

# TELEVISION

VOLUME IX      NUMBER 4

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# QUARTERLY

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THE JOURNAL OF  
THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF  
TELEVISION ARTS  
AND SCIENCES

Published by The National Academy  
of Television Arts and Sciences in  
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EDITORIAL OFFICE: Dr. Robert R. Smith, TELEVISION QUARTERLY, School of Public Communication, Boston University, 640 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. All editorial matter should be sent to this address.

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Gilbert Seldes was the closest our time has come to producing a "Renaissance" man of the communication arts. During his incredibly active and productive life, Gilbert was a devoted practitioner, and at the same time the most honest critic of the "lively arts." As author of some of the most enduring books in the field of popular culture, Gilbert gave us such terms as *The Great Audience* and *The Public Arts*.

When, in 1950, he became Dean of the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania, he brought rich and varied experience as a pioneer in television (he was CBS's director of television way back in 1937), a playwright, a maker of documentary movies, and many other ventures. And to everything he did Gilbert brought a zest for life, a learned wit that spared neither friend nor foe, and a genuine warmth of heart.

For us, and for a multitude of his contemporaries, students, and readers, Gilbert Seldes was a mentor and friend. He was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of this journal from its inception. Perhaps, with us, Gilbert would have felt some disappointment that the *TELEVISION QUARTERLY* suspends publication with this issue. But as Don Marquis so aptly put it, "An Idea isn't responsible for the people who believe in it."

Perhaps someday (hopefully not too long from now), this journal will resume publication. If and when it does it will be fortunate to have a friend on hand as wise and honest as Gilbert Seldes.

# REBELS, THE F.C.C., AND THE STRUCTURE OF BROADCASTING

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MARCUS COHN

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The structure of every institution is under attack today. The church, the school, the family, and almost every profession and business is being kicked, gouged, pinched, bitten, dissected and eviscerated. It is nothing new for institutions to be criticized. But the current drive for change reveals three characteristics which were missing from reformation movements of the past.

In the first place, changes in the past did not deal so much with the inherent structure of the institutions, but rather, with the substance and texture of their teachings—the storehouse of their wisdom. The advocates of institutional change may have argued for new colors, composition, or complexion, but not for the destruction of the old and the erection of something completely new. While universities did add new courses to the curricula, the teacher—and not the students—remained to teach the new courses. The president of the university not only held the title of leader of the campus, but effectively exercised his authority. The churches were forced to change portions of their rituals, but the scriptures were not burned, the churches were not desecrated, and the clergy were not locked in their rectories.

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*MARCUS COHN* is senior partner in the communications law firm of Cohn and Marks. He earned an A.B. degree at the University of Oklahoma, an L.L.B. at the University of Chicago, and an L.L.M. at Harvard University. He is former Assistant General Counsel of the F.C.C.



In the second place—and most importantly—the changes occurred over a period of time. Advocates of change did not demand immediate and instantaneous 90 or 180 degree shifts in direction. The phrase “non-negotiable demands” was not known.

The third feature that distinguishes the current from the past eras of change? This is the first time that all institutions are under attack at one time. Heretofore, different institutions were attacked at different times or, at the very least, the reformation of one institution only led the way to the reformation of another. But this time the reformers are demanding that all institutions change at one time.

It was inevitable that broadcasting—a separate and important, but comparatively, very new institution—should also feel the full force of this current maelstrom.

However, one important difference should be noted between the attack upon the structure of broadcasting and the attack upon other institutions. The attacks upon the other institutions came from those who were active, day in and day out participants in the very processes of the institutions. It was the students and the young faculty members who revolted against the structure of educational institutions. It was the congregants and the young ministers, priests, and rabbis who violently shook the doors of the houses of worship. It was the youth of America who rebelled against modern family life and ancient moral codes.

In the case of broadcasting, however, the attacks against the structure have come neither from those who were a part of it nor from the audiences which it serves. The attack came from the regulators who succumbed to the youthful virus of anti-establishment. The fervor, intemperance, and violence of the youth of the country resounded across the nation and infected great parts of Washington, including, of all places, the Vice President’s office and, a few blocks away, the corner of 20th and M Streets, in Washington, where the Federal Communications Commission has its offices.

For about 20 years after the birth of the FCC’s *Public Service Responsibility of Broadcasting Licensees* in 1946, the Commission’s basic interest in the industry’s affairs was related to programming. The programming section of applications was repeatedly revised. Almost every Commissioner made one or more speeches at one time or another complaining either about the quality or quantity of public service programming. The Commission wrote to licensees criticizing specific programs, or pushing for more public service

programs. And even Congress examined and cross-examined Commissioners and licensees on the content of radio and television programming.

But there has been a drastic shift in the winds. During the past few years, the structure of the industry has merited an intensified and growing concern. The question is less and less, "What did the station broadcast?" and more and more, "Who owns the station?"

The Commission can exercise its regulatory powers in one of two ways. It can punish—as it has from time to time—the individual culprit who abuses his responsibility as a licensee. Or it can adopt rules which apply to everyone, the culprit as well as the innocent. Unfortunately, during the past five years, the Commission's use of rule-making as a regulatory technique—the lumping together of the guilty and the innocent—has grown by leaps and bounds. Emerging is a growing trend to rule by rule rather than by a discriminating concern toward the performance of each individual licensee. The emphasis has shifted from regulation on a case-to-case basis, where past malfeasance or future harm can be proven, to overall regulation of suspected or possible malfeasance and harm. The individuality of the licensee is disappearing; he is becoming an anonymous stereotyped number. The good and the bad are treated alike. The principle, rather than the "principal," has become the important focus of regulation.

At the heart of the various FCC proposals to restructure the industry is a philosophy that man is, as Hobbes argued long ago, essentially mean, brutal, and corrupt. For example, the Commission adopted the rule which would prohibit one individual from owning more than one broadcasting station—a television or a radio station, but not both—in a community. Yet it cavalierly sloughed off the argument that no evidence was before it that society had been harmed in any way by a licensee operating both a radio and a television station. The consequences of such ownership, said the Commission, were immaterial. It was sufficient, argued the Commission, that it now—after all these years—distrusted putting such power in the hands of one individual.

Radio and television stations have been owned by one person in one community in a number of cities in the United States for more than 25 years. There may have been instances—less than half a dozen—where, because of the venality of a few isolated licensees,

the public has been disserved and the industry's dedication besmirched by that joint control. Yet the fact remains that joint ownership has not been harmful but, indeed, has generally proven to be beneficial to the public.

A certain elite haughtiness is revealed when the Commission now blithely states that it cares little what the consequences of such joint ownership have been because, in its judgment, it simply believes it to be an evil. It reminds me of another sovereign, the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, who screamed that the sentencing of the prisoner should come before the verdict. After all, she said, the important thing was the punishment—whether or not the prisoner was guilty.

The antagonism of the Commission toward the structural ownership of broadcasting is further emphasized by its proposal to prohibit newspapers from owning broadcasting stations. Here, once again, the Commission concedes that it has no facts which hint that such ownership harms the public in any way. Moreover, the Commission completely ignores the past testimony of several of its chairmen before congressional committees. They argued that it was not necessary for Congress to enact legislation which would prohibit the Commission from exercising any veto power over newspapers' owning stations because, among other things, there was no intention ever to do this.

The Commission has recently undertaken a study of whether radio and television stations should be owned by institutions that also have non-broadcasting interests. Although it doesn't say so explicitly, it imputes corruption and venality to the men who today operate conglomerate businesses.

I don't know what a detailed statistical study would show, but based upon my experience, I would guess that approximately 90 per cent of the owners of radio and television stations have other business interests. It is almost in the nature of the enterprise for television to have been fostered by men with other outside interests because of the magnitude of the requirements for capital.

But the non-broadcasting interests of radio and television licensees today are not confined to business activities. If the Commission is right in hinting that there is some kind of inherent corruption in one owning a broadcasting facility and, at the same time, engaging in other non-broadcast activities, would it not follow as day follows night that those educational institutions which are licensees of broadcasting facilities should also be required to divest themselves

of these broadcasting interests? If it is true that businessmen of broadcasting who have non-broadcasting interests will jeopardize the former to protect the latter, would it not follow that colleges and universities, when faced with a question of a conflict of interests between the operation of their broadcast facilities and the operation of their major educational facilities, will corrupt their broadcasting activities, in order to protect their educational activities?

Assuming, for the sake of discussion, the Commission adopted a rule which prohibited a person from being a licensee of the broadcast facility if he held other non-broadcast interests, what would it propose to do in a situation where the broadcaster who had no other business interest later decided to engage in a non-broadcasting activity? Would it not follow that, under those circumstances, the Commission would then, in effect, have the power to force a broadcaster to decide whether or not he should engage in new non-broadcasting activities?

At the heart of the Commission's thirst and thrust to increase the number of owners of stations—and its constantly expanding interpretation of the Fairness Doctrine—is the John Stuart Mill theory that democracy requires the greatest number of owners and voices in the marketplace of ideas. But Mill was referring to society where a few hundred people would gather together in dialogue to resolve their differences and make the political process work. I have grave doubts as to whether the final result of what the Commission is ultimately proposing—two hundred million people speaking and arguing at one time—will give vitality and meaning to our society. The Tower of Babel is not only unwieldy and indeed unworkable, but, in a real sense, it ultimately will negate the fundamental concepts of the democratic process.

Merely increasing the number of individuals who are licensees of radio and television stations and increasing the opportunity for everyone, whether rational or coherent, to babble publicly merely because he has vocal chords, gives no assurance whatsoever that the public will profit from the exposure. What we might expect is the spewing of verbal debris in all directions. Indeed, the net result often is a blended stew neither intellectually invigorating or debilitating, because all of its 5700 ingredients are stirred together into a nondescript mush.

The argument that a direct correlation exists between the number of voices in the marketplace and the quality, truthfulness, or legitimacy of those voices has proven to be a fallacy. All one needs

is to look at the large number of movie magazines, or the plethora of the underground newspapers, in order to appreciate the fact that mere multiplicity of voices does not assure quality. Intense media competition frequently results in more and more people lowering the standards of performance in order to effectively capture the largest share of the audience. Indeed, I suspect that the result of brutalizing and overheated competition is to lower—rather than raise—the common denominator of the media.

It may be unpopular to say it these days, but given my choice, I would rather have the one or two institutions which may be dominant in a community and which are owned and operated by dedicated and highly professional people who can serve the public well—rather than a multiplicity of now-you-see-it-and-now-you-don't, fly by night competing institutions, scrounging and cutting corners in an attempt to compete in the open marketplace and survive.

Rather than believing its role is merely to maximize the number of separately owned stations, let the Commission put the emphasis where it should be: on the basic qualifications of each licensee. If the Commission is truly concerned about programming quality, let it place a greater emphasis on the individual qualifications to become a licensee. Let it insist (as many licensees in the industry have urged) that merely being a U.S. citizen, having the necessary financial qualifications, and proposing to operate on a frequency which will not cause electrical interference—the three statutory qualifications—are not enough. A new qualification—professional people devoted to the standards of a profession—is needed.

The Adam Smith belief—that free and unrestrained economic competition should be the ultimate goal of every society because under it man will achieve his highest goals and standards—was exploded a long time ago. The essentially democratic Japanese community has demonstrated that competition, as we know it, is not necessary in order to achieve excellence and efficiency. Indeed, there is no democratic country in the world where economic competition is unbridled and unrestrained. There is not a year that goes by in America—whether the Democrats or Republicans are in power—when the government does not interfere more and more in the economic life of Americans. Why? Because it has been demonstrated that the result of unlimited economic competition impedes, rather than helps, man to achieve better standards of living, greater human values, and greater dignity.

We went through a year where our educational institutions were bombarded, pillaged, burned, and desecrated. Those young revolutionaries were both unwilling and unable to try to work within the institution in order to change its mold and give it a greater currency than it had in the past. They made stiff demands and then said that those demands were non-negotiable.

In a real sense, I get an impression that the same kind of forces are presently at work by those who are shrieking and shouting at and denouncing—on a non-negotiable basis—the very structure of broadcasting. They are unwilling to work within the institution, to try and better the programming content. They are convinced, just like the young college revolutionaries, that the only salvation for broadcasting is its disembowelment.

The Commission's current anti-establishment frolics will conclude by stifling the zeal for excellence, the urge for creativity, and the momentum for originality. Concerned and dedicated broadcasters have an obligation not only to themselves but to society as a whole to abate or stop this present tidal wave. The fragmentation of the broadcasting industry may result in the beach having more pebbles, it may thus create more sand for children to play in, but it will deprive man of large and significant barriers against the onslaught of hurricanes and storms.

# JUST HOW GOOD IS BRITISH TELEVISION?

Comparisons and Lessons for America

---

NICHOLAS JOHNSON

---

Many citizens are deeply disturbed at the appalling state of American television. No other single institution has had a greater impact upon the body, mind, and spirit of the American people. Yet too many of us suffer in ritual silence as television bombards us with daily soap operas, deodorant ads, old movies, cigarette commercials, situation comedies, enticements to buy mouthwash, westerns, hairspray announcements, and news documentaries that do not relate to the crashing confusion of our lives.

A few people are beginning to react. Some have just turned off their television sets. A recent Harris poll shows a growing number of thoughtful Americans are watching television less and less. The younger generation (aged 14-28) is openly contemptuous of television. Even set sales are declining. Others, however, who believe

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Early in 1970 *NICHOLAS JOHNSON*, a member of the Federal Communications Commission, and author of *How To TALK BACK TO YOUR TELEVISION SET*, attended a Ditchley Foundation conference in England related to the responsibility of the mass media. Concerning his probe of British broadcasting, presented here, he has noted that "unless one is blessed with the leisure for academic study, there is very little alternative simply to learning as much as possible in the time available, modestly stating these limitations, and plunging ahead." Herewith, the Commissioner's plunge into comparative broadcasting.

this country possesses the capacity to offer all individuals a much higher quality of life, are growing indignant at the shocking irresponsibility of television's corporate profiteers. Instead of turning off TV, they are asking why television isn't giving us more for our \$20 billion investment in receivers, and the three billion dollars a year in added product costs for broadcast advertising.

In the belief that television couldn't possibly be as bad in other countries, some have looked to see what other nations have done with their television systems. Often, of course, they have found that other countries have not only followed our lead institutionally, but that they actually rebroadcast much of the American networks' old programming. Nevertheless, a number of countries—Britain and Japan among them—have experimented with and developed new approaches to television programming. We can, and should, learn from them.

Let's look at the British experience. Just how good *is* English television? Do the English receive better television service than the Americans? I think the short answer is "yes"; but the longer answer is not so easy or simplistic.

Let me begin by sketching some basic characteristics and differences in the British and American systems—perhaps disposing of a few common misunderstandings in the process. The United States has some 857 television stations—and these essentially fall into three groups:

1. *Network affiliates.* Over 85 per cent of the 680 commercial stations in the country are "network affiliated"—connected with one of the three national networks, ABC, CBS, or NBC. Fifteen of these are actually owned and operated by the networks. The remaining "affiliates" receive paid fees for rebroadcasting network-originated programming. The networks in turn are paid by national sponsors (often in direct proportion to the number of network affiliates, or, put another way, the size of the national audience).

2. *Independents.* "Independent" commercial stations, usually in larger cities, have no contractual connection with the networks. The independents often broadcast movies, occasional specials from independent studios, or older network re-runs which have been sold by the networks to national syndicating distributors. Some belong to group owners—Metromedia, Westinghouse (Group W), and others—which may function as miniature networks.



In general it is safe to say that a very small proportion of daily programming is originated by the individual commercial stations in the first two groups. The vast bulk of programming comes from the three networks, which dominate television in this country. Even the independents rely heavily on older network programming.

3. *Public Broadcasting.* The United States' newborn and rather timid system of non-commercial, public (or educational) broadcasting encompasses nearly 200 stations, many of which are interconnected (via telephone lines) by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and its Public Broadcasting System. CPB and other organizations—such as National Educational Television (NET), the Children's Television Workshop, and the now defunct Public Broadcasting Laboratory (PBL)—have helped finance programs produced by individual stations. (Most of the funding has in fact come from the Ford Foundation.) These may also be networked or syndicated.

Public broadcasting has many problems—including limited audiences, inadequate funding, excessive sensitivity to establishment pressures, the established viewing habits of the commercially-oriented VHF audience (many educational stations broadcast on the UHF channels), and lesser access to creative talent (as most talented producers and writers are "bought up" by the commercial stations). Until significant numbers of Americans begin to watch non-commercial television, it need not be seriously considered in evaluating the impact of "television" as a whole on our nation. But at least public broadcasting has begun in this country.

In Great Britain there are two separate television systems: the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Independent Television Authority (ITA).

*BBC.* The BBC is a "public corporation," somewhat like the Tennessee Valley Authority or the Pennsylvania Turnpike Authority in the United States. It is not an agency of government (although its governing board is appointed by the Queen and Parliament), it is not funded by general taxation, its employees are not civil servants, and it accepts no commercials. Rather, it is financed by a yearly "license fee" (about \$14.40 a year), paid by each television set owner to the BBC.

The BBC programs not one, but two, television networks—BBC 1 and BBC 2. BBC 2 was started in 1964 on a UHF frequency, and is currently available to more than two-thirds of British viewers. The bulk of BBC programming originates from

London and is rebroadcast by the 13 regional BBC stations in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These regional broadcast stations, also wholly-owned by the BBC, originate a certain proportion of the day's programming which is tailored to local need and interests.

*ITA.* British viewers also have available commercial or "independent" television (ITV). ITV is the programming service of the Independent Television Authority (ITA), created by Parliament in 1954 to offer competition to the BBC. Like the BBC, the ITA is a "public corporation," with 13 board members appointed by the Postmaster General. But in contrast to the BBC, the ITA's programs are commercially sponsored. The ITA owns a network of transmitters throughout Britain which are licensed to 15 independent programming companies that create their own programming for profit. The licenses last for six years, and may be turned over to any other group that convincingly promises to do a better job. The ITA, however, approves the program schedules of the constituent programming companies, imposes advertising standards, and supervises all financial transactions. The companies have formed a networking system to distribute their programs from one outlet to the others. News on ITV is supplied by Independent Television News, a company jointly owned by the 15 companies, and carefully "protected" by the ITA.

Before we compare the "quality" of British and American television, let us note a few distinctive aspects of the British television system. First, one might think that the commercially-sponsored system of "independent television" (ITV) would offer popular programs, the BBC 1 middle-brow fare, and the BBC 2 cultural programs for intellectual minorities. But, in fact, program types (public affairs, dramatic series, opera, musical variety, etc.) seem fairly evenly sprinkled among BBC 1, BBC 2, and ITV. And the networks' popularity is also fairly even. BBC and ITV almost evenly divide the British audience (currently 52 per cent for BBC 1 and 2, 48 per cent for ITV). What this means, as you might guess, is that both BBC and ITV program to maximize audience during much of their schedule.

Here are some examples. It is ITV's evening *News at Ten* which is the country's most popular news show. Over 1,000 hours of feature films were televised over the BBC last year. And on Monday evening, when ITV and BBC 1 compete with current affairs programs, BBC 2 offers *High Chaparral*. In sum, all three networks offer all types of programming. The only safe programming generalization is that

BBC 2 tends toward greater experimentation. When it comes up with a successful program, it's often moved to BBC 1 to reach a larger audience.

A second aspect of the British system is that none of the three networks attempt anywhere near the total *quantity* of programming put out by American stations in major markets. There are TV stations in American cities that run virtually 24 hours a day. Yet British stations generally have followed Mason Williams' admonition that "Television ought to leave you alone during the day when you've got work to do." The BBC 1 and ITV average 14 hours a day, and BBC 2 about half that figure. The Postmaster General fixes the maximum number of hours of television broadcast per week—currently about 53½ hours, excluding education, religion, and certain special events.

