

TELEVISION

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SUMMER 196

QUARTERLY

THE JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS
AND SCIENCES

Published by The National Academy
of Television Arts and Sciences with
the cooperation of the Television and
Radio Department, Newhouse Commu-
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TELEVISION QUARTERLY

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As host of the *Today* show and emcee of *Concentration*, HUGH DOWNS is seen on television more than any other performer in the medium. He began his network career in 1954 as host of the Arlene Francis *Home* show and was later the announcer for *Caesar's Hour*. In 1957 Mr. Downs joined Jack Paar's *Tonight Show* and was with the late-night series for five years. He became host of *Concentration* in 1958, and took over as anchor man on *Today* in 1962. Mr. Downs's wide-ranging interests include astronomy, painting, sports, composing popular and classical music, and writing.

CBS News Correspondent MIKE WALLACE, anchor man for the daily half-hour *CBS Morning News with Mike Wallace*, has had considerable background in news and public affairs programming, ranging from coverage of several national conventions and elections to organizing and heading news staffs for local New York television stations. In 1956 he started his television interview series, *Nightbeat*, on which he gained acclaim for direct, hard-hitting questions. In addition to his extensive broadcasting, Mr. Wallace has written for newspaper syndicates and magazines. His awards include the Peabody, several New York Emmys, and the Robert E. Sherwood Award.

THE CRAFT OF INTERVIEWING

HUGH DOWNS
MIKE WALLACE

Perhaps the most difficult of television's arts is to make plain talk interesting and germane to great audiences. In June, *Television Quarterly* arranged a meeting with two of the medium's most alert and able conversationalists, HUGH DOWNS and MIKE WALLACE. The purpose of the discussion was to discover some of the secrets of their interviewing technique, and a report of their revelations is printed below.

We might begin by ascertaining whether you hold some special philosophy toward interviewing. Is it a unique art or craft? Why, for example, do interview and talk programs have greater apparent success with British TV audiences than with American?

MR. WALLACE: I think we must separate the interview from the regular talk program at the outset. Interviewers are not "talkers." The function of the interviewer is to talk no more than necessary. His job is to encourage the man sitting across the table from him to talk.

As for the success of talk programs in London, I suppose the British are more addicted to the talk show, both in radio and television. Men like Malcolm Muggeridge and Robert Morley have great followings because—somehow—the British seem to be brought up to be better talkers than Americans.

MR. DOWNS: I am aware of the great number of talk programs in

England, and some of them are very good. But often a talk program can become random and aimless if it does not have the focus that a good interview must have. One of the remarkable qualities of Mike's interview technique, for example, is its deliberate direction.

It is my belief that there is no such thing as an embarrassing question in a good interview. There is always the matter of taste, of course, in a question. It might be loaded in such a way that the listener becomes confused—or it may take advantage of an ineptitude on the part of the guest. But Mike's show seeks participation, and asking those frank questions which are in the mind of the viewer really constitutes the whole art of interviewing. I have always felt that my ultimate function is simply to represent the natural and healthy curiosity of the viewer or listener.

MR. WALLACE: You must also remember that when Hugh does one of his *Today* interviews, he is not just a reporter who is digging for facts. He is not only reporting, he is actually editing and publishing at the same time. This is a difficult and complex job. The discussion we are holding now, for example, is different from an ordinary live television interview because both Hugh and I will have a later opportunity to see a transcript, and we can make sure that we have said what we intended to say. We will have the right to say "Let's get this out," or "This is what I meant here." You will condense and rearrange it, and we can see it before it is frozen in print. But the TV interviewer has only a few fleeting minutes to accomplish the same goal, and under pressure. Nobody else in any other medium must work under those conditions which make broadcast interviewing unique.

MR. DOWNS: Yet an audience member is not exactly like a reader. The reader will sense that the print piece has been polished—that it has been culled from a lot of material and that skillful editorial ability has been applied to it. The audience for a TV interview, however, recognizes the nature of the work and how it is delivered to them. They can be more compassionate when they know that a person is on the spot, and they will settle for what comes out within such conditions. Mike pioneered this approach in his old *Nightbeat* show and the audience responded to it. That lack of perfection which is an inescapable element in my own daily interviews is somehow understood, and in large measure forgiven, by the audience because they are aware of our problems.

MR. WALLACE: We ought to recognize, too, that the function of the interviewer will alter in different types of programs and with different kinds of guests. Many interviews—perhaps the bulk of them—are purely informational. But there are also interviews which are devoted to pure entertainment. If I am interviewing Woody Allen I am not really after information. I am virtually a straight man, just setting up jokes for him.

But the informational interview can have controversial overtones. I may have a guest who has aroused a great deal of curiosity because he is disputatious, and I want to push him, prod him, and encourage him into making more direct statements of his views. I try to confront him with an attitude he has held in the past. Perhaps he has changed his position. I may operate on the hunch that he hasn't made his change of mind public, and I will try to confront him with this private change.

MR. DOWNS: Certainly the objective is truth, but elements which will mitigate the incisiveness of the interviewer as he digs for it must be considered. Certain aspects of taste will influence him, as will simple compassion, and this poses a dilemma. If, out of compassion, a questioner lets up on a guest the interview can become vapid and hypocritical. There are some viewers who may say, "That's good. The guy is a human being after all"; but many others will say, "I don't give a damn about his feelings. I want to know the truth." This group wants the interviewer to keep after him. You have that obligation to the viewer you represent, but on the other hand you feel odd about really putting on the heat in order to get at the truth.

For five years I worked with Jack Paar, who, contrary to what some people have been led to believe, was not a villain. He was not malicious, but because of his personality he could be more incisive than many people who have made life-long careers of getting information out of people. He just asked a question in a certain way and *bam!* I don't think he was hurting people. I think that one of the conditions which led to his remarkable, and not undeserved, success is a certain morbid curiosity in many viewers. They didn't tune in to listen to his skill or maturity, but because he had that raw, direct quality which brought out the truth in such a way that TV seemed an even more powerful medium than it is. He had the knack of asking the basic question right off. When he interviewed Harlow Shapley the first thing he asked was, "Is there a God?" A question like that would unnerve even a distinguished scientist like Shapley.

MR. WALLACE: It may seem strange, but when you consider it there is a certain time of day when questions like that become more appropriate. The kind of question Paar used to ask on the old *Tonight* show could not be asked by Hugh on his morning show. It seems to me that after eleven o'clock the threshold for acceptance of pointed questions is somewhat lower.

MR. DOWNS: That's a coincidence. I never discussed this matter with Mike, but over the years of broadcasting I got the same feeling. I once wanted to do a magazine piece called "The Prude Curve." The observation is true, but it isn't because the audience make-up changes. There are subjects you can touch upon as the hour grows later that cannot be broached at other times. At quarter to one in the morning you can bring up topics and use words—and we did—not because there were different people, but because the "curve of acceptance" seems to drop. This creates additional problems when you are pre-taping because editorial handling and time-placement can bring about entirely unanticipated reactions. A taped discussion of incest or birth control intended for late evening might be played on a morning show and bring on strong criticism.

We are touching upon the entire question of appropriateness and taste in interviewing now, and I wonder if you would comment upon the increasing tendency to bring "kooks" on the air—people who see flying saucers or who have far-out notions on any subject. Is this dangerous in the kind of interview where confrontation is an objective? Perhaps what we are really seeking are your own standards for selection of interviewees.

MR. WALLACE: It will inevitably depend upon the interviewer's taste and judgment. I don't welcome the self-conscious "kook." It might be useful to salt the schedule with one or two in a season, but it can be a delicate matter.

MR. DOWNS: Doesn't the American stage pose an analogous question? There are human beings, it is true, who are handicapped or crippled, either physically or emotionally, but if you people the entire stage with them it reflects not so much the world as it is as upon the nature of the playwright's outlook. Has he really made valid comment on our lives? The same question faces the interviewer—more acutely because he is not dealing with fiction. It is not real or editorially honest if you select too high a proportion of such way-out types. This is as untrue as eliminating or ignoring them.

MR. WALLACE: You can destroy your own credibility when you bring too many of that kind to your show. I would readily admit that my old *Nightbeat* program occasionally came near to vaudeville when I resorted to the piercing, rather than the penetrating, question. The audience sensed what we were doing and so these lapses did not serve us well in the long run.

But let me differentiate between the two kinds of questions. The piercing question was instituted purely for shock value—like a telegraphed punch. The penetrating question was used to honestly seek information and a point of view. The latter kind of question seeks to generate sparks between one idea and another idea. It is not employed—as the piercing question is—merely to hurt or to raise a little hell. The end result of that approach may be entertaining, but it wears itself out very fast.

If your goal is an adult and mature, if abrasive, way of getting vital information, then almost any question is a sensible one. The least palatable approach is not simply in interviewing “kooks,” but in creating a “kook” environment around normal people. Some performers now on TV do much of that.

MR. DOWNS: I think the guests will survive even that, but the show may die. Some guests on the Paar show complained that he “made them look bad,” but I disagree. Nobody can make an interviewee look bad, although he can make himself appear ridiculous. A guest may be neglected or abused—or even misused in some ways—but if he looks bad he has done it to himself.

MR. WALLACE: I feel we do not attach enough importance to the manner of presentation. The visual effects which can add dramatic value to an interview should not be neglected. Ted Yates designed the visual presentation for *Nightbeat*. It was his idea to shoot it over the shoulder, thus making the interviewer more anonymous. He felt that the audience must see the interviewee’s face in a tight closeup in order to reveal the thought process in action. When a penetrating question was asked you could see it hit. You’d see the reaction begin in the eyes, and this made for a kind of drama superior to many others on TV. And the lighting was blocked out so as to contribute to the starkness of the setting. Incidentally, there is a crucial distinction between radio and TV interviewing. Radio time is cheap and more of it is available, whereas in TV the half-hour and hour required for proper depth in an interview is simply *not* to be had. And I think it’s impossible to develop a good and sensitive interview in less than half an hour.

MR. DOWNS: Thomas Mann wrote that one of his characters "got used to not getting used to a certain situation," and that's the way I feel about time in television. There is too little of it to begin with; there are too many interruptions. I have had to learn to work with it. You find out how much time is available and you try to use it in the best way possible, but interviewing interesting people under such restrictions is like walking a shore filled with interesting shells and stones. You know that if you linger too long at any spot you will fall behind.

Is there a real dramatic structure in a good interview? With a beginning, middle and end, and point of climax?

MR. WALLACE: Absolutely. You can only hope that you'll have the wit, flair and ability to respond to the flow, in order to make the interview more and more interesting as it builds. In order to do this you have to know your person pretty well. You must know what he has said in the past, and what his point of view on various subjects is and has been. The interviewer must research what others have said on the subject or about the person being interviewed. But there should definitely be a story "line" in the interviewer's mind as the interview begins.

MR. DOWNS: That's a sound framework, but I would differ to this extent: I have found it possible to lose freshness and perspective if I am too well versed in a subject and the viewer is not as completely informed. In theory, it seems to me that some ignorance can be virtuous. If you have an interesting person, it may be helpful to follow a line of simple adverbial questions: "Who are you?" "Why are you here?" It is a theory, but it will work in practice with stimulating guests. I like to be well prepared, but if I know the subject too well I begin to follow inside routes and the viewer is left behind. I would at least enter a brief against over-preparation.

MR. WALLACE: Well, you could have fooled me, because I thought you were a superb interviewer who knew what he was doing and was capable of performing in such a way as to make me believe that it was spontaneous.

MR. DOWNS: I think I rely on ignorance more than that. I majored in it at college.

Do you try to ask the question that hits at closely guarded secrets? Do you often ask questions that will annoy the interviewee?

MR. WALLACE: I have, especially in the past. A device I will occasionally use is to ask a question and, if I get only half an answer, let "dead air" take over. The interviewee may find that the protracted silence is too much for him, and—so—frequently the pudding comes tumbling out.

In that regard, do you often find yourself dealing with the compulsive talker? How do you treat this kind of situation?

MR. DOWNS: I don't find many of that kind, but I was a bystander on the Paar show on that horrible night when Mickey Rooney spent 25 minutes digging himself into a hole 50 feet deep. My toes curled in my shoes and at one point I wanted to try to rescue him in some way, because Paar just sat there and let him go on. It was a masterful use of technique. Later, when Rooney wanted to sue Paar, someone asked, "How do you sue a man for sitting by and watching you dig yourself into a hole?" This is actually what he did. Rooney couldn't stand silence, and Paar simply sat there and looked at him. It's a hell of a technique. It can also be a very cruel technique.

There are all types of interviewers and interviewing techniques, but maybe the technique of listening is most neglected. There is a type, especially among the amateurs, who has simply never learned to listen. I call him the "Yeah, well..." interviewer. He will begin by asking a person how long he has been in the city, and while the guest is answering he is already thinking of what his next question will be. If the interviewee says, "I've been in New York for 155 years" this chap will blandly say, "Yeah, well where do you go next...?" If you don't listen to the answers it can't be much of an interview.

MR. WALLACE: By the very act of listening you can get a fine interview. A man coming to a TV studio for an interview is, after all, in a formidable situation. There are lights, cameras, mikes, distraction. Your function is to try to wipe all that away and establish a chemistry between you and him. You do that by listening. You do it by responding and directing the flow of conversation, and if you do it well there is a moment of truth—a moment in that time period when your eye suddenly fixes on his and you are talking to each other. He has forgotten all the distractions and this is when the best interviewing happens.

MR. DOWNS: During the early days of TV—no more than a dozen years ago—the interviews were carefully blocked and written out. A director would tell a guest, “Mr. Blank, when Mr. Wallace asks you this question, address your remarks to camera three.” It wasn’t long before the guest was ready for a strait jacket. He had no idea what was happening and couldn’t begin to keep track of things. It is up to the medium to bring its techniques to the person who is not familiar with them. It is up to the interviewer, the director, the cameramen and everybody else to make the guest feel at home. The most vital skill is to listen carefully, and probably the next most important is never to ask a guest to look into a camera. Television is at its best when it is eavesdropping.

MR. WALLACE: Playing the cameras is a mistake. Many politicians do it. Jack Javits constantly does it, and it’s very distracting. You ask him a question and he immediately turns directly to the camera and away from the interviewer. The audience—I think—prefers to have a sense of eavesdropping on a conversation between a guest and an interviewer.

MR. DOWNS: The reasons for that preference are not hard to find, either. Audiences have become immune to being talked and shouted at. They have seen too many loud and abrasive commercials, too many political speeches. A curtain drops in front of their eyes. Mike, have you ever tried to tell a politician that he might be better received if he didn’t talk at them?

MR. WALLACE: Time and again, but it is difficult to break the ingrained habits of politicians who insist upon speaking to their constituents. I think the most effective political spots I have ever seen were those run by Bobby Kennedy in his senatorial campaign. People came up to him on the street to ask questions, and he answered them directly. The camera was there just as a bystander, taking candid shots. He never looked at the camera, and so it was believable. There was candor and conviction in it.

This was the kind of sequence they used in a CBS Reports on the Kennedy-Keating race. Are there any special techniques that can be used to get by the routine statement—the foggy political speech?

MR. WALLACE: Most politicians I know are quite in command of an interview. They know the devices that will be used as well as the interviewer knows them. If you want a straight answer you simply have to be dogged. You must go after it and keep after it, as Lawrence Spivak and his colleagues on *Meet The Press* do so well.

