

TELEVISION

VOLUME IX

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SPRING 1970

QUARTERLY

THE JOURNAL OF
THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS
AND SCIENCES

Published by The National Academy
of Television Arts and Sciences in
cooperation with the School of Public
Communication, Boston University

**“Write the
shortest possible
imperative sentence
embracing
adventure, drama,
comedy, sports,
song and dance,
news and
public affairs.”**

“Watch CBS .

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THE MYTHOLOGY OF TELEVISION

MAURY GREEN

In its attitude toward television news, the American public appears to be developing schizophrenia. Approximately one-third of the people distrust TV news, and more than one-tenth believe it should be government controlled, whereas more than two-fifths consider TV news more reliable than any other medium, and two-thirds derive from it most of their information. So state various recent polls.

Such diversity in polls bodes ill for the mental health of the body politic, especially when it must also try to rationalize such contradictory phenomena as the public huzzahs over Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's Des Moines speech that attacked TV, and the success of Joe McGinniss's *THE SELLING OF THE PRESIDENT* 1968.

Is it possible, one wonders, to maintain the free flow of information essential to democratic government when the most important and omnipresent of the news media is distrusted by one of every three persons watching it?

Active for many years in California broadcasting, **MAURY GREEN** currently serves as host of *Inquiry*, an interview show on KNBC, Los Angeles that made its debut this spring. As a former newscaster for KNXT, Los Angeles, and CBS, Mr. Green has won a number of awards, among them two Golden Mikes and a National Television Academy EMMY. He is a lecturer in journalism at UCLA, president this year of the Greater Los Angeles Press Club, and author of a recently published book, *TELEVISION NEWS: ANATOMY AND PROCESS*.

Mr. Green submitted the following as an original article for *TELEVISION QUARTERLY*.

Much of this distrust appears to be based on ignorance of *how* television conveys information. If the public does not become better informed, the growth of a national split personality toward TV news could get us all into trouble.

Few people, even among those working in television, comprehend how it gets its message through the tube. And ignorance, as always, gives rise to belief in magic. Such a belief unconsciously colors all too much of the criticism of television; its magical powers are taken for granted. Thus is created a mythology in which television causes riots by reporting them, trains children to commit violence, encourages crime, and by artful misdirection elevates to the Presidency a nonexistent man.

All this is nonsense. But it is nonsense which a great many people obviously believe, and therefore it is dangerous nonsense.

Some of the criticisms are so illogical that they would scarcely deserve serious consideration were it not for their source. Mr. Agnew, for example, in his Des Moines speech challenged television's right to comment on Presidential speeches as well as the right of network newsmen to associate with one another in off-duty hours. To give such challenges the force of law would require major surgery on the Constitution, and we doubt that anything concrete will come of them. The more likely result, already strongly suggested by acts of omission, would be an overly solicitous network attitude toward Administration pronouncements.

The self appraisal that Mr. Agnew, more realistically, proposed for TV newsmen is something they themselves have long been concerned with. They are far more aware than the public of the imperfections of their medium, and eager to eliminate these imperfections.

Mr. McGinniss, who based his book on a six month sit-in course watching Richard M. Nixon's 1968 television campaign, is more pertinent in his comments but still wide of the mark. Many of his arguments typify the half-truths which find nurture in the false mythology of television's magic.

He complains, for example, that Mr. Nixon's TV appearances were so stage-managed that the candidate seldom was forced to answer tough, challenging questions. True! But that is not a fault inherent in television. I feel that such a campaign could as easily be conducted if TV did not exist. The only corrective is to publicize the strategy, which is exactly what Mr. McGinniss has done.

He complains that any candidate who appears on TV needs to master the specialized art of performing for the camera. Partly true! He fails to make the important distinction between *presentational* and *representational* performance, between argument and acting. Further, in the pre-television era the political candidate needed equally to master the art of public speaking—an art at which not everyone can excel. The new requirement imposed by television is not necessarily evil. It is merely different.

He complains that the only personal contact 90 per cent of the people can make with a Presidential candidate is through the TV tube. Underestimate! It is probably closer to 99 per cent. But what would the percentage be without electronic communication—one per cent? Is not the 99 per cent better, no matter how tenuous the thread of communication? Is not *some* personal communication, *some* ability to see and hear the candidate and make a judgment on what one sees and hears, better than almost none?

The McGinniss theory goes farthest astray in his conception of the “image” (that overworked word!) projected through the tube. In a nutshell, which is where it belongs, the theory holds that television makes it possible to peddle to the electorate an artificial, plastic candidate with no resemblance to the real man. A kind of political Barbie Doll, with voice, looks, and opinions designed to Madison Avenue specifications, and animated by Disney wizardry.

Mr. McGinniss himself has been victimized by one of Madison Avenue’s most successful sales campaigns: he believes that TV advertising is sorcery.

In a recent Los Angeles *Times* article he compressed his complaint about the TV image into the contention that “the camera is a magnifying glass, an amplifier that exaggerates gestures, facial expressions, voice inflections.”

Again, he is partly right. The camera has nothing to do with voice; the microphone handles that. The camera can magnify, right enough, but it does not exaggerate; “exaggerate” means to magnify beyond the limits of truth, and that is beyond the camera’s power.

(The camera, we concede, can *distort* if certain lenses such as the fisheye are used, but we have never heard of such lenses being used in news or political coverage. The amount of distortion caused by the zoom lens—in almost universal use—is negligible in television news, and nonexistent in public awareness. Exaggeration *can* be accomplished by editing of film or videotape, but that is another matter entirely.)

These trifling technicalities aside, the real question is *what* the camera magnifies.

A false image?

Look again. And look carefully.

The television camera, focused on an individual, is a psychological X-ray machine that cannot be deceived by makeup, artful performance, careful staging, or a million dollars' worth of Madison Avenue advice. It bares the performer's soul, whether he be Richard Nixon or Dean Martin, and the longer he is on camera the more nakedly his psyche is exposed.

If the police in our more puritanical communities viewed psychological nudity as severely as they view physical nudity, every television newscast in town would be raided nightly; Tom Reddin, the former Los Angeles police chief who quit law enforcement to become a TV newscaster, would have become well acquainted with the cast of that city's much-raided production of *Oh, Calcutta!*—behind bars.

Mr. McGinniss naively assumes that the machinations of Mr. Nixon's advisers had the effect they intended. But that assumption of cause and effect is, to say the least, highly questionable. If the farmer prays for rain, and it rains, that does not mean that his prayers brought the rain. Mr. McGinniss fails to give Mr. Nixon enough credit for his own election, as well as for being the man he chooses to be. (This is not, by the way, a comment on Mr. Nixon's policies, pro or con.)

A comparison of the performances of Mr. Nixon and his opponents in 1960 and 1968—comparably close elections, both decided by a fractional percentage of the popular vote—emphasizes the factor that Mr. McGinniss, like so many others, has failed to perceive.

In 1960 it was John F. Kennedy who took visible delight in the campaign confrontations, who was cool and casual, who projected the image of a very real confidence in himself; it was Mr. Nixon who worried overmuch about polls and makeup, whose very gestures revealed his lack of confidence. It was Mr. Nixon who sweated on camera and Mr. Kennedy who went to the White House.

In 1968 it was Hubert H. Humphrey who displayed the lesser confidence, who was too eager, too uptight; it was Mr. Nixon, visibly more mature and more in command of himself than eight years earlier, who projected genuine authority and won the prize.

Both elections involved, of course, many other factors. In 1968 the

polls showed Mr. Nixon well ahead; there was national disenchantment with Vietnam and the Johnson Administration, and the disastrous Democratic National Convention. But where those factors are almost evenly balanced, the projection of personality and character through television can be decisive. Few voters care to see a man of indecision in the White House, and that is not a bad basis on which to mark a ballot.

And, for whatever reasons, the comparative confidence projected by the candidates was genuine, not manufactured. Reality could not be confined by the art of either man; it burst through the TV tube and impressed the electorate.

For this psychological X-ray effect of the TV picture, there are two reasons.

One is the peculiar ability of the motion picture, whether film or electronic and regardless of the viewing conditions, to capture virtually the *total attention* of the viewer. Still pictures do not create this effect; it is unique to the picture which simulates life by movement. If this effect did not occur, there would be no motion picture theaters. And the first home television receiver would never have been manufactured, because no one would have been able to conceive any use for it.

To understand television one must understand the cause of this extraordinary focusing of attention, a twofold cause, the *movement* in the picture and the picture's *frame* or boundary. To the viewer nothing exists beyond the frame. The camera narrows the world to its own limited vision, a kind of tunnel vision, its limits sharply defined by the frame.

The borders of human vision have no such sharp definition. They recede indefinitely through roughly concentric peripheral images until it is quite impossible for anyone to be certain exactly where his vision begins and ends. This visible world, with its indefinable boundaries, is the world to which all human beings are accustomed. But when the human looks at the world through the camera's eye, he automatically and unconsciously accepts the camera's more limited world; his natural world with its peripheral images vanishes from consciousness. All that exists, exists within the frame.

With his attention thus focused within the frame, the viewer's awareness of events within that frame is heightened abnormally for the very reason that the world he views is thus rigidly limited. Extraneous images do not intrude upon his consciousness. He notices

the performer's most minute change of expression, and with his attention so riveted he also notices, or at least reacts to, the performer's every variation in vocal inflection. Facial or vocal changes, which might pass unmarked in ordinary face to face conversation, are greatly magnified in their effect by the exclusion of peripheral images.

The total effect of this concentration of attention is, I feel, a more acute discernment of both truth and falsehood. No performer, whether newsmen or political candidate, can escape this discernment or dissemble successfully under such scrutiny.

The second reason for the psychological X-ray effect of the television picture is the *closeup shot* so common to news and political broadcasts. It functions like an additional lens, re-magnifying the effect of the exclusion of peripheral images. The closeup is a view of extraordinary intimacy: the performer's face is displayed larger than life (unless the viewer's TV screen is smaller than life), every mole a mountain, the very pores wide open to inspection, every smallest change of expression now doubly magnified. It is a view so embarrassingly intimate, yet at the same time so devoid of embarrassment (because the performer cannot see the viewer inspecting him) that it has only one counterpart in all of life's experience: the intimate view one has of another's face when making love.

In this magnified visual intimacy, no one can hide his true feelings. Even the involuntary dilation or contraction of the pupil of the performer's eye, a revelation of emotional state at once totally uncontrollable and totally revealing, is magnified in its effect on the viewer. And the effect, like the revelation, is involuntary. Awareness of the phenomenon does not alter its effect. Like the rotation of the planets, it is a fact of nature before which man is helpless.

Watching television, then, is a form of making love—or hate. It is a highly focused emotional orgy, not a reasoning activity such as reading a newspaper. It is a highly personal contact in which truth outs by osmosis.