*Responsiveness to public tastes and needs* is a third aspect of the British system. Because London is the financial, business, governmental and artistic capital of England (almost New York, Washington, San Francisco, and Los Angeles rolled into one), most of the best television production comes from that city. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, both the BBC and ITV are much more responsive to public sentiment than the New York and Hollywood-based networks in the United States. For one thing, the BBC earns all its income from license fees paid directly by the people it serves (a system somewhat analogous to the listener-supported Pacifica stations in this country). This has a healthy influence on management's responsiveness to audience desires. The BBC, for example, regularly televises special programs in Hindu/Urdu for Indian and Pakistani immigrants. Although the ITA is commercially sponsored, it too is essentially a "public" body and feels its obligations to the public in ways that the FCC and the U.S. commercial networks do not.

A fourth aspect of the British system is its *emphasis on "regionalism"*—that is, its attempt to cater to the different tastes and interests throughout England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The BBC's 13 regional television centers produce fully one-seventh of its total programming, and the BBC has a wide array of regional "advisory" committees and councils. The BBC has recently announced plans to cut back programming production in its regional centers, and originate such programming from two or three main production centers—especially in London. This change has met with substantial resistance from the BBC's advisory committees in the regions, and may not be implemented.

The ITA is equally regional in its operations—if not more so—although there are also moves afoot in ITV to condense its operations along the lines proposed by the BBC. The ITA has two programming companies in London and 13 elsewhere. The two London companies program a single station—one during the week, the other on weekends. This approach has fascinating implications for the United States. In larger cities with unfulfilled demand for access to limited television frequencies, for example, the FCC might permit “split-level” ownership of a station—one group programming the daytime and another the evening, or one group for weekdays and another for weekends. According to the recent Supreme Court *Red Lion* decision, the FCC certainly has the authority—and perhaps even the obligation—to consider such proposals.

Vice President Agnew has expressed the concern that the people, creative product, way of life, and point of view of America’s heartland are largely unrepresented in the barrage of television production coming at them from both coasts. In contrast with England, America’s commercial networks too often ignore such complaints entirely, or make superficial responses that scarcely contribute toward a solution of the problem.

A fifth aspect of British television—*its unique approach to politics*—really deserves a separate article. The British simply expect, as a matter of course, that free television time will be made available to all political parties, and that no one should buy time for political messages. They are appalled at the doubly corrupting American practice of turning over political time (and therefore public office) to the highest bidder—permitting broadcasters to profit from what should be a public service and leaving office holders beholden to lobbyists in general and broadcasters in particular. (The details of the British system are complicated, but, in general, the free time is made available in proportion to the votes received in the last election.) Moreover, if the Prime Minister should decide to make a half-hour televised political speech (as President Nixon has done several times on the Southeast Asian war), reply time is automatically given to the leader of the Opposition Party the next day, at a similar time, for a similar period.

Finally, something should be said of the BBC’s extraordinary audience research—in many ways more regular and thorough than that undertaken by the American commercial networks. Neilson, for example, may regularly use one to two thousand families throughout the United States. The data may be spotty, the questions

shallow. The BBC, by contrast, interviews 800,000 different people a year. (This is 2,250 each day, equivalent, as a proportion of national population, to about three million a year in the United States.) The survey produces a highly useful "Daily Audience Barometer" for the BBC concerning which radio and television programs people are watching. But the BBC may also measure, for example, the level of public knowledge on a given question before and after the presentation of a documentary on that subject. The British believe this such an essential part of a broadcaster's operation and obligation that they have included in the BBC's Royal Charter the requirement that "it shall be the duty" of the BBC to provide "means for the representation to the Corporation of public opinion on the programs broadcast."

This brings us to the question of the "quality" of British television. At the outset it's useful to reject the temptation to talk about "television" in abstract terms. There are almost as many varieties of "television" as there are varieties of print. And just as one would evaluate separately the current crop of novels, newspapers, drama, or comic books, so it is useful to take a closer look at television program types. There can be dispute about the number or breadth of categories, of course, but these seem workable: movies, dramatic series, musical variety, sports, news, interviews, documentaries, drama, comedy and social satire, cultural (such as serious music, dance or opera), children's programming, and instructional series.

Each of these types appears on both American and British television. Indeed, there are occasions when the very same program is shown in both countries (NBC's Rowan and Martin *Laugh-In* or the CBS interviews with President Johnson). David Frost hosts shows in both countries. During 1968 the BBC's top series and light entertainment shows included several familiar to American viewers: *The Virginian*, *The Man from UNGLE*, *Daktari*, *Ironside*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and the *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*. On the other hand, the United States constitutes the largest single market for BBC-produced programs (2,612 titles in 1968)—mostly purchases by NET and independent stations. Anyone who watches British television in search or anticipation of some wholly new use of television, or type of television program, will be very largely disappointed.

Movies appear on television in both countries. There are British movies on American television and American movies on British

television. I doubt that there are any fundamental "quality" or subject matter differences in the selections available in the two countries. American television films are sponsored and hacked to pieces with commercial interruptions. ITV films also have commercial breaks; however, they have less total commercial time (a maximum of seven minutes per hour), fewer breaks—and more ads in each break. With three commercial networks and a number of independent stations in many cities, Americans unquestionably have a greater number of televised films available to them every week than the British audience. Whether this is a fair exchange for the increased commercialization is a matter of individual taste.

By a "dramatic series" I mean a program that is regularly scheduled, with a fixed cast, related setting, and limited character development. It may be a "situation comedy" or "western." Series programs are shown on all the British and American networks. *The Saint* and *The Avengers* are British series shown on American television. *High Chaparral*, *The Man From UNCLE*, and *Daktari* are examples of American series shown on British television. Most are produced within the country. As with films, differences in British and American series are slight. However, Britain relies heavily on so-called "electronic drama series" ("live" studio plays which are videotaped without much editing, and then broadcast); American "television" series are more likely to have been filmed, like movies. "Electronic" drama in Britain more closely approaches actual theater performances (almost nonexistent on American television), and attracts more talented writers into the television medium.

My initial impressions are that there are quite significant differences relating to the role of the writer in British television. The American television writer is often an assemblyline worker, paid for participating in a manufacturing process with generally 13 to 26 mass-produced programs in a series for which he has virtually no pride or control. Because America's best writers generally do not (or are not permitted to) write serious drama for television, they are driven to other media of expression—novels, short stories, plays, poetry, or films. Those who do write for television are generally cynical and depressed and feel they are being forced to prostitute their talent in unworthy ways.

British writers are encouraged to write for television, and are given considerable artistic control over the product. The BBC's Managing Director of Television, Huw Wheldon, believes the BBC "cannot accept dismissal [of TV] by artists and writers and men

and women of sensibility as a purveyor of pap. . . as does commercial television in America." Because most "series" run only six segments, for example, individual writers can structure the entire series. There also is a greater reliance on recognized works of literature. *The Forsyte Saga*, based on the novels of John Galsworthy, was so popular it brought England to a virtual standstill when it was televised there. (It has been shown in this country by the Public Broadcasting Corporation, and is one of its most successful offerings.) The BBC and ITV are also offering series based on *Vanity Fair*, *Blood Brother* ("Broken Arrow"), and *Ivanhoe*. Finally, as I mentioned earlier, British television uses "electronic" TV series, or semi-live presentations, which challenge the abilities of the more creative writers and keep them in the TV medium.

In general, British television officials react more maturely toward controversy than their American counterparts. William Hartly described the BBC in the *Wall Street Journal* as "the world's most uninhibited network," one that "infuriates viewers coming and going." He reports that one top BBC official said, "Almost any television program you do is bound to offend someone, somewhere. If we worried about offense, we'd never get anything on the air." The BBC's forthright approach toward television programming is in large part the result of its felt need to meet competition from the slick, American-style entertainment programming on ITV, and the lack of commercial restraints imposed by queasy sponsors. Huw Wheldon of the BBC believes television "should be vivid, as many-sided as it is possible for arts and communication to be in a society. Treatment is everything. Hamlet is about incest, murder, revenge and suicide. . . violence and sex, but it is possible to transmit Hamlet. It is also possible to make an offensive program about buttercups."

Musical variety shows (known to the British as "light entertainment") are very much the same the world around: singing, dancing, bands, comedians, and so forth. Once again, there is little difference between the British and American offerings aside from the commercial policies. *The Smothers Brothers* and *Andy Williams* are American productions that have appeared on British television. *This is Tom Jones* is a British production made with an eye toward the American market.

Sports coverage is also similar. Sports are popular in both countries, although the games differ. The British have their soccer and rugby; the Americans, football. Sports programming is perhaps

more likely to show up on prime time (evening) television there than here; but then we seem to have more on weekends, and this season are moving more into weekday evenings. We may be somewhat advanced in "instant replay" and "split screen" techniques, but this is not a fundamental difference.

The quality of "news" programming—at least the news "summaries" we associate with Walter Cronkite, Huntley-Brinkley and Frank Reynolds—are (in my evaluation) better done in the United States than in England. The major network TV news shows are concise, informative, and visually interesting. On the whole, however, they are far too short to give the viewer an understanding of the facts presented. But this is a close judgment based on a limited comparison of our half-hour evening shows with the more regular and briefer British presentations. On the other hand, although British news may not be as "entertaining," the viewer in Britain during the course of the day is undoubtedly given more information, more often, than his American counterpart. British television programming never contains the long, unbroken stretches of programming, devoid of any news, that are so common here. There is no *News at Ten* (a 30-minute ITV prime time program), for example, on American commercial network television. Further, the 15-minute ITV news is not interrupted by commercials. (The 30-minute news has one commercial break.) And the British viewer is exposed to a much less parochial and broader range of "foreign" news than Americans; but, of course, that is true of the mass media in most of the civilized countries of the world.

It is in the area of interviews and documentaries that we begin to notice great differences between British and American programming. Although virtually every program type seen on British television has been seen in America on some occasion, the difference in quantity and scheduling are such as to become differences in quality. Where the American commercial networks have a "news" department, the BBC has four separate departments: news, current affairs, features, and documentaries. The personnel do not overlap, the competition is fierce, and the commitment of budget, personnel, and regularly scheduled time (including prime time) is enormous compared to the American experience.

For example: NBC offers a weekly interview program, *Meet the Press*, on Sunday afternoons, and a current affairs documentary magazine called *First Tuesday* once a month. Yet during the week I viewed British television (January 2 to 8, 1970), the following



regularly scheduled *weekly* programs were televised in the early evening hours. (Of course, many more were shown at off-peak viewing hours.)

*24 Hours*, about 10:30 p.m. every evening on BBC 1, is something of a daily equivalent of NBC's monthly *First Tuesday*.

*One Pair of Eyes* is broadcast Saturday evening from 8:15 to 9 p.m. on BBC 2 and is without parallel on U. S. television. It is, perhaps, the purest case of the proposition that British television tends to reflect the full spectrum of British society. Each week a single individual from outside the television industry is given the resources of the BBC to put what he has to say into the format of a television program. The person selected may be "famous" or someone totally unknown to the television audience. The programs are, of course, uneven; but some are extremely good and all are a change-of-pace from conventional television fare. The week I watched, *One Pair of Eyes* featured Professor Francis Camps, a well-known pathologist who has worked on many famous murder cases, discussing fields of law which have proven ineffective, such as prostitution, pornography, drugs, and driving.

*Review* is a weekly arts "magazine" that also has no precise American counterpart. It is shown every Saturday evening from 9:45 to 10:30 on BBC 2. It provides discussion of available cultural offerings, prizewinning films and plays, and prominent authors.

*Omnibus* is a weekly Features department presentation shown Sunday evening on BBC 1 from 10:15 to 11 p.m. It deals with artistic subjects of general interest. The show I watched was an entertaining biography of James Bond's creator, Ian Fleming.

*The World About Us* deals with subjects from nature, and is shown each Sunday evening from 7:30 to 8:10 p.m.—early enough for young viewers.

*Television Dr.* is a fifteen-minute health discussion which deals with a different aspect of health each week. It is televised on BBC 2 at 8:15 Monday evenings.

*Nationwide* is a 30-minute program Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays on BBC 1. The program truly allows the nation to talk to itself—as it is produced in cooperation with the 13 regional outlets. It has an audience of seven to eight million.

*Horizon*, a weekly feature show at 9:45 Monday nights, is currently doing a series entitled "Man and Science Today." On January 5 the show was titled "The Moon: Just Another World."

*This Week* is ITV's 30-minute weekly public affairs show broadcast at 9:30 on Thursdays.

*Panorama* is the showcase 50-minute current affairs interview/documentary film show on BBC 1, Monday evenings at 8. On January 5, for example, it dealt with "The Economy and the Port of London." On January 12 Prime Minister Wilson appeared for a live interview. During the same time slot ITV competes with its own news features program, *World in Action*.

*Tomorrow's World* is seen on BBC 1, Tuesday, from 7 to 7:30 p.m. It deals with technological and scientific advances—a weekly version of the one-time CBS series *21st Century*.

*Man Alive* is a similar show dealing with human behavior. It is televised every Wednesday at 8 p.m. on BBC 2. The January 7 show dealt with the Esalen Institute in California.

*Europa* is a weekly series on BBC 2 at 10 p.m. Wednesdays. It is unique in that it broadcasts, in translation, film produced by other countries—U.S.S.R., Eastern Europe, Western Europe, etc.—without censorship or interference with editorial line.

*The Money Program* is scheduled for 8:30 every Thursday on BBC 2. It presents the week's financial news and opinions of men from the world of business.

This year a special series on the history of film is being shown at 8:30 p.m., Fridays on BBC 1. The series, *The Golden Silents*, is on loan to the BBC from the National Film Theatre in London.

*Seven Days* is a topical feature program shown Sundays at 6:30 on ITV.

*Friends and Neighbors* is a weekly informational series for children on ITV, Sundays at 6:15 p.m.

Of course, this list is scarcely a complete catalogue of the public affairs programs that have been regularly seen on ITV and BBC. It omits the news programs, the substantial quantity of one-of-a-kind programs and "specials," and the programs shown out of prime time. And, of course, it does not list the original drama and other alternatives to lowest-common-denominator entertainment fare. But it does give a sense of the range of prime time programming of substance regularly available to British viewers.

Not only is there a greater range of significant programming to choose from, but British documentary producers also appear more willing to grapple with controversial subjects than their paler

American counterparts. Many of the BBC's late-evening programs, reports the *Wall Street Journal*, are "strong stuff" and "particularly hard-hitting." One documentary, for example, described the plight of a young married woman when poverty forced her to take shelter in a government dormitory where the rules forbade overnight visits by her husband. The documentary drew such a shocked response from viewers that the policy was changed in days. Jackie Gleason recently observed in *TV Guide* that "things can be said in London on TV you can't say here. Topics you never hear discussed in the United States are talked about every night there." One experienced British television journalist has commented that "in Britain people care more about the impact of violence on their children or family audience than they do about 'adult' themes. Language or sexual behavior portrayed in various artistic modes are generally accepted without much worrying."

British also *watch* the BBC and ITV documentaries. Four regular talk or documentary shows—including *The Thursday Documentary* and *Panorama*—received audiences in 1968 between eight and ten million, equivalent to the best ratings received by all but a handful of the more conventional entertainment programs on British television (in a nation with 15 million licensed sets).

In current affairs interviews, one is struck with the much more lively and penetrating questioning. This may be because British television regularly employs the very top graduates of England's finest schools. It may be because of the Parliamentary tradition of regularly opening the Prime Minister and Cabinet officers to questioning on the floor of Parliament. For whatever reason the vigorous interview of Prime Minister Wilson by Robin Day the evening I visited the *Panorama* studio (January 12) was in marked contrast to, say, President Nixon's relative control of the questioning at a Presidential news conference, the comparatively restrained questioning during the networks' Sunday interview programs, Walter Cronkite's handling of Mayor Daley (August 29, 1968) and former President Johnson (December 27, 1969 and following), or the "instant analysis" of Presidential speeches—especially since Vice President Agnew's attack. And yet, when I talked to the Prime Minister about it afterwards, he seemed to accept the battering he had taken as quite appropriate.

In terms of going soft on public officials, there is far more government "control" of the commercial networks in America than of the BBC in England.

Robert MacNeil, a former NBC correspondent now working for the BBC, told the *Wall Street Journal* that "American television works in a general atmosphere of timidity toward politicians and government. You have to pull your punches." On British TV, he says, "news is more robust." MacNeil gave one example: before interviewing Conservative Party Leader Edward Heath on a television program, MacNeil summarized criticisms of Heath from members of his own party, added a few criticisms of his own, and stated that Heath had little stomach for the cut and thrust of politics and had to try "very hard, like a sensitive man in a butcher shop, to conceal a faint nausea." During these remarks, Mr. Heath was sitting within earshot in the studio waiting for MacNeil to begin a half-hour interview with him! One can imagine Vice President Agnew calling for the instantaneous abolition of the BBC had Robert MacNeil subjected President Nixon to a similar confrontation.

Much of the same contrast exists in the area of drama and cultural programming. Once or twice a year CBS puts on a drama like *JT*—on Sunday at 12:30 (December 13, 1969). The BBC puts on a *Play of the Month*, as well as a 60-minute original drama (*The Wednesday Play*) every week in prime time (9 p.m.). Other live and original drama appears regularly throughout the weekday evening on BBC 1, BBC 2, and ITV.

Television recognizes and responds to its responsibilities to be a major supporter of drama, music, and the arts in England; it does not in America. It is that simple. During the Christmas week, for example, BBC produced from Covent Garden, in their fantastic color, a three-hour televised version of the opera *Aida*. The cost? About £ 200 (\$480) per 1,000 viewers—roughly 100 times the rate for some of its cheaper and more popular shows. Opera and ballet every night? Far from it. Occasionally? Yes.

Neither country is doing right by its children on television. England is providing far more programming of some constructive content than the American commercial networks. Our Children's Television Workshop production of *Sesame Street* on educational television knows no peer, in my judgment, in the programming of any country. But even *Sesame Street* offers only five hours of new programs a week and the commercial networks are just beginning to stir themselves to respond.

Instructional programming in the United States is provided almost exclusively on the public broadcasting stations. By instructional programming I mean programs received on a television set in the elementary or high school classroom and used as a part of the curriculum, or adult educational programming series received in the home (such as cooking, foreign language, or guitar lessons). Such programming is offered by both ITV and the BBC in England. And an "Open University" is now beginning, which ultimately could offer televised college courses to every home throughout Great Britain. (Needless to say, we have not even begun to think of such constructive uses of television in this country.)

Overall, British programming in early January was varied and impressive. It did not appear to be atypical. In 1969, for example, the BBC offered about 15 per cent "talks, documentaries and other information programs," about 10 per cent "drama" (exclusive of films and series), 12 per cent "schools" and "further education" programs, over five per cent "news, weather and other news programs" (other than sports), and about five per cent "religious programs" and "music" (other than light entertainment). Thus the BBC offers about half of its total programming fare (47 per cent) in categories that counterbalance its light entertainment, sports, series and feature films. Quite a contrast to our commercial networks.

So, where do we come out? Just how good is British television? If I were to sum up the differences between the uses of television in our two countries in one word it would be "balance." Those who think the BBC offers nothing but ballet and long-haired professors in a style designed to appeal to no one but "old auntie" are just wrong, that's all. British television is entertaining, interesting, and attracts audience. The current ratings show the BBC leading ITV with shows like *Panorama*, *Forsyte Saga*, and *Not in Front of the Children*. There is scarcely an hour when one cannot find the relaxation of a movie, light entertainment, or a cheap series show somewhere on British television. Yet any Anglophile possessed of the romantic notion the British are spared the trashy programming to which Americans are regularly exposed need only watch a few evenings' offering at random. The mass appeal programming is there, in abundance.

