TELEVISION QUARTERLY

VOLUME VIII NUMBER 2 SPRING 1969

THE JOURNAL OF
THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS
AND SCIENCES

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

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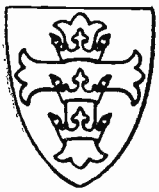

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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

When your TV screen goes black for an hour, you're watching ABC.

Because ABC owns five major television stations that are the leaders in community-minded broadcasting. Each one, for instance, is currently involved in programming exclusively for black people. On San Francisco's KGO-TV it's "Black Dignity," an hour program every Sunday. Originated and produced by black people. For black people.

It's a chance for black militants to talk with the Establishment. For black people who made it to talk about how they made it. And to tell other blacks how they can make it, too. ABC is five television stations that are tuning in on their audiences. And helping them to change things. In San Francisco. Chicago. Detroit. Los Angeles. And New York.

When you're watching "Black Dignity," you're watching ABC. When you listen to a top ten record, you're watching ABC. When you ride in a glass-bottom boat or go out to see "Hell in the Pacific," you're watching ABC.

We're many companies, doing all kinds of entertaining things you probably didn't know we did. There's a lot more to the American Broadcasting Companies than broadcasting. Watch us.

We're not quite as simple as ABC.

abc American Broadcasting Companies, Inc.

BLACKS AND BROADCASTING

It is a truism by now to state that the shifting, often ambiguous relationships of Black America with White America constitute one of the most crucial problems of today, indeed of any age in history. Television, a child of today, a mirror of today's reality, has a unique and special role to play in shaping the public's attitudes, in mirroring the public's all-too-slow response to these pressing issues.

This belief prompted us to devote a substantial part of this issue of *Television Quarterly* to the question of blacks and broadcasting. We present three articles to serve as a partial spectrum. Three men, of separate vantage points and particularized experiences, have dealt with the issue as they see it.

Whitney Young, Jr., Executive Director since 1961 of the National Urban League, brought the problems of blacks and television dramatically into focus in his address at this year's NAB convention. Based on this speech, his article is a passionate, witty, and moving declaration. A master of the hard question, Mr. Young asks where the FCC stands on self-integration, on dealing with openly racist stations, on the question of tokenism in the industry's employment policies.

From the academic community, Cedric Clark of the Annenberg School of Communications gives us an incisive description of how, from a sociologist's point of view, television seeks to control reality by its often-unfortunate modes of portrayal of black series characters. We then hear from Stephen Fleischman of ABC News who gives us a biography of *Time For Americans,* his network's two-year summer series, and suggests guidelines for the future based on this experience.

These articles mirror and stimulate many views: optimism, irony, despair. We learn of continuing problems; we learn of small successes, chinks in the wall. This dialogue can serve us only as one of many beginnings. In seeking to let each man speak his piece, present us his experience, we hope to open the forum for a continuing discussion of blacks in broadcasting in succeeding issues of the *Television Quarterly.* We hope that dialogues such as these will serve as eventual goads to change; that in future we can report more heartening developments (in news and entertainment programming, in staffing and employment policies, in television's attempt to more truly serve its audience); we hope that the industry, by taking the lead in shaping the reality of the future, will have a less threatened reality to report in future years.

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. has served as executive director of the National Urban League since 1961. A social worker, teacher, administrator, writer and lecturer, Mr. Young is a former dean of the Atlanta School of Social Work and currently serves as president-elect of the National Association of Social Workers. He continues his association with the boards and advisory committees of various organizations, including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Urban Coalition Institute. He has served on seven Presidential commissions and was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Johnson.

The following article is based on Mr. Young's address of March 24 to the National Association of Broadcasters convention.

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF BROADCASTERS

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR.

"We shall have justice...when those who are not injured are as indignant as those who are."

Even the most hopeless optimist among us or the most naive would acknowledge that we as a country are in serious trouble. And I think that we are in trouble because—and no honest man can deny it—America has lived a lie. We have developed a Constitution, a Bill of Rights, and a Judeo-Christian ethic that excludes, as of now, almost eleven to twelve per cent of the population—namely, black people.

Although I am fully aware that Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, and Indians also suffer discrimination, the have-nots of our society are usually symbolized by black people. The black American is not only a larger group but the only group that represents an involuntary immigration to this country, the factor that sharpens his awareness of the injustices that have been perpetrated on him.