And *this* is what really disturbs people about television—not its content, but the instinctive, unconscious realization that it works on their emotions, not on their reasoning powers. We like to think of ourselves as creatures of reason, not of emotion; we reject any concept to the contrary. But the psychological mechanism of TV *does* work to the contrary. Television bypasses the ego and goes straight to the id. The medium really is the massage; it massages our most primitive instincts.

Under the civilized veneer of conscious thought and action, Walter Cronkite and Spiro Agnew really are mortal enemies, and they know it atavistically. I feel that each of them really would like to kill the other, because each is a genuine threat to the other's interests, beliefs, and philosophy of life. It is the TV picture that assures each that the threat is real.

How this kind of communication works is described in published papers by Dr. Albert Mehrabian, a psychologist at UCLA—papers which strangely have been ignored by those who should be paying the most attention, such as TV newsmen, critics, actors, political candidates, lovers, used car salesmen, priests, con men, and all other members of the human race.

Dr. Mehrabian's studies involved face to face personal communication (*i.e.*, presentational performance), but he tells this writer that in his opinion the results would apply equally to presentational performance on television. We would disagree only to the extent of pointing out that television tends to magnify the effects in the manner described above.

According to Dr. Mehrabian, presentational TV communication is a form of multi-channel communication in which attitudes are conveyed by three channels: (1) verbal, (2) vocal, and (3) facial. To put it another way, television communicates information by (1) words, (2) voice inflection and intonation, and (3) facial expression and physical posture.

His most startling discovery reveals that the smallest part of the message is conveyed by the verbal channel upon which most of us are conditioned to place the greatest reliance. Only *seven per cent* of the message is contained in the words!

The remainder of the message—93 per cent—is transmitted by the other two channels of communication: 38 per cent by vocal intonation and inflection, and 55 per cent by facial expression and physical posture.

If this is correct, to attempt to discover the meaning of Mr. Agnew's speech against TV by analyzing a written transcript is an exercise in futility. The analyst might as well study the Des Moines telephone directory; he could miss only by seven per cent. To understand fully what Mr. Agnew said, he must have seen and heard him on television, because Mr. Agnew's vocal and physical posture constituted 93 per cent of his message.

Dr. Mehrabian readily admits that further research may alter

these ratios somewhat, but his studies so far clearly indicate the approximate degree of effectiveness of each of the three channels. His figures are "ball park" figures. They demonstrate both the inevitability of the "cult of personality" and the impossibility of true objectivity in TV news.

Not only does the bulk of the message depend upon the purely emotional component of personality, vocal and facial, but the intensity of the message is magnified when the communications on all channels are redundant, and diluted if they are not. If the words say one thing and the voice another, the viewer believes the voice. If the face says something altogether different, the viewer believes the face.

Sarcasm, one of Mr. Agnew's fortes, provides a perfect example of nonredundant multi-channel communication. "Big deal!" says the speaker, the words implying exactly that but the tone of voice implying exactly the opposite. The hearer believes the voice, not the words.

The dominance of the physical component of communication has long been recognized by stage and film directors. Every director knows that if the actor speaks to the actress of his love for her, but at the same time moves away from her, the audience will correctly interpret his attitude as rejection, not love. The audience will know the actor is lying.

If a man speaks to a woman of love and the pupils of her eyes grow enormous, he has already won the game. No matter what she says, she can be seduced. But if her pupils shrink to pinpoints, he might as well prepare to cut his losses. She is not receptive, no matter what she says.

In the newscast or the political speech on TV, the performer's conviction, his belief in the truth or the rightness of what he says, comes through the tube with the same power. He cannot fake it. If the channels are redundant, he is believable, authoritative. If he himself has the slightest doubt, it will show in his face or sound in his voice, and his doubt will create an equivalent uncertainty about him in the viewer. He cannot hide from the psychological X-ray.

Unfortunately, there are many in the television audience who desire confirmation of their prejudices more than information that might upset those prejudices. As Bill Brown of NBC News once put it, "The audience is sometimes more slanted than the news." Should that kind of audience ever become a majority, catered to by newsmen or politicians who genuinely hold the same prejudices, tele-

vision may well become the instrument that destroys the American dream.

But this same instrument, properly understood, may also be the only possible means of preserving our continental, pluralistic, democratic society. It is the new Town Hall of the world, where every man may see and hear and judge any and all who would speak to him of his own concerns—judge them in the way men know best, face to face, person to person.

Television's moving picture is "moving" in more ways than one. It moves the viewer emotionally, viscerally, even against his will. He likes to think of himself as reasonable, impervious to emotion, but in his subconscious he knows he is not. He lives by instinct. And his instinct tells him to fear television because it works so directly on his emotion in ways he does not yet understand.

On the bottom line, his objection is to the basic nature of TV communication. His instinct is right. But television cannot change its basic nature any more than the zebra can change its stripes. And this strange new medium of communication is not about to go away—not unless we all go with it.

Man's problem, therefore, is to learn how television works and to make it work for him, not against him. He must discard the old mythology. And he must stop asking television to make sense in the way that print makes sense.

Television is a product of reason, but its product is not reason. Its product is emotion.

That charming Elizabethan, John Lyly, wrote in *Endymion*,
“’Tis an old saw, Children and fooles speake true.”

Well, it's time—and time past due—for some plain, honest talk about children's television in the United States. Undoubtedly, there are still too many station managers who are content to fill the hours with an infinite regress of moss-eaten cartoons and the final pie-in-the-face antic of the redoubtable Stooges. But, other voices have been and are being heard. The networks, themselves, are sensitive to their responsibilities. There is, surely, more than one twinkle-eyed Ali Baba waiting to utter the magic “Open, sesame!”

In this section, we present the thoughts of two men, Lee Polk and George Heinemann, who are charged with the task of improving childrens' programming. This is only the first part of this discussion. The Summer issue of the *Television Quarterly*, guest-edited by John M. Culkin, S.J., will be devoted entirely to the problems and challenges of children's television.

COURAGE: THE NAME OF THE GAME

LEE POLK

Whether this can accurately be termed "The Century of the Young" is still in question. But 1970 can deservedly be named "The Year of the Child" as far as American television is concerned.

Item: For the first time in broadcasting history, the three commercial networks joined NET in specifically naming a head of children's programming.

Item: A noncommercial program designed for the preschool disadvantaged child became a spectacular national success and an international curiosity.

Item: The host of a children's show, called to testify before a Senatorial committee, is credited with influencing resulting appropriations for noncommercial television.

Item: A children's favorite of the past twenty years returned with a series of specials to receive rave reviews.

New children's shows, "old" children's shows getting all that attention? Indeed this is a year of new interest in young people. How long it will last depends on one word: Courage.

Long associated with educational television in New York, in January of this year **LEE POLK** became NET's new Director of Children's Programming. Prior to this Mr. Polk had served as director of news and public affairs, WNDT. He pioneered educational programming on WPIX and was associated with CBS as producer-director of such programs as *Eye on New York* and *Sunrise Semester*. In addition, he has served as writer-director for various award-winning children's festivals on CBS and NBC, and was recently a consultant to the Children's Television Workshop production of *Sesame Street*. Polk is also known as the creator and producer of hundreds of records for children.

It will take courage to attempt new forms to interest and involve the children brought up on today's sophisticated media.

It will take courage to continue those forms despite the caveats of television professionals, rating services, self-styled educational specialists, and an apathetic public.

Can courage pay off? The story of a *Misterogers' Neighborhood* is a case in point.

Fred Rogers was a local performer on a noncommercial Pittsburgh station, WQED. His style is low-key, his manner so gentle that some parents and critics questioned his ability to compete with high-powered established personalities. Fred Rogers stood his ground. He hosts one of the most popular children's programs in the nation. WQED and NET firmly backed his method of presentation and have received the support of the Sears Roebuck Foundation in doing so. Rogers was the one who testified before Senator Pastore's Committee and was told he had helped to motivate funding by a cautious Senate group.

Perhaps the most acknowledged example of courage was Joan Cooney's fight to gain sufficient funding for a preschool series for the disadvantaged youngster. The series, of course, is *Sesame Street*. Picture the accomplishment: We have a multiple-hosted series (usually unheard of in children's programming). Two of the hosts are black, and the locale is a replica of a Harlem street!

Sesame Street entered the sacred possession of the advertising world, the one minute commercial, to sell educational material. The result has been attested to by all media. It has also won almost every major television award available including four National Television Academy EMMY nominations and the Peabody. More importantly, it has attained the goals of teaching youngsters. There are those who wonder if television really teaches. It occurs to me that the contribution of *Sesame's* producer, the Children's Television Workshop, is more valuable. It has helped children to *want* to learn.

A final instance of courage was exhibited by a performer who has always believed in the value of his approach. In the same way that Swift and Lewis Carroll have been sources of pleasure for young and old alike, so have the creations of Burr Tillstrom crossed age boundaries. Potential sponsors, network executives, even fans of *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* have often tried to persuade Tillstrom to alter his style, to integrate his characters into other program formats, and to create a few new puppets for newness' sake.

Tillstrom held fast. He knew that he had created a folk literature that had character dimension and enough fun and fantasy to satisfy an entire family audience. WTTW in Chicago and NET brought *The Kuklapolitans* back to television for a series of five shows. Thousands of old and new viewers applauded the continuation of the situations that only a Tillstrom could create. It seems fairly certain that Burr Tillstrom and company will return for an even longer series of programs this coming season. But the point is that his courage in doing what must be done should be emulated by all authentic artists, especially in the children's field.

The question that remains uppermost is whether the success of such programs as *Misterogers' Neighborhood*, *Sesame Street* and *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* will ultimately spur other children's program sources to come forth with ideas designed specifically for the young.

The other concern is whether the networks have responded to momentary success and will retreat to their usual positions as soon as one rating service seems to indicate a decline of viewers.

The ultimate truth is that *children's programming cannot depend on ratings*. The moment for survival is too close to us. Our children will either grow with a sense of guidelines and priorities, or they will find the vacuum created by vacuous programming with actions of their own.

What continues to puzzle me is the lack of faith on the part of experienced executives. *Sesame Street* has proven an irrefutable fact: There is a large and hungry audience waiting to be fed imaginative material. It takes full-scale research, development, promotion, and topflight production. Then the results are commercially irresistible. Every major advertising agency and merchandising firm has been after the creative group responsible for the series. Furthermore, anyone involved in children's programming is trying to compete with new formats, competent performers, experimental ideas, and the rejuvenation of good but neglected concepts.

For example, NET is trying to reawaken the interest of producers and audiences to an important art: *children's theater*. This form of theater is not only enjoyable but helps develop a child's tastebuds for all the arts. Outstanding producers, plays, and performers have already sought support on the part of the public. For the most part apathy reigns. Especially around the holiday periods, second-rate productions have become the norm. The fact that children will accept this inadequate material satisfies most parents.