The difference is that there is also something else—on ITV, BBC 1 and BBC 2 alike. There is *balance*.

There is balance, first of all, between the commercial and public systems. Our commercial television grossed about three billion dollars last year. The total expenditure on public (or educational) broadcasting in the United States ran about three per cent of that amount. There are three very strong commercial networks with nationwide VHF coverage, and only one very weak public network with spotty, largely UHF coverage. England invests in the BBC, as a proportion of its gross national product, roughly 250 times President Nixon's request for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Yet I don't think even the most outspoken critics of American commercial television would suggest it be abolished altogether and replaced by public television. There is a place for commercial television in America: to sell products, and to provide the kind of lowest-common-denominator programming it does. But shouldn't we at least be given a *choice*? The principal question is how commercial television should be balanced. I believe it should be more like 40 to 60 per cent—rather than 97 per cent—of the American television budget, hours, and audience.

Britain also has balance in its programming—on *each* of the networks, commercial as well as BBC. No one is forced to watch "what is good for him." There is always a choice. And the significant programming does not reflect the fear of humor and entertainment that occasionally seems to stifle the efforts of America's producers of "educational television." But there is more than just "choice" on British television; there is an abundance of choice—not once a year or once a month, but every evening—from among current affairs discussions, documentaries, live drama, and the arts.

So what can we do about it? What do we want to do about it? The BBC is a British institution that has been an influence in England (and, with its short wave broadcasts, around the world) since the beginnings of radio in the 1920's. There is no way of importing that history, experience, tradition, commitment (and years of monopolistic operation without commercial competition) even should we want to do so. But we also have a tradition of public investment designed to develop and free the mind and spirit of man: public education, national parks, and libraries. The Public Broadcasting Corporation is very much in the American tradition. It is just under-equipped and -financed.

The American people do not know what public broadcasting can offer. They have never experienced a system like the British. How could they "choose" it? ("The choice you've never known is the

choice you'll never make," a wise man once observed.) But the same could have been said, at one time, for public education. The Land Grant College Act and local support of public schools changed all that. There are always educational reform movements, but by and large Americans today seem quite prepared to go on spending \$50 to \$60 billion a year in public money to educate their children. Why not some proportion—say one per cent of that amount for public television (from which they will get much more of their "education")? No one can say for certain what we "should" be spending on public broadcasting. But from what I have seen in Britain (and Japan), and what I know of television's potential and costs, I would suggest something on the order of one per cent; something more in the \$400 million to \$1 billion-a-year range than the \$10 to \$100 million range that has for so long limited our thinking.

I think we must allocate to public broadcasting a VHF television station (and an AM radio station) in each of the 100 largest metropolitan areas. However, I believe public broadcasting will never reach but a fraction of its potential unless we are prepared to make available two UHF (and two FM radio) nationwide networks as well. This is not suggested in a spirit of grandiose generosity; it is essential to public broadcasting's success. Much of what provides the balance in British television is that one of the networks has two outlets (BBC's "BBC 2"). This means that neither network need constantly maximize audience with each program; counter programming is what offers the balance. (NHK, the Japanese public broadcasting corporation, has three national radio networks and two television networks—in competition with commercial radio and television—and wants a third television outlet. The "Open University" could develop into a third public television network in England.)

If public broadcasting in America is ever to attract an audience, popular and political support, and the justification for large budgets, it must be fully competitive in attracting audience away from commercial television with popular programs—on at least some occasions. It simply can never do this, and provide the more substantive cultural and experimental fare as well, unless it has at least two networks. By skillful scheduling of programming throughout the day and evening, CPB could use three networks to provide seven or more programming services: preschool programming for children in the home; grade school instructional programming; high school instructional programming; general college course

material (for classroom or home instruction); specialized instruction for, say, doctors or policemen (possibly with a "scrambled" signal for privacy); and two channels offering balanced general "public broadcasting." This is what England and Japan have found necessary to supplement their commercial systems, and I really don't see how or why we should be expected to go through the Seventies and Eighties with less.

How do we get from here to there? We must simply grasp the nettle and do it. (For example, Japan recently decided it was going to move all television from VHF to UHF. A comparable decision in the United States might simultaneously resolve our shortage of land mobile radio frequencies and provide meaningful equality and expansion of UHF television. Such decisions are difficult but not impossible.) There are many possibilities. Comparative hearings could be held in each of the 34 of the top 100 markets where there is now no VHF educational television station. The station with the worst performance (network affiliate or independent) would lose its license unless, before or after the hearing, one of the VHF stations would voluntarily agree to move to UHF. The FCC could order at least one network affiliation in each market to be with a UHF station—thereby doing more for the development of commercial UHF television than the "All-Channels Receiver Act." A network affiliate that voluntarily moved to UHF would be guaranteed the continuation of its affiliation. An independent transferring to UHF might be able to pick up a network affiliation. Any station losing its license could get tax benefits and possibly compensation from the federal government.

The same procedure could be followed to acquire the fulltime educational AM station in each market (with transfers to FM). (The additional two UHF and two FM assignments would often be available in the community. When not, comparable procedures could be used.) The FCC clearly has such legal power. It need only exercise it in ways fairly designed to reduce the disruptive impact on commercial licensees to the absolute minimum necessary to achieve this broader public interest.

Even with the most favorable political support and expedition, it would take at least 20 years to reach the stage where American public broadcasting splits the audience with commercial broadcasting as it does in England. BBC officials tell me that so long as their audience share is between 40 and 60 per cent they believe they have



been successful. More than that and they are pandering to low taste; less than that and they are losing touch. But these are weekly averages. They are quite prepared to take extremely low ratings on individual shows of merit—and regularly do. (During 1968, for example, BBC 1 continued to support the talk-documentary show *Contrasts*, broadcast Wednesdays at 11 p.m., notwithstanding its relatively small audiences of 350,000 to 1.7 million.)

So what do we do in the meantime—while 94 per cent of the American prime time audience is watching commercial network programming (and most of the rest are watching old movies or network reruns on independent stations)? What we simply must do, in my judgment, is to provide an institutional environment in which the American commercial networks can, more often, do the best of which they are capable. They must be provided the incentive to offer more balance; or, otherwise stated, the present barriers against balance and innovation must be removed.

The American corporate ethic expects business to earn all the profit the law allows. The problem in commercial television is that the law knows no limits. This, paradoxically, is unfair to the networks. Only their executives' own consciences, and internal fear of vague governmental retribution, produce any pressures whatsoever for balanced programming. Most network officials would, in my judgment, accept the existence of some FCC standards requiring them to dedicate a portion of prime time to the public—after, of course, some initial opposition for appearances' sake.

It is in this spirit that I have proposed the "one-third rule." Under this proposal each network would have to provide one-third of its prime time for programming other than entertainment and sports. (The rule would be framed in terms of the obligation of the licensees, the television stations affiliated with networks, which could substitute locally-originated programming in the same categories if they chose.) Programming would be scheduled so that every American viewer, between the hours of 7 and 11 each evening, would always have a choice of at least *one* network offering something else. This would be programming balanced among the categories of current affairs, discussion, documentaries, drama, serious music or other cultural programming, instructional series, original and live productions or special events. Humor and satire of a kind not generally commercially sponsored would certainly not be excluded. Institutional advertising could be permitted once an hour, or before and after the programs (many corporations and trade

associations would be willing to pay handsomely for the opportunity); or commercials might be prohibited altogether. Perhaps the networks should be required to provide all or a major portion of such programming; maybe it should be opened up to outside suppliers (independent producers, the Ford Foundation, the best from the CPB, BBC or others).

Such a proposal would have advantages for the networks and American commercial enterprise as well as for the public. It would enable network executives to meet what they know are their responsibilities without having to apologize to their shareholders or boards of directors—or to refund advertising revenue already received for regularly scheduled shows. (“Specials” and fast-breaking news would have a regularly-allotted time slot.) The rules of the game would simply require it. And they would be free to maximize profit within the rules. The “one-third time” proposal might ease from their backs the torrent of governmental and public criticism that their present performance (quite understandably) produces. It would enable them to recruit the talent that is now leaving television in droves—promising new recruits the opportunity to work on creative programming in exchange for time spent on the commercial product.

It would enable many American corporations to fulfill comparable ends. There are always more companies that are potential supporters of “image-building” programming than there are programs for them to sponsor. There is nothing attractive about being associated in the public mind with nothing but trash.

Finally, the “one-third rule” would provide employment and encouragement to the wasting and weakened creative talent across this country that is now excluded from television, our nation’s most popular stage. America is poorer today because its filmmakers, musicians, writers, actors, and talent of every description are forced to skirt the creative wasteland of the television medium.

There is a greatness and diversity in every part of our country. But too little of this is reflected on prime time television—increasingly the product of a small handful of people who work within a few blocks’ area in Los Angeles or Manhattan.

British television is a more accurate reflection of the British people—all of them—than is American television of our country today. It need not be so. With greater American public understanding and involvement, with pressure for the “balance” that public broadcasting and the “one-third rule” might provide, it will not be so.

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A few months ago **ROBERT F. LEWINE**, President of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, interviewed Carol Burnett, star of CBS' *The Carol Burnett Show*, her husband and producer, Joe Hamilton, and her supporting "second banana," Harvey Korman. The respondents are identified in this interview transcript, with questions asked by Mr. Lewine.

# THE WORLD OF CAROL BURNETT

## QUESTION—

*Are comediennes successful only when they ridicule themselves?  
or when they poke fun at their roles as women, wives, and mothers?*

## CAROL BURNETT—

No, I don't think they're only successful doing that. I've been successful doing it myself but I used to poke fun at myself before I was in show business, so it comes from true life. I always kidded myself in school and at home. Everything is a series of self-defense remarks. . . to laugh at myself.

## JOE HAMILTON—

But that's not the only way you've been funny on the show.

## C B—

No, it's not the only way, but I still do it.

*—Do you find it helps with your audience identification?*

## C B—

Oh, sure. . . People stop me in the street, saying, "You're just like somebody in my family." Last week in "Questions and Answers" I mentioned a letter I had received when I was on Garry Moore's show. A mother wrote me, and said, "My daughter looks just like you and reminds people exactly of you. Please write her and tell her there's hope."

*—Were either you, Carol, or you, Harvey, influenced by one person  
in this business when you started?*

**HARVEY KORMAN—**

When I was doing stock 10 or 15 years ago, I was very much influenced by an actor named Donald Cook who was a brilliant actor and comedian on stage. . . . When I worked with him, I would observe and study him and be astounded by the selections he would make. His pauses would get longer and longer every night. I'd think, "He can't take that pause any longer—he'll blow the laugh." But the laugh would come stronger and bigger.

I found (the same thing) when I was working with Danny Kaye. But Danny used to tell me, make the big choice. Don't do the expected, do the unpredictable. Do wild things. Shout if you want to. And vocally, for instance, don't be afraid of words. Take a long pause. Scream if you feel like it. You come to believe in yourself and what you're doing. I think it's very important because you can go along always doing things people expect of you, and get lost.

I use the word "selection" because you have a selection of things to do when you work. I think Tim Conway is (succeeding at it). Don't just sit around and say, "Wouldn't that be funny?" and then, "No, we can't do it!" Go ahead and do it and *then* find out what's the best.

—*What about you, Carol?*

**C B—**

I didn't think I was going to be in show business until I was 20 years old. . . . it was a surprise to me. Before then, I wasn't influenced, I don't think, because my favorite actress was Linda Darnell. I worshipped her. She was so gorgeous and she was from Texas, too. Ever since I was a kid when I saw her in *Blood and Sand*. . . . My favorite actor was James Stewart.

When I went to New York to get into show business and I knew what I wanted, I lived at the Rehearsal Club and I never missed a Sid Caesar Show. It was the show, the group, that influenced me more than any one person. . . . the way they worked and developed sketches. In 1956 when *My Fair Lady* opened, two tickets were donated to the Rehearsal Club. We had a raffle and I drew the lucky number. I gave them away because I didn't want to miss Sid Caesar's show. I said, "Well, that'll be running a while," but because Sid's were live shows I knew that once it was over I'd never see that again.

As far as my attitude about work goes, I think I was more influenced by Garry Moore, the way he behaved around people.

*—Do you feel you need a company of players, that team around you?*

**C B—**

I feel I do. Jack Benny had Dennis Day and Rochester. He had people around who were funnier than he at times. They got the laughs and Jack just did takes and reactions.

I think that's very healthy. A great way to be. I don't want to be out there all the time and nobody is happier than I am when Harvey gets the scene or the laugh or when Vicki (Lawrence) comes forth with a character and it becomes hers. And Lyle (Waggoner)—when at times he's been given the right things to do he's come right up—he just shines. I think it's great—the audience likes it. It's like a family.

I don't like to work alone—I love contact with people, even in nightclubs. That's why Jim (Nabors) and I went up to Vegas together to work at Caesars Palace. I just don't want to get out there by myself. I can't come on alone.

**H K—**

I think Carol is a theatrical personality. She's not a monologist. She's not a stand-up comedienne. She's an actress who does comedy extremely well and it's my theory that she could do drama very well.

*—Do you or Harvey ever come up with sketch ideas of your own, or write your own material?*

**C B—**

Occasionally. Maybe in the past three years I've done six or eight of my own.

...But I'm really at odds if we come up against a sketch and know something's wrong and don't know how to fix it. I know what feels uncomfortable but I don't know how to get what's right on paper unless it's my idea from the first. I always know when it's going to be good, really good, when it's really working. And there are some things that I'm against from the outset that turn out all right.

**J H—**

You have 100 per cent instinct almost when it's wrong for you but you don't have a 100 per cent feeling when it's right for you.

**H K—**

That's where your theatricality comes in. Carol feels comfortable when there are...motivated characters who (have a direct relation with) another character.

**C B—**Not forced.

**H K—**She'll give up jokes to get it going.

**C B—**You're that way too, Harvey.

*—Why are there so few stand-up comediennes?*

**C B—**

I don't know. I think Joan Rivers is one of the best. Totie Fields is very good, and Phyllis Diller. I would be terrified to get up and do jokes. I think basically they're just exceptions to the rule...

*—Do you think...women feel people are uncomfortable when they come out and tell jokes?*

**C B—**

I don't think that's why there are so few. I don't think it's a question of what the audience would think—it's what they think of themselves. If I wanted to be a stand-up comedienne, I wouldn't think of defeat, and the fact that there are so few (comediennes) that the audience might not like me. I'd still go out and do what I wanted to do and try it. I think there are so few because they *don't* want to try it. They're trained from little girlhood not to grab the center of attention. With a little boy, it's "Oh, isn't he a caution!" when he acts up funny. (Boys are) encouraged to be funny. Whereas little girls are expected to be ladylike.

*—You don't think it has anything to do with the difference in sex?*

**C B—**

I just don't think that many women want to (come out and tell jokes). They want to come out and be pretty. For the most part, little girls growing up want to be actresses and be kissed by Steve McQueen, or be dancers, and be pretty...that's the image they have. That is, until they get a little older and realize the only way they're going to be loved is to be laughed at—by putting themselves on, or down. And then they start joking around with the boys at



school. They get dates for prom night and wind up playing ping-pong, but they have a good time.

—*Would you like to do stand-up comedy, Harvey?*

H K—No, oh no.

C B—He's an actor.

J H—Carol and Harvey both have to wear a mask of some kind, a character.

H K—

Before I even thought of comedy, I played *Hamlet* and I was (ahem) brilliant. It was full, rich. I don't have the need to do it any more. Tragedy, that is. It's a good thing because I had a terrible time getting into the business and all I could do was small theater, community theater, stock. Emotionally, everything was so close to the surface...

C B—A lot of comedy is tragedy *plus* time.

H K—Sure, you break your leg and it's a tragedy at the time but six weeks later...

C B—

When you're telling the story about when you were in the hospital in traction and the nurse accidentally brushed up against you and you're in pain; then it can be hysterical if you tell it right and look at it in a funny way. But time has to heal that pain...

That's why I always say sound effects are very important in comedy sketches. The more real they are, the bigger the laugh... it gets a much bigger reaction the more *Playhouse 90* it is. I hate slide whistles when you fall out of a window because (it's not real). I want it to sound real, a little bigger than life—a real body fall, a real clunk on the head.

—*What you are saying, then, is that comedy is very real, more true to life than drama.*

C B—

Oh yes. Chaplin proved that. Eating his shoe was very sad but it was very funny. Starving to death isn't funny but the way he coped with it...

H K—

Chaplin is also a great illustration of an old definition of the difference between comedy and tragedy. Comedy is when the characters are in control of their circumstances, tragedy is when circumstances control them. Chaplin was always in control. He'd always bounce back.

J H—

Ed Wynn had this theory: some people say funny things, other people say things funny. You can tell a joke and get laughs or take a straight phrase and say it in a funny way and get a bigger laugh out of it.

*—Do you find staging an hour show each week to be a terrible burden?*

C B—

No. I wish I could sound terribly profound like, "My life is hell," or, "People should love me for working so hard." No really, I love it. The only pressure is that occasionally I love to be alone and very seldom am I ever truly alone.

J H—

The hardest part of the show for Carol (or any show) is getting good material. Naturally, any performer is happier the better the material is. Carol never sees it until after it's already been mimeo'd.

*—She doesn't sit in on writers' meetings?*

J H—

No, occasionally we'll talk over production ideas or a sketch idea, but she doesn't actually sit down and write with the people, or say, "Don't do this or that, or I won't do this." That comes afterwards when we're molding the sketch.

C B—

If there's a particular idea I'm in love with, I'll poke my head in while the writers are working on it and say, "How's it going," or "I've got a thought—can you use this?" If I know a particular thing is being written that I really dig and want to turn out right, I'm very interested. With some of it, I just look at the bulletin board and ask what's the soap opera about two weeks from now.

—*The Funn Family? When was that created?*

C B—

Joe and I wrote that one night over the dinner table. We started talking about old Dan Dailey/Betty Grable movies, and with the kids talking and all, we got the whole plot out over dessert. Then I ran to the phone and called two of our writers and gave them the plot. They elaborated on it and wrote the dialogue, the jokes, and the marvelous songs. It just happened.

We want to make a movie out of it but I guess it's not dirty enough. In the end, Mama Funn ought to be an old stripper or something, to sell today. It's a musical—maybe it could be a television special or a *Movie-of-the-Week*.

They say you can't satirize Betty Grable and Dan Dailey films because they're doing it themselves on the *Late, Late Show*. That's my favorite item on the show—satire on old movies. They're hokey but they're a tribute to the era. That's what I mean about the material.

—*Do you believe that satire is too sophisticated for a mass audience?*

C B—

Ours has always been successful. The best mail we get is in praise of our satires.

H K—

It's camp. A lot of the young kids like the material. They like that era.

C B—

It's a real mother-pleaser. You know, "Oh, look, Betty Grable left Dan Dailey for his own good." They take it for real.

H K—

The real square ones will.

—*Do you have any feeling about doing topical comedy?*

C B—

My only feeling about it is, if it's truly funny, then okay. I don't want to come in and say, "I'm on a bandwagon for something, so let's do something political." If it's truly funny and it's political then groovy; but as far as I'm concerned, it has to be funny first.

There are some (political) things we've done that I don't think were that funny—but I was overruled so we went ahead and did them anyway. I'm not against (it)—it's not taboo, but we don't *have* to do them, either. I just want it to be funny.

—*Harvey, how did you get your start?*

**H K—**

I spent ten years in New York. I couldn't get on Broadway or off Broadway so I worked in a lot of restaurants. I guess the first thing that helped me get established as a working actor was *The Danny Kaye Show* in 1963. In 1960, I was doing summer stock in Chicago for Seymour Berns, and was understudying Jackie Coogan who played the lead. Berns said I ought to come to Hollywood because they needed actors who did comedy. . . . But three years later that show in Chicago paid off because Berns recommended me to the Kaye people and they just threw me in.

