seek only the reassuring ambiguities in carefully reasoned and patiently researched studies of broadcasting's effects, who avoid all mention of the tough questions left posed but unanswered by careful scholars. If mass communications research is to result only in the broadcasters' glib invocation of multiple causation instead of mature response to its intellectual challenge, then behavioral research as a science will have been cheaply served.

But, above all, the broadcaster must look to the university for painful criticism, not because we are sadists or because they are masochists, but because our entire society is passing through a long and trying experiment in cultural democracy. The stakes are big at home and momentous abroad. If broadcasters continue to cheapen the great ideal of cultural democracy by equating it with Dick Clark, Kookie, and other apotheoses of immaturity, we as a nation are headed for serious trouble. When, as ABC policy-makers have been saying in trade circles, we must win the Cold War by exporting such television abroad, then we are headed for disaster.

Toward Seeking a Truce

The greatest service communications education could do the industry and country it serves is to blow the whistle of shame when such jerrybuilt rationalizations are seriously advanced, and to encourage the kind of thoughtful self-criticism the Westinghouse Conferences represent. And the broadcaster would do us all a service if he would demand from the university as high a level of performance, intellectually and imaginatively, as he demands from his own business operation. If we can accelerate such a dialogue, it will be of immense value. Such acceleration could lead to a truce, but not appeasement, in the cultural Cold War between broadcaster and intellectual in America.

MODERN MAN AND THE COWBOY

JOHN W. EVANS

One of the questions that seems continually to plague TV columnists, and journalists in general for that matter, is the tireless appeal of the TV Western. At the end of every season there is the usual outpouring of solemn yet delighted predictions that the Western fad has finally run its course and that a new dominant theme in television drama can be expected to appear. But each fall the Western seems to emerge as strong as ever. The screen is again peopled with most of the familiar heroes, as well as a new group of aspiring fast-draw artists, and the Westerns continue to have little difficulty in outstripping most of their non-Western competitors in the ratings.

Such enduring popularity contrasts sharply with the collective attitude that emerges in the columns of the entertainment writers and critics. From their comments, you can only conclude that nobody in his right mind would ever watch a Western. It is the Western, more often than even the soap serial or the quiz show, that is held up as the symbol of television's cultural bankruptcy. Yet it's obvious that somebody is watching the Westerns. In fact, it's obvious from the ratings that more viewers watch Westerns than anything else. And the audience data indicate that it is not only the "masses" who are contributing the steady and interested customers. In view of the scorn with which intellectuals in particular are supposed to regard the Western, it has always been something of a fascinating puzzle to me to observe how knowledgeably many of my well-educated friends are able to discuss the latest problems and exploits of the major Western figures. (I realize, of course, as they are always quick to indicate, that they "just happened to have the set on last night" when *Gunsmoke*, *Lawman*, *The Rifleman*, or whatever, came on.)

But even if it were true that only "the great unwashed masses" made up the audience of the Westerns and sustained them year after year, this would be largely beside the point. The point is that here is a truly phenomenal instance of mass appeal, an instance which, while it is obviously very poorly understood, is typically dismissed in a very cavalier fashion by those whose business it is to analyze, understand, and make pronouncements on such matters. Though the critics' attitude toward the Western is clear enough, their explanations of its stubborn popularity are halfhearted and superficial. To be sure, there have been a number of comments about the Western as symbolizing the romance and challenge of the frontier, and some have suggested that Westerns constitute the main stream in a developing body of American folk literature and folk art. The popularity of the Western has also received some attention in the academic journals, but most of these analyses stress the tired themes of masculinity or Freudian sex symbolism. More often than not, however, the Western is dismissed as merely a fad.

Such an explanation—if it be that at all—has always left me with a very uneasy feeling. Such fads in mass taste are seldom analyzed, explained, or related to anything. They just seem to hang suspended in the cultural air. The view taken is that fads are fads, they come and they go, and that's all there is to it. And so with the Western. Critical opinion seems unanimous in the feeling that the best thing to do with the scourge of the horse opera is just to ignore it and eventually it will go away.

This is a mistake, regardless of what may be your personal judgment with respect to the dramatic value of Westerns. In view of its wide appeal and demonstrated viability, the Western obviously constitutes a problem par excellence for the fields of mass communication and mass persuasion, one which is only ignored by taking refuge in the "fad" explanation. The notion I would like to advance is that the strength in the Western's appeal, though obviously a puzzle to many, is indeed susceptible to explanation; more specifically, to an explanation in which the popularity of the Western is seen as an understandable response to the major trends and social-psychological conditions of modern society.

What are these conditions and how is the lowly Western in any way related to them? To begin with, the Western provides a source of vicarious experience in the real substance of life for which modern man restively yearns, but which the alienated, bureaucratized, and blandly ameliorated conditions of daily life in modern industrial society do not provide. The portrait of a society in which the Western

finds such wide appeal has been a developing one from the works of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Mannheim to the contemporary writings of such men as Riesman, Mills, Whyte, Fromm, and others. The basic thesis in this literature of social analysis is that the development of modern industrial society has brought with it a radically altered type of social life characterized by

- (a) the decline of close, primary social ties and their replacement by impersonal, anonymous, and exploitative relations;
- (b) a deterioration of accepted norms of conduct alongside a baffling proliferation of competing moral standards and life patterns;
- (c) the gradual shrinking of the individual's sphere of choice, decision, autonomy, and personal control concerning the major events in his life.

The end result of these trends, so the analysis goes, is that relations among men become anomic or normless. Expediency and private gain come to be the guiding principles in men's relations with each other. The effect on the individual is one of *alienation*: the complexity of society is so opaque, understanding of world events so hard to come by, and the difficulty of moral choice so paralyzing, that the individual comes to view the world as essentially *meaningless*. Correlatively, he comes to view himself as unable to make any dent in the larger forces and encompassing organizations that dictate his daily alternatives and ultimate life chances, and therefore regards himself as essentially *powerless* to exert any real influence over the course of the significant events in his life.

This necessarily brief summary of the "theory" no doubt states the situation in a rather grim and extreme form. But that these problems constitute, in some degree at least, vital considerations in modern society is not open to much question.¹

It is within this social context that the Western's strong appeal is to be understood, for the Western displays a type of society and a type of man which are in many crucial respects the diametric opposite of their contemporary counterparts. The basic appeal of the Western thus lies in the fact that it is an invitation to escape to—or better, participate in—a world in which psychological gratifications are an almost perfect antidote to the alienated conditions of life in modern industrial society.

If it seems a bit exaggerated to suggest that something as mundane as the Western is related to such seemingly distant and intellectually lofty notions as the social structure of modern society and the alienation of modern man, such a proposition becomes more compelling

when the content of the Western is examined in some detail. One can discern (among others) two themes of major emphasis running throughout the currently successful TV Westerns. The first of these is the theme of *mastery and control*, and the second is the theme of *clarity of purpose in the life pattern*. Variations of these two themes form the plots, structure the activities, and define the personalities in the sagas of "Western" society that have become so popular. They may, in fact, be said to constitute the real literary and psychological substance of the Western. The important point for the moment is that these two themes which dominate the activities and personalities of the Western are the very same issues that, from the alienation point of view, are the problematic ones for the individual in modern society: viz., powerlessness and meaninglessness.

The Theme of Mastery and Control

Perhaps the most salient characteristic of the Western hero is the mastery he is able to attain over the events and people in his life. It is more than a coincidence that this theme enjoys such popularity in a society which Alvin Gouldner has described as follows:

By alienation is meant that men pursue goals, and use means in their pursuit, determined either by social entities with which they do not feel intimately identified or by forces which they may be unable to recognize at all. Thus no man "wants war," yet two are fought on a worldwide scale within a quarter of a century. Practically everyone desires economic security, yet our society encountered its most devastating depression during the thirties and fears still another. These are but two dramatic indications that social forces are abroad which most men little understand, to say nothing of master. . . .²

In the same vein, Robert Nisbet has observed:

The most obvious symptom of the spiritual disease of our civilization is the widespread feeling among men that they have lost all control of their destinies. . . . The hero in the contemporary novel, it has been said, is not the man who does things, but the man to whom things are done.³

Against these portraits of contemporary life, consider the composite image presented by Matt Dillon, Paladin, Wyatt Earp, the heroes of *The Rebel*, *Lawman*, *The Rifleman*, and the lives they lead. Here we find the very personification of autonomy, freedom, independence, mastery, and personal control. These are not the men "to whom things are done." They are the men who do things, men who do not live out their lives abiding frustrations, meeting schedules, con-

forming to regulations, and obeying commands; but, rather, men who are truly masters of their fate, who calmly dispatch all interfering opposition with their omnipotent fist and gun, and to whom others stand in charismatic awe and respect.

Looking more closely at the characteristic features of the standard Western hero, the first and most obvious is his physical prowess. Though he is not always large in size (typically, however, he is), he is nevertheless capable of besting at least two men twice his size in a fight and, with rare exceptions, proves to have the fastest draw. This superman characteristic has, of course, been widely noted and commented upon. The point that needs to be made, however, is that from my interpretive standpoint it is not laughingly dismissed as merely an indication of the infantile tastes of Western viewers, but rather is understood in terms of the appealing contrast such mastery bears to the life situation of Twentieth Century man.

In addition to its embodiment in the full complement of forceful personal characteristics, the theme of mastery and control finds expression in the social position the Western hero typically occupies. He is, for example, almost never married, and there is rarely any mention of his family or relatives. The importance of this fact for the alienation hypothesis of Western appeal is that it makes him appear completely unencumbered and uninvolved in restraining and confining social ties—even those of the family. Unlike his contemporary counterpart who may feel tied down to a wife, children, monthly payments, and the daily routine of a job that is required to meet these family obligations, the Western hero is completely unfettered. He stands alone and independent, neither requiring the support of family members in times of personal crisis nor having the responsibility of a family to restrict his freedom of activity.

Essentially the same type of comparison can be made on the crucial matter of occupation. The Western hero is never part of any large-scale organization, never the holder of some niche in a vast bureaucratic structure where he would be subject to rules and restraints, and never obliged to perform routine or repetitive tasks. Most importantly, he never has a boss.⁴ As a rule, he is either cast in the mold of a Paladin—a grand, romantic and free-lance conqueror of life—or he has some connection with the law and law enforcement, often as a sheriff or marshal (Matt Dillon, Wyatt Earp, *Lawman*, etc.), sometimes as a bounty hunter (*Wanted, Dead or Alive*), and even occasionally as an informally designated protector of community interests (*The Rifleman*). The significance of this kind of occupational role for understanding the Western's appeal is that the Western

protagonist is continually faced with the task (or, better, presented the opportunity) of conquering odds and exerting his will. The substance of such an occupation stands in sharp contrast indeed to the routinized paper shuffling of the modern bureaucrat or the mechanical existence of the factory worker.

Though the theme of mastery and control finds many and varied forms of expression in the plots and personalities of the Westerns, all these eventually come in focus on the single, unambiguously decisive act of the gunfight—the *sine qua non* of the authentic Western. Here in a single, instantaneous act a man demonstrates that he is a person to be reckoned with, that he will not be put upon, duped, exploited or pushed around, that he is in control of the situation and that he has the power to transform his desires into reality; in short, that he is the man the modern viewer of Westerns longs to be—an autonomous individual whose acts and choices count for something and who can bend the world of experience to his desire. Through his vicarious participation in the powerful and final act of the gunfight, the factory worker or the organization man symbolically shoots down all the individual officials and impersonal forces that restrict, schedule, supervise, direct, frustrate, and control his daily existence. The gunfight thus provides modern man with a substitute in fantasy for the grand confrontation scene which in real life is never possible for him. The viewer's itching need to have the action consummate in the gunfight, born out of his feeling of powerlessness against the forces that channel the course of his life, is his demand for a super-clear and emphatically decisive resolution to conflict and opposition. Winning an argument or showing the other guy to be stupid is not enough. Since for modern man the villain stands for all the forces that render the individual impotent, he must be dispatched with the clear finality that only a physical act can symbolize.