This is not the case in other countries, where the foremost writers, actors, and directors contribute their time and talents to children's theater. At a recent meeting in Stockholm, I met representatives of 23 countries, all of whom represented children's programming in their respective areas. In most cases, they also represented large departments of personnel, whose specific functions are concerned with young people's programming. Examples of their efforts were humbling as far as American television is concerned. Surely, not all their product was successful, but the size of the efforts expended was bound to result in a high ratio of quality programming.

In June, there was another international exhibition of children's programming at the European Broadcasting Union's Prix Jeunesse. *Sesame Street* was entered. But there were not too many other entries from the United States. Perhaps this is the year that this will change. Perhaps.

If it happens, it will be a tribute to the courage of those who believe in children's programming, not solely as a practical success—the achievement of a vocal and loyal audience—but in terms of the needs of children for today. Think about the usual children's fare. Then choose the alternative.

LOOKING AT CHILDREN'S TELEVISION: A SELF-INTERVIEW

GEORGE HEINEMANN

QUESTION—

Mr. Heinemann, do you think it was necessary for a network to appoint a Vice President of Children's Programming?

MR. HEINEMANN—

I accepted this new responsibility for children's programming before I knew I was going to be appointed a Vice President. Personally, I'm thrilled. Operationally and functionally, the prestige of the position will emphasize the importance that NBC places on continuing improvement in our children's programming. The important thing is that we are in the process of creating something new and exciting, and since I live for the present and not the future, I don't care who gets the credit. I look for significant contributions from *all* the broadcasters.

GEORGE HEINEMANN was appointed by NBC in January of this year as vice president of its newly created division of children's programming, a landmark "first" for the network. Long associated with NBC, Heinemann was formerly its director of public affairs and has also served as executive supervisor of *Meet the Press*. As executive producer of *NBC Children's Theater*, he won a Peabody award for his production of the *Stuart Little* classic and in 1952 received a National Television Academy EMMY award for his creation, *Ding Dong School*.

Communication, vocabulary, intent, habit, and desire plus pride of authorship often provide the real stumbling block to progress. "Everybody is a program manager" is a phrase not to be taken lightly. In my 25 years of programming I have never sensed a greater public and industry response to ideas for children's programs. My office is churning with people and ideas.

—Do you think that National Educational Television's presentation of the now popular program for preschoolers, Sesame Street, has inspired this sudden interest on the part of networks in improving children's programming?

ANSWER—

On the surface that is the way many people may see it. I know for a fact that my own network, from the very top echelons on down, has been deeply committed to the improvement of children's programming prior to the debut of *Sesame Street*, and they had been taking active steps in that direction.

—Do you read all scripts submitted to you? Do you see all the people who want to contribute talent or ideas?

ANSWER—

Yes, I do. Personal interviewing is a must for finding new talent and new ideas, in addition to finding production people. This is easier to talk about than to do, as there is just so much time in any given day! I am determined to interview and read everyone who wants to be read but they must have patience with us. We have been seeing four to six people per day for several weeks now (as of March 10), but the backlog will still fill the next few months.

—When will your unit contributions begin to affect the schedule for children's broadcasting?

ANSWER—

Our first assignment is to do eight one-hour specials for children on a one per month basis, slated to begin in September of this year. The '70-'71 schedule was already locked in prior to my appointment, and thus our first children's series contributions will be scheduled for 1971-1972.

—*What is the basic concept of the specials you plan?*

ANSWER—

These will be shows for children but not necessarily about them. They will be from the child's point of view, and about the world around the child.

—*What age groups are you trying to reach?*

ANSWER—

While I don't believe in categorizing by age, we still find that sales departments, advertisers, and parents all tend to request programming by age groups. Therefore, we will be programming for an overall range of about four to twelve years. However, the specific shows will be labeled—if a given show is aimed for three-to-nine year old children, we will bill it for that group. This is quite different from the usual procedure.

However, we are also aware that there are some children who are eight going on twelve and others who are ten going on eight. We will build into all of our programs the simple element of "reach." Within the span of the individual show, the child will be enabled to reach up for entertainment and information. This, to me, is the essence of show biz, though I'm not sure that all of my bosses would agree. It will all take time to see what we have in mind. Of one thing I am certain: you can't please everyone.

—*Are you going to be a children's programming censor or some kind of do-gooder?*

ANSWER—

No, I am going to be a broadcaster whose only concern is to sense a national need for programs and schedule them.

—*Oh come on, Heinemann, that's too pat an answer. Does that mean you will program "what the audience wants to see"? This is an old, worn-out axiom with the networks.*

ANSWER—

I suppose there will be those who will call me a censor, educator, snob or some kind of purist; I must resign myself to that. But when I say that I am a broadcaster, it means that I clearly understand our mass media approach is one of "entertainment." However, I'd like

to point out that, like the word "education," there is no clear-cut definition of the word "entertainment." For some children, the sheer discovery of the fact that two and two are four constitutes "entertainment," and for others, it is an emotional experience. For all children, curiosity and the privilege to reach for something gives them a combination of entertainment and information. This is the kind of show business we will be in from now on. I am not interested in sheer emotional experiences on a continuing basis—this is our current dilemma.

—*Will you imitate Sesame Street?*

ANSWER—

No. It's as simple as that as far as I'm concerned. I think the show does a sensational job of bringing the NET network into the world of untold numbers of mothers and fathers who have heretofore not known about it. If we are going to give the child a selection as great as that now offered to the adult, then each network ought not to imitate but to build its own show—indigenous to the program philosophy of that network. In this way, the child has a chance to round out his television viewing.

I would also hope that these shows do not get scheduled opposite each other. This is a battle to build well-rounded and informed minds so that as these children approach adulthood they will demand even more of our program schedules, and will be able to accept concepts beyond those being discussed right now. Lastly, I've never had to "me too" any program idea during 25 years of ideas and I don't intend to start now.

—*Do you condone violence, or the current word-substitute for violence which in the trade is called "action"?*

ANSWER—

Violence for violence's sake is not for me. *Motivated* violence modified by reasoning, for an act contained within a presentation, has a reason for being. Incidentally, I do have some trouble understanding why a violent act is acceptable if it is suggested but does not occur on the screen. For instance, when a character in a cartoon is about to be hit on the head, the camera pans away from the scene and instead we see the stars resulting from the action. We then go back to the lump rising from the victim's head. To me, this is still

a violent sequence and it might even intensify the interest of the child watching . . . imagination takes over.

—*Incidentally, how do you feel about cartoons?*

ANSWER—

I am asked that question every day by the press because the public now feels that all cartoons have a bad odor. Such is not the case. UNESCO and other educational institutions use the cartoon form to teach people all over the world how to eat properly or how to grow crops. Of course, if I say that I endorse cartoons, then the headlines will read: "V.P. of Kids Shows Sez Cartoons Are O.K.!" It's not the form but the *content* that is my concern.

—*What is the solution if you feel the form is not as important as the content?*

ANSWER—

The answer is, as always, *balance*. Easier said than accomplished. I want the child to enjoy the same chance at selectivity that the adult now has on the network television schedule. By studying schedules, I think that the adult must be aware that a selectivity—information, sports, education, talk shows, entertainment, and cultural programming—is available to him. My advantage is that I will be able to offer the child this balance all within a single morning . . . Saturday. How wonderful!

The responsibility of this new assignment is awesome. We want a continuing audience flow. The parent wants to feel that his child can freely watch the network schedules. The advertisers want to reach the market, to be associated with programming that will enhance their approach. My management wants me to carry out my responsibility with a broad understanding of the above, and I can hardly wait to try. I'm certain we will rock a few cages. We shall draw from 25 years of experience and from the assistance of our friends in industry and education, but we will not forget that we are in the entertainment business. All we ask is our day in court.

—*You've talked a lot about the emotional wring-outs for the child. Of all the stimuli the child receives when he watches television, which is the most potent?*

ANSWER—

The music! For some reason, every producer in the business feels that every dramatic sequence must forewarn the viewer with the proper mood music. It also seems (and I use the word “seems” because I am most conscious of it during tense moments) that the most “active” action always has the heaviest music. Often, the music is much more fright-producing than the emotional quotient of the action itself!

Certainly I know that music can indeed talk, just as an actor or narrator can, and oftentimes music can be the catalyst for a show. I’m not talking about the standing fight most writers have with the composers about dialogue vs. music, but I think that somewhere back in the ancient ages of show biz, the “telegraph” method of music leading into action became established and has been a formula ever since.

Someday I would wish that the child might see a very real action scene with just natural sounds. It is rather difficult for most villains or heroes to tote around a 90-piece orchestra, particularly when they find themselves all alone in a little rowboat at sea, or deep in the African jungle.

—*Do you think your kind of programming will sell?*

ANSWER—

Yes! I recall the day when we showed one of our shows to a prospective client, and he said, “How can you expect an audience with a thing like this? It’s just a simple story of two children who work hard to earn money and buy themselves a horse. The greatest piece of climactic action in the whole show is when they discover that the horse will only turn left!” Ours will be a different kind of sell.

Some people thought *Miss Frances* was a pretty dull property, but the kids didn’t. Four million kids tuned her in each day, and half that many mothers got the word at the end of each program. Soon the sponsors were there at full rates! Success will come with creative salesmanship on our part, with some management help, and with some hard sessions with advertisers, that’s for sure—that is the name of the game, and our sales people are great at it.

To return to the question of the attention span and interest of the child audience. I would be glad to have you pick the show and the children (all I will do is to determine the age of the participants)

and make a comparison. Most of our work will stand well above the most active or violent show. You can screen my show and then screen your selection for the same children. I also know that the amount of material retained *will* be greater for a show specifically designed with "reach" in it but in accord with the child's knowledge and vocabulary level.

By now I'm sure you think all of our new shows will be educational, teaching, in nature. Not true! They will be entertainment of the best sort but perhaps different from the slam-bam-wham of the past. Just give us time and we will do our best to reveal that entertainment, education and interest *combine* to make audience, sales, response and appreciation.

—*Will they really give you the time and money to do what you wish?*

ANSWER—

Sesame Street has taught the industry that it takes time. At the moment, we have one year, which is a longer proving ground than I've ever had in 25 years. I never worry about money, since reasonable requests are always considered. The magic ingredient is something no one can buy, and that is *imagination*. I'll take my chances.

PUBLIC TELEVISION SPEAKS OUT

An interview with JOHN MACY

DEENA CLARK—

Mr. Macy, may I ask you to begin by defining the term "public broadcasting." Is it synonymous with "educational television"?