I will never forget an interview with Wayne Morse. He led me by the nose despite all the doggedness I could summon. He was going to use the show as a platform, and I could not shake him loose.

MR. DOWNS: The political interview is not a specialty of mine. I occasionally get one, and once when I did, Senator Clark managed to make me look inept and ineffectual. I recall that we were discussing an amount of money in the billions, and I suggested that three million or so was a drop in the bucket. He replied, "Well, maybe three million isn't much to a radio announcer, but to me it is an important amount of money." It was a wonderful put-down. I had just stuck my neck out so far and he whacked at it.

MR. WALLACE: I thought Martin Agronsky used to do a superb job of political interviewing on the *Today* show before he came to CBS. He conducted a very low key—if insistent—interview, and he got his answers. He got them remarkably fast, too, because he wasn't given much more than twelve minutes.

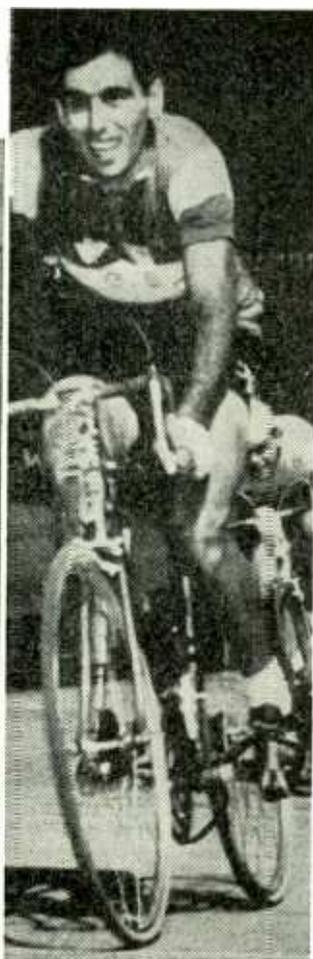
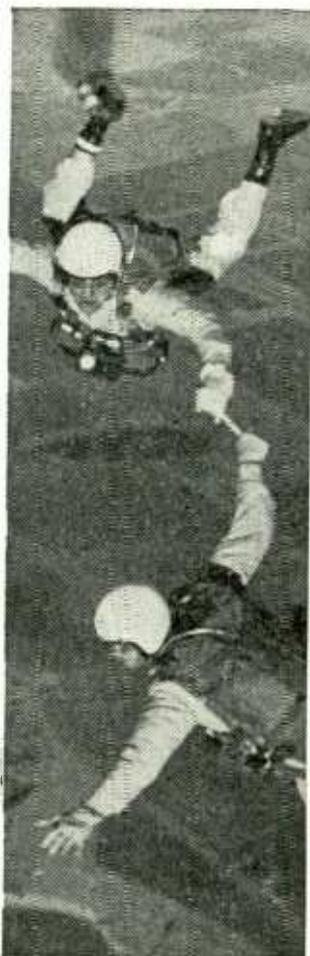
In closing, what interviews did you find particularly memorable? Who is the most stimulating kind of guest?

MR. WALLACE: The best kind—not just for interviewing but for any stimulating television—is the person who builds upon his own ideas. Articulate writers and lawyers are excellent. Actors, by and large, are dull because they talk only about their current work. But an artist, a writer, a poet—anyone who deals with ideas—is fine. Frank Lloyd Wright stands out in my memory. He knew why he was there. He wanted to talk about his ideas and stir up a little controversy. He was almost self-conscious about it. He wanted to have some fun and excitement.

MR. DOWNS: The real delight is someone who wants to tear up the floor, not be agreeable. Frank Lloyd Wright is the perfect example—a real joy and challenge. He would lead off an answer with an airy "My dear boy—" and you knew you were working with a genuine master of stimulating conversation. That makes interviewing the most potentially exciting form of television.

MR. WALLACE: It certainly does. Wasn't it Ed Murrow who once said that people armed with their own convictions can compose compelling literature while they are speaking? That's TV at its best—in a talk, a documentary, an interview—anything. Conviction.





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 **NBC SPORTS**

AN EXPERIMENT

Last May, on the eve of the nation's annual Memorial Day highway accident debacle, CBS News offered an hour long special program designed to achieve a direct audience response in a test of driving safety knowledge. *The National Driver's Test* was seen in over sixteen million American homes, where it was attended by 53 per cent of the TV audience—approximately 30 million viewers. Within a few days the program drew an estimated million-and-a-half mail responses, earned nearly unqualified critical endorsement, and was even assessed by some as a communications phenomenon comparable to Orson Welles's 1938 Martian broadcast and Kate Smith's World War II war bond-selling marathon. Described by Robert Shayon as "a pioneer penetration along the frontier of two-way communication," *The National Driver's Test* may well have established a dramatic new pattern for overcoming one of the greatest shortcomings inherent within any form of mass communication—audience passivity and non-involvement.

Shortly after initial reaction to the program, *Television Quarterly* visited the West 57th Street offices of CBS News, where a lengthy discussion was conducted with the producer-writer of the program, WARREN V. BUSH. Mr. Bush's comments were taped and transcribed, and later condensed into the printed version below.

Associated with CBS since 1955, WARREN V. BUSH has written and produced award-winning Public Affairs and Special Events programs on such diverse subjects as politics, poetry, economics, education, science, art and humor. In 1964 he edited *The Dialogues of Archibald MacLeish and Mark Van Doren*, the book version of a television program of the same name which Mr. Bush conceived and produced in 1962.

THE TEST

WARREN V. BUSH

There's really no logical explanation as to how a broadcast "first" such as *The National Driver's Test* originally comes into existence. As you know, basically sound broadcast subjects often fail to see the light of the tube for lack of a viable form of electronic expression.

As a case in point, CBS News had produced no definitive driving safety broadcasts up to the time of *The National Driver's Test* since the network airing of *The Great Holiday Massacre* on December 26, 1960. This was not because there was a lack of interest on the part of CBS News—rather, it was primarily a case of our failing to come up with a program idea which would literally *sing*, which would get across the safe driving story like it had never been gotten across before. However, we continued to remain alert for those unknown elements relative to any given subject that would suddenly coalesce into a program idea which had interest-compelling originality and an unmistakable, self-generating vitality.

The genesis of *The National Driver's Test* probably began like this: about three years ago the National Safety Council independently concluded that, after almost a half a century of using mass communications in one form or another, it really didn't know very much about it. Some among their staff began to associate a continuously rising road accident toll with their own failure to develop effective mass communication techniques in the field of driving safety. So, as a major project of the National Safety Council's 50th Anniversary celebration, an extensive Safety Mass Communication Study was begun.

The study was divided into several phases, the first of which was the writing of a basic paper by Dr. Harold Mendelsohn, head of Radio-TV Research at the University of Denver. Essentially what Dr. Mendelsohn did was to review and synthesize available literature on mass communications. There was so little on *safety* communications *per se* that he was forced to borrow from other fields where communications research had been conducted and proved out. He

applied these related findings to the objectives of the organized safety movement, and developed certain key principles to serve as safety communication guidelines.

The second phase of the study involved the writing of critiques on Dr. Mendelsohn's basic paper by 18 leading social scientists, communications specialists and safety experts. Phase three was a National Symposium held in September, 1963. For two days 72 communications and safety specialists met in panel groups to discuss the basic paper and critiques. At the conclusion of the symposium each panel presented summary statements which served to refine what was rapidly becoming a definitive "handbook" on mass safety communications.

As a matter of fact, Arch MacKinlay, Jr., Director of Public Information for the National Safety Council, is even now preparing such a handbook—for those whom he describes as "safety communicators"—based largely on the formal findings of the study.

Although the original study could not be construed to be a program idea, it became one of the potential elements of a program idea; all that remained was for it to be linked up with another unknown element to result in a broadcast with a unique character and a life of its own.

Thus it was that a highly formalized, academic study of communications techniques came to collide with the legendary "got" instincts of Fred W. Friendly, President of CBS News. About the same time the National Safety Council was launching its communications project, Friendly (then Executive Producer of *CBS Reports*), discovered to his chagrin that he had accumulated too many demerits on his driver's license for traffic violations incurred while driving from his home to "crisis" meetings at CBS News headquarters in New York City.

As a consequence he was required to take—and pass—a mandatory refresher driver's test administered by the New York State Motor Vehicle Bureau. In the process of salvaging his driver's license privilege it became dramatically clear to him—an experienced driver—that there were many things he had forgotten, or only half remembered, about safe driving. Enthused and fascinated with the impact the test had on his subsequent driving habits, Friendly intuitively felt that here, at last, might be the *deus ex machina* that would miraculously solve the nagging problem of how to put his brand of "electronic journalism" to work in a dynamic and inform-

ative framework on the subject of safe driving. Why not give a refresher driver's test to all of the licensed drivers in the country? Why not make available in the living rooms of 96 million drivers a home-audience participation test which would let each viewer find out for himself how good a driver he *really* is? Surely, he reasoned, a privately self-administered, self-revealing driver's test might go a long way toward arousing complacent or misinformed drivers who were statistically responsible for most of the nearly 50,000 highway deaths occurring each year on American roads.

Friendly immediately directed that the feasibility of creating a national broadcast driver's test be explored. It was—intensively. Consultations were held individually with driving and safety professionals the country over. But not until Friendly's visceral punch encountered the National Safety Council Study (to which many of the same individually consulted professionals had contributed) was the practicality of producing a national driver's test confirmed. The unknown elements had come together. This unpredictable union literally forced a no-return commitment. The program idea *sang*.

Six months' production time and an unprecedented six-figure budget were allocated to the broadcast which was to be described later as "the most ambitious safety communications effort ever attempted by television to educate a mass public." It turned out to be just that, but not without some inadvertent neglect. Program priorities were necessarily given to the on-again-off-again cold war, an assassination, primaries, conventions, and a national election. But the idea persisted; it lived on.

Production finally got underway in December, 1964. The first order of business was to put together an advisory "brain trust" of some of the nation's most respected experts in the fields of driving safety and education, mass communications and test design. Suddenly fed and doted upon, *The National Driver's Test* idea began to flourish; indeed, before it was all over, it figuratively burst the seams of our most sanguine expectations. Such was the enormous vitality of the basic idea that the combined production giants involved—CBS News, the National Safety Council, The IBM Corporation, and the Board of Consultants—could barely keep up with its demands. A few that come to mind are:

- Challenge, without destroying, the self-esteem of 96 million "expert" drivers hardened to bloody highway fatality statistics.
- Create a network driving test for a nation devoid of com-

plete standardization of traffic laws or licensing requirements.

- Devise a driving test which would advance safe driving information that a consensus of professionals could agree upon.
- Provide psychological incentives for active home participation which would preclude passive viewing leading to the reinforcement of an established inertia on the test subject.
- Develop production values which would compel and sustain viewer interest while minimizing anxiety; which would promote better post-program road performance or participation in driver improvement classes.
- Innovate testing and scoring techniques which would provide for self-analytic candor in the isolation of a viewer's living room, while simultaneously creating a spirit of vicarious group competition; and as a corollary to this, obtain a unique post-broadcast research capability.
- Develop a mass-media test commensurate with the capacities of all educational and intelligence levels; a test without the usual spatial-sequential relationship, but necessarily confined to a time-sequential relationship.
- Design a saturation publicity and promotion campaign with maximal local and regional exploitation possibilities.

Of course, the diversity of these demands and others cutting across several disciplines taxed the basic competence of a broadcast news organization which is largely reportorial. Therefore, we necessarily relied heavily on the pedagogical advice of our brain-trust, and the mass-communications findings of the National Safety Council study. It should be noted that throughout the production several strongly-held beliefs sustained everyone responsible for meeting the enormous demands of the basic idea. First—emotionally the automobile is an inseparable part of the so-called American way of life; second—most American drivers held their driving skills and knowledge in rather high regard; and three—most Americans like to test themselves on whatever they think they are particularly good at, be it accuracy with a baseball at a carnival concession, or beating the *New York Times* double crostic.

Exhaustive research provided us with questions of safe driving importance which were largely compatible with what is standardized in American traffic laws and regulations. And, a consensus concerning recommended driving techniques was obtained from leading driving safety professionals.

Test semantics and visual production techniques were pre-tested on a probability sample of licensed drivers selected from the Washington, D.C. area. The pre-test findings also served as guidelines in establishing the degree of difficulty the average viewer should reasonably experience in taking the test.

Filmed high-speed collision scenes were staged by professional stunt drivers in such a manner that each viewer could imagine in terms of his own experience or inclinations the human damage that could result from the structural damage of the colliding cars.

Nearly 50 million *official* test answer forms were printed and circulated to provide the home-viewer with a psychological incentive to see the broadcast and to take an *active* part in it. The test was also designed to induce the participation of viewers who did not have an official test answer form. Low-scorers and others concerned with their test results were immediately provided with an anxiety-freeing recourse prior to the termination of the broadcast, i.e., an opportunity to enroll in, or start, a National Safety Council Driver Improvement Program within their own communities.

A sense of group participation was created by providing viewers with an opportunity to compare their test results throughout the course of the program with those of a four-city probability sample of 2000 drivers who began the test a few minutes immediately prior to the broadcast. (The test results of the sample group combined with additional survey questionnaires provided a bonus feedback for post-program research purposes.) Finally, the project was designed to support an established testing theory that the function of a test should be to advance as much, or more information than it seeks to elicit from the respondent.

The concentrated national and grass-roots pre-broadcast publicity campaign facilitated the ease with which potential viewers could obtain incentive-inducing test answer forms, and generally pre-disposed an estimated one-fourth to one-third of the nation's drivers to participate in the broadcast.

Additional psychological lures were employed: the confidence-inspiring, authoritative Walter Cronkite was engaged as the broadcast test administrator, and Mike Wallace, the tough, call-a-spade-a-spade reporter, announced the test-results of the four-city sample. An especially designed *official* CBS News Test Center was erected in our New York studios, with a functional similarity to the CBS News Election Headquarters. And, with the exception of the

test questions and answers which were produced on film, the basic broadcast was *live*, providing each viewer with an emotional stake in the immediacy of a national television event unfolding before him and everyone else for the very first time.

With a fundamental respect for the integrity of the basic idea, and a self-sacrificing willingness on the part of everyone involved to meet its natural demands, *The National Driver's Test* ultimately secured what *Variety* described as "the highest rating ever for a public affairs program . . . garnered a whopping 30.5 . . . led the Top 10 in the Nielsen pocketpiece for the two weeks ending June 6." Trailing substantially behind in the ratings for the same period were such popular riveters of passive attention as *Bonanza*, *Peyton Place* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Even the rating of the dazzling Gemini IV space shot could not compare with that of *The National Driver's Test*.

So deep was the involvement of viewers in *The National Driver's Test* that approximately 52% of the more than a million completed test answer forms which were mailed to CBS News contained unsolicited demographic information concerning the respondents, some volunteering, "thought you might like to have this for your research." Moreover, for the first time since the early days of television, a single program became the principal topic of conversation throughout the nation following the broadcast.

The size of the audience, evidence of its intense participation, the favorable response to the broadcast from safety professionals and communication critics, and the general excitement generated by the experiment led to one inescapable conclusion: experience-forged broadcast capabilities and techniques utilizing key communication principles inimitable to the social and behavioral sciences had made possible a kind of instruction for a whole society.