It is interesting that, as important as the gunfight is, it is not at all necessary for the achievement of full psychological impact that the outcome be death for the villain. In fact, it is often better that he be only wounded in order that the hero (and the viewer) can enjoy the effect on him of his total defeat and degradation. Having him killed is too final. Thus, in the recent hearings before the Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee, *Wyatt Earp's* Hugh O'Brian was able to boast that in six years he had killed only one man—and that one accidentally.

Some Westerns have tried to play down the gunfight or do without it altogether, but it is my impression that more often than not these are the ones that fail to survive. Ingenious writers, in attempting to

elaborate and embellish the standard themes and plots and thereby avoid what they regard as trite repetition, have failed to comprehend the real essence of the Western and, consequently, in the process of their well-meaning tampering with the classic formula, have emasculated rather than improved it.⁵

In sum, the Western hero is a composite of individual traits and social characteristics that personify mastery and control. His world thus presents an appealing contrast to the lives of the worker chained to an assembly line, the white collar worker lost in the vastness of bureaucracy, and the alienated intellectual overwhelmed with his powerlessness to alter what he regards as an inevitable movement of events toward world disaster. And when you stop to think about it, is it really any wonder that, home in the evening from his niche in the bureaucracy or his slot on the assembly line, the average man turns not to the entrapped plight of a Marquand hero or the depressing maze of news analysis but rather to the decisive action of a Matt Dillon, the romantic exploits of a Paladin, and the confident inner-direction of a Lucas McCain?⁶

The Theme of Clarity

A second important theme in the Westerns centers around the problem of ethical conviction and clarity of purpose in the individual's life pattern. By this I refer to the fact that the Western hero is always a man of strong moral conviction whose life goals are so clear and organic to his daily behavior that they never even come up for consideration. Again, as Nisbet points out, this contrasts vividly with the vista of modern man as it is most commonly portrayed by contemporary writers.

In much contemporary fiction there is a vagueness and indecisiveness of intent, accompanied by a belief that the exterior world is a vast scene of purposeless and inexplicable forces. . . . The spectacle of the individual caught treacherously in a world of shifting norms is not merely a widespread theme in literature; it has become a basic theoretical problem of the humanities and the social sciences. The "lost" individual, to use Dewey's phrase, is a creature of as much concern to the politics of a Lasswell, the anthropology of a Mead, and the psychology of a Horney, as to the theology of Niebuhr or Demant.⁷

If there is anything the Western hero is not, it is "lost" or "purposeless." On the contrary, he emerges as a man of certain purpose and firm conviction, a man who knows what the basic problems of life are, and who knows how they should be dealt with. There is no

trace in his character of uncertainty, conflict or misgiving. He *knows*. He knows what the situation is, and he knows what is right and wrong. He bears no resemblance to the often pathetic image found in much contemporary fiction and social science literature of the intellectually confused, obsequiously smiling, apprehensively uncertain, and vacillatingly other-directed individual.

Again, it is not difficult to see how this overall impression of clarity and certainty develops quite naturally out of the basic characteristics of both personality and plot in the typical Western. First, the Western hero is a pre-eminently non-intellectual individual. He is never portrayed as a soul-searching or introspective person. His approach to life's problems is not intellectual or analytical but intuitive, decisive, and active. Extremely interesting in this regard is the treatment of education. It is usually apparent that the Western hero is a person of meager education (Paladin is the rare exception on this score), but more important is the implicit attitude in the Westerns toward education. Quite unlike Twentieth Century America, where education is regarded as the panacea to all the world's ills, the culture of the Western places no high value on learning. To do so would be to admit that the world is a complex place and that the solution of problems requires time and study. The de-emphasis of education and intellectual analysis is thus consistent with the Western view of the world in which intuitive apprehension and immediate, decisive action are the keys to dealing with problematic situations—an attractively simplifying view which must surely be appealing to the alienated viewer, overwhelmed as he is with the feeling that events in the world are essentially meaningless.

Along these same lines, you will notice that the plots of the Westerns rarely, if ever, deal with a truly complex or involved issue (as exemplified, for example, in the tortuous ethical dilemmas of contemporary novels like *Advise and Consent*). Though problems are always formidable, they are not complex; and their solution is to be achieved through a single, dramatic, and decisive act (usually by means of the gunfight, of course). Issues are clear-cut, and choices always lie between an obvious good and an unmistakable evil. And I would argue that these facts cannot be shrugged off with the superficial observation that the plots are simple because the viewers are simple-minded. There is plenty of simple-minded fare on TV that has nowhere near the popularity and the durability of the Western.

There has been a great deal of what, I think, is sophomoric criticism directed at the fact that both the persons and the issues in Westerns are always either black or white. Such criticism, while it

may help the critic feel superior, only avoids the question of the Western's appeal. Like the similar criticisms of the gunfight, it reveals a lack of understanding of what the psychological essence of the Western is and the needs to which it appeals. All this, obviously, is not an attempt to defend the Western as good drama, but only to understand its popularity. The point is that in the alienated person's world of vague and ambiguous grays, what could be more appealing than the stark clarity of black and white?

Thus for modern man, living in a time when issues are unclear, facts conflicting, good intertwined with bad, and moral evaluations impossible to apply, the assured inner-direction of the Western hero and the simple clarity of the problems which he masterfully solves provide a respite from the baffling complexity of world events and the paralyzing conflict of moral choice. The man who finds the complexities and subtle distinctions in the daily news too elusive to grasp can drop his evening paper and, with the twist of a dial, enter a world where issues have distinct alternatives and ethical choice is transparently clear.

The two themes of mastery and clarity fuse together in the Western hero to form an ideal man—omnipotent, omniscient and infallible—a man who in the final outcome never loses a fight or his soul. In the succinct summary of *Lawman's* announcer, the Westerners tell the story of "men who knew what they wanted and how to get it."

Alienation and the Broader Scene

I have tried to argue that the sustained mass appeal of the Western is to be found not in the transient psychology of fads but in the needs that are generated by certain basic social characteristics of modern society. It is significant, I think, that despite their uniquely American cultural flavor, American-produced Westerns are as popular in most other industrial countries as they are in the United States.

On the surface, such an analysis of something as trivial as the Western probably seems to amount to little more than intellectual recreation. But there is more to the matter than this, and the issues at stake go far beyond the Western and its wide appeal. When viewed from the general alienation perspective I have advanced, the appeal of the Western is seen as of a piece with other apparently unrelated social phenomena. The "cool" behavior and the nihilist ideology of the beatnik, for example, may be regarded as just another type of response to feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness. The very same sense of alienation that draws some individuals to a vicarious participation in the decisive action of the Western causes

others to take refuge in a bizarre, modern-day stoicism in which goals that cannot be obtained are renounced or pretended not to exist. Thus it is that the beatnik belligerently insists (mostly in order to convince himself) that positive effort is futile since events are meaningless and social forces uncontrollable.

In a still further-removed social context—that of minority-group prejudice—the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality* have suggested that essentially the same processes may be at work in the formation of anti-Semitism.

Alienation is experienced by the individual as disorientation, with concomitant fear and uncertainty. . . Stereotypy . . . can be understood as a device for overcoming this uncomfortable state of affairs. . . Charging the Jews with all existing evils seems to penetrate the darkness of reality like a search-light and to allow for quick and all-comprising orientation.⁸

Examples could be multiplied but the point is clear: the appeal of the Western is not an isolated phenomenon. Rather it is only one manifestation of the widespread alienation in modern society which finds expression in a variety of social and political contexts.

In its most innocent form, the alienated individual's yearning for clarity and control may be expressed by an identification with the lives and exploits of the mass media heroes, and the choice among such heroes is not limited to the Western. There is also, for example, the increasingly popular private eye in whose episodes, it is interesting to note, the themes of personal autonomy, mastery, and ethical clarity are also heavily stressed (e.g., Peter Gunn, Mike Hammer, et al.). But in more acute form, feelings of alienation may rise to the surface and find expression in some of the society's most important activities. In politics, for example, we find that the politically apathetic citizen, paralyzed in his feelings of powerlessness, retreats from decision and action while taking a curiously morbid kind of solace in the notion that "my vote doesn't count anyway." But for those who cannot swallow their frustrations or tolerate a never ending ambiguity, the political leader—like the Western hero—may take on the characteristics of the knight and the saviour. As Alvin Gouldner has put it:

When leadership is invoked today, often what is being asked for implicitly are men who can accomplish what the alienated individual, overcome by a sense of his powerlessness, feels he cannot. The leader becomes the symbol of control and mastery, of knowledge and insight, denied the masses. . . The anxiety-motored drive for security, evoked

by a mass sense of powerlessness, finds outlets in a quest for dependence upon leadership.⁹

But to return to the Westerns, what conclusion are we left with regarding their future? In my opinion, the answer to this question is fairly clear. The Western cannot be dismissed as just another one of those interesting fads that rather amusingly and inexplicably come and go. On the contrary, it, or at least its psychological equivalent in some other dramatic costume, can be expected to endure. For the roots of its appeal are bound up in the very fabric of our society.

NOTES

1. For an expanded discussion of the various dimensions of alienation, see M. Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation," *American Sociological Review*, 24 (1959), 783-791.
2. A. W. Gouldner (ed.), *Studies in Leadership* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), p. 6.
3. R. A. Nisbet, "Leadership and Social Crisis," in A. W. Gouldner, *op. cit.*, p. 740.
4. The obvious exception to this point, of course, is Wyatt Earp who is continually being harassed, supervised and restrained by the mayor, the judge, and the city council. It is tempting to speculate that this organizational enmeshment, which makes Earp's position too similar to that of the modern organization man, may be partly responsible for his being less popular than the more ideally independent Western heroes such as Matt Dillon.
5. The recent demise of the *Wanted, Dead or Alive* series, following an "upgrading" of its plots, would seem to be an example of this.
6. Some may wonder how such a conception of the Western can accommodate an obviously different type as *Maverick*. The answer is that it cannot because *Maverick* is not really a Western, but only a comedy with Western trappings.
7. Nisbet, *op. cit.*, p. 706.
8. T. W. Adorno *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), p. 618.
9. Gouldner, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

TELEVISION IN A DIVIDED WORLD

ROMNEY WHEELER

To most Americans "propaganda" is a dirty word. Many of us associate it with the late Dr. Goebbels and, more currently, with Radio Moscow and Radio Peiping. It is a word that, most often, suggests untruth and deceit.

The Congress of the United States itself has accepted only reluctantly the idea that propaganda is a continuing aspect of international relations. Even today, influential voices argue plaintively that governments should communicate only with other governments, and should not attempt to influence people directly.

Nevertheless, whether we call it "propaganda," or "information," or "public relations," the fact is that communication between peoples of the world is essential if our society is to survive in any form remotely resembling what we know today.

In discussing the uses and problems of television as an entertainment and a propaganda medium, we naturally must draw a distinction between television in the United States and Canada, and television elsewhere in the world. Here, the use of television as a communications medium is highly developed; and, while it often is charged that TV over-emphasizes entertainment, it also is true that the medium is being used to disseminate many types of propaganda ranging from cigarette commercials to appearances on TV of Mr. Khrushchev and Dr. Castro.

The uses and problems of television in the United States and Canada should be discussed in another, and probably broader, forum. Our focus here will be upon only the uses and problems of TV as a medium of entertainment and propaganda elsewhere in the world.