JOHN MACY—

It has been generally synonymous, Deena, but in recent times the word "public" has been substituted for "educational" to overcome a general impression that if a program is educational, it must be delivered in the classroom. Public broadcasting in fact now consists of about 190 television stations and about 400 radio stations, all of which are non-commercial, non-profit. It also includes the Corporation which I head, which was set up by the Congress to strengthen all these stations and to assist them in broadening their range of programming, and hopefully in raising the quality of those programs.

CLARK—

What of your programs—which ones do you consider your most innovative and experimental?

JOHN W. MACY, president of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, is the featured guest in the following excerpted transcript of a March 15 television interview with *DEENA CLARK*, star of *Deena Clark's Moment With . . .* on WRC-TV, NBC's affiliate in Washington, D.C.

MACY—

Well, I am always happy to answer that question because, really, I feel the true definition of "public broadcasting" can only be given in terms of the programs themselves. Our greatest success story is *Sesame Street*, the program designed for the education and the learning experience of the 12 million preschool children, the two-to-five year olds in our society who will be our future human resource. But beyond that, there's a great—there's a great variety of programming. I like to characterize public broadcasting as providing the "tickets" to art and music and dance; providing an opportunity for a ringside seat at public events.

Just recently, here in Washington, D.C., the cameras of the local station, WETA, went to the city council meetings for the first time. I feel that public broadcasting has an obligation to involve the citizen more in the government of his city, his state, and the nation at large. So public broadcasting is a great variety of program offerings for everybody from the preschooler to those in the "golden years."

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CLARK—

Mr. Macy, going back to your program Sesame Street, which certainly is the open door to learning, have you heard the saying that "many a child who spends hours sitting before the television set will go down in history and geography and arithmetic"?

MACY—

Down in everything. What we are trying to do is to provide *Sesame Street* as the opening door so that he will be *up* on learning, while being entertained. Along that line, I like to use another definition for public broadcasting. I like to feel that it is making the important, desirable and interesting.

CLARK—

Very good. I thought, Mr. Macy, that your Job Man Caravan, which was telecast from South Carolina, was particularly effective because it produced actually measurable results in the community. Would you tell us something about that program?

MACY—

Yes, I think that in many ways this program is a prototype of the type of public service programming that we can do. The statewide

educational public network in South Carolina organized what they called *Job Man Caravan* as an effort to take unemployed blacks in South Carolina and match them with available job openings. This is a mobile unit that visits city after city. There's always a bit of music, there are attractive ladies on hand to provide information. And then comes the announcement of the jobs that are open in those particular communities.

CLARK—

And you actually placed some 400 people.

MACY—

Exactly—22 per cent of those that responded actually received jobs. Now I feel this is a concrete demonstration of what can be done, of how we can use this marvelous communications medium for constructive social purposes.

CLARK—

Mr. Macy, do you make a special effort to reach minority groups?

MACY—

Yes, I have frequently described our "efforts-to-reach" programs not as "efforts to reach" the "mass" and hold the "mass," but as efforts to provide programming that has a particular appeal to minority segments of the population, so that cumulatively we are reaching the entire population.

There has been an effort in recent years to do more to beam programs directly to the black minority. *Black Journal* is put on by National Educational Television, and they have a series on now that was produced by the New York station, and is called *Soul*, a variety program with blacks.

The Chicago station has a program for its local audience, an interesting experiment, really a dramatic serial—or, as they say, a "soap opera" that deals with a black family in the inner city. It is hoped that such a dramatization will not only have an appeal to the black audience, but will also be revealing and helpful to the whites who view the program.

CLARK—

At present, there is no long-range or permanent funding set up for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which means that each year you have to go up to the Hill and ask for allocation of funds. If Congress provides the money, aren't its members likely to scrutinize very carefully how it is spent? Do you get Congressional suggestions—and I underline the word "suggestions"—as to how the government grant should go out over the air?

MACY—

I've really been surprised at how few suggestions we've had. Some of my cynical friends just say that's because nobody is watching the programs. But that isn't true, either. No, I feel that there's been a decided sense of responsibility on the part of the members of Congress with respect to the necessary independence of those who produce the programs.

They do review the use of the funds that are provided through the appropriations route, but I feel that they, as representatives of the people, clearly have an obligation to ask questions of that type, and I feel in this sense we are accountable to the Congress. Our hope is, however, that within the next year or so there will be longer-range financing so that there will not be the necessity to return each year to make a case for money—but, rather, that there will be funds flowing into a trust fund that the Corporation can use.

A number of suggestions have been offered as to how that could be. One suggestion is an excise tax on the sale of television sets. Another is an annual fee on the sets in the homes of Americans, as is done in both Great Britain and Japan to finance their public broadcasting.

In America, the total funding for all of public broadcasting—the stations, the national producers, our own organization—was about 80 million dollars last year. This contrasts with gross receipts for commercial television of about \$3 billion.

In Japan, the annual expenditure was \$256 million and translated into U.S. GNP, this means about two billion dollars. So we do feel that we are underfunded for the mission that we have to perform. But it is part of our task to convince those who are the potential beneficiaries—the viewers, the people—that there is a justification for funding this public broadcasting.

CLARK—

The magazine America, on April 26 of last year, said, "If educational television stations are looking for something to worry about, they could well turn their lenses on the possibility that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting may become a domestic USIA, as outgoing President, John White, has warned." Has any pressure of any kind ever been brought on you to broadcast only material favorable to administration policies, or acceptable to members of Senator John Pastore's Subcommittee on Communications?

MACY—

No. The answer is clearly "no."

CLARK—

Never?

MACY—

And I must say that I bristle a little bit at that phrase because I feel it reflects both an inadequate understanding of the mission of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and a misunderstanding of the role of USIA.

This country would never tolerate a domestic USIA, a propaganda voice of the government itself. The government has its means of communicating its responsibility to the American people. The President has his press conferences and his speeches that are widely disseminated in order to account to the public—but there is not, there can not be a broadcasting system which is merely a mouth-piece for those who are in office.

CLARK—

It has been suggested, though, in some quarters that some national educational television stations which failed to carry the documentary Who Invited Us? might have been influenced by government censors. Laurence Laurent, writing in the Washington Post, reports that the "film, over-all makes a strong statement of opposition to the influence of the military and the CIA in foreign policy." Can you comment on the suspicions that censorship interfered with the showing of that documentary?

MACY—

There was no censorship, whatsoever. I believe that case illustrates a frequently misunderstood point about broadcasting, commercial as well as public. It is the *station* which transmits a program that is responsible to the FCC and to the public, as the licensee for the program that is actually transmitted.

In the case of that particular program, it was the judgment of the station manager that the program was so onesided, was so biased in its presentation, was so unbalanced in its treatment of history that he preferred not to show it. And I know for a fact, that no one here in Washington raised the issues with him before he made that decision. To my knowledge, some ten other stations across the country came to the same conclusion. It was within their right and responsibility to do it.

It is very important, because we are supported by public funds, that our treatment of public issues be as balanced as possible, and I cite the reaction on public broadcasting to the President's Vietnam speech of November 3, 1969. You will recall that this speech tended to trigger some of Mr. Agnew's comments with respect to the media. In that particular case, public broadcasting put on a panel discussion of the President's speech that ran for more than 30 minutes. The panel had a "hawk," a "dove," a Republican and a Democrat, and very skillful interviewing by the late Paul Niven. To me, that reflected the type of approach public broadcasting should take. I think it is important that we be balanced in our treatment of our issues. If a particular program constitutes the editorial view of a producer, or an executive editor, it should be clearly labeled as such, and should be followed by a similar presentation of the opposing view as soon after as possible.

We hear occasional comments that too much of our programming tends to be "too liberal." My answer is: have you watched Bill Buckley lately on public broadcasting? Our programming is a means of balance. But I think we are always going to be charged with taking one side or the other excessively until there is that kind of balance, the kind assured by the quality of program judgment that is brought to bear.

I like to cite the new weekly program we have called *The Advocates*, on every Sunday evening. It is a live discussion of a current decidable issue, developed in legal advocacy terms on both sides by trained attorneys, who use witnesses and filmed material, and in

front of an individual who at some later time has to make a decision—cast a vote or apply some kind of administrative judgment. And the viewing public is encouraged to get in the act—not just be passive observers . . . The point is that we need to *show* the citizen that he *can* do something. I have a feeling that far too many public affairs programs leave the viewer with a total sense of dismay and frustration about what he as an individual can do to alter the course of events . . . Or take some of these “environmental” documentaries that make it pretty clear that doomsday is right around the corner. I’d like to see an upbeat at the end of the programs that indicate to the citizen that there *is* something that he can do in his community, to improve the quality of life. . .

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CLARK—

Mr. Macy, when your name was announced as a future guest on this program, a young man sent me several questions to put to you. One concerned “spot pleas” for support money such as “A color camera costs \$70,000.” This very vocal viewer asked, “To what extent should public service stations focus on technology at the expense of content?”

And I further quote him, “Garbage in color is only colorful garbage, the smell is the same.” Do you feel that some of your money might be better spent on content rather than color?

MACY—

This is a good point—this is a knowledgeable questioner. Certainly, the competition now is increasingly in color, more and more programs are being color produced. I think it is more than just the esthetic value. Color does render a far more effective visual image. I don’t believe that the public stations are sacrificing content in the interest of technology or in the interest of facilities.

I’m concerned that the content is as underfunded as it is. The average station operating budget for a year, all 180 stations, comes out at about \$350,000. Now you know and I know what it costs to produce some of the programs that are on commercially. I am not sure that \$350,000 would buy two hours of prime time programming on one of the networks.

So we do need far more in the way of resources. My feeling on facilities is that the order of priority should first be to get additional stations on the air, so that public broadcasting can achieve as close

to 100 per cent coverage of the TV households as possible—and it now has 79 per cent.

Secondly, to make sure that we have the appropriate power and range and direction so that such a total audience can be reached. Then we can get into the studio to see what we can do to improve some of the color . . .

CLARK—

Mr. Macy, are you, like profit-making stations, concerned with ratings?

MACY—

We pretend that we are not, but we are very concerned with ratings. Let me go beyond that, Deena. We are not only concerned with ratings, we need to know much more than we have in the past about the audience that's watching. Not just the numbers, but what economic segment of the population they come from, what the age groups are, and what the educational levels are. We are putting some of our money into this kind of audience research in the belief that we can do a better job of programming if we have more in the way of information.

Now we are talking a lot more about ratings these days than we did six months ago because *Sesame Street* is definitely showing up in the ratings. And so, interestingly enough, is the *Forsythe Saga*, and here we find an interesting subsidiary rating. The publisher in this country of that great Galsworthy novel, the Scribner Company, reports that they have sold over 300,000 copies of the book since it went on public broadcasting last fall.