The implications are overwhelming.

In theory, almost any subject of social consequence could be treated in the manner of *The National Driver's Test*. For example, take the subject of personal debt within the United States. We are often warned of the dangers of excessive installment buying, of over-extending our personal credit. Suppose a national broadcast test were devised with objectives similar to those of *The National Driver's Test*—candid soul-searching, with an aim toward self-improvement? Just as we asked the driver to realistically evaluate his ability to handle himself behind the wheel, we might ask a typical family breadwinner to privately analyze the condition of his

personal economic position. If such a test were irresponsibly handled it is not inconceivable to imagine some 30 million Americans on a given evening stuffing their money in mattresses, withdrawing their money from the consumer market. The velocity of money could drop off radically overnight and a whole economic structure based in large part on personal credit could conceivably teeter on the brink of disaster.

The same kind of potentially radical results might be anticipated in response to irresponsible "test" treatments on the subjects of, say, aptitudes, bigotry, sexual mores, marriage, political sentiments, or other social or cultural phenomena.

What I am suggesting is this: the incredible response to this first primitive step in the direction of national public instruction makes it plain that great powers and dangers are inherent in this collaboration between the social sciences and the broadcast profession. Therefore, those who choose to handle this communications gunpowder must do so with great care and wisdom.

If I am uncertain about the future development and application of this communications breakthrough, I am positive of this: we marshaled the nation. Approximately 30 million people—presumably adult—made an appointment with their television sets for the evening of May 24, 1965—not to be entertained, but to learn something that would bring about a *change*—hopefully an improvement—in the daily activity of their lives. This says something—not about television on broadcasters or social scientists—but about people and their relationship to the ubiquitous tube. The opportunity to participate, to become deeply and actively involved in *The National Driver's Test* was evidently something they wanted—that they felt they needed. They wanted an experience, and obviously they had an experience. They were a necessary part of an electronic "happening," and it was thrilling to them not to be talked at, or talked down to. Instead they were free for the first time to enter into the same sort of meaningful personal relationship with that box in the living room—as they had long ago with that old flame in the garage.

THE HUMAN DRAMA

ROONE ARLEDGE

The following essay was originally prepared by ABC's ROONE ARLEDGE for an ABC-TV publication. *Television Quarterly* is pleased to have been given the privilege of reprinting this articulate statement upon the role of sports in television.

I believe the Olympic Games to be the greatest single sporting event in the world. The incredible task is to take this magnificent idea that brings all the countries of the world together and make it believable. Show at once the grandeur of the setting and yet never lose the individual portrait of an athlete's effort! From a television standpoint we felt that the Winter Olympics from Innsbruck would give us the opportunity to utilize the techniques we had developed on *Wide World of Sports* during the previous three years and put them all into effect at one time. The logistical challenge as well as the creative challenge was very exciting. We wanted to televise the games from the Alps in the snow and use the remarkable communications satellites to relay them to the United States.

We felt that because of our *Wide World of Sports* experience in Europe we were probably better equipped than the other networks to cover the Olympics the best, despite the fact that CBS had done

ROONE ARLEDGE is Vice-President and Executive Producer of ABC Sports. Since joining the network in 1960, Mr. Arledge has pioneered many camera techniques and developments in the field of sports coverage and programming, among them the use of the hand-held camera in collegiate football and zoom lenses in baseball. Prior to joining ABC, Mr. Arledge was a director and producer at NBC-TV, where, in addition to varied news and special events programs, he produced Shari Lewis's *Hi, Mom* series, which won an Emmy Award.

a tremendous job at Squaw Valley in 1960. I thought that was a milestone in television coverage up to that time. In retrospect, the excitement of winter sports was new to television in 1960 and, most important, everything from Squaw Valley was live. There is just no comparison to the built-in excitement and tension of an event that is live, no matter who wins, because you don't know what's going to happen. If the results are known, as they were in most all of our telecasts from Innsbruck, then showmanship and creative ability is much more important than it is in a live show. ABC had to take events like Luge and skating where Americans had little chance to win and explain to people who Pfestmantl and Stengl or Lidiya Skoblikova and Manfred Schnelldorfer were. We had to make them exciting, even though our athletes in the first week were not in the running.

However, this is what we thrive on. This is our basic concept on *Wide World of Sports*: the idea that there are elements in all sports competition which are universal. The emotional impact that is found in the dramatic conflict of one man against time or two men or two teams against each other has an absolute fascination to everyone, everywhere. The second universal aspect is the panorama and the atmosphere of the setting where the event takes place. This basically is all we have to work with—a contest and a place—but we believe these are all we need.

All sports are equal in their potential for dramatic impact on those people who know and care and are involved in the spirit of the contest, so that the atmosphere in Hayward, Wisconsin, on the day of the Lumberjack Championships is really not unlike the atmosphere in London on the day of the F. A. Cup Championships or in Baltimore when the Colts are playing the Chicago Bears. There is an air of electricity and everybody is talking about the athletes, and this atmosphere pervades any sporting event.

What we have to do is to make people, in a very brief period of time, know enough about an athlete: whether he's likely to succeed or not; whether what he's doing is particularly difficult; how he has to do it; and then whether he did it, and his reaction. The task we have on *Wide World of Sports*, and this was true on the Summer Olympic trials when we telecast sports like rowing or judo or equestrian, is to portray the universality of these events. For each—in beauty and grace and the effort of the athlete—can match any national game. In each there's a mission to be accomplished. Human beings with clashing emotions are pitted against each other. This is

the thing we have to find in reporting. It is much easier when you are doing a football game in which everybody knows the participants. It is a challenge when you're covering an event that people know little about.

We try on *Wide World of Sports* to forget our own environment. If you live in Westport, Connecticut, or Van Nuys, California, the All-Ireland Football Championship is of academic interest to you, but if you live in Dublin, it's life or death. Our reporters—producers, directors, and announcers—*must* put themselves in the position of the people in Dublin which means they must take the game very seriously. They can't do as many sportswriters do—look on it condescendingly. We treat all events on *Wide World* as important sports, because to the people who are participating in them, they are. That doesn't mean that there aren't funny things to be treated with good humor, but basically we don't go to do an event in order to be big-city sophisticates who think, for example, that it's a ridiculous contest when grown men chop poles in half. There is nothing really different about a guy trying to chop a tree down quicker than the guy next to him from someone trying to pole vault higher than the guy next to him. It is basically the same elements in sports that excite the people of the world.

One of the things that you must do in televising sports is to *relate*. If you don't show people what to look for, they cannot really enjoy the contest. When you come in and show with drawings what happens when a ski-jumper leaves the lip of a jump, or (with our new Dual-Action camera) explore the critical turn in the richest horse race in the world to see how the winning horse came within an inch of clipping the heel of the horse in front, the viewer understands what an event is all about.

But it all must be presented in an emotional context. It must all flow together. When it does it becomes a new language of vision in sports. The difference between an outstanding telecast and a routine open-up-a-camera-and-just-document telecast is in this *selectivity*. Our staff is devoted to exercising this selectivity—both audio and video—on behalf of the viewer. There are times when an anecdote from a Paul Christman or a Stirling Moss is fascinating. There are other times when, no matter who he is, you want to say, "Be quiet—they're about to score!"

In both audio and video people will not tolerate anything less than perfection. It's the same old story. When you're getting something for free, you are a good deal more critical of it than if you

were paying for it. If you paid \$8.00 to get into a stadium and could barely see the field, you would go home thinking how lucky you were to get into the place. But when you see it on television for nothing, everybody raises a fuss if a camera is slightly out of focus.

There is no question that we have advanced tremendously since our program began in 1961. I think the one area we must explore further is how to convey the emotional impact of what an athlete is doing. There's no real way that we can actually show how it feels to drive a Grand Prix racing car at 160 mph through a turn at Le Mans in the rain in the middle of the night. We can record it, we can show the rain, we can take pictures from inside the car, we can come close to capturing the reality of speed rather than the illusion of speed that people talk about. But there is no real way we can make people feel the danger. This is the area that we will have to explore and it will come partly through a deeper insight into the athletes themselves. Most athletes articulate their feelings through action, not words, so we will need a combination of aesthetic feeling with our new language of vision, be it new television cameras, drawings, still pictures, a montage of sounds, close-ups of faces, or a combination of all of these with the voice of an athlete. We must achieve the feeling of what it's really like. We are doing this much better than we were, but we still have a long way to go.

Communication is an art form. Since we are dealing with an emotional expression of people, although it takes a physical form, it is an art and our method of communicating this *must* be at least as great as the art of the athlete involved. We cannot record greatness in a mediocre way. The way we record something that happens is worth our using whatever energy, whatever creativeness, whatever resourcefulness we have, to find the perfect way to do it. We have to get the same emotional surge and satisfaction watching an athlete succeed as he gets in succeeding. In fact we must get more, because we have a further responsibility to millions of people who look to us and accept this program and our shows and this entire medium as representing a "standing in their stead" at something, and you literally do not want to let these people down. When you go across the world to represent the American people who could not attend a great sports spectacle you can't give them crumbs. The viewers will not only be disappointed, they'll be resentful, because they feel that one network paid money to keep everyone else out. Once involved, a network cannot toy with the feelings of millions of people. The responsibility is too great.

The Davis Cup does not compare with the more serious public events, but relatively we have the same responsibility to transmit to people what the Davis Cup means to a Roy Emerson or a Chuck McKinley when he is out there alone on a court representing his country with everything in his world at stake. You can't do this with pedestrian camera work or banal commentary.

If we are unable to describe the emotional experience exactly, then we must give the people watching the raw material so that they are able to react with their own intelligence and their own emotions. We must give them the opportunity of becoming emotionally involved with what we know is a great experience. Not everyone is going to realize the impact of 12-year-old Scotty Allen getting a five-minute ovation in a communist country. We cannot say, "Watch this. It is important. This is great!" We must give the people the most incisive words and pictures they need in order to feel this. We can't feel it for them.

The thing that people find so fascinating, I think, about sporting events is that they are a microcosm of the large issues of life itself. It narrows down to a man surviving and excelling in conditions in which maximum grace and maximum use of his human skills are necessary. It is a lot more graphic in sports than it is with a business man who comes to work and has to show courage in standing up for an idea, or in arguing against one, or in making a significant judgment, but the values and the decisions to be made are much the same. This is what life is all about.

Sports is a microcosm of all of this because its crises happen before hundreds of thousands of people—crises set up as a game to force an athlete into a situation where he must use every human element that he possesses in order to survive or to succeed.

DANCE ON TELEVISION

During the past spring, *Television Quarterly* conducted a series of independent interviews with a number of television's leading choreographers for purposes of assessing the current status and past achievements of the dancer in the medium. VALERIE BETTIS, RALPH BEAUMONT and JOHN BUTLER reflected upon the role of the dance in TV, their own work, and their hopes and aspirations for further choreographic effort that might assure a wider audience for the oldest and perhaps most basic of the performing arts. Their comments, along with an essay by British choreographer WILLIAM HARPE, are included in the following section.



Valerie Bettis
"As I Lay Dying"
Camera Three

VALERIE BETTIS

How well has television served you as a choreographer? What kind of creative opportunity has it offered you?

My TV experience has been both exhilarating and frustrating. The greatest freedom was afforded me, of course, in the early days of TV when, with Paul Whiteman, we did 16 programs—on each of which was offered almost a full 15-minute ballet. It was a musical format. Because of Whiteman—and because we could get the best music—it was an exciting experience. We didn't have to stage around a specific singer or piece of music. I haven't had that much creative freedom since! A dancer becomes unhappy when he feels he is not being used properly, or when a producer or director has some built-in thoughts about what dancers are trying to do. Then you may get the old argument that "the audience won't understand."

But it's not all one-sided. Speaking as a choreographer, I feel that most of the directors with whom I have worked are very much aware of the relationship between what you are trying to do and how they can help you. They are appreciative if the choreographer knows something about how to employ the camera. The difficulty is that there are too many choreographers who know nothing about the "camera eye" and how distinct it is from the head-on proscenium stage idea. The most vital experiences I've had in TV dance have come when the director has had some knowledge and appreciation of what we were attempting and used the camera in relationship to that.

Do you think TV is doing an adequate job in representing and presenting dance?

No choreographer would admit that it is! TV could do much more—in two ways. First, there's an enormous amount of dance that is already choreographed; it is in existence but the general public knows very little about it. It would be valuable if TV would make the literature of the dance widely known in the way that the



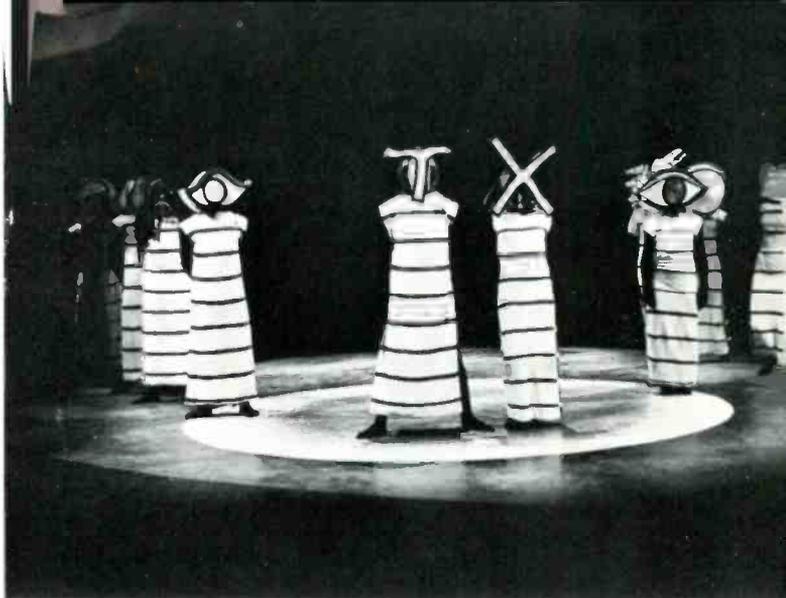
literature of music has become known. The literature of dance is extraordinary, and if it could be transformed for television we would enjoy a burgeoning of interest and awareness for good dance similar to the growth of interest in good music created by the recording and by audiotape. TV could assist in spreading this awareness about dance in the same way—by exposure, and by preserving these works on film and videotapes. This would make a further growth of dance companies possible, just as the number of orchestras and repertory theater groups has expanded.

But TV can make an equally vital contribution by establishing a true dance form within the medium—a form arising out of programs that are all dance. There is truly a wealth of material available. There is the contemporary dance, the classic ballet, the ethnic dances of racial or religious groups. Sources for TV are virtually limitless.

Why, do you suppose, are there no regular weekly series presenting this material?

Primarily because of TV's economic structure. Dance, like musical comedy, requires production. We have all encountered the problem of the advertiser—who knows the present size of audience for the dance but cannot logically support the costs of production. The return would be too small. And there is such a large gap between what ETV and commercial TV can do. The ETV people haven't enough money to really do justice to the dance. It would be pleasant if there were some middle-ground between the extremes.