—*What about you, Carol?*

**C B—**

I always had faith. It's blind youth—being so dumb that you don't realize the odds against it. Therefore, it's a beautiful way to start believing in yourself. You just don't know that you *can't* do it—so you do it.

—*Don't you think there are two central motivations? —One is, believing in your talent and the other is wanting to make it big quickly, drive a Rolls Royce, live in Beverly Hills?*

**C B—**

No, I never thought in terms of money. Ever. Not when you're young. . . .

I would have been very happy to be in a chorus in a Broadway show but I couldn't because I couldn't read music. A friend of mine had been in a movie in a small part with Eddie Foy and he told me to go and see him. At that time Eddie was appearing on Broadway in *Pajama Game*. One night after the show I bluffed my way through the stage door and went over to Eddie Foy. I introduced myself and told him about my friend who was in the movie, that I was living at the Rehearsal Club and that I wanted to work. He asked me what I wanted to do. I insisted I had to have a featured

role because I couldn't dance and I couldn't read music but I sang very loud. Isn't that dumb? The next day Eddie called and gave me an introduction to an agent. Isn't that marvelous? I couldn't even be in a chorus.

**H K—**

It's really true, what I've said. As I sit here I don't really feel as though I've made it. I don't feel secure or that I have more or less talent or belief in my talent than I had 15 years ago. As a matter of fact, at times I have the feeling that somebody is going to poke me on the shoulder and say give all the money back—there's been a terrible mistake.

*—I can see an actor being frightened that some day it's going to be all over when he or she is not as physically attractive.*

**C B—**

I don't think that applies to us. I think that's one nice thing about being a comic. You don't have to worry about looking good, looking for the wrinkle.

... This is what I love, the variety show. You can do many different things each week. And you have your rep company that miraculously and beautifully get along. And you have fun with each other and fun working with different guests each week and doing different things. I don't have to worry about disintegrating physically. I could always do character things in movies to keep working if I wanted to.

*—I must say your show is honest. You can't cheat the tube. The compatibility and harmony of your group comes through on the show.*

**C B—**

I haven't felt this close to a group of people since Garry's show. This one has the same kind of feeling. I look forward to each week.

**J H—**

I think with this type of show, the comedy-musical-variety, unless the viewers themselves fall in love with the star, you don't have a chance. You can have the greatest material in the world, but first they've got to like the star.

—*How do you come up with fresh material each week?*

**C B—**

We *don't* each week. As Joe says, I think our percentage is good. I don't think any group of writers can come up with something fresh every week. It's just humanly impossible, so therefore you can't complain.

After all, they want (the show) to be funny and they keep trying. So, when you do have a little jewel, that's when you really latch on to it and polish it, and that's when I hate to see Friday's taping come and go. I think in order to make it fresh *we* have to be enthusiastic. Every week. That's what's hard because sometimes you don't feel like it.

—*How do you compare this with working on the stage? Do you find that it becomes monotonous playing the same role every day?*

**H K—**

I did *Little Me* this summer. [C B: You ought to read his reviews—you'd think his mother had written them.] One of the things I realized was that I got terribly bored with it after a week. I literally had to push myself on stage. Once I was there I had fun, especially in the smaller theaters. I realized what a tremendous education theater had been, especially in comedy, because the stage is the best place to learn your craft. The audience tells you from moment to moment what to do. When to make it larger, when to make it smaller. Why you missed. (I don't see how anyone can play the same part week after week, night after night.)

**C B—**

Television provides a new challenge week after week for me. I adored doing *Once Upon a Mattress* but then I started doubling. I was on Garry Moore's show and there was one period I was doing *The Blue Angel* [club], *Mattress*, and Garry's show all at the same time. I was physically tired. One time I got up on the mattress and almost flunked the test. For fifteen seconds I was out like a light. But I still didn't get as bored as I have subsequently doing the same thing in nightclubs. I love the new challenge. You have to remember that you think the audience has heard it before but the secret is they haven't, so you have to find new ways to do it to amuse yourself, for your own fun and games, and yet not lose the original characterization.

H K—

Having that challenge and a new show every week is great except that I find I begin to work fast and there's a tendency to rely on tricks that you know will always work. That doesn't broaden you as an artist. That's why the system in England is very good where you go from a film to television to the stage to broaden and constantly replenish the spirit. I find it difficult in TV because I'm relying on the same things. Because we work quickly and because the challenge is instant, we have to meet it instantly. If something inspirational doesn't occur to you immediately, you begin to lean on the same tricks. Not wanting to be predictable, you have to fight to be fresh, real and interesting. Carol's a marvel to me. Every week she's there, bubbling over and "doing it" while for me it gets harder and harder. I want to find something else to do—I've done this seventeen hundred times—seventeen hundred times I've used this reading!

C B—

We all do. I do too. You do it at home in real life—there are some things you do the same way every day just because you're that person.

J H—

That's part of growing and learning your craft.

C B—

But it's hard to do. In four days—without relying on something. Sometimes you're given something to do that you're stuck with—you don't want to do it but you don't have another sketch. You do it *because*. You have to do it. You work together.

H K—

It's the constant drawing on your own resources. I mean how far and how long can it go on? That's why television to me is so interesting. How much can you do on that little screen. You have to be interested in the people or you have nothing. I would like to get away from doing the characters and the sketches and the constant turnover and get closer to the person. I'd rather do more myself, rather than a German General or a Prussian faggot.

C B—

But Harvey, you're such a *great* Prussian Faggot.

# FAIRNESS, BALANCE, AND EQUAL TIME

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ELMER LOWER

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What is equal time? Who is entitled to equal time on the air?  
What is fairness and balance?

Everyone has the right to ask for equal time. Everyone has the right to ask for anything. This is a free country. But not everyone is entitled to equal time. The equal time requirements of the Communications Act of 1934 relate exclusively to appearances over broadcast facilities by legally qualified candidates for public office. Thus, vegetarians are not entitled to equal time each time someone is shown eating a hot dog on television; pigeon lovers and pigeon haters are not entitled to equal time. Even proponents and opponents of such a controversial subject as socialized medicine are not entitled to equal time.

What the vegetarians, pigeon lovers, and those for and against socialized medicine are entitled to is *fair and balanced treatment in news programming*.

The Federal Communications Commission's Fairness Doctrine provides that when a broadcast licensee presents one viewpoint in

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On August 5, 1970, **ELMER W. LOWER**, President of ABC News, spoke before the Public Relations Institute of the American Medical Association in Chicago. At a time when television news is under attack from both the political left and the right, his comments are welcome both for their clarity and for their keen sense of the importance and responsibility of television news.



relation to a controversial public issue, it must afford a reasonable opportunity for the presentation of contrasting views.

What we have here, then, are two distinct animals—Equal Time and Fairness.

Equal time as a principle emerged out of candidates' complaints in the 1926 election. Then, for the first time, radio was seen as a method of providing candidates with direct and immediate access to millions. Previously, broadcasting had made its debut in politics during coverage of the 1924 Democratic Convention in Madison Square Garden. (This particular political drama went on for a seemingly interminable 17 days and 103 ballots before John W. Davis was nominated.)

In response to criticism by candidates in the 1926 election, many of whom thought that their opponents received more air time than they did, the Radio Act of 1927 was passed.

Significantly, the law said that nothing in it was to be construed as giving the government power of censorship over broadcast communications. Section 18 of the Act required that equal time be given to all candidates if given to any. This, of course, was the prototype of Section 315 of the Federal Communications Act of 1934, which, with some amendments, remains in effect today.

Exemptions granted to Section 315 by Congress in the Presidential election year of 1960 permitted broadcasters to bring you the Kennedy-Nixon debates. The failure on the part of Congress to enact exemptions in 1964 and 1968 prevented face-to-face confrontations by the major party candidates in those years. The debates could not have been staged without the exemptions because of the plethora of minority party candidates for President—possibly dozens of them—who manage to get on the ballot in one state or another. Without a suspension of Section 315, all of these individuals would be entitled to equal time.

Both the Senate and House are now completing the drafting of legislation which would grant permanent exemptions to Section 315 in Presidential and Vice Presidential elections. ABC News has consistently endorsed this sort of legislation to enable us to bring fuller coverage of the major candidates. Should this legislation pass, the major candidates would be able to appear in extended debates or discussions on the ABC Television and Radio networks—without charge—to discuss fully the major issues. And I am sure that the other networks would also make substantial amounts of free time available, too.

The Federal Communications Commission's Fairness Doctrine was given its definitive form in 1949. It was codified in a 1959 amendment to the Communications Act of 1934. The FCC rules that radio (and the rules applied to television, too) can serve as an instrument of democracy only when devoted to the communication of information and the exchange of ideas fairly and objectively presented.

The Commission ruled, "Freedom of speech on the radio must be broad enough to provide full and equal opportunity for the presentation to the public of all sides of public issues. Indeed, as one licensed to operate in the public domain the licensee has assumed the obligation of presenting all sides of important public questions, fairly, objectively and without bias."

Thus, when many viewers—organization members, or individuals—write us requesting "equal time" they are asking for something that they are not entitled to. They do have a right, however, to expect that we will treat controversial stories in which they may have an interest fairly and in balance. Only candidates for public office can demand equal time.

Now as a practical matter, how is the Fairness Doctrine enforced?

In one recent case involving a local radio station—WXUR and WXUR-FM in Media, Pennsylvania—the FCC denied the licensee a renewal because the owners did not make reasonable efforts to comply with the Fairness Doctrine.

Networks are not licensees per se, although each network owns five television and seven radio stations, and all of these are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission. In addition, of course, our affiliates both in radio, where they number close to 1,200, and in television, where they number 160, are licensees and so the coverage they get from ABC News will be judged for fairness and balance by the Federal Communications Commission along with their own news efforts.

Today we hear a lot of discussion—that's a polite term for some of it—about whether television and radio news is, indeed, fair and balanced. Much of the discussion, I think, is generated by the passionate feelings inspired by the issues of our times. Our country is divided quite seriously on many issues. The war in Vietnam, economic and social problems at home, the radicalization of segments of our youth—all inspire intense reactions. A comment by

a Nixon administration supporter aired on our *Evening News* program inevitably brings letters demanding why we aired "administration propaganda." A comment by an administration opponent often brings letters accusing us of having committed nothing less than treason.

Many in the audience are so emotionally involved in the perplexing and seemingly insoluble problems of today that they tend to suffer from severe cases of selective perception when we report those problems. That which reinforces their own attitudes blends into the general background; that which tends to contradict their previously-held attitudes stands out, infuriates them, goads them to write letters of denunciation.

Ironically, you can get completely opposite reactions to the same story. Several months ago we aired a story about the death in Vietnam of a young helicopter pilot. The soundtrack of the piece was a tape recording made by the pilot shortly before his death. The tape was made available to ABC News by the pilot's father.

Students at the University of California at Berkeley filmed a suburban couple watching the *Evening News* that night and interviewed them about the spot. They thought it should not have been shown—that it was anti-war, anti-administration. Yet when our anchorman Frank Reynolds visited Berkeley in person a short time later, the same report was shown to students there and they challenged Reynolds for having shown what they considered a pro-war piece. Obviously the piece could not have been both pro-war and anti-war, both administration propaganda and anti-administration reporting.

What do we do to make our news fair and balanced? Well, one thing we do is hire only trained, experienced professional newsmen. For the professional newsman, the dedication to fairness and balance is a matter not of governmental doctrine, but of personal credo.

Our producers and editors don't sit at their desks with ledgers in front of them saying, "Senator Fulbright had 32 seconds yesterday, so we'd better get Secretary of State Rogers for 32 seconds today." It doesn't work that way. But when news breaks, our men do seek both sides of controversial questions—or all three or four sides if the issue is more complex than a two-sided one.

Senator Fulbright, incidentally, has initiated legislation which would require the networks to find time to enable both houses of Congress to answer Presidential statements.

Hearings into that bill are now being held by Senator Pastore's Senate Communication Subcommittee. Leonard H. Goldenson, President of the American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. told the Pastore panel yesterday, "Experience indicates that the greater the controversy surrounding an issue, the more fragmented and divergent are the views of those who comprise the Senate and the House. I find it difficult to even imagine a point of view on a controversial public issue which could aptly be characterized as the House or the Senate view."

And on Tuesday, Senator Pastore himself pointed to another potential problem in institutionalizing Congressional reply time to Presidential remarks. Should the proposal become law, he said, "I can give you the names of five guys that would never give the rest of us a chance."

Mr. Goldenson told the subcommittee, "Instead of... legislation which seeks to achieve balanced presentation according to a rigid formula, we urge the subcommittee to re-affirm, as it did in 1959, the FCC's 'Fairness Doctrine'."

Now Mr. Goldenson's recommendation may lead you to ask, "How do you network newsmen do, operating without a 'rigid formula'? Just how fair are you, operating on your journalistic instincts? How well do you do?"

Very, very well, I think. But, to be sure, ABC News undertook a content analysis study of all its 1969 regularly-scheduled hard news programs. This included every broadcast of the *ABC Evening News with Frank Reynolds and Howard K. Smith* and the *ABC Weekend News* for the year—a total of 104 hours and 40 minutes of television newscasts.

The methodology of the survey was devised by Dr. Irving E. Fang of the University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Dr. Fang has worked for newspapers and wire services, and was in television news from 1961 to 1969. He served until last fall as the assistant manager of the ABC News Political Unit—the unit which supplies analysis and projections during our coverage of elections.

Dr. Fang worked with seven ABC News researchers. They read each script and program log, categorized stories, wrote summaries and ran checks on each other's work.

In the organizational stages, Dr. Fang worked side-by-side with each researcher in turn to be sure that decisions were reached in

harmony with the group. All members of the team worked in close quarters, so that the frequent questions raised by one researcher about the disposition of a particular news item could be heard by everyone.

At meetings, key decisions were reviewed to be sure that everyone was using the same criteria and that everyone felt the group decisions were the right ones.

The key areas were the Nixon Administration, the Vietnam War, the Vietnam issue at home, the Mideast, other international political news, the Chicago Eight trial, crime and trials generally, the Kennedy-Koepchne case, the ABM controversy, military spending and space, the Haynsworth nomination and the Fortas affair. These major stories and issues comprised about two-thirds of that total 104 hours and 40 minutes.

Overall, the Fang group found that news which tended to support the Nixon Administration viewpoint or which was likely to be pleasing to a supporter of the Administration totaled 14 hours, 48 minutes. That tending not to support the Administration or likely to be displeasing to a supporter of the Administration totaled 11 hours, 17 minutes. Neutral news totaled 13 hours, 53 minutes.

As you know, if you are viewers of the *ABC Evening News with Frank Reynolds and Howard K. Smith*, we permit our anchormen to deliver personal opinion commentaries—which we clearly label. (In fact, Frank Reynolds won a prestigious Peabody Award for his 1969 commentaries.) Commentary tending to support the Administration totalled one hour, 44 minutes, commentary tending to be critical totalled one hour and three minutes. Neutral commentary totalled two hours, 20 minutes.

The faces and words of the Nixon Administration personnel and its political supporters got more air time than their political opponents by an order of three-to-one. Of course, any Administration sitting in the White House enjoys such a built-in advantage.

Filmed or videotaped statements by members of the Nixon Administration and direct quotes totaled three hours, 25 minutes. The same type of material by their political opponents totaled one hour, 15 minutes.

On Vietnam, let's first look at stories originating from Vietnam itself. The researchers logged two hours, 58 minutes of news from Vietnam that was favorable to the Administration. Also, there was 12½ minutes of favorable commentary. Unfavorable news from Vietnam totaled two hours, 24 minutes. And there was a total of

three minutes of critical commentary. In the neutral category, Dr. Fang's researchers found two hours and 50 minutes of news and 15½ minutes of commentary.

Now, for news on the Vietnam issue originating in the United States and, to a very small extent, in other countries outside South-east Asia, stories favorable to the Administration totaled two hours, 28 minutes. And there was a total of 20½ minutes of favorable commentary. The unfavorable figures show two hours, 29 minutes of news and 11 minutes of unfavorable commentary. In the neutral column, the survey shows one hour and 43 minutes of news and 40 minutes of neutral commentary. Note that there was an imbalance here of only one minute—out of close to seven hours of news coverage!!!

The vast amount of other international news, other than Vietnam and the Mideast, fell in the neutral category—five hours, three minutes of hard news, plus 19½ minutes of commentary were classified as neutral. The favorable total came to two hours, 18 minutes in news, 14 minutes in commentary. The unfavorable column shows two hours, 12½ minutes of news and one-and-a-half minutes of commentary.

On the Mideast, the survey found that the difficulties our correspondents and crews encountered in the Arab countries contributed to a small imbalance.

The researchers found one hour, 33 minutes of news and film showing the Israelis in a good light, either as a people or as a military power. The comparable figure for the Arabs was one hour, seven minutes.

It should be remembered that during this period, Mrs. Golda Meir, the Israeli premier, visited the United States—dropping in on sites she knew when she was growing up in this country—and so generated a good deal of coverage.

Neutral or balanced Mideast news totaled two hours, 37 minutes. In addition there was neutral commentary totaling six-and-a-half minutes.

Since that time we have done a 30-minute documentary in our Monday night *Now* series on the Palestinian refugees and we have assigned correspondent Peter Jennings to make frequent swings through the Arab countries from his home base in Rome.

Censorship and government obstruction remains a problem in the Arab countries, and in March I visited Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon personally in an effort to get the Arab states to permit us more

freedom in covering their activities. I also checked conditions in Israel, where we maintain a bureau. There is censorship in Israel, too, but it is not as stringent as that in the Arab countries.

On military spending, stories of opposition to the Administration's point of view got 30 minutes. Stories of support totaled 13 minutes. There were 12 minutes of neutral news and one minute of critical commentary.

The ABM controversy was treated separately. Here, the Nixon Administration's point of view received more time—24 minutes—to the opposition's point of view—15½ minutes. There were two favorable commentaries, one critical commentary. In the neutral column on ABM, we find 33 minutes of hard news, three minutes of commentary.

On the Haynsworth controversy, the researchers found perfect balance. News and sound-on-film statements supporting the nomination of Judge Haynsworth to the Supreme Court totaled 20 minutes. Similar material in opposition totaled 20 minutes. In addition, there were 25 minutes of neutral news and statements. ABC News aired one critical commentary and one neutral commentary.

The pros and cons on the Fortas case balanced out at about four-and-a-half minutes each, while neutral news totalled 12½ minutes. There was one neutral commentary and one which was critical.

On the Kennedy-Kopechne case, the surveyors found 29 minutes of news unfavorable to the Senator, 9½ minutes of news favorable to him and 32 minutes of neutral news. I should add that this total did not include the ten-minute special broadcast from the Kennedy home in which the Senator gave his side of the story. One commentary was generally favorable, another generally critical.

During simpler days, when there was considerably less controversy, the job of being fair and balanced was relatively easy. . . the pressure was down. In times such as these, "times that try men's souls," the pressure is up and there is a far greater challenge in being fair and balanced. Yet, in such times, fairness and balance are far more important to our viewers and listeners.

I think I've provided you with some picture of how fairness and balance works—at ABC News at any rate. Our survey is continuing as we strive to achieve the goal we set for ourselves and the goal the Federal Communications Commission has set for us.

# THOUGHTS ON WRITING FOR TELEVISION

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MAX WYLIE

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Television, it would appear, has entered a critical phase of its short life. In the past, the *writer* determined the patterns of television programming. It was the writer's work, the best and the worst of it, that formed those patterns. Today, this is true only in part. Today, when all of the complementary skills of a good production are in good supply, writers are in short supply. And the situation is worsening. No one is training tomorrow's television writers. They are finding their way into television by themselves, or getting lost en route.