THE MAKING OF THE *RAQUEL* SPECIAL

DAVID WINTERS and BURT ROSEN

PART ONE: THE NEW YORK MEETING

by Burt Rosen

There are two kinds of television specials. The first type, currently broadcast in great abundance, could basically be described as a one-shot variation of a standard variety hour. The other form is a true special, a program so distinctive in concept and presentation that it stands out from the bulk of television fare.

Winters/Rosen has always aimed for program presentations that would fit the latter definition. Of the same accord is John Allen, McCann-Erickson's senior vice president in charge of television programming. Allen, who has arranged in the past for the Charlie Brown specials, the National Geographic specials, and many more, was looking for a vehicle in the form of a television special to help introduce the "new look" Coca-Cola was planning as their Spring, 1970 promotion.

Mr. Allen asked me who would be the hottest available personality around whom we could build both a television special and a nationwide exploitation of the new "Coke" legend. We discussed a wide variety of personalities. I then mentioned Raquel Welch. The idea of using Raquel in this venture appealed immensely to John, and we concluded a deal that evening contingent upon our ability to "deliver" her in a special.

DAVID WINTERS and *BURT ROSEN* are well known West Coast television producers.

Later that evening, I telephoned my partner, David Winters. We discussed a concept for the show and I asked him if he could contact Raquel within two days, since I was then scheduled to leave New York.

Four hours later, at five in the morning, I received a telephone call from David. We had gotten Raquel.

PART TWO: THE LOS ANGELES COINCIDENCE

by David Winters

Through a series of telephone calls, I learned that Raquel Welch was shooting a picture called *Flare-Up* down on La Cienega Boulevard. I raced down to the location and waited outside until she was finished. Raquel emerged with her husband, Patrick Curtis, and I told them both of Burt Rosen's meeting in New York.

I asked Raquel and Pat to join me over a cup of coffee at Delores' Drive-In (of all places!). We discussed the type of show we had in mind—a show that would focus upon Raquel's talents as an actress, but would also spotlight her as a vocalist and dancer.

I learned during our conversation that Raquel had been frequently approached to do a special. However, she had refused these proposals because they offered her nothing new and creative. Each idea had been merely a variation on an old and tired theme.

The idea that Burt and I put forth intrigued Raquel, however. She was able to visualize herself within our concept. That evening, she committed to doing the special. Burt confirmed the deal with John Allen the following morning.

PART THREE: THE WORLDWIDE CONCEPT

by David Winters

From the beginning, we realized that if this special were to truly match its name, we would have to satisfy three objectives. The first two were obvious. One, we had to promote Raquel in the best possible environment, and two, we had to use the special as a vehicle to promote Coca-Cola's "new look."

The third objective was much more subtle, but without it we knew the show wouldn't work. That element is what I call the creative look, an overall feeling a show exhibits that separates it from all similar ventures. In this case, we decided that we would film the show in glamorous foreign and domestic locations in such a fashion that the footage would resemble dreamlike sequences. Even though

"we" were in the United States, we would guide the viewers on a tour of the world's major locations as seen through Raquel's own thoughts.

In planning the special, we were fortunate enough to sign three of today's major personalities (Bob Hope, John Wayne, and Tom Jones) and present them with Raquel, who offers a fantastic box office advantage. The resultant rating was a 58 audience share.

PART FOUR: HOW TO GET A 58 AUDIENCE SHARE

by Burt Rosen

The 58 share we attained on this special made it the highest-rated entertainment hour in the history of television. Many people in the industry have asked me how it was done. In answer to those requests, I shall now reveal our secret recipe.

1. Get the world's biggest female sex symbol, Raquel Welch, and arrange to have the world's most important male sex symbol, Tom Jones, appear with the world's two most important personalities, John Wayne and Bob Hope.

2. Next, fix it so that two weeks before the show is telecast, John Wayne wins an Oscar.

3. Tie it all in with a nationwide campaign for Coca-Cola. Before the show airs, arrange for lifesize posters of Raquel to appear in almost all major supermarkets and on all Coke trucks. (Coca-Cola owns more trucks than the United States Post Office.)

4. Broadcast the special in television's best possible time slot—Sunday evening at nine p.m.

The above ingredients aside, I believe that our rating was essentially due to our being able to accomplish the two central goals for the production of any special. The first, of course, is to score highly in the ratings war. However, this would not be possible without the second factor, which is to create a special that shows off its star to the best possible advantage.

PART FIVE: WE SHOOT EXTERIORS, DON'T WE?

by David Winters

The actual shooting of *Raquel* was conducted in about 40 shooting days during a five-month period. Our crew traveled to London, Paris, and Wales. In Mexico, we produced segments in the Yucatan, Mexico City, and Acapulco. In the United States, we filmed portions of the show in Sun Valley, Big Sur, Newport Beach, and Los Angeles.

With so much exterior shooting involved, we were naturally faced with certain problems. In London, our arrival coincided neatly with the flu epidemic. We had all been previously inoculated, but apparently to no avail. Many members of our crew, along with me, came down with the flu; and the result was the loss of ten days shooting time.

In Paris, we faced below-zero weather. I must admit that Raquel was a real trouper here. We had to film a scene with her aboard a barge in the middle of the Seine during bitterly cold weather, and she never once complained.

While filming in Sun Valley, I was faced with the terrifying reality of a helicopter pilot who had never worked with motion picture equipment before and who had difficulty judging the altitude due to the snow.

Mexico presented us with a rather peculiar problem—photographers. They're worse than the *papparazzi* in Rome. For one thing, they are sanctioned by the government. Anyone who interferes with their work faces a certain torrent of criticism in the press. Our sets were guarded in Mexico by the army, but whenever the photographers appeared, the troops would disappear, leaving us defenseless.

PART SIX: PRODUCTION NOTES AND CONCLUSION

by Burt Rosen

The claim that this was the most expensive special in television history is erroneous. The cost of *Raquel* was about \$425,000. The Julie Andrews special ran \$750,000, the Elvis Presley special, one million. Basically, *Raquel* cost us about what Coca-Cola paid us to do it; foreign sales and domestic repeats should be nearly all profit.

Traveling with a skeleton crew handpicked by David was one way we kept costs down. David knew each crew member well enough to utilize him to full potential. In each location area, we would hire additional crew members as needed.

In addition, as a repayment to Raquel, who had performed on *their* specials, our guest stars performed for union scale.

We were also to make arrangements with the various foreign governments involved for consideration in the defrayment of expenses, as they recognized *Raquel's* value as a vehicle for tourist promotion.

To watch David Winters work is to understand the essence of what is meant by creativity. Although the show was scripted by

David and me, it is important to note that David creates as he shoots. He has an instantaneous way of working and is able to do instant choreography and instant camera set-ups with what would seem to be relative ease. To watch David develop a sequence photographically is quite an experience for anyone who doesn't know him as I do. David always knows what he is doing. He knows every shot that is being photographed and he moves around that fact. In *Raquel*, for example, he supervised five different editing teams simultaneously. From the very beginning of the show's creation, David Winters was in control all the time . . .

PART SEVEN: AND FURTHERMORE

by David Winters

. . . a show which would never have been possible without the production guidance and genius of Burt Rosen.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I have a middle-aged housekeeper who watches TV with me a great deal. . . . She was bored by the *Nutcracker* ballet (CBS, December 23, 1969), but jumped about as a delighted mimic during three presentations of the Martha Graham trilogy (NET), her enthusiasm running highest with the "Athletes of God." She fell sound asleep while I grew silently ill at the recent National Ballet of Canada's *Cinderella* (NET). Who is reaching whose audience?

The *Cinderella* was a production débacle of such magnitude as to make the *Nutcracker* a paragon. Its dancing was average, its photography fair, but its settings, costumes and storyline and its mixed photo-media were a bumptious shambles—*e.g.*, the pumpkin and white mice as coach and four were rendered a papier maché swan boat, to say nothing of the orbital prince. This is not to disparage NET for the showing; but, unfortunately, the exposition of mediocrity is not as self-destructive as it should be. TV serials prove this. The *nouvelle vague* is in the "specials."

But let me turn to the larger matter of the performing arts in sound-motion pictures in the home: their evolving "ecology" or bionomics.

Greater demands are made on a production that goes along to sell a quality product than when it is made by some agency purporting to do good. The presentation of ballet and the dance regards not only that art itself but also its combination with fine music. Both arts (and opera) have received low TV priority.

A copy of my critique to Roger L. Stevens, Chairman of the Board of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, drew the following:

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is exactly what it says—a center for performing arts—and has absolutely nothing to do with television production (2/14/70).

Printed at the bottom of his stationery is "Created by an act of Congress in 1958 / an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution" and his envelope was franked. Unlike the Lincoln Center (with its Juilliard School) and other civic centers, *his* center belongs to the nation and to *me* as citizen, and television is the mass media for the performing arts in the U.S.; hence the JFK Center has *everything* to do with their ultimate production on TV. By this I do not mean sponsorship, but by means and materials to concept and quality. Mr. Stevens sees the JFK Center as the pterodactyl of the performing arts, while he sits as its troglodite chairman.

Mr. Vincent Wasilewski's reaction to my critique was: ". . . We do like to hear from informed viewers . . . I hope that future presentations will be more to your satisfaction (1/15/70)." Which simply indicates a well-meaning but indifferent aspiration.

Miss Nancy Hanks's want of any response to my criticism and study was understandable: after all, her entire budget for all the arts in all the United States would finance only 160 Jackie Gleason Shows or the equivalent of three propellers on an aircraft carrier. She could not even run the opera houses of Milan, Vienna, and Hamburg for one year.

Stevens is the shaman, Hanks the liniment bottle and Wasilewski the masseur to the body of the arts. What is needed is the tonic of a new Sol Hurok.

While forecasting in 1946 dire consequences seen today, my contention in two published articles that the "only plausible future for television lies in commercial sponsorship" still stands. It was a nation of shopkeepers that produced Shakespeare, a mercantile Holland a Rembrandt, and the bankers and cloth merchants of Florence the whole roots of the Renaissance. It is for the many and "now" entrepreneur Fords and Rockefellers to raise the arts by their own bootstraps.

I am waiting for my housekeeper to dance in the living room again.

.

On March 14, NBC presented *The Switched-On Symphony* with Zubin Mehta. Here, a masterful array of talent in instrumental and vocal music and the dance demonstrated how these arts and the potential of television can be put together.

It is significant that the *Bell Telephone Hour* has never judged quality by its Nielsen rating. One cannot habituate an audience by playing down.

How wonderful it would be if in the near future other great network "specials" could be achieved, if only twice a month, by cooperation between civic centers—and the nation's JFK Center—and industry! Here is a role for corporate advertising.

Incidentally, my housekeeper, while she did not dance, was as enchanted as I was.