John Butler Company
"Adventure"



Mary Hinkson, Glen Tetley
"Adventure"

I may sound pessimistic, but I have never known any serious artist—in any of the performing arts—to get anywhere at all unless someone, whether from a network or elsewhere in the industry, who is really interested in advancing the art took hold of his ideas and saw that they got exposure. I don't believe an audience will suddenly materialize for dance on TV. There may be a growing awareness of dance in this country, but an audience will not simply come forward and say, "We must have dance on television." This situation will improve only if there is direction from the other end—when a sponsor or network or group of stations begins to make greater use of dance. Dance is a product that has to be sold. That's the law of mass media and it must be observed.

Let's turn, then, to the considerable amount of dance which does get on TV, ranging from work on Shindig, Hullabaloo, and occasional works on such shows as Ed Sullivan's, and the more serious efforts on programs like Camera Three and the Bell Telephone Hour. Where can improvement be sought? What new ideas can be initiated?

Choreographers are notoriously independent, but it might be well for them to seek more understanding of what the TV director faces. This is a technical as well as creative problem to be overcome. What is more necessary is that we strive for recognition of dance as a form of theater. There is, to me, a fantastic supply of American literature that can properly be handled only with dance and speech. Dance must be regarded as a form of poetry, and not just as spectacle or divertissement. This narrative form of dance might be the best way to develop the larger audience for the form. It has plot, story line, and a point of immediate focus and interest. Dancers have this kind of flexibility today—they are more total performers. If we look at the dance on the musical-comedy stage now, we can see that there is not a dancer around who does not do singing and speaking work. Even ballet people today are fine actors. If we try to work away from snips and cuts for background color or action, we may have a better chance of building a great TV audience for serious dance.

Is some of this being done now?

Of course, but as I pointed out earlier, this work is created out of older work. Even in ETV, most of the dance programs which are planned are of works already made. Since ETV has limited funds, it is to their advantage to record a work that is already choreographed—in some cases already fully mounted. Production work is thereby avoided. Original production comes only when you take a work already made and entirely rework it for the medium.

It is important that we start the process *fresh* in television. We think too much in the reverse order—just as when stage plays were taken before the early motion picture cameras with no thought of creating fresh for the film medium. And the fault is not all TV's. Often our finest choreographers fail to think about television as a distinct medium. They fail to consider how it can reshape “dance thinking.”

Of course the ideal would be to have networks regard dance in the way they approach music, and create and support a dance company as they would orchestras or opera companies. The group itself would constitute the format, and while you could range over the established works you could also bring new, exciting choreography to the medium. I think the day will come when networks will begin to add this phase to their support of culture. They are getting into the theater, and the next step is into the other performing arts. All of it is available—the talent, the interest.

What you are suggesting, then, is that the industry enter into a subsidization of the dance as a worthy performing art until it can attract audiences on its own.

If we are to get new work and emerging forms, yes. The analogies already exist. Since opera became “respectable,” ballet is being increasingly accepted. The contemporary dance is being given more

“As I Lay Dying”
Camera Three



attention in the community, even though interest in it was developed largely in the colleges. Touring companies cannot foster this kind of development. Most of the companies that go out today must be smaller (again economics!). They are limited to smaller works. Even Martha Graham cannot afford to tour with big productions. All of the companies can tour around the world if they get support from Government, but until we finally accept the idea that you can't always judge the product by how much money it makes we will not expand the art.

That's where TV could do wonders. TV can bring about a state of national familiarity with dance and its serious purposes better than any other medium. If music had not profited from recording, that whole booming development within our culture would have been slowed to a standstill. Dance must exist visually—on a stage, or in films and on TV, but it is primarily TV that can change the American attitude toward dance.

And you feel this cannot happen in existing circumstances?

Not easily. We are still seeking the new, the serious and the experimental, but the need for audience is difficult to ignore. I recall being asked to dance to Duke Ellington. This is great in its way, but there is no Ellington, including even Duke's largest symphonic works, that I want to dance to. As a dancer I would be neither one thing nor another—not creating something fresh or serious and also not creating just entertainment. That is frustrating. I was expected to make into something popular a phenomenon which doesn't lend itself to that approach.

Perhaps what I am saying is that television owes the dancer—as a serious performing artist—the best possible conditions for creative expression. All that is being done is good, and we are grateful for it, but like all artists we need more outlet, more room to let people sense our contribution.



Maria Tallchief, John Butler
Bell Telephone Hour

JOHN BUTLER

Has TV fairly presented and represented dance as a performing art?

Unfortunately, the calibre of dance exposed on TV is not always what it might be. This is a serious fault, but the graver fault is the way in which time and talent are wasted in bad viewing hours. There have been works that used a full company of dancers, a full symphony orchestra, and earned plaudits from some fine critics, but were seen by almost nobody. They were put on from 10:00 to 11:00 on Sunday morning, and no one saw them, even though they were serious and exciting projects. I know some good things do get into choice viewing times, but they are not commissioned works. One of the few evening programs that does try to do serious material is *Bell Telephone Hour*, but it has been pointed out that this is not work commissioned for television. It is stage presentation brought before the cameras. And I think it is nearly impossible to take a large-scale piece and make it work for camera unless you re-choreograph from the outset.

I am pessimistic about the future of serious dance as a major factor in TV programming. I used to have the conviction that an audience's appetite for good dance would begin to grow and that TV would feed it. Only a few years ago—when we first did *Amahl*—such things were an instant public success. Things like *Omnibus* and *The Seven Lively Arts* were around to feed a taste—but over the

years, one by one, they have disappeared. It's not right, because there have been remarkable talents and great productions. The history of the Sunday morning shows makes it obvious that you can get any artist to work for you if he respects the program. Once you give someone a completely unrestricted commission you can get the best to work for you—and for little pay. It isn't snobbery that causes so many to turn away from the medium. Everyone has changed his mind about appearing on TV. It is just that the prime-time dilemma scares so many of them. They feel lost and unable to use their full creative powers. They want to do more than they are asked to do.

Is there room for development of technique in TV? Can TV people and choreographers work toward new forms?

The medium does require a new technique. Camera selectivity creates new dimensions that change the shape and craft of the dance. You don't relate to picture-frame space. It's as if the dancer were in a huge swimming pool, and that makes the planning more adventurous. You begin to rely upon smaller groups, of course, to carry the bulk of the dance. But time with cameras is desperately required, and you don't get it. You're booby-trapped by time. There is nothing that would replace experiment with the camera itself—in a work period for both director and choreographer. I have worked with careful directors who come in and sit every rehearsal and really learn the dance and the score. But they are trapped by time and have to compromise, too.

Technique and form will grow if you work with conviction. If the work is exciting, people will respond—both dancers and crew. The cameramen become involved. You get to know them over the years, and they know that you are serious—and then they become serious too. When you are doing trash your own distaste shows, and they share it. They're ready to go out for a coffee break as soon as the performers are. Both at NBC and CBS, we've had crew people get involved with the performance and suggest shots or easier ways of achieving something.

How do you react to TV as compared to stage or film?

Perhaps I speak for most dancers and choreographers when I say that TV is sometimes incomprehensible to us. I am excited about the medium or I wouldn't have stayed with it so long. Even if I didn't like it, I suppose I would go on doing entertainment shows to earn my rent money, and shut up. But I still do the Sunday morning

kind of show. I still accept original commissions—and I stay enthusiastic. But all of us are lost in a business world, I think. Except in our craft, we are not disciplined people, and we do ourselves great harm by each going off on his own private tangent and complaining and wailing about things we do not understand. The best thing for all of us is to keep at our work, and hope for the best.



Glen Tetley, Carmen deLavallade
"Saul and the Witch of Endora"

John Butler directing
"Lamp unto My Feet"



RALPH BEAUMONT

We may begin with a basic question: Do you think dance is being given adequate presentation and representation in television?

There isn't as much dance on TV as there once was, I'll admit, but there is still quite a bit. New shows like *Shindig* or *Hullabaloo* are important to America: they are making a whole nation aware of dance. If it is not always serious and beautiful, well—at least people are getting exercise. Most of the programs featuring or including dance on TV are giving the audience some chance to develop taste. They offer a marvelous education in dance, just as in the early days of the movies when so many people first became aware of dance, and even began expecting Broadway shows all to look like *#2nd Street*. And the great advantage in TV is its realism. It can come closer to what dancing really is. The movie dances were always too tricky—too “hoked-up.”

In what ways could dance on TV be improved in technique?

I think the dance would be more understandable, and more satisfying, if choreographers were able to call camera shots themselves. If they are working with someone who knows what to do, it's a great help. But this is not always enough. When I choreograph for television I become the camera. I know what the shots are, where the camera is, and where it will be next. Too often you'll find a director with his own ideas, and he may miss the point of the action completely. Some will sit across the studio and never study the action closely. I have had directors, particularly overseas, who can bring life to numbers that would otherwise be boring with tricky camera work, but they can also destroy some very fine things. The choreographer should know what he wants and try to get it.

When I choreographed for Italian TV I saw a lot of experimentation with the camera. But it began to become corny—just a phase. Some of the shots were interesting, when used well and with taste. Putting the camera in the pit, for example—right at the dancer's feet—creates interesting effects. In one case a back-stage camera was used, and you saw dancers rushing from the wings to get into position. It gave the program a kind of “backstage at the *Folies Bergère*” flavor. You saw people rushing up and down the stairs, taking up position on the floor, and so forth. Sometimes I think Italians are overly conscious of women's backsides, but except for some doubtful shots, this camera work did add a dimension to the show.

I'm looking forward to the possibilities of dance in color on American TV. If a number is considered great in a studio it will come out brilliant in color. Color increases depth, which is vital in a space art like the dance. Life is color. The theater is color, and that's as it should be. All dance numbers should be seen in color.

But I ought to qualify my enthusiasm for techniques generally. Certainly TV can allow a kind of presentation the proscenium cannot. You can go to four sides instead of one. You can take a camera in a circle around action—all around it, under it, and above it. But I am not really inclined to admit that TV has advanced the form of dance. I've seen little that is different from musical shows. I can't think of an instance when I've seen any dance on TV that has not previously been seen on the stage or in night clubs. Perhaps the dances of ethnic groups might be an exception, but that applies only to audiences outside New York. My family sees very little dance except what TV brings to them, and consequently they are impressed with the June Taylor dancers. They would also be impressed with Radio City Music Hall dance. But the New Yorker would find that hardly novel. The camera makes new technique possible. It makes it easy to put over a small piece of business. It aids in giving dance a narrative thread. It can give dance a flow that the movies cannot provide—but I don't think it has really introduced new forms at all.

"As I Lay Dying"
Camera Three



Of the media, then, you would not choose TV as best for your work.

I prefer the theater. Television has given me good training—and taught me how to work fast. I would like to do occasional work on TV, but the thought of 26 weeks is like a sentence to Sing Sing. Perhaps it's the restriction in time that's placed upon you in TV. In Italy, for example, neither time nor money seemed to be a problem. I was able to use 35 dancers for a show there, and that number of dancers is unheard of here. I could say to the set department: "I want 18 columns and a 40-foot staircase for this number," and get it. In America you must think of cost probabilities before you even begin to plan a number.

I am a union member, but I think we have begun to throttle the creative purpose. I think some unions must begin to backtrack, and re-evaluate their importance. American dancers are the best trained I have seen, but so many other unions have beat them to the punch that they earn nowhere near their worth. It has become a habit, after everyone has gotten in his claims upon the people doing the show, to reduce the number of dancers. There must be so many stagehands, so many electricians, so many musicians—but no one who speaks for the dancer says, "You must have 20 dancers." I am in favor of everyone making a living, but I think it has gotten out of hand. Before I became a choreographer, I often thought that even dancers were asking for the wrong things. Something has been lost sight of.



"As I Lay Dying"
Camera Three

Extremely active in television as both a choreographer and dramatic actress, VALERIE BETTIS has also appeared in motion pictures and Broadway and off-Broadway productions, as well as ballets, dance-theater works and concert tours. Miss Bettis's awards include "Best Choreography on Television" (Jack Gould, *N. Y. Times*) and two Donaldson Awards.

A master of the modern dance technique, director-choreographer-dancer JOHN BUTLER lists among his credits concert dance, opera, television, musical comedy, and even ice skating spectacles and industrial shows. He has choreographed and danced in productions throughout the United States and Europe, and has been actively involved in choreographing television shows since the medium's early days.

RALPH BEAUMONT has choreographed stage productions in New York, London and Italy, and has appeared in many motion pictures and most of the major TV variety shows. He was responsible for a production at the 1958 Brussels World Fair, and was chosen to go to Africa to select dancers and drummers for the African Pavilion at the New York World's Fair.

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TV DANCE IN ENGLAND

WILLIAM HARPE

The one sphere where BBC and ITV inevitably started on level terms was dance; and it can hardly be argued that one has done conspicuously better than the other. TV dance in almost all its forms, from ballet to the Palladium Boys and Girls, has its sources in theater and films—large shows for large audiences. However, it is not my intention to laugh at the spectacle of two large corporations unable to dance in a confined space. I intend to make my comments as purposeful as possible, dealing first with 19th century ballet, and then with modern dance.

Perhaps we can hardly expect ballet companies to open their eyes to TV when they are still—in general—resisting the arrival of the first half of the 20th century. However, this hasn't shielded us from the occasional blunt presentation of a full-length 19th century ballet on TV. But without the application of some human, and *interpretive*, historical intelligence we can hardly expect the TV

WILLIAM HARPE has appeared on the British stage as both actor and dancer and on Granada TV as solo dancer and choreographer. Founder of the Cambridge Ballet Club, Mr. Harpe has directed and choreographed an original dance film and a production of *The Soldier's Tale*, Stravinsky's ballet-with-words. Author of several scenarios for ballets and for a film musical, Mr. Harpe has written many articles on the dance.

screen to perpetuate a 19th century spectacle—a spectacle composed of dancing and gesture created for a huge stage, performed in costumes such as tights and wigs (which had a relevance to the clothes of the period), and presented to a particular Russian audience (to a Russian society as ambiguously drawn in Tolstoy's novels). And by interpretive and historical intelligence I mean something more than the continuous choice of the best camera angles and cutting points—it was all designed to be seen from the front anyway—and the pin-pointing of “dramatic” or “romantic” moments.

I consider all full-length ballets which may be seen in this country, even if created only a decade or so ago, to be 19th century. But I am only interested in choosing ballets for TV production from the classics like *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Les Sylphides*, *Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and perhaps *Copéllia* for children, and there seems to me to be two ways of approach.

One is to create a genuinely modern production and then see what can be done towards accommodating it on TV. However, no such productions exist in this country; ballet is kept mistily preserved. The second approach is to go back to the historical original and use the *You Are There* technique—the sort of thing suggested by Olivier's *Henry V* and used successfully on TV for documentaries and court cases. The complete event of an early St. Petersburg performance of *Swan Lake* could be made the subject of a program, the audience and the theater being presented so as to take on an importance of their own.

The cameras would not be slaves to the action on stage, but would reveal the life in the audience during the performance as well as during the intervals. There are in any case parts of *Swan Lake* which a modern TV audience could well miss.

The full-length 19th century ballets could be presented successfully, and popularly, if rarely. But let us banish extracts and imitation extracts; usually *pas de deux* presented in 19th century costume or imitation 19th century costume, and danced before a cyclorama. And if we can't banish them, let us be heavily discouraging and impose a strong government tariff on all performances, at least until a producer somewhere learns how to deal with them. At the moment it's laughable when the world which gave such *pas de deux* a sort of life is replaced by a flickering screen in a drawing-room of three or four people, where the gesture meaning “I love you” (to partner) has an unneeded largeness, and the gesture meaning “I thank you” (to audience) takes on overtones of

the insane. TV ballet, I think, will just have to be tough enough to take this sort of punishment if it is to survive.