This is wrong.

It would be equally wrong, however, to accuse the networks of abdicating a responsibility they never have felt. The actual *teaching* of television writing, or the underwriting of a plan for such has never been recognized by the networks as an activity profitable to their own interests. Yet, if properly directed, such a plan would serve these ends richly and immediately. It's hard to see how the networks could get hurt; how they could lose much. Suppose they were to uncover another Rod Serling?

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In September 1970, veteran television writer *MAX WYLIE'S* latest book, *WRITING FOR TELEVISION*, was published. Portions of it are of interest to many in the television industry who are not primarily writers as well as to other readers of this journal. Mr. Wylie is a member of the Editorial Board of *TELEVISION QUARTERLY*. This edited excerpt appears by permission of his publishers, Cowles Book Company, Inc.



The problem of "television's writer starvation" was earnestly discussed by one of its most dependable and mature dramatists, Reginald Rose.

The new *CBS Playhouse* (the *Playhouse* then being in its first year) does attempt to light one candle, but in the main it is still necessary for us to curse the darkness. The *Playhouse* to date has been an attempt to supply us with serious drama and, hopefully, with new writing talent, but the four or five plays it will present this season are simply not enough. . .

*ABC's Stage 67* was a noble but costly flop, proving, I imagine, once again to the decision makers, that the American public is simply not interested in serious drama.

It becomes increasingly evident that we are not about to spawn a new group of craftsmen such as Robert Alan Aurthur, Paddy Chayefsky. *et al.* There is simply no training ground available for them.

What we are developing today is a kind of computerized writer, an artist who learns his craft writing to formula.

Without a training ground there will be no new rising young stars, and most of the old ones have turned to other media. J. P. Miller and Sumner Locke Elliot, for instance, are writing novels. The others are writing either for films or theater, or both.

Television by its very nature has a responsibility to, if you'll pardon the expression, art. Meaningful drama belongs regularly on at least some of those 75 million boxes scattered across the country, if only because there are millions of viewers who want it, who will be entertained by it, and whose insights into the human condition will be deepened by it. (Note: According to latest estimates at the time this book was being written, the number of TV sets in American homes had risen to 78.2 million.)

The foregoing sentences ring with authority and integrity. And a lot of controlled hurt.

Many of the best-known names in television writing wrote scripts in their spare time while making their living at something else, as Reginald Rose pointed out in the same article (*New York Times*, September 20, 1966). For example, Paddy Chayefsky wrote sketches for nightclub comics. N. Richard Nash was a schoolteacher. Rod Serling was on the GI Bill. Tad Mosel was an airlines clerk. Robert Alan Aurthur was part owner of a small record company. Horton Foote was an actor. David Shaw was a watercolorist. And J. P. Miller sold airconditioners. "I myself sold thirteen shows to television before I finally got myself an agent," Rose said.

But for writers, those days were different. There was a market for what they wrote. Today there isn't.

Often I have asked established television writers what kind of advice they would offer the young talents who wanted to move into television. Not very encouraging.

Said Luther Davis, "I'd tell them to avoid it." Donn Mullally, a writer of very different slant but large accomplishment said, "The trouble with writing for television is that it can be damn hard work. And there's the slippery bit of scrambling around in your own blood, which is *revision*. Yes, you may correctly assume that all the young men and women are being discouraged, deliberately and overtly, from undertaking this means of making a buck."

Anything encouraging from any writer? Yes, here and there. But you'll have to dig for it. New writers *do* have friends, men who will read them—Harry Ackerman, Leonard Stern, Sam Bobrick, Jack Elinson, Sheldon Leonard. *Writers* help other writers. So do some producers. But networks do nothing, really. Most producers work with a small (or large) stable of writers they've come to trust. But in the training or steering of talents that have yet to succeed, there is neither idealism nor intelligence to help. Nor any recognition of the need of it. At the beginning it is better to be tough than gifted.

Another problem that today's television writer must meet head on: he must live on the West Coast. If he doesn't happen to, it is essential for him to move there. However, the young writers I know do have a lot of bounce. They'd go—if they thought they had a chance.

Do the networks do anything to help?

ABC is doing something interesting and productive to seek new *acting* talents, and through a setup that makes sense. Under the auspices of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, with Worthington Miner and his actress wife, Fran Fuller, in charge, 2,500 actors and actresses were auditioned out of a list of 25,000 applicants. Each trying for one of the scholarships established by ABC.

It would be pleasant to report that the same network is doing the same for writers. Perhaps it may in future. What ABC is doing now is on a most modest scale. Editors of high school papers may apply for two available fellowships that will bring them to Blair Academy for summer work. Blair is in New Jersey, but this is not just an eastern thing. One of last year's winners was a Texan, the other from Indiana. But these fellowships are intended to steer

these young men to TV *journalism*, not to television drama. Drama and comedy have recently become orphaned.

In emphasizing the special contribution of the writer, I do not intend to slight the importance of other contributions: production quality, publicity, star value, time-of-show, and the hard effect of competitive factors. A large number of collateral influences reach into every show. They help it or hurt it. They enhance or diminish what the writer offers. But I believe it is his offering—whether adult or puerile, sweet or steamy, whimsical, tough, put-down, turned-on, in, out, way-out, up-tight, funny, or square—that must carry the main load of the production.

In my opinion, the script is the wagon the writer built. All others connected with the journey either ride on it, drive it, grease its axles, or push at the spokes. But all are after the same thing: they want the wagon to move.

This aim is good. And the units that support most of television's successful efforts are skillful, approachable, and well disciplined. They get up early and go to work early.

There is something else. There is a basic honesty and a basic simplicity about all the successfully produced drama in today's television, whatever its category. This is as true of a happy, tatterdemalion show like *Tarzan* as it is of an excellent thing like *The Price of Tomatoes*.

This business of simplicity, of honesty, is no longer quite true of the English-speaking theater, I feel. Nor is it true of many of today's novels.

For example, within the past few years it has become more important that a playwright "explain" or interpret his play on the theater page of a newspaper than that he write it for a theater audience. Yet the stage is nostalgically recalled by many Americans—squares, no doubt—as a forum where plays, in days past, did their own explaining. You knew what was going on. You could disapprove, but at least you knew. So did the author. Today, in our passion for the incoherent, we are so contrarily conned by glibness or coy obfuscation that what is *said* about a theatrical product is sometimes more significant than what the *work says* of itself; or what it reveals to beholders, or reveals as to the purpose and integrity of its maker.

For the time being we've mislaid our self-trust.

Television, by contrast, can't be precious, or pawky, or "unresolved." The compound eye of 30 million viewers won't accept it.

Perhaps some of the people in today's theater, and some of the practitioners of the obscure, need a chat with the six year-old who saw that the emperor had neglected to pull on his pants and was strolling down the boulevard bare as a clam.

A lot of loose naiveté is floating around under the guise of social significance. We'll always have it. Some of this naiveté is getting wide attention. In the past three or four years Marshall McLuhan has moved it forward. His mind-catching syndrome about message content in contemporary media, it seems to me, has sharper application to abstract painting and nonbooks than it has to radio or television. I can go along with him about his "hot" and "cold" but only to the limited extent that the contribution of individual imagination makes radio hotter than television. But radio's invitation to the imagination has been known for 40 years before McLuhan. It serves to explain why serious ghost stories, for example, were big in radio and why they're impossible on television. You want your own ghost, so you create him.

Procter & Gamble long ago learned the risk of photographing Ma Perkins. Radio listeners didn't want to be shown what Ma Perkins looked like. They *knew*. And anything but their own image of this cackling old one-woman matriarchy, hacking around in her sanitary lumberyard, was wrong.

Similarly, many who remember Amos 'n Andy forget how fast this team died on the screen.

*If something isn't understood in television, it's tuned out. If something isn't understood in the theater, it's celebrated.*

The television audience at large doesn't worry about "hot" vs. "cold." Marshall McLuhan will never get through to them; they aren't aware of him. He's a university phenomenon and he'll end up there. (And not a bad place to end up, either, considering the coin that goes with it.)

Even if they had heard of him, TV audiences could shrug off Marshall McLuhan and go right on watching Marshal Dillon accepting warmed-over coffee from Kitty in the Long Branch Saloon.

About 30 million Americans think there *is* a message there at Dodge. They're not concerned about the medium, just the message. If there is a message, a writer wrote it. Is it important that the message is trivial? No. Or ephemeral? No. It is only important that it is there.

Call it a "story" if you like.

Were the message not there, it is the belief of television executives that 30 million viewers would not be there either. In television no one has the handy escape hatch McLuhan has neatly worked into his own prose: "People make a great mistake to read me as if I'm saying something."

Marshal Dillon *has* to back up all he says. If he doesn't, he's dead. McLuhan doesn't have to back up anything. He can pick up a good fee by advertising his frailties and circumlocuting his adversaries to death by machine-gun disorgements of self-ridicule, self-contradiction, and paradox.

Many of the best scripts (of their type), I have included in my book—both for comedy and for drama. Some of them are from television series now departed; most of them are from series that will one day be no more. *Titles* of television series are transitory; *types* of series endure.

There is violence in some of the best dramatic scripts for television. And violence *belongs* in these stories. They would not be stories without it. But no *gratuitous* violence exists in any of the material. If you come up against the Mafia and you are caught, you get hurt. The most "violent" script (the reader will meet with), *A Trip to Czardis*—is an American classic. It is violent because its violence is withheld, insinuated, never seen. It is the violence of feeling, not of sight or sound. But its swift power will stun. It will leave you hurting the rest of your life.

It is time that critics of television's "violence" review their definitions, time they leave that word alone when they mean brutality. And is there not a great deal of brutality on television? Yes, there is. And much too much of it, much that is cynically permitted.

*This* is the industry's shame.

But any writer who must rely on brutality betrays a basic weakness in his talent reservoir. My own hatred of physical violence, more especially of unprovoked brutality, is so extreme that it almost constitutes a violence of its own. The violence in *The Sand Pebbles*? Yes. The brutality in *A Fistful of Dollars*? No.

By the same token, if the aspiring television writer looks down his nose at the *Dick Van Dyke Show* or *Get Smart*, this book on television writing is not for him, either. In fact, my book is not for anyone who looks down his nose at anything in television. This means not at all that everything is to be approved or applauded or emulated. Or that much isn't to be deprecated. It just means

that objective assessment will yield the truth sooner than impassioned dismissal. It means that impartial display of the insides of a great many different types of successful programs will more quickly steer the new writer to where he wants to go, to the goal he would most like to try for in television, to the quality and mood of the show or series to which he feels a natural leaning or a chemical affinity.

Could that include soap operas? Of course. Why not? There has to be something not only valid but unusually viable in a soap opera that has survived for 19 years. *Love of Life* did it.

Is the writing of a soap opera beneath you? You'd better wait till you try. You think you would never descend to it? Maybe you couldn't get up to it. Actors don't spurn this work. *Love of Life* got Warren Beatty started. And it paid the rent for Carl Betz. They went on to bigger things—Warren Beatty to the springboard of *Bonnie and Clyde*, Carl Betz to *Judd for the Defense*. But neither man considers *Love of Life* a shabby side of his professional background any more than Helen Hayes felt hesitant about taking a role in a *Tarzan* episode. These actors are professionals, and respecters of professionalism.

In conclusion, what continues to amaze me is the vast number of students enrolled in television courses who have never *seen* a television script. It is even true of many of the books on the subject. Few of these available textbooks contain more than a script or two, and I have books on my library shelves that do not contain even a single script. This appals.

There seems to me something lazy, or dreamy, or dishonest, about all this, like teaching dentistry without lights or pie baking without flour.

The purpose of this book is to help new energies find their way.

# COMING OF AGE IN SUDSVILLE

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AGNES ECKHARDT NIXON

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From the mists of memory, some of my earliest recollections are laced with the themes and theses of the old radio serials. Before I knew how to read or write, I knew that Helen Trent was proving romance need not pass a woman by at age 35 or more, that Lorenzo Jones was not a joke to his wife Belle, who loved him, and that Mary Noble's husband was the matinee idol of a million other women.

I yearned to visit mysterious and beautiful Black Swan Hall where Our Gal Sunday had a running battle to keep her hooks in England's richest most handsome lord, Lord Henry Winthrop; and I often took my nap to the mellifluous tones of the announcer recapping Stella Dallas' story of mother love and sacrifice or the lullaby lilt of Oxydol's own Ma Perkins.

Of course I much preferred, to this "adult" fare, *Let's Pretend* and the serialized *Secret Three*, *Fu Manchu*, and *Little Orphan*

*AGNES ECKHARDT NIXON's* television career began with live evening drama when she wrote for *Studio One*, *Hallmark*, *Philco*, *Robert Montgomery Presents*, and *Somerset Maughan Theatre*.

In the daytime serial field, she created *Search For Tomorrow*, co-created *As The World Turns* with Inna Phillips, was head writer on *The Guiding Light* and *Another World* and most recently has created, and been writing, *One Life To Live* and *All My Children* for ABC. She has had at least one program on the air, five days a week, year round, for the last 15 years.

*Annie*—being so addicted to the latter that once in an unaccountable attack of religious fervor, I gave up that program for the whole forty days of Lent and, in my childish but very real way, suffered severe withdrawal symptoms every afternoon at four o'clock.

Thus did I grow up with "soap opera," and am, I hope, still growing.

Listening, of course, is not the automatic path to learning. If it were, we'd have at least 20 million serial writers by now. But I differed from the other listeners in having the best possible teacher, Irna Phillips, who hired me upon my graduation from Northwestern University to write dialogue for her. (Miss Phillips is still continuing her prodigious output from her home in Chicago where she and her daughter, Katherine, are responsible for the new ABC serial, *A World Apart*.)

Even more important than story construction and plotting techniques, Irna taught me that I must have respect for my metier or I would be but a hack, and that only from this respect would emerge the ability and capacity to develop one's craft and perhaps even raise the standards of the form.

Yes, talent is a prerequisite; but it is also a gift and thus one deserves no credit for it. Yes, the self-discipline needed is enormous and one does want credit for that—particularly if the cleaning woman has quit or one was up most of the night with a sick child—but the sine qua non, at least for this writer, is belief in what one is doing, because without that belief, one can do nothing.

Of course we all know that the term "soap opera" has become a cliché of denigration and this piece is in no way an apologia or a defense against the bromidic critics who must constantly fall back on this prosaism. The simple fact is that each of the serials on the air is watched by an average of from three to eight million viewers per day—men, women, and children. And when one multiplies that number by five days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, one must be struck by the power of this form of entertainment and the force it can have in our society. This, then, is the subject under consideration.

First, however, it must be understood *why* the dramatic serial is such a popular form of television entertainment. Why, in an industry with a very high nighttime mortality rate, these hardy perennials, done live on tape, at a fraction of the production cost of the filmed or animated shows, are increasingly becoming the financial bulwark of the networks because of their audience appeal.



There is no mystique about it. For a serial to be successful it must tell a compelling story concerned with interesting, believable characters. Characters with whom the audience can personally identify or emotionally empathize. The ingredients are the same required for any good dramatic fare but with one basic difference: that the continuing form allows a fuller development of characterization while permitting the audience to become more and more involved with the story and its people.

When the audience left the theater after *Death Of A Salesman*—or when they turned off their sets after that memorable video production—they realized how completely caught up they had been in the travails of Willy Loman. They reflected on how his life might have been different given other circumstances and conditions, but this was academic because the play had ended. In a serial, however, the play does *not* end. There is always “tomorrow” with the possibility that fate may deal “Willy” a different hand, a new set of circumstances, or that he will find within himself the resources to battle and conquer life.

This, at bottom, is the ingredient responsible for the audiences’ being “hooked,” for their tuning in to the next episode. The serial form imitates life in that, for its characters, the curtain rises with birth and does not ring down until death. Just as the viewer looks forward to his or her own tomorrow and the joys and vicissitudes it will bring, so does that viewer look forward to the next day in the lives of those people who have become companions of her daily existence. For they are not thought of as actresses and actors, they are friends who quite often break the monotony, even the loneliness of the day’s routine.

And the fact that these actors are not thought of as entertainers is the greatest testimony to their talent. A talent honed by an incredible amount of hard work. In spite of laboring under a time limit imposed upon no other dramatic form known to man, the best of the serials display a level of professionalism, a caliber of directing and acting, a spirit of dedicated teamwork from stagehands, lighting and camera crews to the highest paid actors, without peer in this industry. Only by being associated with these people can one know what a grueling job it is and without them how meaningless a writers’ efforts would be...I humbly and gratefully salute them.

As to the “typical” soap opera viewer, in my experience there is no single category. We know from the letters we receive (obviously

I am speaking only of letters to the shows I have written) that the viewers' age range is from early teens to the eighties, and the educational gamut runs from near illiteracy to the highly intellectual and articulate.

There are also specialized, intricate methods by which audience size and composition is measured today—with the emphasis on the buying power of the 18 through 49-year old segment of viewers and the desirability of appealing to them. But no rating chart, no demographic percentage has ever refuted the fact that whatever the audience profile, the vital ingredient that attracts them is a good yarn about arresting characters.

Of course the daytime serial has gone through revolutionary changes, but so has all entertainment. Helen Trent would never have had an abortion but neither would her fans have been able to see *Hair*, *Oh Calcutta*, *I Am Curious: Yellow*, or *The Tropic of Cancer*. Today, Stella Dallas would chuck Lolly-baby, have her face lifted and marry Just Plain Bill, Our Gal Sunday would join Women's Lib, and Mary Noble, Backstage-Wife, would split from Larry and begin to swing a little herself. Indeed we've come a long way since the Saturday morning Armstrong Theater's ten mimeo'd pages of sponsor taboos and exhortations to writers, containing the immortal dictum of "no serious infidelity."

Television is more sophisticated today. More sophisticated than it was even ten or five years ago. But by sophistication I do not mean the use of sexual exploitation or exhibitionism themes, but in the ability to deal with many areas of social significance in depth without fear of disturbing the shibboleths of some intransigent minority, whether religious, regional, political, or ethnic.

There are those who claim that serials portray more "adult" situations than do the nighttime programs and that this happens because network executives simply ignore the content of daytime shows. This is sheer nonsense because every script that is aired must go through Continuity Acceptance and any story line whose contents might be questioned is discussed with said executives beforehand.

However, the genre of the dramatic serial *does* allow time for the treatment of certain subjects in a way that is impossible in the complete-in-one-episode nighttime format. And because of this in-depth development, the serial audience becomes so thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances which impelled the character

into the given condition, has witnessed (if a "soap" writer may be permitted such a literary allusion) "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" as they rained upon the protagonist, that said audience is apt, therefore, to be more indulgent, more tolerant of the transgression committed, whether knowingly or by accident.

This is not to say that all serial characters are lovable latter-day Hamlets or Ophelias; the pieces have their villains, their unsympathetic characters, for whom the audience does not wish a better tomorrow. But in any well-written serial, these "heavies" are also well-developed three dimensional characters whom the audience knows and understands even though they disapprove. Actually, some of the most popular characters I have ever created, male or female, were of this ilk, the audience enjoying the audacity and complexity of their cunning, loving to hate them: . . . "Oh, that Erica Kane, what a devil she is, I can't wait to see what she's going to pull next."

Now let us consider the "soaps'" power to influence, and thus the responsibility of this form of entertainment. For it is in this area that we have made the greatest advances in recent years. This is where we have truly grown up, by tackling and dealing with subjects and situations which were formerly off limits.

As stated previously, the fear of offending any group with buying power made many controversial issues verboten. And since controversy is of the essence of conflict and conflict the essence of drama, one was often hard put to contrive interesting, contemporary stories while avoiding some of the basic issues of our times.