Today these black Americans are joined by a new ally—young people. These are your daughters and sons—and mine. Young people at best cynical, at worst contemptuous of current values. Young people who point unerringly at the inconsistency and hypocrisy among us.

Those of you who would like to think that this is a phenomenon of the last half of the sixties are indulging a luxury you can ill afford. This is not panty raids, not public swallowing of goldfish, not crowding in telephone booths. These young people will not be seduced and co-opted by stock options or promises of economic security, because they have *had* those things and they take them for granted. These young people are in it for the duration. They believe deeply in justice. And I'm not talking about the hippies and the yippies. I'm talking about normal, typical youngsters with a deep commitment.

This country will not meet this challenge by suppression. Or by deluding itself into thinking that the cry of one or two crackpots for separatism will send all the blacks back to Africa by boat or move them into some separate state.

I am sure I speak for 95 to 99 per cent of black Americans when I say that we have been in this country more than 350 years, that we have fought in every war and are now dying in disproportionate numbers in Vietnam, that we have a claim to every acre of land in this country and we do not intend to let America off the hook by withdrawing to any separate state.

Admittedly, the media has shown great skill in finding and playing up an occasional one of us who proclaims that we are seeking separatism. But I challenge you to find one such person who boarded a ship for Africa or even moved into Mound Bayou, Mississippi or another one of America's all-black cities.

The rhetoric of a revolution is different from the substance of a revolution, and the sooner we cut through the noise and look at the crucial issues, the sooner we shall solve the problem. America is going to have to deal with the black American. And I think there's no group in the country whose role is more crucial and critical than the broadcasters'.

What I would like to talk about is your future role. I would like to appeal to you, not out of morality, which hopefully you do have, not out of patriotism, which conceivably you might have, but out of your own enlightened self-interest.

If you for one moment think that the universities of this country will be the first and the last institutions to be challenged, then you must be smoking opium. The universities are just the beginning. Every institution in this country will be challenged and will be confronted, not just by black people but by *young* people, black and white. And certainly no institution deserves to be challenged more than broadcasting.

I say this fully aware of the progress that you have made. I am fully aware, also, of the actual figures, and the figures show that you have a long way to go. Yet you are the eyes and ears of America. You are the part of the people who use the public airways that belong to all of the people. You will either lead the way in remaking the majority of all the people into American citizens with a truly Judeo-Christian ethic and a truly democratic spirit, or you will let them continue on as racists.

You are the people who are going to have to take on what is now *the* tough job in civil rights—to change the attitudes of Americans. For the most part, we have enough laws. We have the Supreme Court decisions, and we have all of the policy directives. But these things have not served yet to change the basic inequity, the gap between the average black American and the average white American.

One out of six black people do white-collar work, compared with some three or four out of six white people. Four out of five black people do unskilled and semiskilled work compared with one out of five white people.

We have more housing segregation today than ever before. And in these segregated areas, we have inferior opportunities for education. We cannot blame this on the inadequacies of laws. We can blame only the inadequacy of the spirit and the heart. And to reverse these inadequacies has to be your job.

The communications media can do anything it wants to do. In a period of 30 years, the media changed the American attitude toward Russia four times. When Russia was allied with Germany, in '38 and '39, we were told to hate Russia. When Germany attacked Russia in '41, we were told that overnight Russia had become our ally. When the Cold War began in 1945, and when Khrushchev was banging his shoe at the U.N. and threatening to bury us, we were told (by Joe McCarthy among others) to hate Russia again and so we all began to hate them again. Then, when Red China began to loom menacingly on the horizon, we were told, "Wait a minute, let's not hate Russia too much." So now to hate Russia is out of fashion again.

In those 30 years we flip-flopped four times. So the American broadcast media is capable of much more than "snow" jobs on toothpaste, two cars in your garage, and three television sets in your home. The media can sell ideology.

I submit to you today that you are threatened. Our cities are becoming blacker and poorer. Within the next ten years, if the present trend continues, ten of America's twelve largest cities will have a larger black population than white. This fact is loaded with economic and political implications that any businessman who has a big fat building in one of those cities ought to be thinking about.

It is a mystery why people will just sit back and allow black citizens to take over the cities, allow them to remain as consumers of taxes rather than producers of goods, allow them to be producers of violence rather than consumers of products. You are already in trouble with the FCC. But I would appreciate the FCC a bit more, however, if it decided seriously to integrate itself. We still haven't had a black person on the FCC.