But one can see why producers like dancing. After an evening of interviews, and *Panorama*, of *Coronation Street*, serious drama, and a singer's face, however lively, held steadily in frame—after all these, and even after location and newsreel shots where we see the world and travel a bit, it's joy to see the human body take off and dance.

But that is—as far as most TV dance goes—putting the matter on much too high a level. For most TV dancing demands the same response from us that we give to an aquarium. We are allowed to slacken our concentration and gaze in a state of very minor hypnosis. After all, that insidious competitor isn't the other channel, it's the tea-pot. Dancing is the ideal and ambiguous solution. By its very nature, such a use of dancing hardly allows of any comparative states of success or failure; though, in a general way, a small group of four to eight dancers looks better than the theater chorus tradition staggering on in miniature black and white.

However—aquarium notwithstanding—TV dancing has sometimes risen to the level of a genuine incidental to some main purpose. Dorothy Provine's dancing in *The Roaring Twenties* was both exciting and relevant (however fairy-tale the series might be). And—to take but one example from British TV drama—the dancing in the park scene of Peter Nicholl's *A Day in the Country* contributed to the basic theme of the play (escape), while the dancing of each person furthered our sense of their character.

But even in a so-called dance program, if it is to succeed, the main interest must be somewhere else, and not in the dance. Occasional programs on music have succeeded. I believe any dance program using a small team of dancers, in routines set to the current Top 10 and screened at the right time, would earn a good rating. Ballroom dancing programs succeed because in the main they tap the dreams of an older generation—as ballet in the theater taps a related reservoir of dreams.

But could TV dance stand on its own? Certainly not if it continues to exist only as pleasing, changing, and original but meaningless patterns and steps with the occasional hint of meaning put in to deceive us (and sometimes the choreographer himself) into seeing a larger meaning. This is what puts dancing and dancers on the level of fish in an aquarium. And the situation is only going to be changed by a collective endeavor, an endeavor which may be, at first, a reluctant giving up of a customary and satisfying inertia,

because of the noise of two or three individuals, and the general dance apathy of viewing millions. But whatever personal style and discoveries may be achieved by a few working 20th century choreographers and producers, the full measure of TV as a dance medium will only be revealed and put to work after the usual mixture of collective achievement and accident.

ON TECHNIQUE

A TV ballet must be played in a set, or sets, designed for TV. Part of that "aquarium look" comes from the kinship which has developed between dance and the use of a large and static set or cyclorama. I know that demands of time and space must be met, but it is, after all, the producer's job to seek life in his limitations, and not to capitulate to dullness. There is no TV convention equivalent to the theatrical "on-stage" and "off-stage," with the wings as boundaries. If the set has a geography it must be revealed to the viewer. If a dancer exists, he must, in most cases, be seen to exit. Otherwise the viewer is entitled to assume that he's still on the set; and, unless he's part of a dream, he must *go somewhere*. I am tired of exits past the camera by dancers leering, smiling, looking shy, or merely avoiding my eyes.

Even a film like Martha Graham's *Night Journey* confuses film and theater conventions and techniques. The geography of the set is never properly revealed. Theater entrances and exits are used (for characters who are passing through Jocasta's mind), but there are no wings to be seen or sensed. The film is neither the record of a stage ballet, nor a film as film.

In all productions, "pop" as well as serious, there is no reason why the set (constructions, sculptures, scaffolding, an arrangement of motor-car bumpers, anything) shouldn't become involved in the dance. Sculpture, in Graham's *Night Journey*, is both part of the set and involved in the ballet itself.

There are rules as to the numbers of people a TV screen can accommodate. Ideology apart, Goebbel's choreographic rituals and mass gymnastics (Nazi and otherwise), screened from old newsreels in documentary programs, come over well. So does the May Day Parade. On the other hand, 30 to 50 dancers—and less if they have complicated costumes—usually make the screen look a mess; whereas about eight dancers are easily made visually comprehensible.

A TV chorus-line is sexless. One person or part of a person is not, or need not be. The finest representation of the act of love I

have seen on TV was not a modern *pas de deux* but the choreography for the two clasped hands in Pinter's *The Lovers*—altogether one of the best choreographed TV plays I have seen, with the continuous revelance of every detail of movement coupled with an ambitious use of choreographed passages.

There is no more need for the TV camera to frame the whole body of a dancer than that of an actor. At a moment in *Symphonie pour un Homme seul* (filmed, but not especially for TV) Béjart and his director achieve their effect with a shot in which two fingers touch, then recoil as if an electric spark had passed between them. In Graham's *A Dancer's World* (filmed for TV) the whole body is involved in all the dances and exercises. But—daringly—the whole body is not always framed, and the effect is still satisfying and complete.

TV dance must—at the moment, anyway—actively pursue a sense of the dramatic—using TV and film techniques, as well as borrowing from the theater. I am sure another part of our “aquarium” sense comes from the steady, flat lighting that is standard on most dance sets, with only occasional silhouettes for variety. Lighting levels can be used to contrast, pin-point, amuse, horrify. The elementary, but basic, techniques of cutting, fading, wiping, are there to be used with purpose. Movement can be slowed down or speeded up. Part of the vitality of Michael Kidd's choreography in *L'il Abner* comes from the dancing having been speeded up to a pace no dancer could achieve without strain, while calculating the speed so that a general audience can accept the sequences as spontaneous dancing.

TV distortion could, with caution, be used to a deliberate purpose—the strongest sense of evil I have had from my set came during an epilogue when a figure turned completely black and buzzed with electricity.

SOME CONVICTIONS

TV dance must learn to learn, and steal, from everywhere—from *Roaring Twenties* to Ionesco, and from Aldermaston Marches to the Olympic Games. And so minor an art needs to be considered internationally if it is to be considered at all.

I believe there may be a place for the individual, magnetic dancer native to TV—like Peter Gennaro.

I believe there is a place for TV “pop-dancing,” and for danced sketches and satire (perhaps with words). It is good sense that

choreographers should be trained for producing and directing. But, please, not the bad ones.

I believe there is a place for serious TV ballet, created in the medium. We may find that such ballets need the spoken words to complete them. This is not balletic heresy. Bédart is already using words in his *Ballet of the 20th Century*; Ionesco is sometimes close to a ballet with words. And—not to be glib in my replies—the Greeks found words necessary.

I hope, however little may have been said in my article, and in spite of what has been said elsewhere about economics, that resident TV acting-and-dance companies will come to be needed, perhaps at first for repertory seasons, but eventually as a permanency.

And, finally, I believe (though my article has hardly touched on this) that with color TV there will emerge a TV musical.

All these suggestions, and others throughout the article, are common sense. But common sense in a new medium—what the medium can do, and how it can do it—is discovered only after years of work and discussion.

TV's CENSORS AND CRITICS

The essential questions regarding television's employment in a free society remain unasked. Anti-business critics continue their carping over "the system," some of them blaming men when they should seek to comprehend institutions; others lament TV's failures while ignoring its achievements, and still others argue only from their own narrow and predictable political biases.

To discover what TV can be we must gain a total and firm comprehension of what people will let it be. To know what it can do, we must first learn what it is allowed to do. In such a long and patient study, TV's entrepreneurs have this distinct advantage—they have done their homework. Now others are coming to their support. In the essays below, JACK BEHAR considers the kind of criticism directed at the medium—and the kinds which are needed—while WILLIAM HAWES presents a basic overview of censorship as a force in TV programming.

ON TV CRITICISM

JACK BEHAR

Television is a medium which, for obvious reasons, makes a sense of its past and developing possibilities difficult to come by. Programs multiply and disappear at an alarming rate, and only heroic effort can rescue and bring them under critical scrutiny. The broadcasting media seem to encourage a kind of systematic forgetting; all new programs are "replacement" programs. Slots are filled; schedules are logged; novelty replaces novelty; the machine whirs. The most recent mutation in a standard series replaces the next to the last most recent mutation in a preempted standard series.

The response to TV has been as fragmented and unpredictable as the medium itself. Although the tradition is under some pressure, it remains true enough in America that every man is his own critic; hence, many people, individually or collectively as members of organizations, feel it their duty to enter complaints and recommendations concerning the course of TV. Representatives of the public, professional critics, and industry leaders play vague roles in the discussion; critics resemble industry leaders, and representatives of the public speak disconcertingly like father-figures and "good citizens." Too often the debate is about civic virtue rather than art and entertainment.

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The demands placed on TV are often bland and disingenuous, consonant with the over-moralizing that is so characteristically an American vice and temptation. Most criticism of TV originates within a number of organizations whose general purpose is to bring the weight of informed public opinion to bear on the broadcasting industry. These organizations publish newsletters, evaluations of programs and recommendations; most take a special interest in the quality of children's programs, and some sponsor and publish research in this area. All of the organizations encourage viewers and listeners to become "informed" critics and, as they become so, to let broadcasters know what they think of their programs and policies.

Such an organization, perhaps as comprehensive in its activities as any other, is the American Council for Better Broadcasts (ACBB), which conducts an annual "Look-Listen" project reporting opinions from monitors throughout the country. ACBB is a reformist group that seeks to act as a forum and clearinghouse for TV information and criticism. For the most part its demands on broadcasters are almost too judiciously reasonable.

One of the "Look-Listen" projects, for example, disclosed that monitors found *Father Knows Best*, *Leave It to Beaver* and *The Loretta Young Show* their favorite dramatic programs; wanted a balance struck between entertainment and information; were indiscriminately in love with all news programs, as well as with *Voice of Firestone*; and disliked violence. The editors of the report concluded that the family plays "were closer and truer to life as people knew it" and that they had in their favor the fact that they could be enjoyed together, and perhaps teach families to be "kindlier and wiser." One can overlook the apparently sacred assumption that no one can be against "entertainment," or at least not absolutely, that informs the outlook of this organization as well as its sisters. But the model of a kindlier, wiser American family—one that meets crises with resources born of enjoying TV programs such as *Father Knows Best*—cannot be ignored, since it makes up a very attractive image, a common denominator, for organizations of this kind.

With the best of intentions, and no doubt with results to show for their efforts, these organizations communicate an old-styled respectability and satisfied middle-browism that, if it had real power, would be deadly to adventure and genuine desire for change within the broadcasting industry. Noticeable in the gentle commitments of

ACBB are the predictable platitudes of responsible, if unimaginative, parents and teachers: the by-now dreary criticism of violence, the repeated references to the public's interest in worthwhile broadcasting, and the approval of the idea that every man ought to be a critic, if only in the interests of self-education. But when the crusade for better broadcasting becomes identified with good citizenship, parental responsibilities, the Andy Hardy tradition of "family" drama, and finally with drama as "social consequences," it is time to have doubts. Not that the middle-browism of the family is not, in a limited way, useful when it becomes a source of pressure on broadcasters to produce programs that take advantage of TV's opportunities to act as reporter and educator—that pressure, whatever its background and genesis, is all to the good.

What I am objecting to is the "good citizenship" tone that commits those who use it to abstractions, to keeping score on broadcasters, and to evaluations which are, except at a most elementary level, of little or no critical use. For example, "Look-Listen" evaluation sheets for news programs (including talks, comments and forums) gives a program 70 out of 100 points if it is without name-calling, glittering generalities, the "plain folks" act, bandwagon appeals, distortion, opinions from unqualified people, and misleading implications and innuendoes. A program scores a 100 by avoiding these errors and appealing to reason more than emotion, by presenting all important sides of questions, and by reducing "emotion-packed" symbols. The emphasis on presentation and thus on largely negative virtues, the pronounced insistence on fairness, coolness, and objectivity (while a necessary insistence when the elementary rules of discourse are violated or ignored), make it likely that only news analyses which do not add an iota to our understanding of events will get passing marks.

"Good citizenship" and "social consequences" can often get in the way of art and imagination. For example, in the questions that ACBB and the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (in the latter's *A High School Radio and Television Curriculum Guide*) ask about dramatic TV shows, there is a noticeably great fear of stereotypes, a monotonous over-emphasis on the question, "Were the characters full dimensional and convincing or were they stereotyped?" Although one understands the motive behind this over-emphasis—that the integrity of the person is not violated in the interests of art—nonetheless there is demonstrated a misunderstanding of the necessities and conventions of dramatic treatment.

And this misunderstanding, in its own way, can be just as harmful as the stereotypes which are denounced, since it arises in defense of a virtue that implies a limited vision of both the necessities and possibilities of art. Likewise, the demand made by these organizations that dramatic shows be "believable," that the real instead of the fanciful or the fantastic be their subjects, and that there be no doubt that fantasy is no more than fantasy, imply a distrust of the imagination that may encourage plausible but hardly compelling drama.

The fetish of the "believable," the "really" real, can easily lead to pious falsehoods proclaimed in the name of the family and community responsibility, to a drama so formula-ridden and patently artificial that one would hunger for even a reminder of the reality and plausibility in whose name this fetish raises itself.

The National Association for Better Radio and Television is an organization that began in 1949 as the Southern California Association for Better Radio and Television, becoming NAFBRAT in 1951. Among its aims is that of encouraging the "development of high individual standards of radio and television appreciation both in the schools and in the home." The organization publishes a *News-Letter*, *Look and Listen* recommendations, and annual studies of children's programs. It is to NAFBRAT's examination of children's programs that I want briefly to turn; and then to *The Parent-Teachers Association Magazine*, which began in the fall of 1959 to publish reviews and recommendations to guide parents in selecting TV programs for their children.

NAFBRAT dramatizes its examination with a turn on Bryan: "You shall not crucify our children upon a Cross of Gold!" It classifies as objectionable programs which show any violence whatsoever, even though the hero (*Superman*, *The Lone Ranger*) may be indubitably on the side of the weak and oppressed. Robin Hood is treated with what I consider a smashing display of insensitivity—"it is difficult for young children to understand why it appears to be legally and morally correct to rob the rich to aid the poor" (as if everything had to be clearly calculated to preserve children from a possibly dangerous ambiguity). Lurking here, no doubt, is the fear of what would happen if our children took to imitating this charismatic hero—a good-bad man working his miracles within a mythically feudal type of the modern "gang." Perhaps the fear would be less if these critics learned a bit more about heroes, fictional, mythological and real, and about the premises and conventions of the worlds

they inhabit. Such knowledge might be shared with children and thus help to teach them something about the lay of the land in fictional and folk worlds. But if there is going to be a rule that fantasy is dangerous, that children must live with the identical codes and sanctions of their parents, and that events must always have quite clear-cut and rational explanations, children are going to be needlessly put upon by absurd adult misgivings.

The P.T.A. Magazine undoubtedly publishes reviews and recommendations that are useful to parents. One judges them with an idea of the mental atmosphere that children live in, and how this is associated with their needs and wishes. In the sophisticated awareness that we now have of children, both of their vulnerability and powers, we have sought and found a host of problems. Most people now know that children are not much like adults, and are therefore entitled to the possibilities and the quality of their own semi-autonomous world. No doubt every P.T.A. member has contrived such a world for his own children. Yet adults must seek to understand that world—particularly given their self-consciousness in the face of children, their hesitancy and self-interrogation, and their frank unwillingness to allow children to live helter-skelter. Thus the necessity for guidance, the reduction of anxiety, and the lessons of prudent use of TV.