Many people, including some who should know better, are fond

of describing television as "an exciting new medium." The implication is that, except in the United States, TV is in a stage of development roughly comparable to the canvas-and-baling-wire plane in which Bleriot crossed the English channel. Nothing could be further from the truth. In Japan, for example, there are seven million sets in use; and, in the three most populous prefectures, more than half of all Japanese homes have TV. In Britain, there are 11.5 million sets, and two homes out of three have TV. West Germany has upwards of five million sets, Italy three million, and France more than two million.

World-wide, excluding the United States and Canada, more than 1,900 TV stations in 66 countries are serving the owners of more than 54 million TV sets. As a medium of communication—whether for entertainment or propaganda—television has arrived.

Nor does the impact of television depend merely on set-count. In Nigeria, for instance, there are only about 13,500 receivers. But every member of the cabinet in the Nigerian national government has a TV set and watches it almost every evening. To be on television in Nigeria is to communicate directly with the Prime Minister and his entire cabinet.

It has been argued that, in poorer countries, television is only a toy for the rich, that it cannot be used for mass communication. This, too, is disproved by a few facts. In Latin America, the Near East, the Far East, and in Europe, television aerials can be seen in profusion over the poorest homes. In Caracas the heaviest viewing is in a slum area where there are neither indoor toilets nor running water, but where TV sets can be found in profusion. Poor families, with three or four members working, pool their resources to make the down payment on a set, then charge their neighbors a few *sucre*s or *pesos* or *bolivars* for the privilege of watching daily programs.

This has led to an interesting statistical dilemma. Set-count, multiplied by the average number of viewers per set, should give a reasonable estimate of total audience. This is not necessarily true in many countries overseas, especially in Latin America. A good demonstration is Cuba.

Probably the most television-conscious government in the world is the Castro regime. Indeed, it has been called "Government by Television." Therefore, some significance may be attached to a survey made by the Cuban Television Service as to its total audience.

The Cubans estimated that 352,000 families own TV sets. Assuming an average family consists of five persons, this would mean an audience of 1,938,750 people. But what about people who do not

own a set? The survey disclosed that 33.8 per cent of these non-owners watched TV at the homes of friends, 4.2 per cent in shops, 9.7 in clubs and trade union headquarters, and 7.5 per cent in public places—a total of 53.2 per cent.

Since approximately 6,000,000 persons live in areas covered by primary signals, the Cuban TV Service estimated that 2,447,253 non-owners were being reached, in addition to owners of TV sets, or a total audience of 4,386,000.

But enough of statistics! What is the role of television in countries overseas as a medium of entertainment and propaganda?

In the decade of the 1950's, television developed first in the urban areas of the more advanced countries. The European countries, the United States and Canada, Japan, Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, and Australia are good examples. Then it was introduced rapidly in the principal cities of less developed countries, as in Central America and the Near East.

Now, in the decade of the 1960's, it is being introduced in the new and developing countries of Africa and Asia. And here, television is bound to be used in a very different way. In the urbanized, sophisticated countries, television has been, and is, primarily a medium of entertainment. Next, it is a medium for news and public affairs, followed in lesser emphasis by cultural and educational programming.

In Africa and Asia, where illiteracy is high, and where teachers are scarce, television certainly will find its greatest use as a tool for teaching and as a medium of instruction. It probably will be used next for information—in news and public affairs—and only thirdly as a medium of entertainment and culture.

In times of acute international tension, as now, television must be regarded as a primary means of reaching and influencing affirmatively the largest possible audience in the shortest possible time. This is recognized by the Communist bloc, whose efforts in the field of television continue to grow. Throughout the world, adroit, aggressive, well-executed Communist propaganda is telecast each day.

The Free World may learn an important truth from the Communist bloc. It is that Communist propaganda is aimed at capturing the attention, and firing the imagination, of the masses. This propaganda seeks to impress the man-in-the-street; first, with claims of Communist initiative; second with claims of Communist resourcefulness; and, finally, with claims of Communist power. Communist success, in one important field, is demonstrated by the widely-held impression in other countries that the Soviet Union is pre-eminent in space exploration and may still be ahead ten years from now.

Certainly it behooves the United States of America to be equally imaginative, and equally resolute, in employing every medium of communication to reach and influence the mass audience of other countries.

There are many methods of communication. You could simply go and talk to people; obviously, that is a practical impossibility. You can reach them by short-wave radio; and certainly, radio is effective, particularly behind the Iron Curtain. You can reach them through newspapers and magazines; but, in many important countries, great numbers of people cannot read. You can reach them through motion pictures, through libraries, and through exhibits. But to do so, you must get them out of their homes and into places of public assembly.

Television returns to the first fundamental of communication. It allows us to go and talk to people directly, face-to-face, in their own homes.

And here is the dilemma. We speak with many different voices to the people of other countries. Some of these voices are affirmative in their presentation of America and the American way of life. Others are less so; and a few, unfortunately, are negative.

Hollywood movies, with all kinds of themes, have been shown throughout the world for many years. It has been argued that, for the most part, these movies have established a favorable image of the United States. The few that have been damaging have been in the very small minority.

This is probably true. Television, however, is not only a medium of immediacy and of personal impact; it is a medium of repetition. It is being watched every day, seven days a week, by millions of families who, in the ordinary course of events, might visit a motion picture theater once a week. Instead of two hours of exposure to an American movie, a family may see ten or fifteen hours of American TV film series every week.

Series featuring violence and crime, which are understood by American audiences in terms of historical time and place or in terms of fiction versus truth, are totally misunderstood by an illiterate foreign audience which has no yardstick by which to measure the cross-section of America which they see. A TV film about leather-jacketed toughs, terrorizing a school teacher with switch-blade knives, is recognized by American audiences as anything but typical of all American schools. In Latin America an uninformed audience may assume that this is what all American schools are like. And so we have more grist for the Communist mill.

In relation to the sale overseas of American syndicated programs

or network public affairs programs, the output of material by the United States Information Agency is insignificant. At maximum, even in a priority area like Latin America, it would amount to less than five per cent of the time programmed with American commercial product.

Yet, in terms of the Cold War, this five per cent can be extremely important in balancing the increasing stream of propaganda from the Communist bloc. This propaganda is aimed both at adults and at children; and many of the programs are well-conceived and well-produced. The Soviet Union, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland are most active in the field of television propaganda, but Hungary and Romania recently have begun to offer TV programs to countries of the Free World.

The Soviet Union, of course, has exploited its achievements in space. The gaudy receptions in Moscow for Yuri Gagarin and Gherman Titov were fed "live" into the Eurovision TV network and were seen by TV viewers throughout Western Europe. Nevertheless, the exploitation of Soviet space research seems to have been less effective than might have been expected, simply by reason of Soviet secrecy. Expensive TV documentaries were produced by the Russians, purporting to show their scientific achievements. Yet the films, in fact, appear to concentrate largely on glorifying the individual astronaut, rather than in demonstrating conclusively how manned satellites were placed in orbit, as was the case in the total coverage given the flight of Colonel Glenn. (Soviet spokesmen explain this by saying: "That is what people want to see.")

The United States Information Agency has met this problem by producing carefully planned TV programs, designed specifically for use on the day when an important aerospace effort takes place. When Commander Shepard made the first American sub-orbital flight, every USIS overseas post serving TV had in its possession a quarter-hour program titled *Shadow of Infinity*. This was embargoed for release when the successful flight took place.

The result was a television "grand slam." TV stations and networks everywhere televised the program the same evening that Commander Shepard rocketed 300 miles down-range; and many stations repeated the program in the succeeding few days.

A similar preparedness program was sent to USIS posts in TV countries in advance of the successful launching of America's first "Saturn" moon-rocket; and, when shown, had a powerful propaganda impact. In anticipation of the first manned orbit around the earth, the Agency distributed two embargoed programs: one a short film

for integration in local newsreels the night of the event, the other a quarter-hour "special" titled *Focus: Infinity*, which explained the long-range purposes of peaceful space exploration. Colonel John Glenn's historic achievement thus was placed in its broadest context while, at the same time, being exploited fully in a propaganda sense.

The Communists have produced special TV programs of their own; but often these arrive late and are less-than-convincing. Indeed, when USIS reports of Commander Shepard's orbital flight were shown on Swedish TV, the commentator observed that viewers were seeing convincing proof of America's achievement. The Soviet Union had, up to that moment, failed to offer convincing proof of Major Gagarin's orbit of the globe.

In the political field, USIA has endeavored to present as vigorously as possible the position of the Free World, as contrasted with the Communist bloc. In television, this has been done with hard-hitting programs exposing Communist deceit and repression. When the East German regime built The Wall across Berlin, USIA's Television Service distributed the first of a series of programs titled *Focus Berlin: Barbed Wire World*. The program was presented by on-camera narrators speaking Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Thai, and English. It was telecast in more than 25 countries.

Later, when the Soviet Union unilaterally ended the moratorium on nuclear testing, USIA-TV produced another program titled *Focus Moscow: The Nuclear Betrayal*. Again, on-camera narrators presented the facts in five languages.

When Dag Hammarskjold was killed, USIA-TV responded with yet another program, *Focus UN: Death of a Statesman*. This program emphasized the need for a strong UN executive, as contrasted with Communist efforts to impose the so-called "Troika Principle."

A half-hour TV film titled *The Anatomy of Aggression* was produced by USIA-TV to remind the world of consistent and continuing Communist pressure on the Free World since the end of World War II. This went to more than 50 countries.

Another half-hour TV film, *Freedom from Fear*, set forth the reasons for the Free World's insistence on a self-enforcing ban on nuclear testing. The film pointed out, with powerful impact, how the Soviet Union had ignored worldwide appeals while conducting fifty or more tests of nuclear devices, including a 50-megaton hydrogen weapon.

Earlier, the Agency's Television Service had distributed throughout Latin America a one-hour documentary titled *Castro, Communism and Cuba*. The program, which shocked audiences throughout the

area, showed graphically how Castro had betrayed his own revolution. This was long before the Cuban leader admitted publicly that he was a Marxist-Leninist Communist.

Still earlier in 1961, USIA-TV and the U. S. Navy produced a one-hour TV special titled *Polaris: Time for Survival*. This dramatic program illustrated the parallel development of the Polaris fleet ballistic missile and of nuclear-powered submarines designed to carry it. The point driven home was that if these terrible weapons ever had to be used in war, their primary objective would have failed—for that objective was to deter aggression and buy time for peaceful settlement of world tensions.

When shown by the West German Television network, this program drew cries of anguish from Communist East Germany. A fortnight later, the East German Television carried a rebuttal program, containing pirated kinescope excerpts of the original program, which a Communist "Military Expert" described as "dirty propaganda." The same program brought Communist complaints when it was shown in Italy by the Italian TV network.

So far, the Free World's use of television for information and propaganda has exceeded that of the Communist bloc, both in frequency and in effectiveness. But the Communist bloc is not idle. Recently, the Soviet Union presented the United Arab Republic with more than 200 TV films, all expertly dubbed into Arabic. A similar offer was made—but was not accepted—to Thailand's TV Service.

Children's programs are a favorite avenue of Communist propaganda; and Communist bloc TV headquarters in Prague recently distributed a brochure offering all kinds of "children's documentaries"—each with a propaganda hook. Some of these are finding their way to TV stations in Latin America, the Near East, and Asia.

Where does entertainment end and propaganda begin? This is not an easy question to answer. Every program, even the TV Western and the situation comedy, has some propaganda impact, whether intended or not. Some of it may be affirmative; some of it may be deplorable. But the impact cannot be doubted; it is felt most in the relatively unsophisticated, developing nations of the world.

For example, an American educator made a before-and-after survey in a village of Nigeria where TV recently was introduced. He was astonished to discover that, after being exposed to TV programs for a few months, most villagers concluded that a majority of Americans rode horses and that pistols are today a regular part of American attire.