Let me say that I am with you on the issue of violence on television. I think that people are being dishonest, nonfactual, and unscientific when they attribute the increasing violence in the country to programs like *Gunsmoke*. The increasing violence in Harlem is due largely to poverty. It is due to the presence of dope and the unwillingness of the Federal government and other officials to crack down on the crime syndicates who control the dope racket from downtown. But you must do something about poverty, and to do something about it means that you just can't focus on the methods of protest without focusing on the injustices. If you do not, you are going to be in trouble.

When I talk about modifying attitudes, here is an example of what I mean. In the last few weeks the newspapers, radio, and television had a field day reporting student demonstrations. Rarely, if ever, has the media documented the injustices within those institutions that provoked the demonstrations. The University of Wisconsin, to single out one, a school of 33,000 students, has less than 300 black students in a state eight to ten per cent black. Only one black student has ever finished medical school at the University of Wisconsin. Until two or three years ago, only four or five faculty members out of some 1500 were black. These figures you never see.

You can see only the figures and the display on television and radio of the people who are acting excessively. While I do not endorse excessive, illegal activities on the part of the students, I still concur with Anatole France. I prefer the errors of enthusiasm to the indifference of wisdom. For a society that has permitted itself an excess in brutality and callousness, *I* can now afford, if you will, a few excesses in the name of trying to correct injustice.

If you are going to modify attitudes, I would urge you as broadcasters to begin portraying the many examples of *cooperation* and not just of conflict.

The Urban League, if you will permit me to use an organizational example, is involved in a beautiful story of street academies in New York City. We took storefronts and made schools out of them.

We brought drop-outs and former drug addicts into those schools, young people the educational system had declared uneducable. Through tender loving care, not just by black teachers, but by white teachers with hearts to match their minds, we have taken these kids and sent them off to prep school. All 70 graduates from our prep school last year are now in college. It's a beautiful story, not of black people going it alone but blacks and whites working together.

There are many other stories. Take the Veterans Affairs program of the Urban League. We have seen 21,000 black men with skills, confidence, and sophistication come back to this country as veterans from Vietnam. They can either become destructive, angry citizens, because they have paid the supreme price; or they can become constructive citizens. We contacted them before they left Vietnam to offer them an opportunity for a job or further education, and they have entered one of our ten urban centers with this aim in view. And these guys are tough enough to make a Rap Brown or a Stokely Carmichael look like Little Lord Fauntleroy.

Now that's a great story—but no television or radio station even thinks about telling it. Yet, if we appeared in the separation center and advised returning black soldiers to join a violent revolution, we would have great publicity overnight.

I know you hear this kind of complaint from everyone, but I think we have a special reason to gripe. If we could get the broadcasting industry to be as discriminating in its identification of black leadership as it is in its employment policies—we would be in great shape. It always annoys me a little to see almost anybody picked out and described as a black leader. One would never thinking of asking Milton Berle to suggest the country's policies in the Middle East, but nobody hesitates to ask Dick Gregory what ought to be done in Africa—or with the black American problem in this country.

A number of reporters from your industry come to me and say, "I just talked to Dick Gregory, and I talked to Mohammed Ali, and now I would like to talk to another black leader." It is more than annoying to see the industry equate such men with the Urban League, a 58-year-old organization with 1700 full time staff people in 94 cities, a professional operation. This failure to discriminate in identifying our authentic black leadership constitutes one of our major problems.

The black community doesn't know that the Urban League found 50,000 jobs last year for unemployed people, has 30,000 people in on-the-job training programs, and has upgraded 12,000 people who were under-employed last year. These facts are not known in the ghetto, because the media is much too busy playing up the loud voice with little, if any, constituency.

All I ask for is balance. If you must entertain and play for ratings, you must also try to be a little more responsible. Otherwise, you do a disservice not to black people alone—you do this entire country a real disservice. I am aware that in some ways the media has moved forward. Now we can see a black face on advertisements or commercials. Now we can see some programs with black people, as witness *Julia* and a few others.

But I am still strongly concerned about your employment policies. The black face has a high visibility anywhere. Because broadcasting has been discriminatory for so long, the one black face sometimes seems to represent a complete invasion.

The figures are still very clear. The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission study and subsequent hearing in New York City shows that even though the black and Puerto Rican populations of that city is over 25 per cent, today less than eight per cent of Puerto Ricans and blacks are to be found in any part of the broadcasting industry.