Many of P.T.A.'s reviews and evaluations are so prudent that they demand of children's programs nothing more than that they answer to P.T.A.'s moral demands on reverence, respect, kindness, tenderness, compassion, cooperation, etc. Thus the magazine becomes, at times, a bit too lesson-centered, looking toward the embodiment in programs of values which it believes TV slights. As one would expect, again, there is a suspicion of fantasy—the line must be clearly drawn—and much emphasis on faithfulness to reality. For example, *Real McCoys* is about a family whose members "are real, and that must be why everybody from Grandmother to school-age Tommy enjoys it so." The emphasis on the "everyday," of course, follows from that placed on learning lessons; *Leave It to Beaver* can show both children and adults how "to value each other more truly and to set up worthy standards for their life together."

I am not suggesting that the magazine is wrong to ask for programs that serve practical ends of parents. Children have to be taught forms of socialization that exist in a culture; and just as a song may attempt to teach them respect for others of their kind, so a TV program may teach them compassion and the rewards of cooperation.

In addition, there is evidence in some of the reviews that the P.T.A. is able to think of children without becoming melodramatically protective or alarmist, without wishing that the lessons of love, cooperation, and compassion were the only ones available to children. I suggest only that there is a danger of ignoring the privilege of children to enjoy a childhood independent of the sometimes all but suffocating piety and sociological wisdom of parents. The question is how P.T.A.'s imagination of children may be enlarged, made more powerful and far-reaching. One clear remedy is to encourage parents and teachers to think about the uses of lesson-free fantasy on TV, and even of nonsense. Children enjoy nonsense, and we might ask what kind of nonsense we want them to enjoy—that concocted by feeble imaginations about the real world, or free, high-spirited nonsense that can be enjoyed simply for itself.

Between the pressure placed on TV to satisfy the moral demands of the overseers of the public good and, on the other side, the high-brow temptation to turn TV into the materials of sociological commentary, little attempt is being made to assess the critical resources we possess, or must come to possess, that would allow us to talk intelligently about a wide range of TV programs. What TV needs most of all is some live commentary, a criticism based on a freer use of "the personal voice." It will likely be the voice of someone who can open discussion by raising questions about the use of real people, of various dramatic and documentary conventions, of the common images of love, marriage, and the family. This criticism should be open, speculative, socially sensitive, building on the clues of style TV tends to give us.

A mature TV criticism will recognize that the medium is low-keyed, gossipy, playful, urban, cliquish, personality-centered, representing in this way the ethos out of which it emerges: the PR-Broadway world of news and entertainment, the treadmill to Nielsen and Trendex good marks. On some accounts, then, the critic's job seems preempted; there is little that demands the special sort of light he can bring. What is offered is intended to mesh with, or sometimes illuminate, the gossip of the day—to make what we know more recognizable and to find a place in the emerging web of communications. *TW3*, for example, paid a kind of unwilling tribute to the predictably newsy stupidities in the chronicle of the week's events; it played them back at us rather than satirized them, the TV schedule out of which it seized a half-hour forbidding point-of-view or perspective, let alone operative standards or values.

The fragments lifted from the whirling, endlessly documented collective psychic life, whether they inspired pity or disgust, were quickly absorbed into the great neutral sounding board of TV.

Where criticism has an important job to do is in connection with TV journalism. We have long taken for granted the goodness of network documentary reporting. We have not yet learned, however, to tell when a documentary style is unable to cope with what we should know, or how the built-in bias of certain styles shapes the kind and quality of knowledge we do get. The shorthand of the form needs examination, embodying as it does largely unexamined or unnoticed assumptions which are organically related to what we come to know, think, and feel. But so do the governing assumptions about itself that any TV style possesses. When we can begin to specify what a given style, format, or mode of representation—perhaps an account of its very power and familiarity—cannot very well acknowledge or comprehend, then we can begin to look at programs with a fresher eye, seeing beyond the useful clichés of the convention to the limits of the convention's usefulness.

But it is probably unwise to be too optimistic about the possibilities of TV criticism. Its future probably lies in the hands of the schools and universities. In such books as Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel's *The Popular Arts* (London, 1964), we can see the influence of the older Leavisite-based literary criticism, with its emphasis on "discrimination" and the anatomy of moral attitudes, on the emerging criticism of the popular arts. One overhears a good many older critical voices in Hall and Whannel, but the pedagogical seriousness of their outlook and the models of analysis they provide are sufficient unto the tasks of the present moment. At the same time we should remember that TV may serve us in ways that defy the uses of the kind of criticism handed down by Hall and Whannel. There is a place for news that does not remain news, for images that hardly invite "discrimination"—for the great cool Leviathan ceaselessly lighting up small places along the compass of our busily expanding world and sending off bits and pieces of information about the life no one imagines himself to be living.

TELEVISION CENSORSHIP: MYTH OR MENACE?

WILLIAM HAWES

The current rash of sociological-psychological dramas in television illustrates the flexibility of public acceptance. As early as 1940 Edward Sobol, then NBC-TV's program director, predicted that restrictions for television would be "...even stricter than that of the much publicized Hays Office. The nicely modulated 'damn' of Rhett Butler can not be tolerated in television. Anatomical comedy, too, is taboo. The scarlet woman dare not show her face. The drunkard must do his drinking off screen, and at most only talk of his prowess. Social conflict requires special treatment."¹ But nowadays, television's doctors and lawyers probe well beyond these limitations. The public is more tolerant than it was 20 years ago.

The first dispute over television censorship did not occur until May, 1944, when a chorus of a song was silenced by omitting the sound—and certain gestures were eliminated by putting them out of camera range—in a close-up during a WNBT (now WNBC) telecast of Eddie Cantor. As a result, *Television Magazine* published a summary of telecasters' opinions of censorship: "Consensus was that self-regulation was the solution by means of a voluntary code

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of the Television Broadcasters Association.”² Subsequently, The Television Code of the National Association of Broadcasters was established on March 1, 1952. This set of self-imposed standards of “good practice,” although it has no legal power of enforcement, is looked upon as a guide both to good programming and to the avoidance of objectionable material.

The code is one of the many restrictions imposed upon television drama. In addition, such agencies as church groups, racial groups, children, anti-Communists, advertisers, and networks all combine to impose a staggering weight of opinion on the television industry. Many writers have complained that these pressures impair the quality of their work.

The Code and TV Drama

It is interesting to examine how dramatists and producers have interpreted what the public, the sponsors, the government, and the critics will accept. Presumably, the public wants a worthwhile program, be it factual or fictional or a mixture; the sponsor wants a drama which will promote the sale of his product; the government wants a program in the “public interest, convenience, or necessity”; and the critic wants a drama that will exhibit to the public a combination of the highest quality of writing and production.

From the beginning, much has been said about what the public will or will not accept in the sanctity of the living room. But a typical TV viewer seldom restricts anything, except possibly undesirable influences on his children. Thus, in a real sense children may constitute the greatest limiting force on TV dramas.

Crime and horror plays are said to be the most objectionable. Crime has held, nevertheless, an important place in TV, just as it has in motion pictures and on radio. Sherlock Holmes was one of video’s earliest dramatic characters. In 1948 there was only one regular mystery show on the networks; a year later *Life* reported ten, with a prediction of more. “Crime—of an especially violent and psychopathic nature—takes up a lot of time in television drama these nights,” wrote one critic in 1950, “and it’s a sorry play indeed that does not end with a pile of corpses, a number of smoking rods, and the contorted face of some maladjusted killer leering from the screen.”³

In 1951 dramas involving drug addiction became popular, perhaps because of the televised hearings of the Senate Crime Investigating Committee. The number of non-fictional documentaries also

increased. Had these documentaries not been presented "in the cloak of education," some may have been banned from the video screen. Medical documentaries, court re-enactments and social work activities brought the dangerous effects of dope, alcoholism, delinquency, and sex crimes into the home. Thus, what was originally labeled *unacceptable* as fictional dramatic fare on television was *acceptable* as non-fictional documentaries.

In 1954 crime series were supposed to have reached a "saturation point" of about 20 network programs a week. Besides the Senate Crime Committee activities and the increase in television documentaries, there was yet another reason for a relaxation in crime taboos in the mid-fifties: a slump in the motion picture business, which caused a relaxation in Hollywood's Production Code. To bolster business, the film industry turned to exploiting taboo sources so as to appeal to an "adult" audience; *The Man with the Golden Arm* and *A Hatful of Rain*, both films dealing with narcotics, were among several brought to the motion picture screen. By 1959 the number of TV crime shows was in excess of 32. Further, as the mid-sixties approached, such series as *The Defenders* were often cited for their excellence as well as their frequency.

Because television dramas are discussed by more people than any other form of the drama it's surprising that there is any freedom of expression. Nevertheless, there undoubtedly is. First, the Television Code is flexible because its provisions are interpreted in various ways. Second, restrictions on television are relative to the time—to the decade, to the events, even to the hour of the day. Third, restrictions are relative to the public's religious philosophy, its concern over moral influences on children, and its patriotic outlook. Fourth, television restrictions are relative to the amount of exposure which the viewing audience has had in the past—to the number of crime dramas on the air, to the percentage of decadent characters on the television screen, to the amount of vulgar language.

Numerous revisions in the codes of the entertainment industry have indicated that restrictions have gradually lessened over the past 40 or 50 years. This is a reflection of our constantly changing society. Public tolerance does not seem to cycle, so to speak; that is, it does not go from a period of restriction to one of liberality, and back. Instead, public tolerance spirals; in the over-all outlook it moves in the direction of greater tolerance, while alternating from a period of relative restriction to one of relative freedom.

Public Pressure Groups

There are many unwritten limitations on television drama. These are derived from the multifarious groups that compose American society. While the individual may express little interest in restrictions, groups of individuals have expressed great concern.

The most influential single grouping is economic—based on the fact that America is largely an industrial and bourgeois society. The “mass audience” has enjoyed the pleasures of the theater, motion picture, and radio. These media have idealized youth, have sentimentalized the triumph of virtue, have stereotyped human beings into categories of “good guys” and “bad guys”—and have measured spiritual success in direct proportion to financial gain. In short, these media have attempted to preserve those characteristics which strongly appealed to the bourgeois class of theatergoers during the last century.

This romantic view of the world is ill-suited to a society that has experienced two major wars, a great depression, and a high degree of nationally discussed crime. In addition, at the insistence of the social playwrights of the Free Theater movement which pushed its way to the foreground by the end of the nineteenth century, the study of psychology and an emphasis on the inner motivations of man have influenced dramatic literature. Modern writers, rather than idolizing heroes and heroines, tend to tear them down, to portray decadence, to picture the world at its groveling worst rather than at its sentimental best. Hence, television dramatic fare wavers between two opposing concepts: the incumbent “romantic” viewpoint and the latter-day naturalism.

What constitutes decency and decorum on television is decided primarily by economic groups. Seemingly, few sponsors would underwrite a drama that would knowingly antagonize consumers. Sponsors, in some cases, have gone to extremes to avoid offending anyone. The result of this philosophy of caution—which dates to the early days of radio and of the Depression—has always been prevalent in the television business and has led some critics to label television dramatic fare as bland.

Political Groups

In the opinion of many critics, the most detrimental political pressures thus far observed in the television industry stemmed from that group which claimed to seek out Communists. The public,

aroused and afraid of being tainted by any Communistic influences over the air, rejected anyone or the works of anyone associated with communism. Foremost among the accusers were two ex-FBI agents, the authors of *Red Channels* and a weekly newsletter, *Counterattack*. Numerous radio and television personalities were mentioned. Several critics opposed the attacks of *Red Channels*, especially Jack Gould, critic for *The New York Times*, who did much to offset the influences of the book.

Nevertheless, the position of the public seemed to be expressed by William H. Shriver, Jr., who wrote in *The Catholic World*: "In these days, if you are not a Communist and are so accused, you should deny it; or if you made some mistakes of affiliating with shady organizations, you should be the first to admit your error, whenever and just as soon as you get the chance."⁴

The publication of *Red Channels* and the attention given to Communists in the investigations conducted by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the early fifties provided a real danger to television dramas as far as censorial restrictions regarding personnel and ideas were concerned. For example, Elmer Rice, whose play *Counselor-at-Law* received a production on *Celanese Theatre*, charged that an attorney for the advertising agency handling the Celanese account was using *Red Channels* as "a guide for blackballing actors chosen by the playwrights, producers, and directors."⁵ Rice subsequently prohibited the production of his plays on *Celanese Theatre*.

It should be understood that the climate for such investigations was already prevalent in the entertainment world, especially in motion pictures. Communist sympathizers and witnesses who took the Fifth Amendment before the hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee after World War II were barred from activity in the film industry for over a decade. As a result of their being driven underground, a traffic in contraband scripts arose. The late Ward Bond, star of *Wagon Train* and president of the anti-Communist Motion Picture Alliance, said that the responsibility lies entirely with the producers who purchased the scripts. Said a noted producer, however: "Frankly, I'd hire the devil if he could turn out a good scenario. It's easy to get 'hot' scripts. There are a lot of second-rate writers around who peddle the stuff by the banned guys as their own—and take a cut."⁶ Faced with this situation, director George Stevens, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, announced in 1959 that the Academy had repealed its two-year-old bylaw banning Communist and Fifth

Amendment-witnesses from Oscar eligibility. "Blackballed" personnel are thus in a position to seek legitimate jobs in films again, and similarly they are employed in television.

Religious Groups

Broadly speaking, religious groups consistently maintain that drama should point to positive values because man himself is of positive value. A "positive ending" has the hero triumphing over his circumstances. Negative values such as degeneracy are discouraged by the churches because they imply despair without spiritual value and do not express total truth. Some playwrights contend to the contrary that human degradation without spiritual regeneration is the truth as they see it. They also demand the right of free expression, the right of free speech, the right to be heard.

Positive value and direction is not to be confused with "the happy ending," although in some dramas they may be coincidental. This does not necessarily mean that the ending must be happy or profitable in the material sense. Rod Serling's "Requiem for a Heavyweight," for example, told about an ex-boxer physically unfit to continue his profession; an employment agent helps him find other work. "A Night To Remember" portrayed the sinking of the *Titanic*, while at the same time it illustrated the courage of passengers and crew. Or, perhaps the hero sacrifices his life, but he gives it for a worthwhile cause—a cause which is of even greater value than his individual life.

In contrast to plays depicting man as worthwhile are plays revealing indecisive or negative values. Often these dramas are equally successful. James Costigan's "A Wind from the South" took a sympathetic look at the problems of a young girl and her brother growing old in modern Ireland. The play offered no simple solutions and no happy ending to their troubles in a land where the old people had already forsaken their hope. In "Patterns," Rod Serling dealt with the cold, calculated replacement of an older, high-ranking executive by a younger man with fresh ideas. "It is a strange thing if this is what playwrights, critics, and the public generally think of as the true mood, atmosphere and moral values of human beings in business," commented *The Wall Street Journal*.⁷ Again, in "The Comedian," Serling showed the comic pulling down all those around him to suit his own ambitions. "Crime in the Streets," by Reginald Rose, depicted the lives of desperate, down-

and-out young people. Downbeat endings and "Southern mood plays" were nurtured especially by producer-director Fred Coe.