Another survey in Nigeria disclosed that even educated Nigerians were concerned over what they described as "the Indian problem." Some of these people wanted to know why Americans had driven the Indians from their lands. They believed that we were taking land from them and killing them—and they used this as evidence that the United States is imperialistic.

It will be seen, therefore, that one cannot claim that exposure to American TV programming is, per se, a good thing, regardless of the programs. On the other hand, it certainly must be acknowledged that, on balance, it is a good thing to have American TV series aired in foreign countries and to have these countries maintain a continuing interest in American programming. A station which regularly programs American TV series may be assumed to have at least a predisposition toward the Free World, and that its program schedule consequently is not being overloaded with Communist propaganda.

Where the development of television eventually may lead us, no one can say. But it is here, and it is a powerful instrument for influencing human actions and opinions. In some countries, it may even become a positive influence for unifying a diversified society.

One opinion worth noting came recently from Dr. Arthur C. Clark, a Briton and one of the world's leading writers on space research. He predicted that the television satellite will become mightier than the intercontinental ballistic missile, adding: "It may well determine whether Russian or English is the main language of the future."

ETV – EDUCATION IS NOT ENOUGH*

YALE ROE

Much of the portrayal of television today seems to constitute something of a Western of its own, with the “good guys” up against the “bad guys.” Reams of copy have been written about the “bad guys,” but just being classified as a “good guy” seems sufficient to spare such characters from close scrutiny. This, it would seem, is the good fortune of those very good guys, the educational television broadcasters.

Today educational television is a sanctified part of American life, and except for having an official day of its own it approximates Motherhood in terms of national reverence. New Yorkers have endorsed it to the point of setting aside New Jersey’s television station in its behalf. The new FCC chairman has promised to do all he can to help educational television. And throughout the country well-meaning intellectuals are urging other people to watch it.

Certainly the American people are fortunate in having television channels assigned to educational telecasting. These stations have not only provided great assistance to school systems throughout the country, but have also offered some excellent viewing to the public at large. They have brought to viewers programs ranging from music to foreign languages and from Shakespeare to modern business. The contribution of ETV has been considerable, and there is every reason to anticipate a continued growth in the number of educational television stations and an improvement in the quality of their product. Nevertheless, it may be not without merit to consider the performance of the educational television system vis-à-vis its potential.

*An excerpt from Mr. Roe’s new book, *The Television Dilemma*, to be published in October in the *Communication Arts Books* series by Hastings House, New York.

First of all, one might consider the purpose of the system itself. It would seem that the answer were obvious—to educate. But is this answer sufficiently definitive? For in any one community is not education pursued through a number of different schools, teaching different subjects, in different ways, to different students? What type of “school” shall ETV be? Shall it pursue the humanities or the physical sciences? Shall it impart facts or whet the imagination? Shall it seek to reach the least informed or the most informed?

The answer frequently is offered in a different analogy: the television station is not like a school but like a library, the programs are like books, and anyone in the community can come in and learn from whatever program he likes. On the one hand the library argument—offering something for everyone—seems quite reasonable. Unfortunately, however, it also offers something to the educational broadcasters themselves—an excuse for every program that is on the air. If the quality or content of a program is questionable, it can always be defended on the premise that a good library should have all types of books and that certainly “someone out there must like it.” The library argument precludes a frame of reference within which the merits of program series might be judged.

It is difficult for any man or any institution to be all things to all people, and it might be preferable for educational television stations to do fewer things and to do them better. For example, a station might decide to program time segments for specific groups only: children, foreign-born members of the community, or area opinion leaders. Or it might concentrate on the arts, for viewers interested in culture; or on fundamentals, for the citizens who have only an elementary school education. The possible combinations are many; the point, however, is that in any combination the goals of the station would be defined so that all effort could be concentrated in effecting these goals. In time, of course, the combinations and the subsequent goals could be changed. But at any given time the task of the station would be defined clearly. All planning and effort would be directed properly. This is much different, however, from the “library theory” which, in practice, results in the programming of everything from Shakespeare to bridge. The sad outcome of the latter philosophy is that a station becomes everything to everybody and nothing to anybody. It fails to establish a recognizable role in the community.

Once a station has set its direction, it should then bring to bear all of the forces that can serve to create a faithful audience. First of all, it should seek to make whatever education is communicated as interesting as possible. We all remember the inspiration and education

imparted by teachers who were stimulating; we recall in sharp contrast the tedious ordeal of enduring dull mentors. Call it "showmanship" or "effective communication," such basic stimulation is necessary for successful educational programming. The captive audience of the classroom is a luxury not afforded to the educational television station. It is not enough simply to transmit a televised message of educational content. That message must be communicated by interesting people and with the kind of production that will compel attention, elicit interest, and stimulate response. Only in this manner will the station be fulfilling its purpose—to educate.

Further, such standards should be applied both to programming which is locally produced and to programs exchanged and circulated through the National Educational Television network. These should, in turn, be augmented by programs of quality that may have to be commercially supported. There are precedents for such joint commercial-educational programs. *Open End* and *The Age of Kings* are two series which have led the way in this sensible direction. The experience of commercial stations already attests to the possibility of selling such programs to commercial enterprises who are willing to make a community contribution of this kind. The vigorous pursuit of such an effort could do much to enhance the quality of programming on educational channels.

After seeking to televise top-level material which fulfills the specific programming goals of the station, it would seem that educational television's other important task is to increase viewership. Stimulating programming, besides imparting education more effectively than does ordinary fare, will in itself do much to gain viewers. In addition, it might be beneficial for the educators to borrow a few tricks from their commercial bretheren. Many techniques are available. Some of the more articulate and exciting members of the station could continuously "stump" the community, making speeches, addressing various groups, and constantly trying to create new and greater interest in the television station. The programming department could try to augment regular fare with "specials" designed to spark viewer interest, to seize upon something of significance that will elicit emotional response and interest from the particular community.

And there is still another technique that educators could borrow from commercial broadcasting—showmanship. The motion picture industry in this country was built originally on the concept of "star power"—that is, the magnetism of performers who were well known and well publicized. Today, persons of this description live in many communities. The typical large city will have its share of ex-celeb-

rities, from theatrical stars to war heroes, many of whom have serious intellectual pursuits and would no doubt be only too happy to donate their services as hosts for various programs. They also might be asked to make promotional spot announcements calling viewers attention to such programs. A little showmanship of this kind will not damage the cause of erudition.

Still another aid to educational television is the aggressive utilization of publicity techniques. It is adequate, of course, to have well-informed, well-meaning persons sending program schedules to the local newspapers, but too few stations employ a hard-hitting, angle-seeking public relations man who knows how to get a story into print or a photo on the cover of the television section. Commercial television may make better copy, but it does not follow that educational television must be relegated to reportorial oblivion. Professional publicity efforts could bring much continued attention to the activities of the educational station.

Educators frequently are predisposed to dismiss publicity, promotion, showmanship, and production as beneath their high purpose. Yet if the integrity of the educator and his instruction are sound, the modern techniques of bringing attention to his efforts will not depreciate the value of his contribution. On the contrary, it will further his underlying purposes. For no matter how eloquent or how brilliant the educator, he will educate no one in an empty classroom.

Lest educational broadcasters feel they are already reaching enough viewers simply because they receive a hundred, five hundred, or a thousand letters a week, let them measure their achievements against their *potential* audience. Their libraries may not seem so crowded if they consider the vast numbers of people who are passing them by every day, and every month, and every year.

It is time for the educational broadcaster to give up his complacency—time to cease being satisfied that his program potpourri, filled with everything from bridge to botany, is an “educational” endeavor. It is time for all educational broadcasters to define their goals, specify their audiences, and assess the nature of the education they are trying to effect. It is time for them to understand that they do not enjoy the luxury of a classroom captive audience, that their programs must be stimulating as well as informative if they are to attract and sustain attention. It is time for them to understand that the commercial interests in their communities can be motivated to give them support. It is time for them to understand that there is nothing dirty or disdainful in actively seeking viewers. In other words, it is time for them to understand that to be successful they must not only be educators; they must be broadcasters as well!

TELEVISION AND CHILDREN

The logic is formidable: Television people are parents; parents worry about what television does to children; *ergo*, television people worry about what they are doing to their own children. This simple enthymeme has created a divided world all of its own. In one camp are worried parents whose children watch TV; in another camp are parents who never let their children watch TV, but who worry about what it is doing to *other* people's children.

In a third camp are those who worry less and seek ways in which such logic can be assailed. In the vanguard of this group are creators of children's programs, and such a specialist offers a plan of attack here. *Paul Tripp* insists that a demonstrated sense of responsibility on the part of those who program for children might bring about the millenium.

The BBC's Director of Television Broadcasting, Kenneth Adam, recently sent to producers a note in which BBC-TV set forth a code of practice concerning violence in television programs. In view of the interest in this statement, and because important sections of it deal with children's programs, *Television Quarterly* reproduces excerpts from this note.

Paul Tripp has made rich contributions to television as an actor, writer, and composer. Over six million copies of his children's record album, *Tubby the Tuba*, were sold; many of his songs have been recorded by major performers. During the years in which his creation, *Mr. I. Magination*, was carried by CBS-TV, this series earned four *Ohio State Awards*, a *Look* award, a *Variety* "Showmanship Award," and an "Emmy" from the New York chapter of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

ATLANTIS - THE MYTHICAL LAND OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

PAUL TRIPP

In two of his dialogues Plato speaks of a great and flourishing island called Atlantis, which one day was raked by an earthquake and swept beneath the sea. He went on to describe Atlantis as an "ideal state"; the Columbia Encyclopedia adds that Atlantis was considered synonymous with Utopia.

The comparison to be drawn between this vanished island and what might be termed "The Mythical Land of Children's Television" is, I think, rather obvious. As Plato viewed Atlantis so we must view the world of children's programming in television. Both are Utopian dreams.

This skeptical observation by no means negates a constructive discussion of the place of children's programming in American television. I merely wish to emphasize that my point of view is not that of an educator or educational psychologist. My concern is with fact, not theory. My job is not to analyze statistics but to create programs. As a professional, my task is to find the audience and then create entertainment that will attract it. This is the way I earn my living. The fact that I am stubborn enough to believe that I can do this and also achieve some measure of quality warns, therefore, that my approach must be cold, practical, and hardheaded. Sir Henry Irving once said that before one could achieve artistic perfection one had to be sure of financial solvency. My sentiments, exactly.

No network is altruistic; nor is a sponsor; nor is an advertising agency. Nor, for that matter, are creative professionals. They cannot afford to be, for we do not work within a government subsidized

system of broadcasting. Profit must be made, and after twelve years in television, I am well aware of that pertinent fact. If we are to take children's programming out of the land of myth, we must first demonstrate that it has a high profit potential.

But there is a mildly disturbing element about this seemingly crass theorem when it is brought to bear on children's programming. We must always keep in mind that children constitute that segment of the audience which is still in a mental and moral growing-up stage. They are pliable and too easily influenced. We must acknowledge that for every ounce of profit a pound of responsibility must be expended. For some people the effort may not be worth it, and that may explain why children's programming occupies its own little clump of weeds in the "wasteland."

For the fact is that a great percentage of regular viewers in this country has been disenfranchised and forced to accept television on a "viewing without representation" basis. Forgotten or ignored is the fact that in the early days of television it was children who were largely responsible for bringing receivers into a vast number of homes. Forgotten or ignored is the fact that children are traditionally the most avid and loyal audience for commercial messages. The profit potential is there. Is it the responsibility which is so difficult to provide?