The hearings just completed in Los Angeles point out that even though the Mexican-Americans and the blacks constitute 20 per cent of that city's population, less than six per cent of them are in its broadcasting industry.

You are using the wrong criteria. You are measuring our present situation by our past. Instead, you should be setting up some realistic goals in terms of representation in our industry that would be proportional to the community population.

I would urge you to mount a major campaign to make integration fashionable, inasmuch as you have worked so hard to make exclusiveness the "in" thing. This wouldn't take a great deal of effort and it is based on reality. There's *nobody* today more culturally deprived than the white youngsters who grow up in one of these bland, antiseptic, gilded white ghettos, feeding sameness to one another, compounding mediocrity, and becoming totally unable to adjust to the kind of world in which we live. A world of 75 per cent nonwhites. A world in which we are 15 minutes by space ship from Cape Kennedy to Africa. Somehow we've got to get people

to apologize for all-white anything but a family. I don't want to be too radical...

But an all-white business, neighborhood, school, church or country club is just not "in." These all-white groups are the citadels of people who are basically insecure, and these are the people you have got to take on.

I would like most of all to see the networks of this country actually kick out the racist stations. You know them as well as I do. You know their programs, financed in part by money from Texas. You know the subtlety of it. They don't come out and urge people to go lynch blacks; they come out with all those little subtle things like, "We made it, why can't they?" Or they talk about law and order, and you and I know what they mean when they say law and order. Give them the best example of order the world has ever known. That order, created by Adolf Hitler with his Gestapo and his storm troopers, allowed for absolutely no dissent. Go back and read the Hitler speech in Hamburg in 1932 and it will sound very much like the speeches you hear today.

You must discourage the so-called white backlash. You must stop people from talking about their loss of sympathy because of the shouts of black power and because of riots. There's nothing phenomenal or original about black power or riots.

Let's reconsider for a moment the statement, "We made it, why can't they?" When the Irish, the Italians, the Jews and other minorities put forth this idea, you might straighten them out with some documentation. Let them know that those who now contend they made it alone are themselves the beneficiaries of WPA and NYA and CCC and REA. They cut their eye teeth (or their ancestors did) on gifts from this country of forty acres and a mule. They were given free farm agents to teach them how to cultivate the land. They were given low-interest long-term loans to buy farm equipment. And now they are given money not to raise anything.

Be very honest when you talk to these people. Let them know that when the immigrants came to this country some time ago, all you needed was a strong back and a willing mind. They didn't have technology, they didn't have the industrialization, they were a pioneering people.

Today you've got to have a high school diploma to be a good janitor. Back then, when those immigrants came to town and got a little education and a little money, they could escape the ghetto.

They had a freedom. If they had difficulty because their names set them apart, they just shortened their names as Senator Muskie and Governor Agnew did. Black people couldn't do this.

These are the myths of the past that you must explode. And you must also allay the myths of the present. Instead of talking about the weaknesses of black people and their pathologies, talk about their strengths. Break the news that 75 per cent of all black families are stable families. Spell it out that despite humiliation and discrimination, they are surviving in the worst housing. And talk about the contributions that black people have made to our society.

Finally, what you really are going to have to come through with is this: you've got to set an example in your own employment. Now I am fully aware, and I would like publicly to state here, my deep concern with the roadblock to employment set up by the labor and the craft unions in the whole broadcasting industry. I think this is one of the most vicious and hypocritical of situations.

You may talk a great deal about the plumbers and the carpenters, but these groups are beginning to move a little bit. Among the groups that are not moving happen to be some of those cameramen unions and other craft unions in your business. But that should not be an excuse. That is not the total reason we don't have people behind cameras, and more in front of cameras.

The main reason is that you of the industry stand back and then say, "Well, we can't find anybody." Well, you've got to stop standing back and stop saying you can't—because you can. Let people see that you've got a Willie Mays, that you've got a Bill Russell. Let them see that there are companies other than Westinghouse and Don McGannon who can have a vice-president who is black.

It seems to me that if we have now successfully integrated sports, and even the houses of prostitution, that it ought not to be asking too much to integrate the broadcasting industry in a very real way, and not with tokens. This means an outreach. This means finding ways to escalate the movement of people up the ladder. This means that you have got to do an even better job of training.