Video adaptations of novels, short stories and plays concerning degeneracy are often revised substantially. Somerset Maugham, William Faulkner, Eugene O'Neill and Henry James have had their works drastically changed for television. Some adaptations resemble the original work in name only. Reasons for such distortion are many and often valid. What is important, however, is that while on the one hand there are numerous dramas being restricted, on the other hand there are many examples of liberality.

Religious groups are also responsible for many of the Code's restrictions regarding decency. The TV Code states that profanity, obscenity, smut and vulgarity are forbidden, even when likely to be understood only by a part of the audience. It adds that sex crimes and abnormalities are generally unacceptable, and illicit sex relations are not to be treated as commendable. The costuming, movements and physical positions of performers should also be kept within the bounds of decency.

Sponsors, agencies, and the continuity acceptance departments of networks carefully check dramatic scripts, seeking ways in which they can avoid violating these rules and yet at the same time offer stimulating dramas to viewers. If all of the rules were adhered to *all* of the time, then perhaps television would be dangerously restricted. But such is not the case. Most of the rules are adhered to only *some* of the time; and thus, television drama is allowed some measure of freedom.

The rules regarding what words are forbidden over the air were established on radio in the late thirties. But like most rules regarding censorship, they were gradually changed. This relaxation, which began during World War II for both radio and the films, has altered what is permissible in television dramas. Expressions such as "abortion," "petting," "puberty," "God," "harlot," "prostitute," "whore," "rape," "bitchiness," and others are among the words which have occasionally been heard on television.

Sex crimes have been seen in television dramas, but they are not common. In TV's "Johnny Belinda," a deaf-and-dumb heroine was seduced by the town rich man's wayward son. This scene opened with the girl alone in a barn at night. The culprit entered and approached her; she resisted his advances. The final shot showed the man's menacing figure and the girl (who was in a half-lying and half-crouching position) in semi-shadow. This sequence is rather typical

in motion pictures. Usually it is accompanied by tight close-ups of the girl's head and especially of her terror-stricken eyes.

Abnormal relationships between the sexes—homosexuality, lesbianism— have rarely been explored in television drama. But both—especially the former—have been discussed on interview programs devoted to probing the confidential aspects of life. (One example is a discussion of abortion on *The Les Crane Show*.) Although these aspects of sex are never regarded as desirable or commendable, there is a current attitude toward understanding and explanation of these problems. It is reasonable to assume that television drama will treat them.

The more familiar illustrations of censored movements are associated with singers and dancers rather than dramatic actors. Television's first case of censorship involved Eddie Cantor and, more recently, rock-and-roll singer Elvis Presley. As a result of protests, Presley's gyrations were eliminated on TV by selective camera shots. His pelvic movements were retained in his movies, however, some of which are currently being released to television.

Only the basest expressions, the most intimate acts, and the most abnormal relationships have escaped the eye of the television camera in the short history of video drama. But it is probable that television producers will find ways of breaking even these taboos, aided by the increased exposure of the public to recent "adult" motion pictures.

Professional Critics

Another aspect of the radio-television business which exercises an undetermined amount of influence on dramatic programs is the published criticism of professional critics. Criticism for radio and television began in the early thirties. Robert J. Landry, who for 13 years was the chief radio critic for *Variety*, together with his staff, "really started radio criticism," according to Max Wylie.⁸ The first review for television ever to appear in the other major show business publication, *The Billboard*, was published on February 25, 1933, as part of Benn Hall's column, "Television."

Several critics have been, at one time or another, producers and writers of radio and TV programs. Comedy-writer Goodman Ace, a columnist for *Saturday Review*, has supplied material for Milton Berle and Perry Como. Robert Lewis Shayon, who serves as TV critic for *Saturday Review*, has held several positions in radio.

Gilbert Seldes, former program department head for CBS-TV, has written several books and articles for various publications.

Many other critics who have written reviews for both radio and television include Harriet Van Horne (*The World-Telegram, Holiday*, and other publications), John Crosby (*The Herald Tribune*), and Jack Gould, critic for *The New York Times*.

Although such publications as *Variety*, *The Billboard*, and *The New York Times* have had television columns since the early thirties, television criticism increased noticeably 20 years later when, in the early fifties, numerous magazines and newspapers expanded radio columns to include reviews of television shows or added TV sections.

In addition to the many publications devoted exclusively to television news, regular columns appear in other largely circulated publications, among them *The New Yorker*, *The Catholic World*, *The New Republic*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Saturday Review*. By 1956 newspapers and other publications over the nation had expanded their television coverage enormously.

The foremost question regarding critics continues to be, "How much influence do they wield over the television industry?" Whereas a Broadway critic reviewing a new play on opening night might influence further attendance, television critics primarily comment on that which has recently passed, which will perhaps never be presented more than once again.

A television series, such as a dramatic anthology, is of course more vulnerable to critical opinion, just as it is constantly dependent on a high audience rating. This question received more than customary consideration during the latter fifties when a feud arose between television executives and television critics. Producer David Susskind commented that critics were "too flippant, too cursory, too gossipy, not constructive enough, and not important enough to create a body of critical judgment on one of the most important mediums ever invented."⁹ Unfortunately, the influence of the television critic has not been adequately measured.

Racial Groups

The most recent and dynamic changes in TV dramas have come about through the recognition of minority civil rights.

Prior to 1960 there was lack of reference, in this regard, to racial problems or even to other races. Occasionally a comedian like Jerry Lewis would mimic a Japanese man by means of the old stereotype—buck teeth, thick glasses, and choppy speech. Likewise,

Negroes occasionally appeared in minstrel shows, as servants, or as uneducated or poor people. Only the American Indian has appeared on television with the freedom of being portrayed in all his savagery and violence, or his wisdom and majesty. However, in recent Westerns writers have increasingly glorified the American Indian. Frequently the Indian's problems and his motivation for doing harm are created by a renegade white man. During the late fifties the half-breed was also treated with favor. Typically, she was not the cause for the ruin of some pure-blooded group or person as, for example, Tondeleyo was in *White Cargo*. Instead, she was often carrying on some noble work, as in the film *Kings Go Forth!*

Interracial marriages still provide one of the most difficult problems, but even they are on the increase, at least in the entertainment media. During the past several years Broadway has offered many plays involving this problem: *Deep Are the Roots* and *The World of Suzie Wong*, to mention two. Similarly, motion picture producers have filmed novels such as James A. Michener's *Sayonara*. In the novel the lovers from different races are separated, but in the movie version they are united. Interracial marriages are especially frequent among servicemen and western heroes in films like *The Big Sky* and *Broken Arrow*. Evidence indicates that there is a decided trend in plays and movies toward favoring, or at least permitting, interracial marriages. It is probable, because of the way in which the entertainment media affect each other, that television dramas, too, will begin to deal with this subject.

Due partly to the many restrictions concerning the Negro, this race has been seldom portrayed in television dramas. One of Reginald Rose's essential themes has been discrimination against minorities. His play "Thunder on Sycamore Street," produced for *Studio One* on March 15, 1954, was "originally written about a Negro family moving into a white neighborhood, but due to last minute timidities on the part of regnant powers, the Negro became a convict... Rose has been forced often to dodge about his theme..."¹⁰ Negroes have appeared either in mixed casts or in casts composed entirely of Negroes. Both kinds of dramatic productions, although rare in their presentations, have met acclaim. Famous personalities, usually musical stars, have acted leading roles in dramas with otherwise white casts. Notable performances include Ethel Waters in "Member of the Wedding," Eartha Kitt in "Salome," and Duke Ellington in "The Drum Is a Woman" and "The Bottle Imp." *Amos 'n' Andy* and "Green Pastures" are examples of

successful productions with all-Negro casts. But the Negro stereotype is being gradually eliminated, and several Negro performers were nominated for Emmy Awards in 1964.¹¹

From this historical review of the various restrictions on TV drama, one might conclude that regardless of whether programming changes because of television executives, sponsors, critics, or the public—it *does change*. The careful regulations predicted for television 20 years ago are now obsolete. TV drama may soon enjoy all the freedoms of novels, theater and films.

NOTES

1. Edward Sobol, "Production in Television," *The Billboard*, August 31, 1940, p. 8.
2. "Is a 'Hays Office' Necessary for Television?," *Television*, I (Fall, 1944), p. 41.
3. Philip Hamburger, "Television," *The New Yorker*, XXVI (April 29, 1950), p. 58.
4. William H. Shriver, Jr., "Radio and Television," *The Catholic World*, CLXXI (November, 1950), p. 145.
5. Saul Carson, "Cheers and Boos," *The New Republic*, CXXXVI (January 7, 1952), p. 22.
6. Rick Du Brow, "Hollywood Lifts Ban on Writers Branded Reds," *The Detroit News*, February 8, 1959, p. 3.
7. Quoted in *Time*, LXV (February 21, 1955), p. 64.
8. Max Wylie, *Radio and Television Writing* (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1950), p. 33.
9. *Time*, LXX (November 4, 1957), p. 55.
10. Gore Vidal, "Television Drama, circa 1956," *Theatre Arts*, XL (December, 1956), p. 86.
11. Sidney Poitier became the first Negro to win an Oscar as the movies' best actor that same year.

COMMENT

In June the Institute for Education by Radio and Television named NBC's ROBERT KINTNER as recipient of its annual "First Person" Award. Mr. Kintner responded *in absentia* by commenting upon some of his hopes for the future of global television. An abridgement of his speech (delivered in Columbus by Sander Van Ocur) is published herewith.

The implications of our experiences with Early Bird during its first experimental month of transmission are so far-reaching that it will be many more months before we can say with assurance all that satellite television will mean to the world. It is not too early, however, to recognize that a revolutionary advance has taken place in communications with this capability for instant, two-way transmission of sound, pictures and color over global distances.

Scarcely 15 years ago, television was just getting started in North America and Europe and, with the exception of a few sets in the Soviet Union, it was virtually nonexistent in any other part of the world. Since then it has spread over the globe at a pace exceeding all expectations. It has established itself as a universal means of communication on this continent and Europe, and is getting well underway in most of Latin America, in a dozen countries of Africa, in much of the Middle East and in the far reaches of Asia and Oceania. Television is now recognized everywhere as a vehicle for education and information, a force to arouse and unify developing nations, and a symbol of national status and prestige that soars above the home-grown airline.

In their urge to establish television, it is natural that other countries should look for information and advice to New York and other centers with technical facilities and experience. We at NBC have responded to the needs of foreign broadcasters in a number of instances with substantial technical and operating services. In the process we have learned something of the problems, as well as the benefits, that television can bring to developing nations. We have found that while television can change old attitudes and awaken new interests, it must not move too recklessly in sweeping away ancient, often valuable traditions. We must recognize that television is indeed so powerful a stimulant that in older societies it must be administered with care and understanding. In each country where it develops, television tends to reflect the institutions and character of the people it serves, and its structure properly differs from country to country.

The great expansion of television facilities around the world has placed a heavy demand on the supply of programming. American programs are sought after both because of production values that few countries are equipped to duplicate and because many of these programs seem to have universal appeal among peoples of varied cultures. Is it mere coincidence that *Bonanza*, a highly-rated program here at home, is also extremely popular internationally (broad-

cast each week to 78 countries)? Yet, there are those in this country who periodically propose that restrictions be placed on the foreign distribution of American programs—our entertainment, because it is deemed too frivolous, and our news actualities, because they are considered too searching in their exploration of American problems. For a response to this viewpoint, I would turn to two sources that can hardly be termed apologists for commercial programming.

One is the United States Information Agency, which has surveyed foreign opinion and found that, in balance, American television programs that are viewed abroad are affirmatively helpful in creating favorable attitudes toward this country. The other is Sir Hugh Carleton Greene, Director General of the BBC, who referred to CBS and NBC documentaries televised in Great Britain in these terms: "Respect for the United States is only increased by the evidence in many of these programs that Americans can look their problems in the face and be healthily self-critical." To this I would add my own view that official restraints on the distribution of American programs overseas, based on judgments of their content, would be most inappropriate, particularly for a nation dedicated to the principles of free expression and free choice.

Our concern should be not to impose new restrictions on programming, but rather to work toward lifting the many barriers that already exist in this and other areas of information. Over the past half-century, while nations have been growing more interdependent in many ways, obstacles have been arising to the interchange of information among them. One result of the great political upheavals that have shaken the world since 1914 is that censorship and the use of the mass media for official propaganda have become the accepted pattern of communication in many parts of the world. The exchange of information is further hampered by national policies—economic or political—which place books, periodicals, films and television programs under the same kind of quota and tariff regulations that might be applied to iron or steel.

There is no reason to assume that the new era of global television will automatically solve such problems—that satellite signals will quickly penetrate all the curtains of ideology and expediency that have been raised in the past 50 years. The record shows, in fact, that restrictions are more readily placed on electronic journalism than on printed media, perhaps because it has a shorter tradition and is regarded as a government operation in many countries. Even in the United States, television and radio are still barred from our legislative and judicial chambers and subject to many other restraints that the print media do not suffer. The development of a satellite system grew with government support, and as a consequence the system is now within the shadow of governmental influence. Under present arrangements for the use of Early Bird, any one of a dozen countries can exert what amounts to a veto on satellite news broadcasts. The fact that France has already exercised this power in an attempt to muffle the dissenting voice of Jean Monnet is a disturbing sign which we must hope does not portend the wave of the future.

This is not to suggest that the freedom of satellite communication is doomed from the start, but only that it will require constant vigilance. Every decision on satellite transmission during these early months of operation—whether a decision on rates, schedules or priorities—sets a precedent that may shape the flow of information for many years to come. Such decisions should most certainly be the concern of the professional broadcasters, but they must also be the concern of

the public and its representatives. For it is the public at large which has the most to gain or lose in the long term as the great technical potential of satellite television is developed.

We may hope that global television will permit news, information and entertainment to flow from country to country, unfettered by government restriction. The viewer must, of course, beware of the difference between political discussion and political proselytizing. The line between them, however, is often a fine one, and we must not let our mistrust of the latter wipe out the benefits of the former. We must, to be realistic, recognize that what is one man's opinion is often another man's propaganda. I doubt, in any case, that blatant political propaganda will thrive on international television. For in those areas where free and controlled broadcasts compete with each other across national boundaries, as they do in many areas of Western and Eastern Europe, there is strong evidence that the free broadcasts exert a far greater appeal than those manipulated for political purposes.

Global television is developing none too soon. Of the three billion people in the world, it is estimated that only a third have the means of informing themselves of developments in their own country and even fewer have access to the news from other parts of the world. This information gap would be a perilous condition at any time of history, but now that we hold the power of self-extinction, it is worse than perilous. We have in satellite television an instrument that could conceivably close the gap. We must make use of it, but we must do so as part of the continuing and exacting experiment that we have come to describe as human freedom.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Harry Bannister. *THE EDUCATION OF A BROADCASTER*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.

The broadcasting industry is a twentieth-century phenomenon and a steadily growing force in our society. Thus, when an eminent broadcaster whose career has spanned the whole development of the industry since the early 1930's recounts in easy and literate style the highlights of that period, it becomes a rewarding experience for both lay and professional reader.

Bannister might have called his book "The Evolution of a Broadcaster." He proves that broadcasters are made, not born, as he details with commendable self-revelation his early days of seeking and floundering after World War I. He came out of the pragmatic jungles of the traveling salesman and entered broadcasting quite by accident after several years of gentle drifting, three-cushion billiards, and smoky card rooms on the road.