Sincerely yours,
David Wilkie
Washington, D.C.

POLITICAL BROADCASTING IN 1968

HERBERT E. ALEXANDER

Political broadcast expenditures continued their steep rise in 1968: the \$58.9 million spent, as reported by the FCC, was 70 per cent higher than the \$34.6 million in 1964. The outlay represents all network and station charges for both television and radio usage by candidates and supporters at all levels for both primary and general election periods. Television expenditures rose 60 per cent, from \$23.8 to \$38.0 million. Political broadcasting increased from 17.3 per cent of the estimated total of all political spending, \$200 million, in 1964 to 19.6 per cent of \$300 million in 1968. This insured its position as the largest single cost in political campaigns.

Political broadcasting also involves both production and promotion costs, which tend to run high because most political advertising has to be hurried.

In Richard Nixon's general election campaign, for example, production costs of almost \$2 million were listed on a little more than \$8 million worth of media time purchased by the central national campaign; this amounted to 24 per cent of media time. The last-minute nature of Hubert Humphrey's campaign may account for slightly higher known production costs of 26 per cent: almost \$1 million costs for \$3.8 million in media time. Data on the advertising

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expenses of Robert Kennedy's campaign again emphasize the very high production costs of a sudden campaign.

If average production costs and agency fees of only 20 per cent are added to the total broadcast expenditures of \$58.9 million for 1968, the cost of broadcast advertising to candidates was approximately \$70 million. To this figure must be added the cost of "tune-in" ads in newspapers, and other promotion expenses.

Thus at least \$75 million, one-quarter of the estimated total of all political spending, is directly related to political broadcasting, making it by far the largest functional political expense.

If one were to add other allied costs—travel to the broadcast city, speechwriting and other such planning and preparation—then a total of 50 per cent more than time costs would not be unreasonable, making broadcast-related expenses as much as \$90 million.

PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTION

In the general election, Democratic spending increased by only 41 per cent over 1964, while Republican spending was up 73 per cent. The great difference in spending patterns of the major parties is best revealed by the fact that Republicans in the general elections spent more than 400 per cent as much as they spent in primaries; Democrats spent only 25 per cent more. The disparity in general election expenditures between the major parties was much greater than ever before, and for the first time there were significant expenditures for political broadcasting by minor parties (mainly, the Wallace campaign).

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

The amounts spent on political broadcasting by all Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates in both the primary and general elections were very high—\$28.5 million—and they account for 48.3 per cent of all political broadcasting costs. The Republicans spent \$15.6 million and the Democrats, \$10.9 million; minor parties spent \$2.0 million.

The pattern of greater Democratic primary spending and greater Republican general election spending was evidenced in the Presidential campaigns, and the disparity was particularly marked in the general election. The Democrats outspent the Republicans, \$4.8 million to \$3.0 million in the primaries (non-major party candidates spent \$300,000), while the Republicans outspent the Democrats, \$12.6 million to \$6.1 million in the general election (non-majors,

\$1.6 million). The pattern of spending by facility was nearly the same for both parties, with about 2.5 times as much being spent for television as for radio.

The intense Presidential primary competition in both parties and the close general election in 1968 were reflected in the significantly higher political broadcasting expenditures compared to four years earlier. The \$28.5 million total in 1968 was 123 per cent higher than the \$12.8 million spent in 1964. The percentage of total broadcast costs devoted to the Presidential contests increased more than ten points in the four years (from 37 per cent in 1964 to 1968's 48.3 per cent): television expenditures for the Presidential contests increased from 42 per cent to 56 per cent of the total political broadcasting costs.

These figures reveal the extraordinary intensity of the 1968 Presidential primary campaigns. Broadcast expenditures for the primaries increased 356 per cent over 1964; while general election expenditures increased 85 per cent. Broken down by party, the 1968 expenditures were startling in relation to 1964: with contests in both years, Republican primary spending increased 131 per cent; with only minor contests in 1964 (between Governor Wallace and President Johnson's stand-ins in three states) Democratic primary spending increased 1,100 per cent. The Democrats paid a high price for their bitter 1968 pre-nomination battles.

NEW TECHNIQUES

Richard Nixon's local panel shows were a new technique in Presidential campaigns. The unrehearsed shows featured Nixon answering questions from a group of local citizens before an audience of dignitaries and supporters. In addition to the live television coverage in the local region, the shows were taped and turned into radio and television commercials, sometimes as soon as 72 hours after the original show. There were ten live telecasts. Production costs for these varied from \$11,000 to \$27,000, and consisted mostly of costs to build the set (like theaters in the round) and to interconnect the various stations. Time costs for these shows were relatively low because they were bought on a local basis.

Both parties scheduled two-hour election-eve telethons, another first in Presidential campaigning. The Democrats paid \$284,000 for their time, and the Republicans, \$293,500. The Republicans' total cost, including production, was \$450,000. Nixon in fact did two two-

hour shows, answering questions live for two hours while the telethon was being shown to the East and Midwest and then again for two hours while the show was beamed to the West Coast, Alaska, and Hawaii. Hawaii was reached by communication satellite, the first time a paid political program had been sent by satellite. Both telethons featured celebrities, and the candidates answered questions telephoned by viewers.

The Republicans had a rating of 26, meaning that 26 per cent of those households watching television were watching the Nixon telethon; the Democrats' rating was 22. The estimated total audience was 15 million for Nixon and 14 million for Humphrey. Almost 90 per cent of each audience was of voting age. A national interview study reported that 15.6 per cent of those who watched the election-eve broadcasts said that they decided for whom to vote either that night or election day.

BROADCASTING DISCOUNTS

Broadcasters can affect a candidate's choice of time purchased by giving discounts on some kinds of time and not on others. In 1968, there were two interesting examples of how broadcasters shaped some of the political dialogue. CBS gave a discount for five-minute trailers, used at the end of 25-minute abbreviated half-hour programs, in effect charging about one-third as much as for a one-minute spot in a prime time network program. NBC gave 50 per cent discounts for one-minute network participations; in some cases the minute was added to an already sold commercial schedule, thus adding profit to the network.

Candidates, obviously, were likely to use more discounted than non-discounted time. One might question whether public decisions on political broadcasting should be made solely by the broadcasters.

Opinions of candidates as to what kinds of media best suit their styles carry less weight than the marketing or profit-making motives of the broadcasters. Judgments of what kinds of time best suit or inform the public also get subordinated to other considerations.

"EQUAL TIME"

Section 315 of the Federal Communications Act—the so-called "equal time" provision—was not suspended for the 1968 Presidential campaigns, as it would have been of necessity if 1960-style

debates between the major party candidates were to be held. It was proposed, nevertheless, that Section 315 be suspended prior to the nominating conventions, because of two reasons: the number of major candidates in both parties; and, with some candidates competing in primaries (Nixon, Kennedy, and McCarthy) and some not (Humphrey, Rockefeller, and Reagan), there was no way for the electorate to make meaningful comparisons. As the Congressional maneuvering over various suspension bills dragged on into the late spring and early summer, however, various political and broadcasting commentators suggested other kinds of joint candidate appearances that would not be covered by the "equal time" restrictions.

The possibility and legality of this approach were demonstrated by the McCarthy-Kennedy debate three days before the California primary. The two candidates appeared on a special Saturday night version of ABC's *Issues and Answers*. Such a regularly scheduled news show is specifically excluded from coverage under the "equal time" provision, and fortunately for ABC, no other candidates raised questions about the McCarthy-Kennedy national telecast.

Although Jack Gould, the New York *Times* television critic, called the debate an "electronic tennis game, in which Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Eugene J. McCarthy played on the same side of the net," and most observers did not think either candidate "won," the debate clearly showed the possibility of some kinds of joint candidate appearances, even if Section 315 were not suspended. The only other attempt to follow this approach, however, was a planned one-hour special version of *Meet the Press* in late August, on which McCarthy and Humphrey would each have appeared separately in 30-minute segments. McCarthy cancelled his appearance partly because he felt the back-to-back format would make for a debate more illusory than real.

A different approach was tried in late August, just before the Democratic National Convention, with plans for a one-hour McCarthy-Humphrey debate to be carried on all three television networks. Before the two candidates jointly agreed to cancel the debate for a variety of reasons, Senator George McGovern and Governor Lester Maddox requested that they be included since they, too, were candidates for the Democratic nomination.

The networks had responded with an offer of "equal time"—30 minutes each for McGovern and Maddox, to be used separately or in a joint hour appearance—which McGovern rejected. Whether or

not the separate time would have fulfilled the "equal time" requirement of Section 315 had not been decided by the FCC when the debate cancellation mooted the issue.

Ironically, there also was one three-way face-to-face meeting of Humphrey, McCarthy, and McGovern, which incidentally proved that there is more than one way to stage a debate. The event was a caucus of the California delegation at the Democratic National Convention. All three candidates were invited; Governor Maddox was not. All three television networks chose to cover the caucus as a legitimate news event. The caucus was not arranged by the networks, and it was not subject to the "equal time" provision. These experiences could conceivably be applied in the future.

Aside from these several instances of new approaches to political appearances, attention was focused on the possible suspension of Section 315. In 1968 it was the Republicans who kept the bill to suspend Section 315 bottled up in Congress, as the Democrats had in 1964. By early fall, it was clear to the Republicans that their party and candidates would be in a relatively strong political and financial position, against a badly divided and financially weak Democratic Party. Confident of sufficient funds for the media time they wanted to buy, the Republicans saw no reason to ensure the availability of more free time which would help the Democrats, who were likely to have much less money available for their campaign.

In addition to financial considerations, Richard Nixon's personal view of debates was probably negative. Most observers believe the 1960 debates with John Kennedy may have cost him the election. The extraordinary exposure of debates is normally more valuable to the underdog or less well-known candidate. Nixon was clearly expected to be the frontrunner, as he was at the beginning of the 1960 campaign, and saw no reason to jeopardize that position. He no doubt preferred the planned regional telecasts he could control.

Nixon's aversion to appearances he could not control extended beyond debates. Unlike other candidates in recent years, he turned down all invitations for interview shows (*e.g.*, *Meet the Press*) from early 1967 until late in October, 1968. In contrast, Hubert Humphrey accepted all available invitations for local, regional, and national interviews and even talk and call-in shows. On such shows, Humphrey would say he was the first major candidate who had ever put himself in these totally open situations. Often the show's moderator

would then note that Nixon had refused to participate on the program.

The Democrats made Nixon's unwillingness to debate, an issue in the campaign—although it was embarrassing since the Republicans had done the same thing when President Johnson responded negatively in 1964. Nixon was chided editorially for his refusal to debate. Humphrey tried to pressure Nixon with offers to debate, with or without Wallace, on or off television, on paid or free television; he offered to pay for half, and then all, of an hour for a debate without Wallace on October 20.