But this has changed in recent years, at least on a number of shows, and for me the biggest and most exciting change came with the premiering of *One Life to Live* in July of 1968. Under the enlightened management of ABC, one of the first, and major, stories we told was that of Carla Gray, a Negro of light pigmentation—played by that excellent actress, Ellen Holly—who, because of the pressures from both blacks and whites, had been passing as a white woman for nine years and was engaged to a white doctor. It was while Carla was still thought by the audience to be white that she fell in love with a black intern at the hospital and the story went on to dramatize how, when he discovered the truth of her identity, he rejected her for her rejection of her race.

Carla's dark-skinned mother, played by Lillian Hayman (who won the Antoinette Perry Award as the best supporting actress for

her role in *Hallelujah Baby*) was also a very vital part of this story and as the months and years have passed, these two actresses, along with three other black members of the cast, have been an integral part of our serial, not only when their specific stories were center stage but in relation to all the other stories which have been developed. They are what one calls, in a serial, "core" characters, tied closely by friendship to the rest of the cast and thus concerned in all other plot lines.

May one emphasize that the Carla story in *One Life to Live* was successful, meaning popular with the viewers, not because of its sociological implications, not because it reflected a very real, and tragic, aspect of American life, but because these ingredients were made into a whacking good story. And this is of paramount importance. No matter how worthy a subject is of dramatization, of being brought to the attention of the public, it must first be told in an interesting fashion, it must entertain, or the viewer will turn off the set, or switch channels, and then *all* one's efforts, and aims, are wasted.

So it is that Sadie and Carla Gray and Bert Skelley, a district attorney who happens to be black and thus happens to offer rich story potential which one would not have with a white district attorney, simply typify life in our country today, as, similarly, our Jewish lawyer, David Siegel, and his Irish-Catholic wife, Eileen Riley Siegel, represent the marriages which 20 years ago caused raised eyebrows and are now the happy commonplace.

But today, Dave and Eileen, united in their love for each other and their children, perhaps a little too protective of them, will soon be facing—since it is obviously being faced by tens of thousands of parents around the country and we feel needs video exposure—the fact that their 20 year old daughter has decided to live with the young man of her choice without benefit of legal union.

Last spring, at a television seminar in Aspen, Colorado, Saul Alinsky, the Executive Director of the Industrial Areas Foundation, charged our medium to utilize its great power of communication in acquainting Americans with other Americans, in explaining one set of ideologies to those who have another set, in exposing dissimilar ways of life and thereby helping to break down the strife, distrust, and prejudices which exist among various groups. Mr. Alinsky's challenge was the result of his own personal experience over decades of skilled professional arbitration and dispute. He freely admitted that he made it a point never to get to know his

adversary, never to personalize with him because, as he put it, "when they start bringing out the baby pictures, you're dead."

No one has said it better than Mr. Alinsky and no one, in my opinion, could have spoken more directly to the dramatic serial. For this, in our continuing format, is what we can do better than any other branch of television entertainment. Not to editorialize, not to proselytize, but simply to show the types of people, their motivations, aims and ambitions, who go to make up our human condition in this country today. We must, in Mr. Alinsky's words, "bring out the baby pictures."

Thus Amy Tyler, on *All My Children*, was a dedicated peace activist who spoke and worked for her convictions unstintingly while other characters were stringently against her ideas and stated the opposing case. And though I doubt that any viewers changed their political stand in either direction as a result of watching the episodes, I do believe that we succeeded, in some small measure, in causing people on both sides of the question to realize that a person with an opposing point of view is not automatically a monster but can be operating from personal convictions and love of country as deep as one's own. And without this realization not even the first halting step can be taken toward bridging the communications gap between such groups.

And finally, this past summer we feel a new frontier for the daytime serial was established with a technique we came to call—perhaps for want of a better term—the fact-in-fiction format. Our aim this time was not simply to introduce various types of people to each other, but to try, as best we could, to combat the epidemic of drug abuse that has been infecting and killing our young people from every stratum of life, social, educational and financial.

As the parents of four teenagers, my husband and I were highly aware, not only from what we read and saw, but from the conversations at our own dinner table, of the prevalence of the problem and that no family dared think themselves immune to it.

We also realized, from personal experience, that youth would accept being talked to but not preached at—a difficult distinction for some adults to make—and that they have an innate honesty and an almost infallible ability to detect dishonesty or deception in others.

And so the desire to do a drug sequence was accompanied by the increasing conviction that simply to present a dramatized situation of drug addiction, no matter how well done, would not have the

ring of truth and authenticity needed to speak to and be accepted by young people in the summer of 1970.

Concurrently, I had been hearing a great deal about the work done by Dr. Judianne Denson-Gerber and her staff, at the various Odyssey Houses in and around New York City, in the field of rehabilitation of teenage drug addiction through a planned psychiatric program of group therapy.

A meeting with Dr. Denson-Gerber and her staff made us realize how ignorant we actually were of the depth and breadth of the drug epidemic as it exists today. We learned that in the city of New York, there were 22,400 *known* heroin addicts under the age of 19 and the number was thought to be more like 40,000, with more teenage deaths from an overdose of drugs than from all other causes. And that this was no longer a big city or "ghetto" problem but one that has spread, like a brush fire, into every community in every state. (A fact which was brought out subsequently by the mail we received.)

We outlined to Dr. Denson-Gerber our plan of introducing into the Odyssey House group therapy sessions a fictional character, Cathy Craig, aged 17, who had, in the story, been experimenting with drugs. We were not nearly so interested in telling Cathy's story as in using her as the dramatic connective to the actual young ex-addicts so that their own stories could be heard by the audience as they were accustomed to discussing them in therapy sessions.

Dr. Denson-Gerber was quick to realize that the medium of a soap opera—many of whose viewers, of all age groups, are not the sort who read *Time*, *Life*, *Look* or even their daily newspapers, and who would be apt to turn off a documentary program on drug addiction—could be the means of disseminating a vital message to people most in need of receiving it.

Thus, again with the approval, encouragement, and invaluable assistance of ABC, we embarked on our project in the late spring, hoping for the best and prepared for the worst.

Committed to the conviction that only by presenting these young people in the realism of spontaneous, unrehearsed sessions would anything truly meaningful be accomplished, we were not able to write scripts nor even an outline for our taped sessions and were thereby giving to a young actress named Amy Levitt one of the most difficult jobs of dramatic improvisation anyone has ever faced. It wasn't a question of Amy's "acting" Cathy Craig, she had to *be*

Cathy Craig, remembering all Cathy's past history and her emotional problems, and then, cloaked in this identity, become a part of the Odyssey House sessions.

An even greater unknown factor was the Odyssey House residents themselves who were to participate in the tapings. Could they be relaxed and free with the cameras whirring away? Would they speak as honestly as they did in their more private session? Could they accept Cathy Craig as they did other kids off the street or would they find it difficult to communicate with her? In the final analysis, might they simply reject, for their own personal reasons, being a part of what we were trying to do?

How naive we were to have harbored any of these fears! A book could be written about the taping sessions and those wonderful young people who had a wisdom, insight and an ability to accept, and therefore come to terms with themselves, that would put most adults to shame. Suffice to say that everyone connected with the project felt it one of the most inspiring and gratifying experiences of our lives. As one ABC cameraman said on the second morning of shooting, "I kept my wife up all night telling her about these kids. It's just unbelievable."

But it *was* believable to the young people—and many of their parents—across the country who watched the taped Odyssey House sessions, broken down into five and ten minute segments and presented throughout the summer in 20 different episodes...

When 17 year old Austin Warner calmly spoke of having slashed his wrists, not because he wanted to die but because he was mixed up and seeking attention and affection, his words had a devastating impact which I defy the greatest writer or actor in the land even to approximate. When Wendy Norins said, "Cathy, it's not a weakness to ask for help; if people hadn't cared about me eleven months ago when I first came into the program, I would probably be dead on a slab," young viewers knew, by some magic which can only be transmitted through truth, that Wendy was not speaking solely to Cathy, but to each of them personally.

The letters came from all over the country. They came daily and they came by the hundreds. They came from large cities and small towns, from the rich and the poor and the vast stratum that lies in between. They came from young people who were on drugs and had been encouraged to seek help in getting well, from others who were in the first stages of experimentation or about to embark upon it, and who had now been dissuaded, and even from ex-addicts

who simply wrote to say we had done a good thing and done it the right way.

There were letters from parents and other concerned adults seeking further information about starting rehabilitation programs in their own communities. One mother described how her daughter had died from an overdose of drugs and said she now wanted to devote herself to helping others with this problem in any way she could. All the letters have been answered now and information sent, when requested, but Amy Levitt is still being stopped on the street by young people with questions concerning drugs.

Now that the new fall season has begun, there have been some excellent nighttime programs devoted to the subject of drug addiction and I know of more fine ones to come. We are only one program among many attempting to combat this problem. But where, save in the soap opera, is the opportunity to give the subject such an in-depth treatment, carried through the out-of-school summer months, with the audience getting to see and know ex-addicts, day after day, just as they know their favorite characters on the show?

So that's what it's been like for one working resident of Sudsville. Like any professional habitat it has its faults and drawbacks, particularly when it demands such a prodigious output. But in my opinion it also has its unique qualities and can make contributions in its own special way. I guess that's why I'm hooked on it and still want to tune in tomorrow.



# EDWARD R. MURROW AND TODAY'S NEWS

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EDWARD BLISS, JR.

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Edward R. Murrow was a prophet, though he would have taken strong offense at the term. Twenty years ago, he said in a radio broadcast, "With all our massive strength, speed of communication, productive capacity, high standard of living, we are not all-powerful."<sup>1</sup> Something the Nixon Administration is trying to explain to the electorate today. Fifteen years ago, he prophesied that if the French pulled out of Vietnam, we would "inherit the mess."<sup>2</sup> Thirteen years ago, Murrow detected an incipient split in the "monolithic" partnership between Moscow and Peking.<sup>3</sup> In 1958, he said of De Gaulle, "He was against European Union. He is capable of taking France out of NATO."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, De Gaulle was—and did! Again, in that same year, Murrow was saying, "We should be making Latin Americans acutely aware that every step to extend democracy is sure of sympathy in the United States." Otherwise, he warned, "we may find the Cold War is being brought to our own backyard."<sup>5</sup>

I submit that these insights are due to more than Murrow's habit of doing his homework. He had a special gift of perspicacity, so

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*MR. BLISS* is Associate Professor of Broadcast journalism at The American University, Washington, D. C., where the 53rd annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism convened. The article following is based on a paper Mr. Bliss presented to that meeting August 19, 1970.

that much of what he said on the air remained timely for months, even years. There was an immense durability to his ideas. What insights did Murrow have regarding broadcasting—the role of broadcast journalism—which hold good today?

First of all, what did Murrow look for in a broadcast journalist?

Murrow said that at the outbreak of World War II, when he was recruiting the first overseas staff in the history of broadcast journalism, “I tried to concentrate on finding people who were young and who knew what they were talking about—without bothering too much about diction, phrasing and manner of speaking.” However, he said the broadcast journalist must be able to read his script “in such a fashion as to be believable.”<sup>6</sup> The “believable” men Murrow recruited included William L. Shirer, Howard K. Smith, Charles Collingwood, Richard C. Hottelet, Eric Sevareid and Larry Lesueur. He tried to recruit Walter Cronkite, who chose at that time to remain with the United Press.

Murrow believed in objectivity. “We shall do our best to identify sources,” he said, “and resist the temptation to use this microphone as a privileged platform from which to advocate action.” But in the next sentence he admitted, “It is not, I think, humanly possible for any reporter to be completely objective, for we are all to some degree prisoners of our experience.”<sup>7</sup> And, of course, there is that admission he made in his letter written to his parents from London during the war: “I remember you once wanted me to be a preacher, but I had no faith, except in myself. But now I am preaching from a powerful pulpit. Often I am wrong, but I am trying to talk as I would have talked were I a preacher. One need not wear a reversed collar to be honest.”<sup>8</sup>

When Murrow said that, in the spring of 1940, he was “preaching” faith in Britain’s will to survive and the need for American assistance. “From here it appears that many people at home do not realize the lateness of the hour.”<sup>9</sup>

A short time later, he was saying, “There is something unique about the American system of broadcasting. I believe that what comes out of the loudspeaker is the most honest and accurate reflection of what goes on in a nation. Radio reflects the social, economic and cultural climate in which it lives and grows. . . . Our system is fast, experimental, technically slick. It is highly competitive and commercial. Often it is loud, occasionally vulgar, generally optimistic, and not always right. There is much controversy and debate, and some special pleading, but frequently the phonies are

found out. There is no conspiracy to keep the listener in ignorance, and government does not guide the listening or thinking of the people.”<sup>10</sup>

But, occasionally, government does.

In 1960, when Nikita Khrushchev came to New York for a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, the State Department advised the networks to play down the Soviet premier's visit. Murrow regarded this as an affront to the First Amendment.

On his Sunday radio program *Background*,<sup>11</sup> he said, “A spokesman for the State Department telephoned the networks and suggested, quite informally of course, that it would be a good idea not to give too much exposure or time to Khrushchev and his cohorts. This is dangerous business, made more dangerous by the fact that only John Daly of ABC and the president of the Mutual Radio Network<sup>12</sup> said in effect that they would decide what was news without any help or guidance from the State Department. The others remained mute.”

The networks, Murrow contended, “should have risen as one man and said, ‘Thank you very much period. We in the news business think we are competent to make our own decisions, are prepared to be judged by the results and require no editorial assistance from the State Department’...It would appear that the State Department was fearful that the American citizenry be exposed to dangerous thoughts. The danger...lies not in Khrushchev's propaganda, or in the fact that the State Department improperly sought to bring pressure to bear upon the networks, but rather that the networks did not seize the opportunity to defend not only their limited independence but one of the basic principles of a free society.”

The “suggestions” on news coverage from high government officials are still heard today.

I remember Murrow expressing alarm over the role of poll-takers in election campaigns. He took heart when the predictions of pollsters went awry. In this he found deep personal satisfaction. It means, he said, we are not robots.

As he expressed it in a broadcast<sup>13</sup> after the upset election of 1948, “I do not pretend to know why the people voted as they did, for the people are mysterious and their motives are not to be measured. This election has freed us to a certain extent from the tyranny of those who tell us what we think, believe and will do

without consulting us. No one, at this moment, can say with certainty why the Republicans lost and the Democrats won. Certainly the Republicans did not lose for lack of skillful, experienced—indeed, professional—politicians. They did not lose for lack of money or energy. They lost because the people decided, in their wisdom or their folly, that they did not desire the party and its candidates to govern this country for the next four years.”

Two days later<sup>14</sup> he returned to the subject. “We know now,” he said, “that during recent months many of us were taken in by something that wasn’t true. We had almost come to believe that the hopes, the fears, the prejudices, the aspirations of the people who live on this great continent could be neatly measured and pigeon-holed, figured out with a slide rule. . . . The experts and the pollsters have, in fact, restored to us an appreciation of the importance, and the purely personal character, of our own opinions. From here on, it will be easier to doubt the persuasive or hysterical voice that reaches us through the radio or the columnist who writes with power or persuasiveness but who divulges few facts. . . . Certainly the experience will cause many of us who write and talk to approach the task with more humility, to consider always the possibility that we may be wrong, and to search more diligently for facts upon which the reader or listener may base his opinion.”

Murrow spoke after the last radio election. By the next presidential election in 1952, the image as well as the voice of the politician was abroad in the land. It was then, in private conversation, Murrow raised the question whether with the advent of television an Abraham Lincoln could be elected. After all, Mr. Lincoln was not much to look at. He was gangling, unprepossessive. His voice left much to be desired. “Could Abraham Lincoln,” he wondered, “have been elected today?” He doubted it.

The fine art of political packaging of candidates for television had not been developed in Murrow’s time, but he had noted its potential. When, in the 1952 campaign, Richard M. Nixon, then the Republican candidate for Vice President, went on television to defend a \$20,000 fund that had been set up for him by a group of California businessmen, Murrow was impressed by how effective television could be as a political tool. “Senator Nixon’s half-hour television report,” he said,<sup>15</sup> “was regarded by many as statesman-like, while others termed it a corny soap opera performance which no Hollywood script writer would have dared produce. But it worked. The results were sensational. Telegrams, telephone calls

came pouring in. Eisenhower and Nixon staged an emotional reunion. What everyone's opinion of that performance may be, the fact remains that the climate of opinion could not have been changed so quickly had television not been available to transmit throughout the country that amazing performance which caused many to weep and some to laugh."

The true function of television in politics, Murrow believed, was "to operate a market place in which ideas may compete on an equal footing."<sup>16</sup> He observed, "It is true that the voter may elect to purchase the second-rate, shop-worn or shoddy idea. He may mistake a mobile countenance for an agile mind. He may vote for profile rather than for principle. An unruly lock of hair<sup>17</sup> may be more effective than a disciplined mind. Television offers no guarantee that demigods can be kept from political power. It merely provides them wider and more intimate, more immediate circulation."

Murrow believed in the right of reporters in a free society to report. In 1950, when the State Department temporarily suspended the entry visas of all foreigners because of fear of subversion, and began interning aliens on Ellis Island, the broadcaster was refused access to the island in New York Harbor. He was outraged. "This," he said,<sup>18</sup> "raises an interesting question, not regarding freedom of movement for aliens, but for American reporters."

When President Truman issued an executive order establishing security officers in every Government agency for the purpose of passing upon information to be released to the press, Murrow protested. "The purpose of this directive," he said in his nightly broadcast,<sup>19</sup> "was stated to be denial of information that might be useful to a potential enemy. No effort was made to define what that information was. . . . Tonight the Office of Price Stabilization has directed its employes throughout the country 'to prohibit the disclosure of material, or the release of any other internal information, that might cause embarrassment to the Office of Price Stabilization'. Presumably anything that might embarrass the OPS would give aid and comfort to the Russians. This is the type of umpiring, or censorship, that we have never before tolerated in this country."

It was Murrow's contention that such issues should, literally, be aired. When the reputation of a young officer<sup>20</sup> was jeopardized by his classification as a security risk on the basis of unspecified allegations, and without the appearance at the hearing of a single witness, Murrow stated on nationwide television,<sup>21</sup> on behalf of Fred W. Friendly, his co-producer, and himself: "We believe that this case

illustrates the urgent need for the armed forces to communicate more fully than they have so far done the procedures and regulations to be followed in attempting to protect the national security and the rights of the individual at the same time. Whatever happens in this whole area of the relationship between the individual and the state, we will do it ourselves—it cannot be blamed upon Malenkov, or Mao Tse-tung, or even our allies.”<sup>22</sup>

At another time, Murrow complained, “We are being made to make up our minds without access to evidence. And if that should become our habit, then our heritage is in danger.”<sup>23</sup>

Secretary of State Dulles would not allow American reporters to go to the Chinese mainland, and Murrow said,<sup>24</sup> “On one aspect of the question of sending reporters to Red China there is no argument, and that is the importance of knowing what is going on.”

For Murrow it was forever individual freedom, freedom of information, freedom to dissent. His clash with Senator Joseph McCarthy was inevitable in terms of all three of these freedoms. In concluding his famous *See It Now* broadcast in which he and Friendly documented McCarthy’s methods,<sup>25</sup> he said, “The line between investigation and persecution is a very fine one, and the junior senator from Wisconsin has stepped over it repeatedly. His primary achievement has been in confusing the public mind as between the internal and external threat of Communism. We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we dig deep in our history and our doctrine and remember that we are not descended from fearful men, not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate and to defend causes which were for the moment unpopular.”