I should, in fairness, explain just what I mean by "children's programming." Like Caesar, I divide this latter-day Gaul into two parts: the area of programming which is aimed at pre-school age children, and the programming which is directed toward the in-school age audience. The former has been more fortunate than the latter, for it has survived in the skillful hands of creative people like Frances Horwich and Bob Keeshan. In programs such as *Ding-Dong School* a tradition was begun, and in *Captain Kangaroo* it has been carried forward. The art of programming to pre-schoolers is difficult, and one in which the mastery of Horwich and Keeshan must be acknowledged.

But programming for in-school children has been sorely neglected. It is this programming which, although designed primarily for children, is capable of attracting a good percentage of adult viewers. *Mr. I. Magination* and *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* are proper examples, for they have always attracted almost as many adults as children. These might, in fact, be labeled as "Children-Family Shows," which are *not* to be confused with a Shirley Temple type of program or *Family Classics*. These shows, while ostensibly designed to attract a children's audience, were fundamentally adult programs. In such

types, a children's audience is regarded as a "fringe-benefit." Into this category we can also fit *Lassie*, *National Velvet* and *Dennis the Menace*. They may be *about* children, but they are really not *for* children.

Now the purists are undoubtedly screaming "heresy!" A children's program should be for children only. On a formal basis this may be so, but for reasons which I have discussed our American system of broadcasting cannot afford such rigidity in approach. A program which can attract both children and adults has a better chance of getting support from a sponsor, thereby gaining a place for itself on the air; and I, for one, am not particularly dedicated to devising the best show *off* the air. I am interested only in getting it *on* the air.

Putting aside this quest for sponsorship, however, I believe most emphatically that the best children's program is one which a child can watch in the company of parents. It is a "sharing" show, and should unite the family rather than divide it. In too many cases a child's attention is glued to the set, and he is oblivious of his family who, in turn, find nothing to attract or interest them in that program. They are not attracted simply because such "child-isolating" programs are in the habit of "talking down" to their young viewers—in words, in thoughts, and in their basic premises.

The proper "Children-Family" program ought to have universality. *Alice in Wonderland* and *Gulliver's Travels* have survived and thrived because both child and adult could enjoy them. The thoughts are full-grown but the language is understandable. *Alice in Wonderland*, designed for children, has always been enjoyed by adults because the thoughts are never condescending. *Gulliver's Travels*, a bitter satire written for adults, is enjoyed by children because the words and images are understood readily by them.

If the best children's programs are primarily designed to attract both children and adults what should their proper subject matter be? The answer is obvious: Everything of possible interest! If adult television is judged on the basis of its contribution to balanced programming, children's television should be judged in a similar light. It is clear that broadcasters, in seeking to answer criticism, are making plans for more informational programming at the adult level. But informational programs, for adults or children, cannot stand alone. They must be buttressed by other forms. A review of the "top ten" programs reveals that informational programs do not constitute a major audience attraction. The rating success they achieve is largely a result of intelligent placement within a framework of entertainment programming. A diet of steady and unrelenting information will darken a set faster than a blown fuse.

Children react in the same way. Limiting them to a one-flavor diet may kill their interest and stifle at its inception any possible resurgence of intelligent children's programming. One network has already been forced to change its plans in the children's program field because sponsors and local stations were unenthusiastic about a new informational program, despite its laudable premise and contents. When such efforts die aborning it is too easy to reach the broad conclusion that there is "no market" for children's programs.

I would only say that there *is* a market! But if it is to be developed, programming must supply a variety of content, including entertainment as well as information—story, drama and fun, as well as news, science, and travel. There is as rich a variety of subject matter for children as for adults, perhaps more. None of this, however, will reach its mark unless one constant—quality—is applied; quality implies responsibility. In no other category of programming is this so vital. We are dealing with the most vulnerable of audiences—an audience that *feels* what it is shown, that *believes* what it is told. It has no background of experience against which it can measure the validity of what appears on the screen. But "quality" can be the most frightening word of all and may even be held synonymous with the "kiss of death." Those, however, who consider quality as the antithesis of success—who cynically maintain that the public, or any segment of it, will not "buy" quality—are mistaken. It *will* respond if material is properly presented.

There is another premise to be considered in planning children's programs. All such material should seek to gain active rather than passive viewers. While adult nighttime shows can be planned in accordance with the theory that "people want to relax," such theory does not always hold up when practised upon children, who are rarely in any mood to relax. It is most important that their imaginations be excited and their minds exercised. Certainly a totally rigid regimen cannot always be followed. Cartoons and game-shows will always have their place in the schedule if they are well done and in good taste. But stimulating material can be done on a professional, show-wise, basis. Too many children's programs suffer from slipshod and catch-as-catch-can production.

I have tried here to demonstrate that children's programming can be done intelligently, with excitement, and still bring a substantial return on investment. But where does the responsibility for such programming finally rest? This responsibility is of fundamental importance and rightly belongs to what I would call "The Triangle of Responsibility," made up of the following.

The Broadcaster, who must realize:

- (1) That he owes a responsibility to himself for creating a proper "viewing image" in the mind of the youngster.
- (2) That the "public" in "public interest, convenience and necessity" includes children, and a fair percentage of programs should be intended for them.
- (3) That someone must foot the bill, and if sponsors can't be found, he should be prepared to allocate some of his own funds.
- (4) That if a sponsor is found, profits may be less than would be made in adult programming; that in children's programming, profit cannot be the *raison d'etre*.
- (5) That all personnel associated with children's programs must have skill, a sense of proportion, and good taste. No long list of rules can achieve the same result.

The Sponsor and Advertising Agency, who must realize:

- (1) That if a sponsor takes pride in his product he should take equal pride in the program which "showcases" it.
- (2) That those who are not traditionally sponsors of children's programs—the big-industry sponsors who believe in the "corporate image," and whose economic future is interwoven with the national future—have a stake in the young viewers of today. Tomorrow they will be our nation's citizens. Tomorrow they will be industry's consumers.

The sponsor owes this to himself—in a strictly business sense. Any show aimed at a children-adult audience in which he invests today can not only sell his product to the adult of today, but also impress his product upon the consumer of tomorrow.

- (3) That an advertising agency, whose main function is to guide and advise the sponsor, has a duty to inform and educate sponsors in regard to the great potential of the children's audience.

The Public, which must realize:

- (1) That each individual owes it to himself and his children to take an interest in what children watch, and to encourage or discourage viewing on the basis of quality, taste and overall impact.
- (2) That it is the prize for which broadcasters contend. Hence, its various organizations must take active interest in what is by law its own property. It must learn its rights, in the words of Newton Minow, and exercise them; must learn the rules by which broadcasting is regulated, and—in the role of a "Watchdog"—see to it that these rules are obeyed.

As I have written this my trepidation has grown. Recognizing problems does not solve them. Perhaps, having dipped into three cans of paint labeled "Profit," "Responsibility," and "Quality," I have painted myself into a corner. I am not stubborn enough to say that these observations will change all things at once. But a start must be made, and once it is made the professionals—broadcasters, sponsors, and agencies—and the public can make every effort to widen the breach in the wall of indifference.

Children's programming in TV can be profitable as well as satisfying. Perhaps the island of Atlantis was real. Perhaps good children's programming is not a myth. That remains to be seen. I *do not* know. We will have to prove it to ourselves.

Last September, I suggested the networks might cooperate in bringing to the country improved programming for our children. The Attorney General stated that the Department of Justice would not regard such co-operation in children's programming as a violation of the anti-trust laws. I asked whether the networks felt they were sufficiently harnessing the unique power of television to educate, awaken, and enrich the 70,000,000 children's hours spent each day with television. And I said that it's time the creative television professionals lit a few million candles to take our children out of the darkness. Later, some broadcasting executives asked for my views about certain types of co-operative plans. I said that I had no blueprint, that I don't produce television shows, and that my purpose was to call public attention to an important problem in the hope that the industry would solve it in any manner it saw fit—or in no manner.

*Newton N. Minow
Chairman: Federal
Communications Commission
(In an address before the
Commonwealth Club,
San Francisco, California
December 22, 1961)*

VIOLENCE IN TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

A BBC-TV CODE OF PRACTICE*

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

The worlds which children and grown-ups occupy, though they overlap, are different. Subjects with unpleasant associations for the one will often be taken for granted by the other. Guns and fisticuffs may have sinister implications for adults; seldom for children. Family insecurity and marital infidelity may be commonplace to adults; to children they can be deeply disturbing.

The main danger points are:

- a) Situations which upset a child's emotional security, arising out of adoption, desertion, cruelty in the home, unwanted children, friction between parents, especially in contemporary settings.
- b) Portrayal of injury, illness or disablements, especially when used to sharpen a dramatic crisis (e.g. nightmares); and of embarrassing personal disabilities (e.g. stuttering).
- c) Dangerous examples of "villainous" action which invite imitation, e.g. the use of intriguing weapons, traps and pitfalls, from sabotaged bicycles to trip-wires.

*Excerpts. Reproduced by permission.

- d) Bad habits in "good" characters; e.g. chain-smoking, hitting below the belt.
- e) Brutality: the most difficult category. Brutality is not the same thing as violence. Violence is not the same thing as combat. Yet because combat, which is healthy, and brutality, which is not, both contain violence, they tend to become identified. Over-emphasis in picture and sound is one key. The long camera shot renders many affrays and battles inoffensive; close-up camera shots make the same incidents inadmissible.
- f) Weapons: the choice is important. Coshes, knives, whips and bottles are more suspect than revolvers, rifles or swords, because they are more easily available or improvised.
- g) Atmosphere: This can be more upsetting than violence because here what is essentially a subjective subject becomes most personal. To chill the spine is a legitimate part of story-telling. To create an eerie and fearful atmosphere, especially with the aid of background music, or sudden optical shock, can be more than momentarily disturbing. The supernatural, especially in modern dress, is perilous ground.

These points made in relation to children's programmes are considered to be of importance to those concerned with programmes up to 9 P.M., during which time children are known to be watching in substantial numbers.

ADULT PROGRAMMES

Producers with library film material to draw upon must always satisfy themselves first of all that the illustrations they choose which depict scenes of violence, brutality or horror are valid and essential to their theme, that the meaning of the programme is, indeed, heightened by the inclusion of such sequences. They must then ask themselves if the effect of including those scenes is not, in the case of a large number of normal viewers, going to cause such distress or resentment as to invalidate the programme altogether for those people. If the viewer is to be exposed to shock, or indeed to fear, there must be certainty in advance that the reasons are good and proper ones. They may well be, but justification by hindsight is not acceptable.

RE-STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- a) A sequence involving violence should arise naturally from the story, and be therefore dramatically necessary and defensible. If it is inserted extraneously for depraved effect, it should be rejected outright. This happens with many of the "private eye" and police series which come from the United States. The Western, on the other hand, has a formal and stylised tradition, of which shooting and slugging it out are an essential part. The latest filmmakers, however, are apt to interject a sudden piece of optical or acoustic self-indulgence into an otherwise admissible fight between law and outlaw. This requires vigilance.
- b) Any such 'natural' sequence should not be unduly prolonged.
- c) No sequence should include shots which dwell upon the more gruesome and bloody physical aspects of a combat.
- d) As with children's programmes, the use of dangerous implements, other than firearms, has to be watched, to avoid both revulsion and limitation in viewers.
- e) Sound effects and sound track should not distort or magnify the impact of violence, e.g. the breaking of bones, the cracking of skull or jaw.
- f) In a fist fight, neither contestant should engage in tactics of a vicious or bestial nature.
- g) Violence inflicted on a woman or animal must require special scrutiny.

If there is any suspicion that a scene has been written, or filmed, deliberately to scare the imaginative and/or nervous viewer, then it should automatically be excised.

Equally important, consideration should be given to the concept of the film or play, to the purpose and intentions of the producer or author and the means they have employed to carry those out. Integrity must not be carelessly dismissed.

BBC-TV

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Opotowsky, Stan. TV: THE BIG PICTURE. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1961.