Nixon's refusal to debate was difficult to defend, because in a *Saturday Evening Post* article in 1964, he had said debates should serve the public, not the candidates, and that they brought about a better campaign. Nevertheless, he did not relent. Humphrey used the October 20 hour on his own, and attracted one of the largest political audiences of the campaign.

Debates and more free time probably would have affected the outcome of the 1968 election more than that of 1964. In '68 the Republicans had a huge advantage in media exposure; they outspent the Democrats 2-to-1 on both radio and television. Lack of funds forced the Democrats to cancel all local spots during the third and fourth weeks of the campaign (the end of September), and cut network television in half for the weeks of October 7 and 14. Given the closeness of the vote, one may speculate as to the outcome if the Democrats had enjoyed more media exposure.

This much did emerge clearly from the events of 1964 and 1968: if the question of suspension of Section 315 is considered anew every four years, the decision will be based largely on the political situation and advantage of the moment, and on which party controls the Congress. The larger question of what may be in the public interest gets ignored. If there is any hope of diminishing partisan and immediate-advantage considerations, the decision on Section 315 may have to be made for more than one election at a time, and probably at least a year prior to an affected election.

SUSTAINING TIME

The "equal time" provisions of Section 315 do not cover certain network interview and documentary programs, and the networks can provide certain time to one candidate without being obligated

to provide precisely equal time for other candidates. In the 1968 general election, the television networks offered only three hours and one minute of sustaining time, down more than 25 per cent from 1964 and less than 10 per cent of the amount of time made available in 1960.

The candidates themselves received relatively more of the sustaining time in 1968 than in 1964. Of the three hours and one minute of television network time in the general election, two hours and 28 minutes were used for appearances of Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates. Four years earlier, less than one-third of the time had been for the candidates themselves. Yet this sustaining time on television represented only 16 per cent of the time of all Presidential and Vice Presidential candidate appearances.

The major parties are normally the beneficiaries of the sustaining time which is exempt from "equal time" requirements. In the 1968 general election, however, of three hours and one minute of sustaining television network time, Republicans received one hour and five minutes, the Democrats 39 minutes, and minor parties one hour and 17 minutes. In the primaries, however, television networks provided 13¼ hours to Presidential candidates and their supporters—almost four hours to Republicans and just under 9½ hours to the Democrats.

Those advocating repeal of Section 315 argue strongly that broadcasters would give more time to major party candidates if they did not have to give equal time to minor party candidates. This argument is challenged, however, by evidence from 1968. An analysis of U.S. Senate races shows that in 25 states where there were only two candidates in the general election, 34 per cent of the television stations in those states gave some free time; in seven states where there were three or more candidates, however, 45 per cent of the television stations gave some free time. Similarly, in 12 states which had only two candidates for Governor, 35 per cent of the stations gave some free time and in nine states which had three or more candidates for Governor, 48 per cent of the stations gave some free time.

While repeal of Section 315 may be desirable in Presidential campaigns, when there will invariably be many candidates, it seems clear that at other levels the existence of minor party candidates is not a significant deterrent to providing free time. The broadcasters' record, especially in two-candidate races, is not impressive.

SPOTS AND PROGRAM TIME

Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates in the primary and general elections spent a little more for program time than for announcement time on the television networks, \$4.6 million to \$4.2 million; however, this relative balance of program time and announcements was not duplicated at other levels of political broadcasting.

On television stations (non-network programs), candidates at all levels spent \$25.1 million for announcements and \$4.0 million for program time, a ratio of more than six to one. The relative spending on announcements has been steadily increasing; the overall ratio of 10 to 1 on radio and television stations in 1968 compares to 6 to 1 in 1966, 4 to 1 in 1964, and 3 to 1 in 1962.

In the primaries, the Republicans' largest expenditure for television was in California, \$299,000; Democrats topped that amount in six states: California, \$879,000; Florida, \$407,000; Louisiana, \$358,000; Missouri, \$420,000; New York, \$443,000; and Texas, \$998,000. In the states with the closest Democratic Presidential primaries, only California was among the key spenders. In states such as Wisconsin and Indiana, the non-Presidential Democratic primary contests did not involve high broadcast costs, so that the total primary expenditures were not as high as those states with very high non-Presidential, though no (or low) Presidential primary broadcast costs.

In the general election, comparison of television expenditures by party shows that the most spent by Democrats was \$767,000 in California, while Republicans spent more in five states: California (\$1.1 million), Indiana (\$851,000), New York (\$1.3 million), Ohio (\$827,000), and Pennsylvania (\$826,000).

CONCLUSION

Viewed in terms of costs, political broadcasting is an ever-growing component of national campaigning. Viewed in terms of candidate selection, the impact of broadcasting on our political life at least at the Presidential level is probably less than some have warned.

During the 1960's many political commentators voiced the fear that candidates would be nominated on the basis of their television personality or image. Yet in 1968, when more money was spent on television and radio than ever before, neither major party Presidential candidate was a "television candidate." Both were party men, with few assets considered important for television campaigning.

Richard Nixon's television presence was an improvement over 1960, but he was hardly a TV idol, and his appearances were carefully controlled. Hubert Humphrey, who talked too much and in a gravelly voice, appeared at his best in filmed documentaries that were carefully photographed and edited; he did not appear in his spot announcements. The Vice Presidential candidates of the major parties could not have been chosen on the basis of television appeal either, for younger, more physically-appealing politicians were available.

If one tries to judge the impact of political broadcasting on the outcome of the Presidential election, contradictory conclusions can be drawn from the evidence of 1968. On one hand, some political experts believe that Humphrey would have won the election had television spending of the two candidates been equal, or at least if Humphrey had had sufficient funds to properly plan and fully execute his television campaign. It is suggested by these observers that lack of adequate television exposure caused by lack of funds cost Humphrey the election.

On the other hand, it has been noted by some observers that in spite of the most massive television campaign in history, and the biggest television spending advantage over his opponent in history, Nixon's ratings in the polls was virtually unchanged from May to November (ranging around 42 per cent). This could mean that Nixon's non-supporters or waiverers may have been largely unaffected by his expensive media campaign, and that his media campaign served mainly to reinforce the favorable tendencies of his existing constituency.

It is impossible to resolve these two conflicting views on the importance of television on the basis of the 1968 Presidential election. One can conclude that other factors are probably at least as important, and that very little is really known about the way and the degree to which television influences voters.

WHAT MAKES NICK TICK

An Essay Review of
"How To Talk Back To Your Television Set"
by Nicholas Johnson
(Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1970)

HUBBELL ROBINSON

Talking back to Nicholas Johnson's new book is a little like questioning God, motherhood, and the American flag. He is against excessive violence on television, against any concentration of interests which would hamper the medium's free flow of opposing ideas, threaten its reportorial integrity, or constrict its independence of the commercial interests supporting most of it.

He is for more programs that seek to inform the public about the world we live in, expose corporate malfeasance, lift the cultural level of the Republic, and elevate the taste of its citizens. The pursuit of these goals is what makes Nick tick. I think it fortunate he continues to tick away, noisily and obstreperously, even if his musings sometimes offer more clamor than clarity. Justice Holmes said of his father, "He had the great gift of starting a ferment which is one of the marks of genius." I'm not quite ready to label Mr. Johnson "genius" but he is certainly a fermenter. And that is a useful function at the Federal Communications Commission, a body many

HUBBELL ROBINSON, who needs no introduction to the readers of this journal, is Co-Chairman of the Quarterly's Editorial Board.

have been prompted to hail with Cromwell's advice to the Long Parliament, "You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart I say and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!"

Mr. Johnson's dissent from his fellow Commissioners has been notable and frequent. They are distinguished for their liberalism, their willingness to question tradition, to create turbulence if he thinks that, in the process, the public good would be better served.

How To Talk Back To Your Television Set seems dedicated to the theory that the bulk of TV's sins may be laid at the door of "The Networks." Individual stations are also dealt some sharp blows. Big business is the third member of his unholy trio. He quotes Bobby Kennedy labeling the sum total of their efforts as "unacceptable." Unacceptable to whom? Not to the great sprawling mass that spends more time watching than doing anything else except sleeping and working. I hear rumors of a new Harris poll that reports viewing is "off." Maybe so. But I have heard no one contest the intensity of the mass audience's addiction. I suspect the defectors are citizens whose cultural and intellectual life styles are kin to Senator Kennedy's, Mr. Johnson's—I hope yours—and certainly my own. It is abundantly clear that much of television offers us little nourishment. The long stretches of evening hour "series" seem particularly arid. At the same time it is improper to ignore the oases in the wasteland. CBS's *Sixty Minutes*, NBC's *First Tuesday*, almost always, Dick Cavett and David Frost, frequently, Hallmark and CBS Playhouse occasionally are what I mean, of course. There are others. Anyone who wants to can find them. Mr. Johnson doesn't seem to want to. He largely ignores them.

The total audience doesn't ignore these programs though it hardly embraces them with the enthusiasm it showers on *Gunsmoke*, *Laugh-In*, *Bonanza*, Jim Nabors, Andy Williams and their ilk. It is not likely they ever will. Nor is it likely the networks will diminish their efforts to supply that kind of diet. It is part of the existence cycle of life in commercial television. Mass audiences seek entertainment. They prefer entertainment that demands little of them. Mass audiences watching that kind of entertainment make it possible to attract advertisers. The advertisers' dollars create profits which is what stockholders demand. Mr. Johnson's primary target in his assault on network practices should be the stockholders, not the management. Any management that doesn't keep profits coming and

increasing will be replaced with one that does. Mr. Johnson is not unaware of this dilemma.

Commenting on the CBS-Fred Friendly imbroglio, he notes: "It is not enough to wish that the networks were being run by men who would televise Senate hearings instead of scheduling a rerun of 'I Love Lucy.' For such a wish requires them to refund pocketed profits to advertisers and to give away for free time already sold—in an institutional environment in which their performance, their 'success' is measured almost exclusively in terms of how much they can increase profits." There's the rub, the problem central to all Mr. Johnson is striving for. Unless that institutional environment is altered, all Mr. Johnson's zeal and fervor seems like to founder.

Mr. Johnson devotes only one paragraph (on page 172) to this seminal problem.

One corrective is ready at hand, potentially, at least. It is of course the expansion and muscling of Public Television. The Commissioner, obviously, is aware of it. He quotes McGeorge Bundy's perceptive statement, "Twenty years of experience have made it plain that commercial TV alone cannot do for the American public what mixed systems—public and private—are offering to other countries, notably Great Britain and Japan." Mr. Johnson adds, "The Japanese people have chosen to fund their equivalent of our Public Broadcasting Corporation at a proportion of their gross national product that would be equivalent to \$2 billion a year in this country. The Japanese are richer for it. The United States is now on the threshold of finding out whether it can muster the national will to do as well. I think that it is crucial that the Public Broadcasting Corporation be adequately funded and, in line with the Carnegie study, in such a manner as to be independent of the government. Such an effort would be a classic example of an institutional change that could benefit everyone affected by broadcasting far more than it costs—and harm no one."