The author is a master story teller, and his lucid, humor-laden style deals much with nostalgia but never lets it become treacly or maudlin. The yarns come one after the other in rapid succession, and together they spin the subtle portrait of the change that came to Bannister as he came to broadcasting and began to feel its force. In his own words, "I found I could earn my living without shutting my eyes to many things I didn't like to do. . . I came to see in WWJ an instrument for practical altruism—an organization that earned substantial profits while benefiting millions of people."

Confronted with the primitive radio fare of the early '30's, the master salesman began to give way to the latent creative man. His emphasis changed to concentrate thereafter on the upgrading of program material for the public, and the sales took care of themselves. Progression from hack pianist in a makeshift studio to a great symphony with world-famed conductors marked the dimensions of the changes he wrought in the field of music alone. Other program fare showed like improvement.

Bannister makes clear his debt to creative people in other fields, and the pleasant anecdotes of his developing relationships with the feature writers of the newspaper will be enjoyed by journalists and broadcasters alike. He is no name dropper, and the book is no exposé of the great or near great. Rather, it is studded with first-hand accounts of eminent men in many fields—politics, religion, education, sports, show business—and the author comes off a gentle man and a gentleman.

Television loomed on the horizon in the mid-forties, and like many another self-trained-and-taught broadcaster, Bannister made the transition easily. The same basic premise applied—that public attention followed programming and creativity—but this time with pictures. His station was one of the first of the post-war crop to take the air, and it quickly moved to a position of pre-eminence.

The advent of television also marked the end of his years as an individual station operator. He was called to a wider sphere of influence at the National Broadcasting Company and there became a chief architect of the developing NBC television network of stations. While his influence expanded to full national scale, the reader senses that his heart was left behind among those days of scrambling, improvising, creating—to build the basic structure of broadcasting.

To anyone within or outside the industry who has ever asked himself... "Where do broadcasters come from? How do they get that way?"...this book gives some answers. While really a collection of good-humored stories skillfully woven together, it also becomes a measure of the man who tells them. He measures well, a prodigious man of energy and ingenuity and good motivation who fashioned the shape and the substance of today's industry out of the dross at hand, and found within himself the innate skills and tastes to meet the challenge of making broadcasting a really meaningful service to the public.

And his unmistakable lesson would be that the most substantial and constant source of both power and hope in the industry is that which resides in the individual licensees, and that because they are closest and most responsive to the public, that is where the power should remain.

WILLARD E. WALBRIDGE

KTRK-TV
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George Katona. *THE MASS CONSUMPTION SOCIETY*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Jules Henry. *CULTURE AGAINST MAN*. New York: Random House, 1963.

For years, a belief in the improvement of man's lot through economic progress and universal education has been basic to positive thought in America. All was for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and—what's more—it was going to get better. Before the Great Depression, the social and economic critics were malcontents like Henry Adams, visionaries like Upton Sinclair, wise guys like Mencken, and crackpots like Thoreau. Since World War II, of course, all this has changed: J. K. Galbraith and Vance Packard are bestsellers; both James Baldwin and William F. Buckley, Jr., get an audience wherever they go; and the inadequacies of our society are trumpeted from the once pristine pages of *Saturday Evening Post* and *McCall's*.

Because so much of the self-flagellation in print from both the left and right focuses on the gross materialism said to be generated by the workings of the mid-20th century American economy, it is refreshing to find a book by a man with respectable academic credentials who is optimistic about the future. In *The Mass Consumption Society*, George Katona, who is Professor of Economics and Psychology at the University of Michigan, describes and analyzes a unique era in human history—one characterized by "the affluence of the many; the power of the consumer; and the prime importance of consumer motivation." Unlike other economists, who despair of our consumer-oriented society, Katona argues that there is ample reason to be grateful for it.

Some of the conclusions reached in this book will be startling to those who have come to look upon the American public as a nation of sheep who can be stampeded into buying just about anything so long as the hawk of wares uses the right mixture of Freud and gall. A few examples: the consumer is a sensible person who exerts a stabilizing influence on the economy; his affluence does not dull his incentives—his sights are raised

gradually as he achieves success ("No one responds to advertising like the man who keeps getting ahead"); the consumer is far from a creature of whim—he reacts to new information slowly and gradually; having installment credit easily available has not reduced the desire to save, nor have low interest rates, social security, and pensions; private pension plans encourage participants to save more money, not less.

Katona bases his conclusions on empirical evidence derived from investigations carried out over a period of 15 years at the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. The basic tool for measurements in consumer psychology (as it is in market research and in studies of voting intentions) is the sample interview study. There are, of course, those who feel that studying consumer technology with this technique after people have been exposed to advertising and other forms of persuasion through the mass media is an expensive form of begging the question. If the hidden persuaders have been successful, won't the respondents say they want what they have been "conditioned" to think they want?

The author is not impressed by this attack. "There is nobody," he says, "who attributes greater power to Madison Avenue than its critics," and he offers a rule by which to gauge the potential effectiveness of advertising and propaganda: The influence of advertising, just as of any other mass medium, decreases in proportion to the importance the consumer attaches to a matter. Katona notes that a major finding of modern psychology is that influencing other human beings toward change—especially without personal contact—is a very difficult task.

Katona argues that an understanding of the findings of research in consumer psychology is essential to the making of future economic policy. Like Galbraith, he deplores "the conventional wisdom"—particularly when it fails to take into account the needs, attitudes, and desires of the consumer sector of the economy. Furthermore, he projects his findings onto the world scene and suggests that a growing consumer economy is the most realistic hope of the world for peace and freedom.

Which is not to say, Katona agrees, that the availability of more goods for more people has solved the problems of mankind. It has, however, *changed* the problem: "Progress in avoiding starvation and in controlling the elements has been achieved at the price of restlessness and of danger of mental breakdown for individuals and destructive war for nations."

It is, of course, axiomatic that the values of much of what we call progress are ambiguous. Even the most important technical breakthroughs and innovations that have introduced significant new values into our culture have destroyed values no less significant. While Katona's book accentuates the positive and urges new political approaches based on the realities of economic behavior in the mass consumption society, Jules Henry, in *Culture Against Man*, chooses as his targets the many features of our way of life that are of questionable value and those which as an anthropologist he considers detrimental.

Henry, who is Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Washington University in St. Louis, sees the mass consumption society as a manifestation of our continuing concern with survival and security. And he sees many things wrong with it. In fulfillment of our economic imperatives, we have developed a set of drives—achievement, competitiveness, profit, mobility, and expansiveness—that tend to engulf and overwhelm the values such as gentleness, kindness, and generosity that have also been the creations of our culture. The net result, Henry fears, is that our inner needs are slighted, and while we have much to show for our efforts at the physical level, we have little to show in the way of basic emotional gratification.

The author discusses the unstable equilibrium that is precariously maintained through the creation of new needs and the encouragement of greater consumption, and he has some caustic things to say about the role of advertising in the process. Anyone at all familiar with market dynamics would be more likely to label as silly rather than evil some of the examples from the "hidden-persuader" school of advertising copy that he cites; throughout Henry's comments on advertising, the feeling persists that he is unduly impressed with what he considers the manipulative genius of Madison Avenue. He does not sufficiently credit the basic sales resistance of the consumer nor the devaluative effects of too many voices in the market place. Henry does, however, make a good case for his contention that the commandment "Thou shalt consume!" has replaced many an older injunction long considered fundamental to Western Civilization. In the metamorphosis to the mass consumption society, advertising has certainly played an important part.

Among the most vivid passages in *Culture Against Man* are those dealing with the decreasing involvement of industrialized man with his work. To keep the machine moving, to keep production going, most people do the job they *have* to do regardless of what they *want* to do. *Moreover*, because he and his working companions are inherently replaceable, no worker can afford to make a great emotional investment in the people around him: they—or he—might be gone tomorrow. Thus, the industrial worker turns away from commitments and involvements with the world around him and turns inward upon his own little world of family, hobbies, and an ever-rising living standard.

It is, however, in his examination of life among the aged in old folks' homes that Henry makes his most telling indictments against the "human obsolescence" that he claims characterizes the consumer culture. Left alone in the world—their material needs perhaps taken care of by their Social Security checks—the very old and senescent reap the harvest of a society so vigorously engaged in surviving physically that it may be dying emotionally. Even in the best of nursing homes, the picture is a disquieting one, as the elderly are forced to live out their years among strangers, in an institutional environment that of necessity places them in an inferior status. Was it for this that they worked and raised families and helped build the society that now has no decent place for them?

It is perhaps a measure of the emptiness of the lives of the aged that Professor Henry—no partisan of television—notes that television actually helps to keep them mentally alive. "TV does more than while away their time; it activates the cultural configuration, maintaining the old people because it breathes life into the culture-in-the-cell. Meanwhile the old people can experience some solidarity with others who participate in the same program."

The author describes *Culture Against Man* as "a passionate ethnography"; one could call it an angry book. It deals with many aspects of contemporary American culture and the relation of our economic structure and values to the national character, to relations between parents and children, to the problems and concerns of teen-agers, to the educational system, and to emotional breakdown, old age, and war. But while angry, the book does not suggest scrapping our culture in an attempt to return to a simpler way of life. If, instead, we could take many of Henry's criticisms seriously and apply ourselves to the creation of institutions better equipped to cope with the needs of the whole man, we might eventually build a culture that would, in the words of Bruno Bettelheim, "exact a smaller price in happiness for being civilized."

LAWRENCE CRESHKOFF

Pauline Kael. *I LOST IT AT THE MOVIES*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1965.

It is the task of the artist to give form to his experience. It is the critic's task to verbalize on how well this has been accomplished... In these terms the author establishes the ground rules for the verbal onslaught which is unleashed in the 350 pages that follow.

Pauline Kael is a part of the intellectual mood at Berkeley. Like the rebels at the nearby University of California, she is a contemporary blend of scholar, cynic, and activist. One of the few motion picture "buffs" to receive a Guggenheim fellowship, she has, at various times, co-owned and operated two small art theaters near the campus, lectured at universities across the country, and authored a number of exceptionally literate articles for film journals here and abroad.

Under the subtitle "The Films of a Decade, Praised and Deplored" some of her writings are here brought together along with a collection of commentaries on films which she broadcast to a faithful following over the subscription-supported Pacifica FM network. Miss Kael acknowledges that her "verbalizations" do not always soothe the soul of the cinemagoer. In fact she frequently has a knack for goading, taunting, exasperating, and sometimes enraging the reader with her caustic opinions and observations. One short but amusing section of the book is even given over to some of the "fan" mail she received, and to the scathing response it engendered.

The book provides some perceptive insights into the works of leading directors such as Renoir, de Sica, Kurosawa, Fellini, and Trauffaut. Particular homage is paid to *Jules and Jim*, *Fires on the Plain* and *The Grand Illusion*.

"Criticism is an art, not a science," she cautions, "and a critic who follows rules will fail to perceive what is original and important in new work." She castigates those who cling to the "critical apparatus of their grammar-school teachers": things such as unity of theme, easy-to-follow transitions in mood, a good, coherent, old-fashioned plot, heroes they can identify with and villains they can reject. (Ironically these are the very standards she attempts, with frustration, to apply to such films as *Marienbad*.) Thus the leading British film publication, *Sight and Sound*, is put down as "a good, dull, informative, well-written, safe magazine... but it doesn't satisfy desires for an excitement of the senses. Its critics don't often outrage us." Regardless of what perils Pauline the critic may endure, it may certainly not be said that she is reluctant to outrage her readers.

But for all her sophistication, these essays lack a certain understanding of the medium which one felt in the writing of Agee. There is a disturbing naïveté revealed in her grasp of the language of film and of experimentation in film form which characterizes the work of Resnais, Goddard, and some of the newer American independents. Such films as *Marienbad*, Bunuel's *Viridiana* and Antonioni's *La Notte* are lumped together as "incomprehensible and empty."

Under cover of a veritable barrage of rather pompous, sometimes ludicrously brash declarations (e.g., there are really no differences between stage and screen that are not open to question), Miss Kael reveals herself to be a rather traditional, provincial observer. "Movies have changed in these 10 years, disastrously in the last few years; they have become 'cinema.'" She complains that films are being stripped of everything that makes them joyful and entertaining.

Both the scholar and other critics are dismissed with a wave of the hand; the former as overly analytical, the latter for moralizing. The book

limits itself to theatrical feature productions and little effort is made to relate the trends to concurrent development in documentary filming which had a profound influence on several of the directors mentioned.

In spite of these shortcomings, there is much of value to be sorted out of this very mixed volume. There is an excellent analysis of two feature propaganda films, as well as a thoughtful commentary on "The New American Cinema" and the French "New Wave." Despairing their preoccupation with technique at the expense of meaning, she concludes that there is nothing finally left that we are allowed to question or criticize. "We are supposed only to interpret—and that as we wish." Her asides on the picture of American youth, as reflected in the movies of our era, are also both revealing and disturbing.

Whatever it is Miss Kael is supposed to have lost at the movies, one concludes, it is not her incisive wit or a keen concern with the troubled image we have created on the screen. Her philosophy as a critic might best be summed up in this simple conclusion: "In all art there is only one rule. Astonish us." For better or for worse, she has followed that dictum well.

ERNEST D. ROSE

University of California, Berkeley

David Ewen. *THE LIFE AND DEATH OF TIN PAN ALLEY*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1964.

Andrew Saltoun, who lived between 1655 and 1716, gets credit for the questionable argument, "Give me the making of the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws."

The argument has been picked up and used again by David Ewen in this exhaustive volume about American popular music between the years 1885 and (roughly) 1930. He attempts to establish the connection between American manners, morals, costuming, national problems and the songs that became popular. What he succeeds in proving is that Andrew Saltoun was wrong; that the persons who write the nation's laws have a direct influence on the songs that win widespread public favor.

David Ewen has authored 30 books, and he was chosen by the estates of George Gershwin and Jerome Kern and by Richard Rodgers to write biographies of those composers. Plainly, he has had a long, long love affair with popular music and the operetta. He has much admiration for both, and like any decent man in love he finds little to displease him.

There is much useful information in the volume. Unfortunately, Mr. Ewen's style is more suited to a Sears-Roebuck catalogue than to light reading. Still, for the determined reader, Mr. Ewen is a faithful recorder of authors, composers and publishers and the songs they passed on to the public. He might even bring comfort to persons who are distressed by the musical tastes of the new generation.

Consider, for example, the outcry of *Musical Courier*:

"A wave of vulgar, filthy and suggestive music has inundated the land. . . Our children, our young men and women are continually exposed to the contiguity, to the monotonous attrition of this vulgarizing music. It is artistically and morally depressing and should be suppressed by press and pulpit."

No. This is not outrage over The Beatles or even the frug. The diatribe was aimed at ragtime music and it was published in 1899.

LAWRENCE LAURENT

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It is with great regret that *Television Quarterly* accepts the resignation of RICHARD AVERSON, who has served as Associate Editor since 1961. Dick Aversion has been the editor's strong right arm over the past four years, making an immeasurable contribution to the quality of both content and style in these pages. As he begins the final phase of his doctoral work at Syracuse, we extend, in behalf of all members of the Academy, our best wishes for success and deepest gratitude for a job well done.

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The best way to provide better entertainment is to develop better entertainers.

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