Again, in a speech:<sup>26</sup> “There is a false formula for personal security being peddled in our market place. It is this, although not so labeled: Don’t join anything, don’t associate, don’t write, don’t take a chance on being wrong. . . . There is no such thing as a Voice of America. That voice is made up of senators, and admirals, and clergymen, the Supreme Court, trade policies, race relations. There is no longer such a thing as a domestic news story; each is part of the voice of this country abroad. And if that collective voice tells the story of reduced freedom, of a tyranny of silence, of

a fear of change, then within measurable time we shall find ourselves a great, powerful continental island off the coast of Kamchatka, with the rest of the world either united against us or indifferent to our fate. Our example, our demonstration of freedom in action, may be more powerful than our dollars, more persuasive than the threat of our bombs."

Ed Murrow believed that broadcasting has an obligation in all this, to play a major role. He accused the networks of being fearful. At a national meeting of radio and television news directors in Chicago,<sup>27</sup> he said, "The oldest excuse of the networks for their timidity is their youth. Their spokesmen say, 'We are young; we have not developed the traditions nor acquired the experience of the older media'. If they but knew it, they are building those traditions, creating those precedents every day. Each time they yield to a voice from Washington or any political pressure, each time they eliminate something which might offend some section of the community, they are creating their own body of precedent and tradition."

And finally, for today's broadcast journalist, Murrow's reminder<sup>28</sup> that the electronic magic which enables him to be heard coast-to-coast does not confer infallibility upon him, or even great wisdom; that the instrument confers no greater wisdom on his words than if they were shouted from one end of a tavern to the other.

Therein lies the challenge.

## NOTES

1. *Edward R. Murrow and the News*, CBS Radio, Sept. 6, 1950.
2. *Ibid.*, May 4, 1955.
3. *Ibid.*, May 30, 1957.
4. *Ibid.*, March 18, 1958.
5. *Ibid.*, Feb. 25, 1958.
6. Broadcast on March 13, 1958, marking the 20th anniversary of the first *World News Roundup* program on CBS Radio.
7. *Edward R. Murrow and the News*, CBS Radio, Sept. 29, 1947.
8. Alexander Kendrick, *PRIME TIME* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 195.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.
11. Oct. 2, 1960.
12. Robert F. Hurleigh.
13. *Edward R. Murrow and the News*, Nov. 3, 1948.
14. *Ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1948.
15. *Background*, Sept. 4, 1960.
16. *Ibid.*, same date.
17. An apparent reference to John F. Kennedy.
18. *Edward R. Murrow and the News*, Oct. 12, 1950.
19. *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1951.
20. Lt. Milo Radulovich of the Air Force Reserve.
21. *See It Now*, Oct. 20, 1953.
22. The question of security was resolved in the officer's favor.
23. Kendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
24. *Edward R. Murrow and the News*, April 24, 1957.
25. *See It Now*, March 9, 1954.
26. Upon receiving the annual Freedom House Award on June 28, 1954.
27. The RTNDA convention, Oct. 15, 1958.
28. *Edward R. Murrow and the News*, Sept. 29, 1947.



In the articles which follow, two scholars look at the future possibilities of television. The first, by **KENNETH HARWOOD**, concerns the organization of local television stations. The second, by **R. FRANKLIN SMITH**, takes a look at how people use television. Dr. Harwood is Dean of the School of Communication and Theater at Temple University, Philadelphia. Prof. Smith is an Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at Western Michigan University.

# COMMUNES AS BROADCASTERS\*

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KENNETH HARWOOD

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To what extent should the staffs of broadcasting stations in the United States own and control the stations they serve?

A statement of the Federal Communications Commission favors ownership of a licensee organization by people who hold policy-making positions such as general manager, station manager, program director, business manager, directors of news, sports, public service broadcasting, and sales manager. Other fulltime members of the staff who own shares in the station are less important to the Commission than fulltime staff members who own shares and are responsible for making the station's most important decisions in the station.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission reasoned that if the people who operate a station live in the service area of the station and make the main policies of the station as owners of the federally licensed broadcasting company, their broadcasts will reflect the interests and needs of the city of license more exactly than the broadcasts of people who live and work in the place but have little to say about the content of what is on the air.<sup>2</sup>

Integrating ownership with management and local residence would put control of broadcasts in the hands of people sensitive to local problems and able to affect strongly what appears on the air.

And how well might "communes" of broadcasters serve the purposes of the Commission? Communes and collectives characterize recently-formed organizations of the radical press and the underground press in the United States. To what extent might these kinds of organizations advance in broadcasting?

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Questions such as these are confounded by lack of general agreement on semantics; the fluid condition of language suggests fairly recent and rapid changes of viewpoint.

If we take contemporary communes in the United States to be groups that live together whether or not they are related by parentage or usual forms of marriage, we may distinguish collectives from communes by noting *that some collectives are solely work-groups, whereas all communes are living groups*. A group organized for both communal living and communal work may or may not be organized as a collective. It is a collective when its adult members have more or less equal voices in the policies of its affairs and when its goods are distributed according to the need of each person instead of his ability. It is not a collective to the extent that policy is made autocratically or that the distribution is more according to ability of the individual member than his need. *Both the commune and the living collective promote the extended family in place of the nuclear family of parents and their immediate children.*

As has been noted elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> a distinction between a family and a firm is that a chief purpose of a family is the self-development of its members, whereas a chief purpose of a firm is service to non-members of the firm. A collective that is organized mainly to serve others is a firm; if it produces mainly for itself it may or may not be a family. It is a family if its members exchange responsibilities for mutual self-development with more or less equality. If some of its members in fact care for the self-development of each other before they care for the development of other members of the collective, then the family extends only to that part of the collective in which there is highest responsibility for each other. That part of the collective in which responsibility for mutual self-development is small is a firm and not a family. Furthermore, it is possible for the same group to act as a family part of the time and as a firm another part of the time. The difference is between self-serving acts and acts that serve non-members.

As for the difference between the radical press and the underground press, some members of the radical press say that their unwavering and self-consistent radical political views distinguish their work from that of the underground press, which is devoted to a variety of unconventional views on politics, sex, and other topics.

With these distinctions in mind it is fairly easy to turn to the evaluation of communes as broadcast licensees in the United States. The kind of commune in which organization and planning are

eschewed in favor of almost unlimited pleasure-seeking appears to be incapable of meeting the requirements of the Commission, which insists upon detailed presentation of program plans, highly organized record-keeping and reporting, minimal hours of commercial operation, and the like. A licensee might support this kind of commune by soliciting funds for a free clinic for members of the commune or by appealing to the public to donate food to its members; but the commune would tend to destroy its own reason for being and to change itself utterly if it were to undertake the responsibilities of a licensee.

The work-oriented commune might well become a licensee insofar as it were able to act as a firm. If its activities were designed to forward the purposes of its members before the purposes of non-members, it could not qualify as serving the interests of all kinds of people in the broadcast reception area, unless its interests were wholly congruent with those of non-members or its members were the only people in the service area.

The degree to which a work-oriented commune could find itself able to broadcast the political views of others, as well as its own views, would determine its possible life as a licensee. A high level of intolerance for broadcasting the opposing views of others would disqualify the commune from holding license, for the Communications Act provides that each licensee has an obligation "to afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance."<sup>4</sup>

It is a commonplace that many who write for the radical press or the underground press look upon the publications for which they write as journals of opinion more than ordinary news media. One-sidedly evaluative reporting and mixture of editorial comment with non-balanced reportage characterize much content of the publications. Many writers might prefer to publish through print instead of broadcasting as long as print presents fewer bars to their one-sidedness than does broadcasting. Those who broadcast would invite rapid imposition of governmental rules requiring balance and fairness in reporting as well as in editorializing.

Yet a commune holding special political, economic, social, or religious views might find advantage in conforming to all present requirements of fairness in broadcasting. To hold a license to broadcast might give the commune much more opportunity to broadcast its views than it would have without holding the license. Notwithstanding the requirements of fairness and balance, the views of the

commune could be heard and seen more often than they would otherwise.

After studying records of the Federal Communications Commission for the period of 1934–1961, Brown<sup>5</sup> reported on percentages of station time in religious broadcasts of 11 AM station-years, two FM station-years, and four TV station-years under license to organizations of the Roman Catholic church in the United States, as compared with 13 AM station-years, one FM station-year, and five TV station-years under license to secular organizations in the same geographical vicinities. He calculated that church stations had 5.31 per cent religious programs of all kinds on AM, while secular stations had 3.61 per cent; church stations had 5.75 per cent on FM, while secular stations had 2.1 per cent; and church stations had 1.1 per cent on TV, while secular stations had 2.24 per cent. Taken over AM, FM, and TV together, church stations average 4.37 per cent of time in religious programs of various origins, while comparable secular stations averaged 3.16 per cent.

It is possible to combine the efforts of a work-oriented living group with those of a collective whose members do not live together. The Philadelphia *Free Press* has been owned by a non-profit corporation. Shares in the corporation were held by members of a collective of editors and writers. Six adult members of the collective had common housing, took some communal meals, and provided communal care of a child. Another six members of the collective did not live in communal housing, although they joined with the first six in editorial duties. All members discussed manuscripts that were to be published, and many solicited advertising. Assisting the members of the collective were perhaps ten associates from among whom the collective found its new members when a candidate for membership in the collective had served a probationary term of three or more months. Experience suggested that those who had common housing were more active than others in the affairs of the publication because they had more opportunity than others to discuss problems and plans of the radical publication.<sup>6</sup> Should an organization such as this operate a broadcasting station, communal housing and meals might at least temporarily tend to maximize the attention given to broadcasting by the staff.

Another variant of broadcasting by communes might be modeled upon the organization of worker-owned plywood producing firms in Washington, Oregon, and California. At least one of 24 producer cooperatives has been organized for more than 30 years.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas shares in the collective of the Philadelphia *Free Press* were given without charge to members and were to be returned without compensation,<sup>8</sup> shares in a worker-owned plywood firm were bought by arriving workers and sold by departing ones. Share prices in 12 companies during 1964 ranged from \$1,500 to \$20,000 a share.<sup>9</sup> Communal housing did not appear to be a characteristic of worker-owned plywood companies. Often the turning point towards the success of a company was marked by the workers' delegating increased authority to the manager, accepting increased discipline on the job, and forwarding a policy of not paying out all proceeds immediately in wages.<sup>10</sup>

Control of broadcasting policy by the staff of a station probably would be more direct in the collective or in the producing cooperative than in the distributing cooperative or in the consuming cooperative. An example of a distribution cooperative was provided by the earliest days of the Mutual Broadcasting System, in which four commercially operated radio stations joined each other to own and operate a network.<sup>11</sup> Ownership of broadcasting stations by a kind of consumer cooperative, i.e., a mutual life insurance company in which ownership was vested in policyholders, is exemplified by Nationwide Communications, Incorporated, licensee of radio stations and television stations, and a subsidiary of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company.<sup>12</sup>

Conventional organization for profit, or organization as a non-profit venture, neither insures nor prevents control of broadcasting policies by staffs of stations. Various kinds of profit-sharing plans tend to be similarly neutral in effect, as do different kinds of bonuses.<sup>13</sup>

Probably the Federal Communications Commission did not have in hand a study of the potentials of communes, collectives, or producer cooperatives when it adopted a policy of favoring integration of ownership and management with local residence. That the Commission might one day find itself regulating some staff-controlled organizations of these kinds presents an open possibility.

The extent to which staffs of broadcasting stations should own and control the stations in which they work might be determinable less from the form in which the staffs own and control than from the extent to which they broadcast as firms instead of families by serving the general public before they serve themselves.

## NOTES

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2. *Ibid.*
3. Kenneth Harwood, "Broadcasting and the Theory of the Firm," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 34:3:2 Summer, 1969, 485-486.
4. Communications Act of 1934, Sec. 315; 47 U.S.C., Sec. 151 (1964).
5. James Anthony Brown, S.J., "A History of Roman Catholic Church Policies Regarding Commercial Radio and Television in the United States: 1920 through 1961" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1967), manuscript ch. VI, table 37, p. 60.
6. Bill Biggin and Judith Biggin, members of living collective of *Philadelphia Free Press*, interviewed in Philadelphia, August 20, 1970.
7. Katrina V. Berman, *Worker-Owned Plywood Companies: An Economic Analysis*, Bulletin No. 42 (Pullman, Wash.: Washington State University, College of Economics and Business, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, May, 1967), pp. 235-236.
8. Bill Biggin and Judith Biggin, *ibid.*, August 20, 1970.
9. Berman, *Worker-Owned Plywood Companies*, p. 194.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
11. E. P. J. Shurick, *THE FIRST QUARTER-CENTURY OF AMERICAN BROADCASTING* (Kansas City, Missouri: Midland Publishing Company, 1946), p. 165.
12. George W. Campbell, Vice President and General Manager, Nationwide Communications, Inc., and Clark Pollock, Vice President, Nationwide Communications, Inc., interviewed in Columbus, Ohio, August 19, 1970.
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# NOTES ON THE FUTURE OF PEOPLE AND TELEVISION

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R. FRANKLIN SMITH

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Each weekday afternoon this past summer, I stood before an audience that had something in common with me. They were parents. In this case, parents of university freshmen. It was my task to moderate a question and answer session after showing a television tape. Playing time of the tape was some 40 minutes, the first twenty comprising innocuous introductory matter that one would expect to find in an orientation program. However, as the tape progressed, contents became more disturbing.

More and more student views were portrayed until, in crescendo fashion, as it turned out, the program ended with a five minute audiovisual essay by students who commented on "pigs," "parents who still believe that stuff about going to war," and "they just don't understand." When I first saw the tape, I had only one reaction: "Hmmmmm, this should provoke discussion."

That was a prophetic understatement.

Several student orientation counselors were somewhat distressed by the tape. And so, in the great tradition of equal time, and at the suggestion of a quick-thinking studio engineer when we auditioned the tape (no producers or directors were that alert), a 12-minute segment of rebuttal was added, in which the students discussed the values of fraternity and sorority life and the futility of violence, as a general refutation of the first group of students. The rebuttal was actually somewhat longer than the disturbing segment of the original tape.



My moderating session certainly proved the theory of selective perception. It was a direct and frustrating experience in communication. Each day, some parents "saw" only a distressing eight minutes of "what they show us on television all the time." One woman nearly wept, "Why did you show us that?" Another would say, "Why don't you tell us what is good about the university?" "We know all about *those* students," a man commented bitterly.

I thought back to the broadcasters' meeting in Chicago I had attended in April, where FCC Commissioner Robert Wells had gleefully described his philosophy of broadcast regulation, "Money is the name of the game." A week or so before that meeting, a very bright student in one of my classes wrote a paper attempting to show that television, as the extension of the establishment, was a hopeless and negative influence in our culture.

These experiences seemed personal evidence of what the theorists keep telling us these days: *people are not talking with one another*. There *is* a communication gap. We do indeed seem to be living in our private enclaves of fragile security, unwilling or unable to relate, without fear, to the outside.

Television, after two decades, has made us all painfully aware of many things, and who knows in what way contributed to events but as the communicative artery of the nation, it obviously has not brought us domestic harmony, and eased the way that people relate and deal with one another.

Perhaps that is neither the task nor capability of the medium. It is a fact, however, that television for more than 20 years, and radio before it, has been the one simultaneous communications link to all of us in the several states.

And what of the future? How will the television audiences relate?

To speculate on that question, one must guess a little at what changes television itself will undergo. My prediction, based on the effect of television on radio, is that we just might see the end of the network system, and a single major communicative channel for the nation. If that happens, it would be for the first time since the 1920's that no one new magical technology will replace another.

But I think my electronic horse and cart are getting tangled. Why will the network system go? Cable appears to be the catalyst. The wired concept of television is providing a rich diversity of channel fare, at least a comparable diversity where it does not exist. Plus the cassette? Home video recorder? And other new factors that many have predicted by way of technological evolution.

Will the networks be able to withstand this change? Probably not when economic factors are added into the mix. This game of millions of dollars for millions of viewers has revealed, over the years, an increasing strain, not just during a year of a "downward" economy. Probably the FCC will become a third influence. Pressured by the dollar and developing new hardware, the Commission may continue its efforts to break up the power of the networks.

Certainly, for news events and major happenings, a national network will be available again, as in the case of radio now. But those endless hours of simultaneous entertainment fare will be gone.

Then what?

We will have a situation of increased leisure combined with all kinds of different visual opportunities. And, ironically, what a national network could not accomplish, perhaps a regional or local diversity will.

In the first place, programming on cable, or the satellite, will become more specialized. It is likely that much more experimental programming, especially inexpensive programming, will be attempted—some of it of highly debatable quality, some representing excellent examples of the television art.

Specialized programming means specialized audiences. There will be ample opportunity for Dad to watch his football game, Mom to catch the *Galloping Gourmet*, but because of several factors, Mom and Dad, either by intent or accident, will find themselves viewing other programs. The visual essay of a great personality, the interview with the noted critic, the play or vignette, or whatever new program is tried, will first of all be there and available, at times Mom and Dad can watch, replacing those long hours of presently available network offerings.

But why will they watch? Mom and Dad will be the middle-aged of today's young generation. Yet I am unequivocally one of those who feel that they are not going to discard the present ideals and concerns that upset so many of today's Moms and Dads. For we can thank our present television system for forcing us all to new awareness and concern. Our increasing sophistication and educational level will thus be why our future Mom and Dad will view and experience a wide variety of programming.

And television of the future will more accurately reflect what each of us actually is: a rather complicated organism who enjoys laughter, pathos, work, play, with changing emotions and physical states.

Arguments about the stereotyped male parent on television, or the ludicrous image of the female, or the inaccurate portrayal of black human beings, will simply cease. Because *one* stereotype, whether dull or dashing, presented each day and evening, will cease to exist. With some considerable difficulty, I suppose, we will be forced through this emerging system, to know that we are neither dull nor dashing, but everywhere and sometimes there and between. In short, complex but more interesting varieties of man in interaction with his environment, in reality, seen subjectively, or in fiction, will be portrayed through the choices of fare about to flood us.

The critics will have to come up with new phrases, no longer the sweeping generalization that bland superficiality characterizes the boob tube. Of course, some of the above will still exist, but applied only to a program, the *telecast*, while the *sweeping accusation of a medium* will disappear. Television, or whatever this new visual-audio-tactile phenomenon in our homes is to be called, will be looked at anew.

And perhaps looked at less. Not because there is nothing there. The choices and mixes will be far more, and for everyone. But our new friend will not have such a magic glow. We are getting used to a visual culture, and while we will treat TV's ancestors with respect and response, we will do so with a decidedly higher degree of casualness, particularly if we know there is no particular or arranged time that CBS or NBC is about to cover the country. The "national" habit will simply be broken with the demise of the networks.

Who knows how the extra time will be used? I cannot foresee a return to canasta, but I can foresee a return to people. Because it will not be easy to label people, we may come closer to knowing that disagreement is not necessarily distortion—that, as Mr. Murrow said more than a decade ago, "dissent is not disloyalty,"—that controversy can be productive, not necessarily hostile and violent.

The audiences will become such because they will be reminded continually of the potential, the values that mark man's existence, and they will come to know his humanity. I risk the temerity to suggest that our new media will contribute to this new and changing attitude among the audiences.

I do not mean to forecast a renaissance, nor revival of high culture, nor the millennium. But I believe that, the superficial, the instant "bumper sticker" school of thinking, will decline.

I know people who wept at *Storm in Summer* last year. I know students, all affected by the warmth and strength of *Teacher/Teacher*. I know children enthralled by a *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

There are countless numbers spellbound by the humanism they see displayed on David Frost's program, many more who laugh from the belly at David Fry's impersonations.

And yes, we become tired, and need froth and nothing. But the balance and options must be expanded. I predict that they will, and to the mutual benefit of us all.