Stan Opotowsky is both a good reporter and an entertaining writer, a happy combination which makes his *TV: The Big Picture* something more than a primer for viewers and something more than just a refresher course for the workers in the TV vineyard.

By Opotowsky's own frank admission, his book "was not written by an insider, nor was it written for insiders. This book was written for those who sit on the living room side of the television screen." He has done almost too good a job, pouring forth a rapid-fire spew of facts, figures, statistics, anecdotes, impressions, and opinions that are likely to leave many a viewer more amazed than enlightened.

Opotowsky has done a thorough, if not always accurate, job of research. He obviously approached the task with no distracting stardust in his eyes and, more importantly, came through without acquiring any. In the process he manages not only to draw a sometimes painfully clear picture of exactly how the medium goes about its business but, at the same time, to delineate a history of TV broadcasting that is notable for its lack of dryness. Generally speaking, his impressions are accurate, his conclusions logical, and his opinions—the medium is so powerful that its misuse is a sin against the entire nation—worth heeding.

Opotowsky commits a few factual errors which might make a purist wince. He credits CBS, not NBC, with developing the compatible electronic color tube and names Parke, rather than Ralph, Levy as having once been Jack Benny's producer. The first error is one of some magnitude and should have been caught somewhere along the line before the forms were finally locked up. The second can easily be shrugged off by the two talented Levys.

For the professional of whatever category, Opotowsky's book can be compared to today's account of yesterday's ball game: it can work wonders on one's perspective and focus.

DAN JENKINS

TV Guide

Marty, Martin E. THE IMPROPER OPINION—MASS MEDIA AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961.

The Improper Opinion opens on a familiar theme, but many variations soon emerge.

Dr. Marty, an Illinois clergyman, author, and editor, proceeds on the premise that mass media naturally cater to popular or "proper opinions." He restates the prevalent claim that best-selling novels, magazines, newspapers, radio, and television generally make minimal demands on the intelligence. The result is an intrusion of subtle patterns of values and form which reinforce an atmosphere of safety, conformity, and secularization. To adapt to this situation, religious publications and broadcasts are

often diluted and distorted until they lose their historic function of presenting "the improper opinion"—those ideas which are a departure from the broadly acceptable.

Dr. Marty allows for exceptions to this generalization and does not lay the blame for this condition upon the publishing and broadcasting industries. Unlike many other critics, he never lapses into the same superficiality and shrill sensationalism of which the media are accused; he is neither caustic nor condescending, neither strident nor supercilious. His concern is how the Christian faith can be expressed through media which are bound to reflect the essentially non-religious presuppositions of modern society.

The very nature of the broadcasting media frustrates the frontal approach of preaching or proclamation, not so much because the approach offends but because it offends in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. Although Dr. Marty sees this traditional type of program as appealing to the committed and as performing a useful, if highly restricted, function among them, he contends that most such broadcasts do the Christian faith "a disservice by making its explicit Christian claim vulnerable to an easy dismissal by the non-religious world." He recalls having thought, while driving an auto one Sunday in "Protestant" areas: "Were I not a Christian, most religious radio would keep me from becoming one."

The author sees limited value in the educational use of the mass media; he favors presentations which are promissory, preliminary, and preparatory. The informal, the indirect, and the implicit presentations are recommended. By this, Dr. Marty does not mean a diluted, universally respectable, inoffensive religiousness that extols native goodness, brotherhood, and the American way of life. He maintains stoutly that "such religion does a disservice in that it provides men with an insulation against the surprising interruption of God in Christ." It is possible, he believes, to retain the paradoxical character of Christian faith by "the presentation of the Church's self through the lives of its people as masks." Noting that "Christianity has always made its way as a good story, well reported," he does not advocate the contrivance of action as an attention-getting device. Dr. Marty suggests that the more the Church acts like the Church, the more newsworthy and genuinely dramatic it will be.

The Improper Opinion concludes that any presentation of the Christian faith must include an aspect of judgment; the ideal presentation "tantalizes, it teases, it insinuates a better prospect. . . . It fuses art with discretion, it cares about the world and shows this by the way it tells its story. . . . It has room for the improper opinion, but it whispers rather than shouts." Admitting that this is only a beginning, he expects the worshipping community, rather than the mass media, to go on from here.

By a reading of this book, television artists and executives willing to struggle with theological language and allusions will be exposed to a penetrating analysis of the task of presenting the Christian faith through the mass media.

JOHN WALTER BACHMAN

Union Theological Seminary

Foote, Horton. *THREE PLAYS*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962.

The fact that a play isn't a play until it's presented on the stage is especially true for television. The characteristics of the medium require not only a good play in terms of modern playwriting but a good play in terms of the limitations of time, space, censorship, and audience. And there are always the restricted potentials of camera and control room techniques to be considered.

This new paperback collection of plays by Horton Foote contains three excellent examples of good television playwriting: "Old Man," "Tomorrow"—both adapted from stories by Faulkner—and "Roots in a Parched Ground," an original play produced under the title "Night of the Storm." The first two were originally produced, and later repeated, on *Playhouse 90*; the last-named play was presented on *DuPont Show of the Month*.

All of these plays are reminiscent of Robert Flaherty's documentary approach: emphasis on the courage and dignity of man even in the most primitive and antagonistic circumstances. Although his plays have large casts, Foote wisely concentrates the action on a few characters and avoids a cluttering-up of the comparatively tiny TV screen. At the same time, he permits and necessitates the use of television's most effective visual device, the close-up.

Horton Foote is faithful to Faulkner and retains the essence of the originals. Foote has captured the private, personal, intimate thoughts and actions of Faulkner's characters involved in critical moments of their lives. But he has successfully by-passed some of Faulkner's long, non-action passages.

For the most part, Foote has contained his plays within the physical limitations of settings adaptable for "live" or taped production. ("Old Man" was shot out of sequence and on tape, with the Mississippi River duplicated in Hollywood's Television City.)

A very short preface by Foote gives some background of the plays. This volume, as with most collections of this kind, would benefit from the inclusion of detailed production information about each play and a sampling of critical reviews of the productions.

In terms of television drama currently being offered, this trio of character-motivated plays is useful not only for reminiscence but for creative study as well.

ROBERT L. HILLIARD

University of North Carolina

Coons, John E. (ed.). **FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN BROADCASTING.** Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961.

The subject of this book is vast and difficult; it is best handled by individuals who are not only aware of the connection between freedom and responsibility but who know something about the problems of broadcasting.

Freedom and Responsibility in Broadcasting had its origins in a conference sponsored by the School of Law at Northwestern University in August 1961. The conference was limited to twenty participants. This volume, which is essentially a transcript of the proceedings, makes possible wider circulation of some carefully documented and well articulated ideas.

Governor LeRoy Collins, Commissioner Newton Minow, Professor Louis Jaffe, and Dean Roscoe Barrow present the four major addresses. Former FCC Commissioner Charles H. King replies to Professor Jaffe's remarks, and communications lawyer W. Theodore Pierson challenges Dean Barrow on several of his major contentions. What we have are six different approaches to the same vital subject.

Appendix I, a large section of the book, is devoted to a memorandum by Joel Rosenbloom of the FCC staff, who sets down the nature of the Commission's power with respect to control of program content. Pertinent FCC rulings and court decisions are

examined from the position that precedent to date is fully compatible with the guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press contained in the Bill of Rights.

Appendix II presents two discussion sessions. No matter how diligently an editor may work, written manuscripts of most discussions do not read well. Whatever spirit which might have been present in a "live" interchange is not translated effectively into print.

This, however, cannot stand as a major criticism of *Freedom and Responsibility in Broadcasting*; to have the statements of six outstanding leaders and scholars on freedom and responsibility in radio and television, available in one volume, is all to our benefit. Perhaps we ought to base on these presentations some discussions of our own.

But, please, no transcripts.

JAMES FELLOWS

Empire State School of the Air

Pedrick, Gale. PROFITABLE SCRIPTWRITING FOR TELEVISION AND RADIO. London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1961.

American readers of Gale Pedrick's book will receive both a disappointment and a revelation. There will be, and should be, many American readers. Americans will read anything that has the word "profit" in the title.

Mr. Pedrick's attitude toward life, the BBC, and television is crowded with a strange kind of amiable resignation; an unspoken dismay that he is a survivor amidst the gay wreckage. He at times suggests the loneliness of a well-situated club chair that is so overstuffed no one will sit in it. Though television would seem to be the main burden of his discussion, one soon knows Mr. Pedrick's heart is still in "sound broadcasting."

To come to the disappointment at once: his book is not a textbook in any sense—not in any American sense anyhow—and you can't learn anything about writing from it. All that a writer can learn is *where* to send his work, once it's ready to go out. But how the script or synopsis is to be put together remains undisclosed.

The publishers do not call this book a textbook. They call it a "guide" and claim it as "the best, wisest, and most sympathetic." Perhaps it is a guide, and surely it is sympathetic, but for readers on these shores, where we like everything labelled, it has to be called a sketchbook. Or a happy journey through the miscellany of atmospheres, minor anecdote, and pleasant memory that Lord Reith has fastened forever on the British mind.

Forever? Well, until the Americans showed up. Here the author experiences "an instinctive shudder at the thought of transatlantic infiltration." But right here he would do well—in the interests of his own longevity—to reverse the maxim of Satchel Paige: "Never look back; something might be gaining on you."

Something *is* gaining on them. It is progress. The Reith Sundays are all over. The BBC isn't "all over." But when television, whose feasibility was known in England long before it was known in the United States, moved into England on a practical and semi-scheduled basis, it made itself felt the instant it hit. It was American television largely, and the reason it made itself felt was that England's common man at once preferred the early American imports to what he was getting.

The English are as quick to see a potential as any other people, but their inflexibility of habit (such as the sanctity of the English week-end), while saying much that is commendable about character and tradition, also adds up as no way at all to deal

with an invader like *I Love Lucy*. They see the potential but don't do anything about it.

Mr. Pedrick informs us that the American "invasion" has been alarming. This isn't true. It was not only predictable, it was inevitable. Any American who had seen much British television, even before the big stuff got rolling over here, was astonished that the English viewer could sit still in the presence of what English producers were exhibiting. The Americans have done only two things: entertained the British better and entertained them oftener.

When Radio Luxembourg was beaming Carson Robinson's *Buckaroos* across the Channel in 1933, there should have been a signal for the first "shudder"—if Mr. Pedrick and his colleagues were sensitive to symptoms. For it was that early that the American imprint was putting its stencil—pale at first—on British homes. On the *average British workingman's* home.

What is that imprint? It is the simplest thing in the world: tunes you can hum, laughter out of the belly, and uncomplicated stories where the villain get it pow right in the kisser.

Mr. Pedrick's lament, that English script writers are being crowded by the American product, is seriously stated and repeatedly so; instead of accepting the challenge this displacement represents, he reverts to being sanguine about the survival of "sound broadcasting" in a TV world. It reads like wishful thinking. There is something desperate in his determination to hold back the tidal pressures of Television, especially "commercial" television, but no plan to combat it is set forth. Whether it needs combatting is not gone into, but Mr. Pedrick is loath to accept things as they are.

He's a cheerful writer, as well as an easy-to-read writer. His book glows with praises of the current British "greats"—stars and writers both—but there are so many references to the good old radio days that any objective reading of his paragraphs obliges one to fear that the complex immensity of television in England today, warm with "foreign intrigue" of every kind; "bad" shows drawing big audiences; the semi-legendary fraternity of such Galahads as Roy Rogers, Wyatt Earp, and Marshall Dillon—in short, the quick acceptance by the British public of what it is getting now in contrast to what it was getting earlier—is a bit more than Mr. Pedrick can bear.

England has always recognized its lower classes but never did much more about them than did John Reith. America, which has nothing but lower classes, has done a lot, is willing to share, and is most anxious to get into new markets anywhere they happen to be.