One wishes Mr. Johnson would devote his boundless energy, his polemic gift, his singleness of purpose to that institutional change. Americans would be richer for it.

How To Talk Back To Your Television Set is crammed with ideas, accusations and solutions to the malaise that besets commercial television. They are not all of equal merit. On pages 182 and 183 he cites Harry Skornia, a University of Southern Illinois academic, who believes all broadcasters and particularly those working

in news should pass some sort of examination as doctors and lawyers and pharmacists do. Specifically, Dr. Skornia says, "In news and public affairs, particularly, the fact is that there is no national academic standard to practice, and that neither the names of the schools from which newsmen graduate, nor their diplomas or degrees—if indeed they are even considered necessary for employment—represent any definitive standard of intellectual accomplishment, morality, character qualification or even technical skill, is disturbing if not shocking."

Mr. Johnson shares his concern.

But on pages 190 to 198 he argues vigorously for the establishment of a Citizens Commission on Broadcasting. As nearly as I can gather from the imprecise language in which the Commissioner outlines its structure and practice, it could just about decide what we see and how and when we see it. And then he says "It should not draw its membership or employees from either government or broadcasting."

We are in the land of Oz.

The broadcasters should be professionals meeting some established rubric. The shapers of the guidelines which govern what they do and how well they do it would have no experience or expertise in the field they would administer.

Each of those proposals taken by itself may have some merit. Taken together they have none.

The Commissioner is also an ardent advocate of listener participation in program decisions. As usual he recognizes the dangers in taking his own proposals too literally. He admits "citizens' groups and listeners and viewers are not generally too helpful when it comes to suggesting new program ideas."

If Mr. Johnson has any lingering doubts about that I suggest he consider some programming suggestions offered to Leonard Golden-son, President of ABC, at the Company's recent stockholders' meeting at the New York Hilton Hotel. Speaking from the floor, Clara Wander, as reported by Leonard Sloan in the *New York Times*, suggested, "Find people who would come and talk on different drugs. We could do with more on that and less on violence."

Harriet Rosen noted that "We should have more time given to those who are in the middle and a little to the right—but not too far to the right."

And Evelyn Y. Davis added, "I think you should have on television some support for the President's view of eliminating draft deferments."

Pursuing his bombardment of network programming, Mr. Johnson says on page 95, "I would far rather leave the head responsibility for the inventory in America's 'marketplace of ideas' to talented and uncensored *individuals*—creative writers, performers and journalists from *all* sections of this great country—than to the *committees* of frightened financiers in New York City. Wouldn't you? I think so."

These ringing words sound just fine—high minded, reasonable and constructive. But who are these creative writers, performers, and journalists from all sections of the country? Who is to sift out, collate and determine which of their contributions the public will view? What criteria will govern those determinations?

It is at least arguable that the greatest concentration of this great country's talent and skill is centered in New York, Hollywood, and Washington. These are the meccas that draw the pilgrims. They come because the rewards, financial and prestigious, are there. The competition is sharper, the standards of excellence, in consequence, higher. And the working climate is cleaner, less befogged by sectional prejudice and insularity.

That, I suggest, is why Nicholas Johnson is now performing his valuable gadfly services in Washington rather than Iowa or Texas or California, all waystops on his way to his present eminence.

Significantly, Commissioner Johnson supplies no specific indictments against those "committees of frightened financiers in New York City." Without specifics, his blanket charges lack bite and focus. Mr. Johnson is no "Agnewstic," thank God, but autistic ploys of this type proceed from the same misty illusions that beset the Vice President.

Whether you find Nick Johnson a starry-eyed dreamer or television's John Brown and Che Guevera rolled into one, there can be no doubt of the probity, determination, and clarity with which he has assailed the Commission's traditional muzziness about license renewals. In the case of WLBT, Jackson, Mississippi, WBAI, New York, WXUR, Media, Pennsylvania, and WHDH, Boston, and others, he has fought mightily for the public interest.

Anyone wishing to understand the facts, forces, and problems tugging and pulling at television today should read this book. Mr. Johnson has opinions about all of them and solutions to many. The chapter headings suggest his range. The Crust of Television; The Media Barons and The Public Interest; The Silent Screen; New Attitudes; New Understanding, New Will; The Media and the

Unheard; A Concept of Communications; A Systems Approach, Communications and the Year 2000; CATV; Promise and Peril; Reforming Television; Institutional Realignments; What You Can Do To Improve TV, are his themes. That's about as broad a gamut as anyone is likely to run this year or any other. Mr. Johnson runs it contentiously and imaginatively. If his tone sometimes calls to mind that London wit who said, "I don't object to Gladstone always having the ace of clubs up his sleeve but merely to his belief that God put it there,"—no matter. What matters is that Commissioner Johnson cares mightily about television. He has a splendid vision of what it might be. In pursuit of that vision he stirs things up. That's good for all of us. I hope he's around for a long, long time.

TELEVISION, THE SUPREME COURT, AND THE CONGRESS

Television is a fact of life in our times, but it does not create new rules of human behavior—it only reflects the old ones. To limit its role in communications on the grounds that it would in any important way alter the standards under which our elected or appointed officials conduct themselves is a wholly untenable proposition. Even if it did, the medium is available to them outside the legislative chambers; and, in any case, the burden of responsibility must rest—not with the instruments that transmit legislative or judicial events—but with the participants who make those events. To do anything else would be not to report what is happening but to distort it—to decide in advance that some people and some occurrences cannot stand public scrutiny. I do not believe that this course accords either with the theory of an open society or the practice of good government. . . .

From the remarks of Frank Stanton,
President, CBS
before the Award Dinner of the
Advertising Council, Dec. 15, 1969

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Truman Capote, Eleanor Perry, and Frank Perry. **TRILOGY: AN EXPERIMENT IN MULTIMEDIA**. New York: Macmillan, 1969.

This is a handsome book. Handsome not merely as a coffee table specimen, but as a testament that art is possible for the American television screen.

Ostensibly, the book is a collaborative case history. It deals with the adaptation and production for television of three of Truman Capote's short stories ("A Christmas Memory," "Miriam," and "Among the Paths to Eden"), followed by a fusion of the three into a feature film for theatrical release. Capote worked on all three adaptations with screenwriter Eleanor Perry; Frank Perry directed. In the book, Frank Perry offers a brief reminiscence of the negotiations and filming, while Mrs. Perry provides notes on the special problems encountered in adapting each of the stories.

Capote is represented by the original stories, and, with Mrs. Perry, by the film scripts.

The triple authorship is, in a sense, misleading. Perry's essay gives few insights into such directorial problems as the handling of actors, filmic composition, editing decisions, and others. He does mention ABC-TV's reservations about the original film ("slight and sentimental . . . lacking in plot"), but tends to underestimate the resultant difficulty in gaining network distribution. Fledgling directors also will find little to dig into here.

Clearly, emphasis on the art of the writer-adapter is the chief focus of the book. The stories and scripts can be studied with profit, and Mrs. Perry's remarks furnish useful guidelines for those attempting to translate prose into filmic language.

Each of the Capote adaptations posed distinctive problems. As a story, "Miriam" conveyed much of its feeling of mounting psychological horror through mood, nuance, description, and symbol. By clarifying certain details, the film script made explicit the implicit. Character and motivation were strengthened, but at some sacrifice in mystery and suggestiveness.

The writers were forced to expand "Among the Paths to Eden" to accommodate 52 minutes of air time, by creating a totally new sequence that added humor and reinforced character, but violated the fragile structure of the original. "A Christmas Memory," a lyrical and evocative mood piece, was the "least adapted" of the three, an approach that worked well for that particular story.

Through this case-by-case analysis, Mrs. Perry is able to clarify some of the major problems a writer might face in adapting literary material to the screen. For students and teachers of writing, then, the book is a natural choice.

Obviously, **TRILOGY** is intended to be something more than a book, something more than a chiefly literary experience. As its subtitle suggests, it is an attempt to involve us in two different modes of feeling—that of the reader, and (insofar as the scripts allow) that of the film viewer. For total media involvement, the film itself should be experienced in conjunction with the stories and screenplays. Barring that possibility, **TRILOGY** succeeds on its own terms in evoking the kind of responses that strengthen our awareness of media characteristics and differences.

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Saul N. Scher

William Small. **TO KILL A MESSENGER: TELEVISION NEWS AND THE REAL WORLD.** New York: Hastings House, 1970.

Each year insiders contribute a number of books about television, news and advertising. Some are genial memoirs, others eccentric polemics against the system. William Small's volume is neither. It is an even-tempered review of what happened to television news up to 1970.

The book is not systematic or cohesive. Each chapter deals with one event or problem (*e.g.*, riots, conventions, Vietnam) in feature-article fashion. There could have been more chapters on international reporting, the Arab-Israeli war, sports coverage, and the Supreme Court—or fewer. It is difficult to decide what should or should not have been included because no plan of organization is apparent.

Small, Washington Bureau Manager for CBS News, uses considerable firsthand information not previously published. Television's handling of the death of President Kennedy is a fascinating descriptive story that kindles memories of that grim weekend. Small's intimate connection with the coverage makes his judgement of it particularly interesting:

Looking back over those remarks almost a half dozen years later, one is puzzled. Instead of awe for the impact of those four days, there is a sense of exuberance, a heady feeling of accomplishment, wonder that it could come off successfully at all. The mood seems incongruous. Those four days were historic, in television's history and the nations's. Why not reverence for history instead of a sense of "We did it"?

This fairness pervades and strengthens the book. Although his research is less thorough than Robert MacNeil's in *THE PEOPLE MACHINE*, Small's judgments are more balanced, less strident. He manages to maintain his good humor and sense of proportion even when dealing with Vice President Agnew's criticisms of television. In Washington, 1970, this can not have been easy.

The book, long on information, is short on explanation. Perhaps this is just as well: one chapter concerned with "Who Runs Television?" is breezy and unsatisfying. Something of a framework is provided in an introduction by A. William Bluem, former editor of *TELEVISION QUARTERLY*. It is a thoughtful introduction, deserving more space and development than it received.

The book will undoubtedly be used by students and teachers of broadcast journalism, but it should not be confined to the classroom. It belongs in television newsrooms to give new staff members a briefing on the problems, strengths, and responsibilities of television news. "This volume has attempted to round out the picture, the good and the bad," the author writes. He succeeds in this timely reminder that television news has served us well in a prolonged period of crisis.

Boston University

Robert Smith





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