And people will start talking with people. I've seen signs that it can happen. One afternoon during our orientation sessions, two hostile parents began bitter and angry, but after a thorough airing of many of their concerns, they left the meeting jovially jousting with one of the student counselors.

Considering the iceberg of variables, particularly in the last third of our century, one must be very humble and tentative in any prediction or forecast. On the changes in the television system and the new audiences for the new media, I concede I may be totally in error.

But if I see a much more positive and optimistic thrust to the new developments than are actually there, perhaps it is because I have thought often about a favorite quotation: "I can easily contemplate the reality of growing old, when I consider the alternative."

I prefer to concentrate on the possible reality of a greater humanity and sensitivity permeating this land, than the alternative.

# ON DIRECTION

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TOM GRIES

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I escaped television about four years ago and am gratefully into movies now. A friend from the Academy asked why, and why so many others like me are out of TV and quite obviously are not eager to return. It seemed a good subject for discussion, and I think the answer relates directly to the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and a responsibility in which it has decidedly failed.

I used the word escaped advisedly. But don't misunderstand. Television was very good to me. It was a school and a laboratory where a young director could learn the tools and techniques of film at small risk to himself or his producer. After all, no matter what we did, *any* of us, the show would be better than 26 minutes of blank screen. Come what may, it would go on the air. That school of the fifties and sixties turned out almost all of us who are carrying on in feature films today: Bob Altman, Sydney Pollack, George Roy Hill, Frank Schaffner, Arthur Hiller, Sidney Lumet, Mark Rydell, John Frankenheimer, and many others. And the learning process is still going on, for those working in TV now, and for those of us who've left.

I'd like to think that we haven't escaped television entirely, that we're on a kind of mutual parole. I want there to be a reason to go back.

Ten years ago, in my view there was more to TV than just the excitement of experiment and learning. There was the satisfaction of good work, sometimes even significant work. At that point in time, television was far ahead of motion pictures in techniques, far ahead in the ability and willingness to make relevant statements. During that period, television hurt movies not just because

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This article is based on a speech by *MR. GRIES* at the September 1970 meeting of the Phoenix, Ariz. chapter of NATAS.

it was free, but because there was so much to be said, so much to be seen, so many things that audiences rarely, if ever, could see in their local theaters. Television could offer better writing and direction, far better acting and, for a variety of reasons, more trenchant subject matter than feature films.

But through all this—and because of it—TV *helped* movies, too. Out of the money pressures brought by the public's desertion, the motion picture industry was forced to catch up, not only technically but, far more important, artistically. It was a kind of war and, like all wars, it brought significant change and new alliances. The change still goes on.

Now the balance has shifted. Cinema, movies, call them what you will, are the relevant medium. They speak to the people. For many of us, the gut satisfaction has gone out of TV, and that's why writers and directors who are given a chance to say their piece in motion pictures just don't want to go back. Why? Turn on<sup>o</sup> any dramatic show tonight in any series—*any* dramatic show—and I promise you that from the first three minutes' viewing you'll know all the character relationships, all the plot convolutions to come, and about half the lines of dialogue. And, whatever the conflicts, there will be no catharsis, no dramatic release, because network fears and government pressures have smeared the tube with chicken fat.

It may be a bore for the audience, but it's torture for the writer, director, or actor who's been exposed to something better, or who wants something better.

Another point: money is not really involved. Damn few people in our line of work do it just for money. There really is an ingrained sense of achievement, of doing work that is not only stylistically or technically satisfying, but work that we can feel has some meaning. It may have been Tolstoy who said that the worst punishment you can inflict on a man is to make his work meaningless. That, I guess, is why television has become punishment for so many of us.

What's happened is not news. Pursuit of profits has led the networks—in whose hands is concentrated total control of programming—to pander to the least common denominator of audience taste. Intermittent pressures from various government agencies have shaken whatever tremulous courage lives in program executives.

Even drastic changes are almost imperceptible when they're taking place around us, when we ourselves are so much a part of

them. We have lost sight of the immensity of our medium. We have always known, have always been told, that television had great impact, but we never really knew how great. No matter what we said then, no matter what anyone says now, it's impossible to exaggerate the effect and the power television has on the viewing public.

General De Gaulle knew this, and during his long regime French television remained under his strict control. We have our own examples, if we'll only see the rush of changes that came under the pressure of TV's eye: the civil rights movement, the realization of the hopeless stupidity of the Viet Nam war, the final overthrow of Lyndon Johnson, the victory of John Kennedy because he knew how to use television, the defeat of Hubert Humphrey because, among other things, he refused to learn how to use it; we've seen the student rebellion, the Black Power movement, even Women's Lib, become instantly cohesive and meaningful through TV's ability to bring these happenings home to everyone instantaneously and at the same moment. And the sales power of television is gradually putting most of our national magazines out of business.

Today the average high school senior has spent about 8,000 hours in classroom work. He has spent more than 15,000 hours watching movies or television and listening to the radio. He does damn little reading. He is totally conditioned to the absorption of information from visual sources. Films and television are literally educating our young people, giving them a picture—not necessarily accurate—of what life is supposed to be about.

What does that tell us about *our* responsibilities?

Our responsibilities as members of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, as people who work in the most powerful communication medium in history? Perhaps what I'm really after is a definition of the Academy's responsibility, which means a definition of the Academy itself.

Is the Academy to grow into some kind of positive and constructive force in television, or to remain a glorified social club with periodic chapter meetings and an annual ceremony of self-congratulation?

I think our responsibility is very great indeed, and I think the responsibility of the Television Academy is greater than it has ever attempted to exercise. We who make film, either for television or theaters, those of you who present news, who make documentaries, *all* of us who are, in a very real sense, educating the young people

of today and tomorrow, must see to it that our media reflect the truth of what has come to be called the human condition.

Whether we like it or not we are, at this moment, more than somewhat responsible for what this world will be in, say, 1984. What shall we do? What *can* we do?

We must, I believe, exert constant pressure, both as individuals and as members of the Academy, for higher quality in entertainment programming. We must press for more time given to documentary and information programs.

I think, for example, that there's a real place for more investigative reporting on TV on a national and, most certainly, on a local level, the kind of reporting that newspapers used to do *all* the time and only do infrequently today. Local stations have a responsibility to uncover hard news and abuses in the areas they serve, however those abuses may occur and whatever their nature. The history of the printed media in this country shows a fairly constant sense of watchdog responsibility to the public, regardless of threats of punishment from advertisers. Very little of that sense has been apparent in TV.

Network programmers must make a wider range of subject matter available for the later evening hours, when small children will not or should not be watching the tube. By what I mean adult themes that will assume an audience intelligence somewhere above the kindergarten level.

The rigid plastic shell of time and format that now encases television and has since its inception must, somehow, be broken so that program control can be decentralized. Hopefully, we can get something like a magazine style, where advertising and program content will be separate matters, and where film makers, or program makers, can work like free lance writers and photographers do for the print media; where a talented professional with an idea can get it on, no matter what its length or how many segments are involved.

Program executives will tell us that it's impractical or impossible to set up a schedule in any way other than the way it's been done up to now. What they really mean is that any other way is inconvenient.

Under the present system in network offices, there is furious activity during a relatively brief buying season and available advertising dollars are quickly split up among the shows finally scheduled. Then it's a long martini lunch for the rest of the year,



with a weekly look at rating figures which reflect very little, if anything. For the most part, what these men want is a weekly can of film with no problems and no complaints. This hardly makes for an informative or fascinating evening in front of your set.

I'm not suggesting some kind of egghead utopia. There should be and always will be plenty of TV time for *Green Acres* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* and whatever doctor, lawyer, or police soap operas are in vogue. God knows, there are a lot of evenings when I come home so beat I just look for a drink and some of that oil of dumbness to wash over me out of the tube, with no heavy involvement. But, in the words of another man, we can do better. We *have* to do better.

Television is a tool, it can be a weapon, and it most certainly is a temptation, a never-ending temptation to men in power, men in government who would like to control it, however subtly. We must help these men resist that temptation by blocking their attempts whenever and wherever they develop.

Congressmen and Senators learned early the personal and political profit to be had from hearings directed at television. Senators Dodd and Pastore had TV's business heads quaking in front of so-called investigations that had no hint of legislative purpose.

In 1854 this country was swept by a political group who proudly called themselves "Know-Nothings." It was a repressively anti-intellectual movement, and we seem to have some of it in Washington today. We are in a period of increasing social and political polarization which will bring us, inevitably, into reaction and repression. The media, all the media are targets. If we do not resist, our choices will be taken away from us.

These are not extraordinary objectives to work toward. To me they seem quite logical, whatever your politics may be.

One final question: if the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences does not—or will not—work for these or for *some* measures to improve the medium, what, really, is its function?

# BOOKS IN REVIEW

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**TELEVISION-RADIO-FILM FOR CHURCHMEN.** B. F. Jackson, editor. New York and Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1970.

The church's love affair with print is challenged, both explicitly and implicitly, in this second of four books in the *Communication for Churchmen* series. Peter A. H. Meggs, a Canadian, an Anglican priest and a broadcaster, makes the initial case.

The church lags, he says, in understanding the changes that have taken place in a world of sophisticated technology. Meggs predicts that a much chastened church, by learning and listening, will finally enlarge its use of media. He concludes by quoting Duke Ellington:

Communication itself is what baffles the multitude. It is both so difficult and so simple. Of all man's fears, I think men are most afraid of being what they are—in direct communication with the world at large. They fear reprisals, the most personal of which is that they 'won't be understood.' Yet every time God's children have thrown away fear in pursuit of honesty—trying to communicate, understood or not—miracles have happened.

In the third section, Father John M. Culkin, a Jesuit and expert on film, reinforces Meggs' stand by providing a concise and readable review on McLuhan's ideas on the "all-at-onceness" of the present context. Culkin, a leader in the movement that sees film as an art form, also provides specifics on the way in which non-church films may serve to deepen communication through group experiences.

Section two is Dr. Everett C. Parker's bread-and-butter history of the broadcasting experience of religious groups in the U.S., in which he has played a key role for a generation or more. Admittedly, to understand the churches' current position, the reader will find the details overwhelming. However, in some cases specifics would have been more welcome than generalities. For example, one major difference between religious broadcasters is whether or not they pay for the time they use, a matter that could have been more helpfully clarified. Incidentally, the major group that insists on buying time, the National Religious Broadcasters, was not mentioned by name, and it is significant enough to have been specified.

Parker briefly summarizes the experience of the United Church of Christ in the landmark decision involving WLBT-TV in Jackson, Miss. Since the publication of this book, the church's concern for responsible broadcasting has continued to develop considerably.

This volume provides background and sets some directions for churchmen who wish to find their way among the problems which media present to churchmen and laity alike.

*Massachusetts Council of Churches*

T. C. Whitehouse

**THE EMMY AWARDS: A PICTORIAL HISTORY.** Paul Michael and James Robert Parish. New York: Crown Publishers, 1970.

Any book that takes three kick-offs to get the ball into play unwittingly signals the reader that there may be more muscle on the field than punt-returns or completed passes. *THE EMMY AWARDS*, Paul Michael's ten-dollar job, takes us through a thousand-word Preface, a thousand-word Foreword, and a much longer Introduction by the author himself, before we encounter Shirley Dinsdale and Judy Splinters (remember?) in 1949 when all the Most Outstanding's began.

Suggested weightiness is one thing. The happy fact, however, is quite different; the Michael-Parish book is altogether fascinating. It is original, challenging, extraordinarily informative, controversial, funny, surgically precise, and disarmingly candid, and in view of this reader, indispensable to an industry that has done so very little, in print, to defend, explain, or even to "declare" itself.

In the entire 379 pages there is not a stuffy line, surely a record of some sort. The book is a conscientious recording of television's annual self-celebration, but wisely stands aside, doing no celebrating of its own; takes no sides; expresses many doubts, but maintains a high consistency of just-the-facts-ma'am. Loring Mandel's Preface for example: beautifully written in a "what-the-hell-is-it-all-for-really" style that is at once dignified, deeply perceptive, and caring. And sometimes bluntly scornful. It is a *tour de force* of compact fairness.

The purpose of NATAS (he reminds us) is "to advance the arts and sciences of television and to foster creative leadership in the television industry for artistic, cultural, educational, and technological purposes." Then Mandel throws this at the reader: "If the Emmy is to be an acknowledgment of this standard, can competitive awards be anything but a reproach?" Mandel is himself an Emmy holder who would like to see some changes made, possibly even the "virtual elimination of categories." "You will find in these pages," he tells us, "a rich testimony of its (the Emmy's) high accomplishments, and a nagging reiteration of its sterility."

Indeed you do find.

Newton N. Minow, the Vast-whatever-it-was (and an Academy member), has authored the Foreword, enriched it with solid hopes and affirmations, and brought to his piece many references from individuals as varied as Lawrence Laurent and Dr. S. I. Hayakawa. The contrasts in history are sharp. In television's beginning days, Laurent reminded Minow, any performer who had worked in broadcasting was identified, in motion picture studios, as an "air performer," which to most in the movie world meant non-existence. In 20 years' time the impact of television, in the view of

college president Hayakawa, was forceful enough to touch off campus unrest all over the country and to ignite the civil rights revolution of the late '60's. Of his own convictions as to the gathering and binding power of television, and its strong sense of "joint participation," Mr. Minow flatly says that, in times of national tragedy (President Kennedy's assassination), "television more than any other force, held the nation together, united us, and enabled us to survive."

Paul Michael's Introduction is intriguing and fact-crammed, running back the early days with bright remembrance (by turns fragrant or fetid and more objective than nostalgic). It provides a careful tracing of the Academy's growth from 1946 and the true genesis of the Emmy three years later.

The unsettling swiftness of change jumps up at the reader on every page: The possibility in 1940 of obtaining commercial feature films for TV showing was "so patently absurd that it never became a serious issue."

The birth and death of the Dumont network is recalled. Did you know that as far back as 1931 CBA had television going—*programmed* television—seven-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week? Do you remember the magnifying glass shield attachment for enlarging the screen? The giveaway filters that were supposed to take the glare off your screen but didn't? Remember MacArthur on the *Missouri*? *Armchair Detective*? *The Masked Spooner*? Mike Stokey?

Paul Michael points out some of the "bewildering gaps in human judgment" in his listing of established TV favorites who have never picked up an Emmy. Believe it or not, here they are: Steve Allen, Arthur Godfrey, Johnny Carson, the late Judy Garland, Arlene Francis, Ed Sullivan, Dave Garroway, Jackie Gleason. Kate Smith has never even been nominated. "No contest trying to balance artistic and commercial ends," the author notes, "can be perfect."

The main burden of Michael's long effort, in which James Robert Parish has obviously provided strong assistance, is the annual account of the Emmy's. The full statement preceding the photographs of each year's winners, creates a cumulative impression of the terrifying bigness of the industry and an accompanying wonder if it's on a proper compass course.

The photographs—not seen before to this reader's knowledge—are excellent; sad, funny, evocative, and (strangely) not credited. It would be possible to complain about a few small matters: in the category "Best Writing" for example, the picture never includes the writer. And a running chart, year-by-year, of the growing number of TV sets would help settle many an argument.

The book is vigorous and worthy of trust. It deserves to hit every library in the U. S.

Max Wylie

**MASS MEDIA IN THE SOVIET UNION.** Mark W. Hopkins. New York: Pegasus, 1970.

Notwithstanding Churchill's characterization of the Soviet Union—"A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma"—the past decade has brought to scholars a number of studies which have effectively served to dispel some of the enigmatic, mysterious, arcane nature of that great power. This is as true of the field of mass communications as it is of most other aspects of Soviet life. Markham's *VOICES OF THE RED GIANTS*, Durham's *RADIO AND TELEVISION IN THE SOVIET UNION* and *NEWS BROADCASTING ON SOVIET RADIO AND TELEVISION*, sections of Emery's *NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS OF BROADCASTING* and Paulu's *RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT*, as well as a number of articles in scholarly and popular journals, have filled the "information gap" quite admirably—with a few major omissions.

Collectively, these sources have given us a relatively detailed picture of the organizational aspects of the Soviet mass media; a fairly clear impression of what kinds and quantities of information, education, and entertainment the Soviet citizen receives through the press, radio, and television (film does not fare as well in this respect); and plenty of philosophical statements—historical and contemporary, formal and informal—on the role of the media in Soviet society.

Mark Hopkins covers most of what his predecessors have collectively covered, touches a number of points that they do not, and perpetuates some of their omissions. His credentials are impressive: educated at Middlebury College, the University of Wisconsin and Leningrad University, traveled extensively in the Soviet Union in 1965 and 1967, presently employed as Soviet affairs specialist for the *Milwaukee Journal*. For the most part, this background serves him in good stead. His firsthand contact with his subject often shows, although never in the "As Adzhubei told me one day..." vein. He is able to render his own translations of articles from relatively obscure Soviet journals, and he draws numerous well-founded comparisons between Soviet and American practice of media organization and operation. His prose style is both lucid and lively.

But his most outstanding accomplishment, to my mind, is his uncanny ability to evaluate the Soviet media in the light of Communist and Soviet philosophy and practice, rather than hewing to an "American" or "free world" ideal. He shows a thorough acquaintance with the writings and pronouncements of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev, but also with the analytical works of Leonard Schapiro, Merle Fainsod and Hugh Seton-Watson.

Where Hopkins is strongest is in his treatment of the printed media and of the journalistic aspects of the broadcast media. His coverage of the various formal and informal censorship mechanisms is thorough. His account of the attempts made by Soviet officials over the years to give (or to give the appearance of giving) "the people" some direct voice in the operation and content of the media is likewise excellent. Finally, through the citation of several surveys undertaken by Soviet social scientists and by certain Soviet newspapers themselves, he is able to give us a reasonably clear impression of both the state of media research in the Soviet Union and the nature of public reaction toward the media.

He fares less well in treating the entertainment side of radio and television, and, for that matter, newspapers and magazines (some of which carry poetry, serialized fiction, and satirical essays). Much of the average broadcast day for Soviet radio and television consists of music (popular, folk, classical), drama, quiz shows, and, for TV, plenty of feature films and sports, but we learn little about them here.

Yet I have gathered from reading and from discussions with Soviet officials the place and function of mass media entertainment in Soviet society that causes a good deal of debate. Similarly, the entire area of media output designed for children and teenagers—and there is a good deal of it in the Soviet Union—is left pretty much untouched. Film is simply bypassed, and no grounds for the omission (admittedly, "omission" only if you feel that film belongs with the mass media and that book titles should mean what they say) are offered.

I feel that these weaknesses are important because I feel that Mark Hopkins has made the most valid (and most difficult) approach to his subject, in that he has attempted to present the Soviet mass media to us in a historical-philosophical-organizational-comparative totality. I suspect that he could have done a more thorough job by pursuing almost any one of his numerous strands—censorship, press organization, philosophy, etc.—in isolation. I personally hope he doesn't; I'd much rather see him return to the Soviet Union in six or seven years' time, live there for two years or so (it would take that long to penetrate the bureaucracy that surrounds even many seemingly non-controversial subjects), then produce a revised edition of this generally excellent work. Granted, it would probably be half again as long as the 1970 edition, and because of this it would probably sell about half as well, but what an accomplishment it would be in terms of personal scholarship and of lasting value to any who wish to better understand the communications systems of other nations.

*University of Minnesota*

Donald R. Browne

# TIME LIFE BROADCAST

major voices and integral parts of

- 7 **Denver**  
KLZ-TV-AM/FM
- 10 **San Diego**  
KOGO-TV-AM/FM
- 23 **Bakersfield**  
KERO-TV
- 6 **Indianapolis**  
WFBM-TV-AM/FM
- 8 **Grand Rapids**  
WOOD-TV-AM/FM