To this reviewer, the most illuminating part of his whole book—the "revelation" mentioned earlier—is Mr. Pedrick's account of his being sent to North Africa to establish the first Army Broadcasting Radio Station for British troops. By that time, England had been at war for two years.

One of the purposes of this radio station was "to set up a friendly opposition to the American Expeditionary Stations." Then there is this, and to me the quintessence of this whole matter of American shows and British audiences: "The reason we were so far behind was, with typical businesslike efficiency, the Americans had arranged for Army broadcasters to wade ashore with their equipment on every occasion when they effected a landing."

This is a habit of ours. We put the oil in a barrel; England reports it to the Home Secretary. Radio and television move so fast, you can't hand things to committees. But the British still do. The Government's Committee of Inquiry on the future of radio and television "will have made up its mind about Pay-TV and the future of commercial stations and color." When will that be? July, 1964.

As a professional craftsman, Mr. Pedrick's best chapter is his work on the subject of adaptations. His worst chapter—comedy. His worst fault: introducing a subject, then walking away from it.

He could have made many of his points merely by moving from the general to the specific and he should have done so, to his own and his reader's great profit; done so by citing examples. There is such a lack of example that the reader comes away from this thoroughly candid but formless book as though he has just seen an operation through the windows of the vestibule, with the patient himself obscured by the gowns of the surgeons and the shadows of all their special gear. We never stand at the table and look down.

MAX WYLIE

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COMMENT

The public's responsibility toward television is outlined in the following note addressed to the great audience by Phillip Cohen, Vice-President in Charge of Television-Radio at Sullivan, Stauffer, Colwell and Bayles, Inc. First delivered to the annual *Syracuse University Seminar in Broadcast Responsibility*, held in the Adirondacks last summer, the letter is belatedly forwarded by *Television Quarterly*.

Dear TV Public:

I know it is not fashionable to write to you. You are the one who is supposed to write to sponsors and advertising agencies, stations and networks and tell them how terrible they are. You are the one who individually may be wrong but collectively are infallible. Well, I wonder if either individually or collectively you are quite as infallible as you, or rather as your self-appointed spokesmen, make you out to be.

First of all, you tend to accent the negative. You take pen in hand to gripe about something—particularly if you belong to a dedicated group. You almost never write to say you *like* something. Have you any idea, dear public, what it means to a sponsor who has made a sacrifice in his cost-per-thousand column to bring you fine entertainment or a public service program to receive a note of appreciation or a promise to buy his product? Let me tell you what it means. It means that the sponsor will put on more programs of this sort and, finally, it may even become a way of life with him. But you don't write. I will bet that *Macbeth* received more Emmy Awards than letters of gratitude from you.

You have another problem. You don't read program schedules carefully. If you would take a half-hour out on Sunday to mark your program schedule for the week, you would—certainly in large Metropolitan areas—check off more fine entertainment—dramatic programs, news, public service programs—than in the end you will have time to look at.

I mentioned above, dear public, your self-appointed spokesmen. Are they, in fact, self-appointed or have you voted lately for someone to represent your views on television? Have you told your representatives whether you think television is basically a source of entertainment or whether you consider it a medium of information and that you want more public service programs?

Let me tell you what I think. I think your self-appointed representatives very often talk about the kind of television they want *other* people to see, not the kind they look at themselves. For example, it would be interesting to know how many of your representatives watched *Groucho Marx* and *The Untouchables* on the evening of April 27th, 1961. The reason it would be interesting is this: *Groucho* and *The Untouchables*, on the evening of April 27, shared 81% of the audience and, at the same time, *CBS Reports* received a 19% share of the audience. It might be a good idea, dear public, for you to find out which of these three programs your representatives were watching on April 27th.

I am not arguing about the balancing of programming—it may be exactly right; it may be exactly what you want. All I am arguing is that you must be articulate about what you *do* want. You must genuinely elect and support your spokesmen, or better, be your own spokesman. You must applaud when you are happy, criticize when you are angry. You must let the people who run television know what you want, or a small group of people will ultimately dictate what you see on your screen. Perhaps you are pretty happy with television just the way it is. Perhaps you would like it to be a little better or at least a little different.

In any case, it would be nice to hear from you before the postage rates increase.

Sincerely,

The Sponsor's Advertising Agency

In a recent address to the New York Society of Security Analysts, Publisher Bennett Cerf added a new, and humorous, twist to thinking about what television does to influence children's reading habits as well as the crying habits of book publishers.

I am sure you have been told that television has hurt the cause of reading in America. This is absolute nonsense! Television is only the latest in a series of things that has raised the hackles of disturbed publishers. Publishers, incidentally, are the most easily disturbed people I ever have met. All you have to do is ask a publisher, "How's business?" and he starts crying. Sometimes his tears bounce right off the decks of his private yacht! In the past 60 years, publishers have been saying nasty things, in turn, about interurban trolley cars, bicycles, cheap automobiles, motion pictures, radio, cheek-to-cheek dancing, rock 'n' roll, outboard motors, and bowling. Thus television is only the latest in an endless series of bugaboos. The fact of the matter is that neither television nor anything else will ever stop people from reading good books, if they have been taught actually to enjoy reading when they were children.

The people who insist that their small fry no longer read books because their eyes are glued to a television set are usually people who haven't got a book in their entire house. A child can't pick up a book unless there *is* one there for him to pick up. I have looked around the homes of some of these despairing parents and found that, instead of having some interesting and attractive new books on their shelves, they fill such shelves with bowls of miniature Japanese trees, chocolate buds and blue glass horses—anything in the world in fact except books.

The very act of watching television, in fact, has made children ten times as anxious as ever they were before to read books. They see things on the television screen that stimulate their interest in current events, in history, in science, in the wonders of the sea and the heavens, and once they turn off their sets, they demand books that will furnish them with further details. Even those repetitious Westerns stimulate children's interest in characters like Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone and Wyatt Earp. The next day they buy books to learn more about these endlessly fascinating highlights of American history. The picture of a hurricane or tornado on a television screen invariably indicates that there is going to be a run the next day on children's books about the weather.

From across the Atlantic come a series of well-turned phrases by our British colleagues. We go first to the pages of *Contrast*, The Television Quarterly of the British Film Institute, for some interesting observations by Maurice Wiggin, a distinguished British journalist, on the distinctions between television and newspaper news.

... But if, as I believe, television is always liable to win on the hard beat, and always liable to lose on the follow-up, the fact remains, and a puzzling fact it is, that television has never quite lived up to the promise which some of us saw in it when the world was young. Why is this? It is simply because most important news is absolutely non-pictorial and incapable of being pictorialized.

In the beginning was the word. Really important news is news of ideas. A declaration of war, like a declaration of peace, is originally an idea. It is something in the minds of men. Hard news falls into two distinct categories: physical and ideal. While you can best report an air disaster, or a natural catastrophe such as fire and flood, with the camera, you cannot report an idea except through the medium of the word. You can show the comings and goings on the fringe of the idea. You can set up your cameras round the periphery of the mental ferment. You can show statesmen (pardon the expression) in their comings and goings, and report their hesitant and evasive and at all times pitiful prevarications. But you cannot make a picture of their mental processes, and it is their mental processes which make the hardest of hard news, and the most important.

Yet we had hoped some of us, that television's vaunted knack of immediacy, of being there where it mattered, when it mattered, might give us an insight into world events which would make newspapers look antediluvian. Not so. Television can learn how to get its cameras to the scene of the crime—no faster than a reporter-photographer team can get there, it is true, but with better facilities for getting the result back to the public. But television's cameras cannot even begin to penetrate a man's mind at the moment when what is going on in that mind is of cardinal (i.e., newsy,) importance.

I am inclined to think that television's advantages and disadvantages, *vis-à-vis* newspapers, just about cancel out, and that the one will always be complementary to the other. I incline also to the view that even when the earth is ringed by satellites off which signals can be bounced, television's advantages will not become too overwhelming. They will be considerable it is true, but this barrier of the impenetrable cerebrum will always work, to the advantage of the word, and against the picture. The categorical imperative.

Next, two statements from *The Listener*. The first, by BBC-TV Controller of Programmes Stuart Hood, incorporates the faint suggestion that television may not, after all, be the educational panacea we hope it to be.

Television is in some ways an imperfect medium for communication. This is partly because the viewer's visual memory can play strange tricks. From a sequence of news-film, or from a documentary, it may retain some striking but irrelevant detail—a child's face in a crowd, a gesture, some distracting element. There is the danger that by appealing too often and too strongly to the viewer's sense of wonder we may blunt his perception and his ability to marvel at all. Everything has been seen. In a spurious way everything has been experienced. Again, information in itself is useless if it conveys nothing more than a jumble of discrete facts, *disjecta membra*, incoherent and unrelated.

There are some topics involving logical argument at a very high level which do not lend themselves to the simplifying process basic to mass communication. It is as if the medieval artist had been asked to illustrate in his sculpture or in a stained glass window not the simple teachings of the Church but the subtleties of dogma and doctrine. But with all these provisos it still remains clear that television can, in a democracy, perform an essential task in presenting the facts and the arguments which, if understood, allow a free citizen to understand what goes on around him and, if he wishes, to take political action.

Finally, the BBC Director of Television, Kenneth Adam, reflects upon the work of BBC-TV on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary.

Summing up, at this year's anniversary, which will soon become next year's watershed in British broadcasting history, a few certainties emerge. First, that we do not have to regard the viewer as a lumpish, incurious mass, and therefore a television service which was no respecter of persons as persons would be not only immoral, but foolish. Second, that the rule of the majority is a vital principle of constitutional democracy, but not of cultural democracy, and since that phrase has been degraded, let us say of "popular culture." Third, that "innocuous" is not enough, because just to be harmless is the last thing television can afford to be, and so it is better to scale up than to scale down. Lastly, that although we need to know more about what is fantasy and what is reality in what we are doing, more about immediate rewards and delayed rewards, and much more about the "lonely man," the "affluent man," of modern society (who may in the end turn out to be too idiosyncratic to be classified), we cannot afford to wait, anyway. We have to go ahead as we see fit. For our appointment is not with posterity, but with tomorrow.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Television Quarterly is pleased to initiate this department by sharing some excerpts from a few of the many generous letters of congratulation which have come in since publication of Volume I, No. 1.

I have read the first issue... with much pleasure and profit... It's an important contribution to thoughtful discussion of television's potential—and I send you and your associates warmest wishes for a long and enduring imprint on all of our minds.

NEWTON N. MINOW

Chairman: FCC

I enjoyed the first issue. I applaud you for the range of subject matter and for the great amount of substantial material included.

MAURINE CHRISTOPHER

*Television-Radio Editor
Advertising Age*

Television needs the literary magazine that you have put together... If the same high standard is continued, you will be providing a significant document for our help.

MICHAEL J. AMBROSINO

*Executive Director
Eastern Educational Network*

Congratulations on the first issue... It is excellent and is a much needed addition to the list of broadcast publications.

JOHN S. FISLER

*Executive Secretary
Radio-Television
The Protestant Council of New York City*

I want to congratulate you... The selection of articles is excellent and the quality of production in keeping with what a journal of a professional group should be.

SOL TAISHOFF

*Editor and Publisher
Broadcasting*

Anyone with a serious interest in television must have been impressed by the variety and quality of material you offered.

MERRILL PANNIT

Editor: TV Guide

I congratulate you on the excellence of your contributors and their articles. I particularly enjoyed the articles by Hubbell Robinson and Bob Foreman.

MATTHEW W. HARRISON, JR.

*Manager: Employee Information
Armstrong Cork Company*

I am pleased to add a "first edition" to my library--particularly one of such high quality.

DR. IRVING R. MERRILL

*Director: TV Research
San Francisco Medical Center
University of California*

I was very much impressed with the first issue . . . The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences is in position to give help directly to the television industry, and especially in terms of its influence and position. The journal can be the medium by which standards are set and maintained . . .

FORREST H. KIRKPATRICK

*Assistant to Chairman and President
Wheeling Steel Corporation*

My interest in television is largely in the field of school education . . . I am a charter member of the Academy, and in my opinion this new project will be more far reaching than any in the past.

MRS. GAIL POWELL

I feel confident that it will be of value to the members of the Academy.

A. PREISS

*Publisher
Telefilm Magazine*

An excellent job . . . I especially liked Pierson on "Censorship," Walter Emery's fine article, and Burton Benjamin on "The Documentary Heritage." As a matter of fact, I will be using his article in my Documentary Writing course.

BERNARD COOPER

*Associate Professor
The Florida State University*

One cannot help hoping that *Television Quarterly* will make its interesting and influential way into a large proportion of the 91 out of every 100 homes reported to have at least one television set. Such a distribution could help work the great change in television programming and practices that many people are looking for.

Review in the Christian Science Monitor



TELEVISION QUARTERLY

— LOOKING AHEAD

How well does the system of mass communications serve the cultivation of cultural values in America, in the broadest sense? Are the mass media degrading modern man with an alluring and seductive diet of "kitsch," or are the media as good as modern man deserves or can take? Should the media give the public what it wants, on democratic grounds, or should they give the public what someone thinks is good for the public, on ethical and artistic grounds? Should the media force people to a serious consideration of life's purposes, or should they facilitate an escape from life?

These questions, raised by Bernard Berelson in a recent issue of *Studies in Public Communication*, are not new to those who are creatively involved with television. Yet the discussion devoted to them has always been one-sided. The spokesmen who can represent the medium with force and vigor in this debate have seldom engaged in direct argument with television's critics against a neutral and impartial background. On the one hand are the "small" magazines, the critical and scholarly journals; on the other are the "trades," daily newspapers, and occasional speech reprints from high sources within the industry. The two points of view seldom meet head-on.

Was John Dewey right in saying: "While saints engage in introspection, burly sinners run the world"? Is the divorce between "men

of action" and "men of thought" complete and final? Are the creative forces, namely the *people*, of television incapable of making informed and alert observations about the significance and value of what they do?

Television Quarterly, in the firm belief that these conditions are not inevitable, submits in evidence the thoughtful statements of television professionals who have already contributed to these pages. In keeping with this faith, it hopes to create full opportunity for intelligent discussion of television and cultural democracy from all points of view.

The opinions of all those who wish to add their own reflections upon this significant debate of our time are needed. It is important that readers of this journal, who constitute the single most powerful communications force in the world today, *do not wait* for an invitation to speak. *Television Quarterly* can live up to its intention of "taking a serious look at television" only to the degree that its readers will make themselves heard.

A.W.B.



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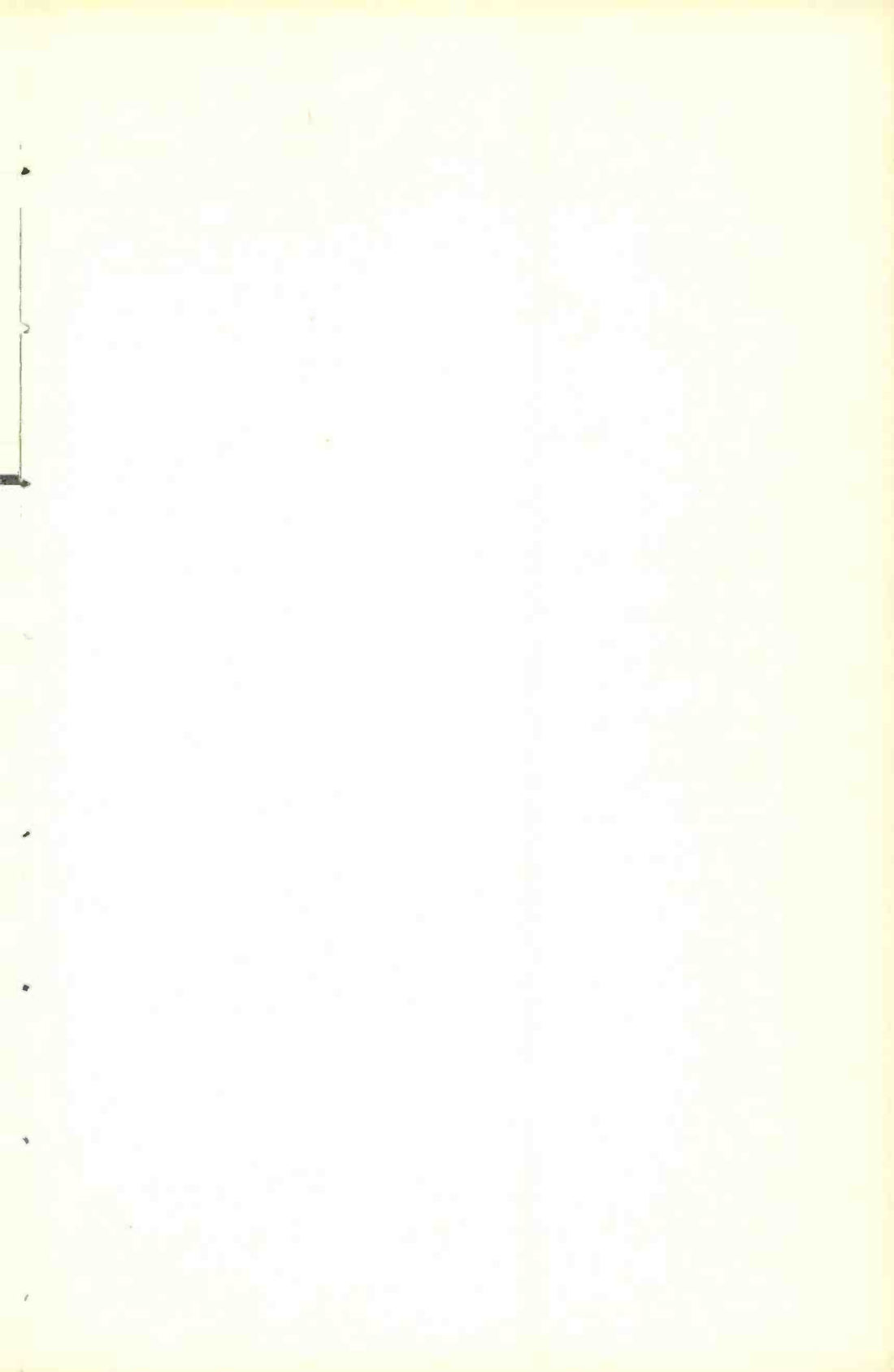
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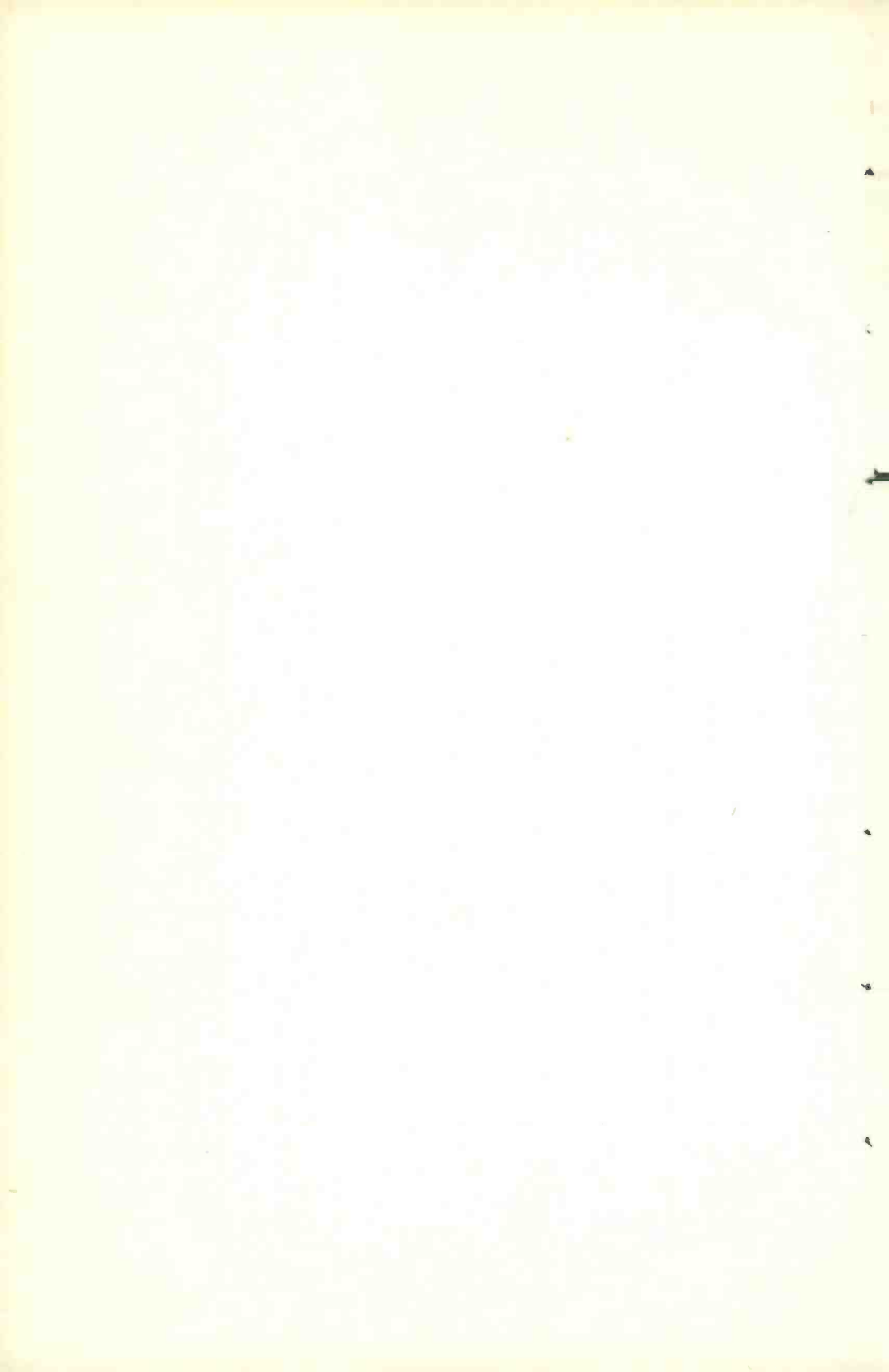
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PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE WHITE HOUSE BY GORDON PARRS

He keeps tabs on the President: Sander Vanocur

As a reporter for *The New York Times* he dabbled in everything from police news to obits. As one of only three Americans ever to have been a staffer for England's *Manchester Guardian* he reported on Princess Margaret's romance. As an NBC News correspondent he covered the parochial school disaster in Chicago, the integration problem in Little Rock and Nikita Khrushchev's explosive U.S. tour. Such is the broad news background of 33-year-old Sander Vanocur—current assignment, the White House. Vanocur has been at John F. Kennedy's side as a newsmen since the key primary fights. He traveled with the President to Paris for talks with De Gaulle and to Vienna for meetings with Khrushchev. He obtained Mrs. Kennedy's first

television interview. With his detailed knowledge of the personalities and policies of the present administration, Vanocur is one of the key members of the NBC News team that puts together the frequent "JFK Report" news specials. On watch in the nerve center of the free world, Sander Vanocur is a vital part of the largest broadcast news organization in existence today. It is men of the competence, experience and responsibility of Sander Vanocur who contribute to the wide scope and diversity of NBC's presentation of the news, and who consistently attract to it the largest audiences in television.

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