After I spoke last year to the American Newspaper Publishers Association, they set up $300,000 worth of scholarship programs for Negro journalism students. They didn't even camouflage it, they came right out and said it. Do you know where the bulk of the money came from? The McCormick Foundation, that's the

Chicago *Tribune*. This is hardly a flaming liberal newspaper, but you can see what they are *doing*. If they can provide this kind of leadership—and the other newspapers have fallen in step—what's wrong with the NAB providing the same kind of leadership in its area?

And all you should try to do now is to be as skillful and as ingenious in including black people as you have been in excluding them. And excluding them has taken real genius.

Three or five years ago, there was a television show on one of the stations, I won't name the network, but it presented a scene from 125th St. Station with nothing but white people in it. Now I don't know how many of you know 125th Street in Harlem. But it takes real genius to shoot a scene from 125th Street in Harlem and have nothing but white people in it.

So I am aware of your genius and your creativity and your imagination. You call yourselves artists in your profession. You are supposed to be above racism and bigotry. Those are things for the less aesthetic people. You are the cultured group. You rise above all of this and you look at a man's talents, you go beyond his suntan. But do you really?

So you put the blame on the advertisers. We agree. We, too, know what the advertisers are doing. This is all the more reason why you, the broadcasters, must move. You've got to start changing things in a conscious, deliberate way. Let me suggest that you do it not because the FCC is about to crack you over the head—and they are. They are coming up on your blind side, about the business of violence and conglomerates, and on the antitrust problems—all of this, but it is on this business of integration and fair employment that they are really going to come at you.

Don't wait for it to happen. Don't be forced to do something. Can't we find a Branch Rickey in this business, too? That's how we got the blacks into baseball—not because we suddenly found Jackie Robinson. We had Jackie Robinsons long before 1945—we had a Satchel Paige and a Josh Gibson, in fact. But we hadn't yet found a Branch Rickey, a man who had the courage of his convictions. Now why can't we find him in broadcasting?

Don't do it just because it's economically sound, or because you don't want to get your license taken away or your hands spanked publicly. Do it because it's right. Do it because, beyond being broadcasters, I would hope that you are men and civilized human beings. Do it because you're fathers and husbands and you are

trying to set examples for young people who are groping, young people who want to see their fathers and their mothers demonstrate their convictions. That's really what's at stake today.

A member of my board named Mil Batten, who is Chairman of the Board of J. C. Penney's, told me of an experience. One Sunday morning, he was having breakfast with his two youngsters, a 21-year-old girl and a 23-year-old boy. Suddenly the girl asked, "Dad, what are you going to do this week?" And he said, "I am going out with Whitney Young and I'm going to three cities and I'm going to host luncheons and talk about expanding employment opportunities for black people."

His son almost fell off the stool. He asked, "You are going to do what?" Mil explained it to him again. The daughter said, "You mean you aren't going to maximize the profits of J. C. Penney's? You aren't going out to figure out some way you can undercut Woolworth's? You're not going out to buy some product that you can get a greater margin of profit on?" And he said, "No, I'm going out with Whitney Young."

There were about three minutes of silence. And suddenly his daughter, with tears in her eyes, jumped over and hugged him and kissed him. And Mil Batten said to me, "Whitney, I really want to thank you. I am the kind of father who has given my kids everything—international trips, cars, clothes, always sent them to the best schools—but never have I gotten the kind of genuine affection and respect from my kids that I got in that one moment."

Well, gentlemen and ladies, this is where it's at. This is what the kids are looking for. They say it to me every day, when I visit universities: "Mama and Daddy are always telling me I don't need to drink and smoke and pet just because everyone else does. I can have my own value system, I know right from wrong, I can stand up for what I believe in...But mama and daddy never do. They never lift their fingers to try to get a black person a much better job in their companies, or get somebody in the neighborhood into the country club. They just go along. They are just money makers."

This, gentlemen, is why we have problems communicating. This is what the kids are talking about. This, also, is what is at stake.

When *you*—the molders of public opinion, the decision makers, the style setters, the keepers of the status symbol—when *you* decide that racism and bigotry and discrimination are wrong for this

country, when *you* decide it is not only immoral but economically wrong, when *you* decide it is playing international Russian roulette with all of our lives—then and then only will we have peace and stability and order in our cities and true American democracy.

An ancient Greek scholar was once asked to name the day when they would have justice in Athens. He paused for a moment and said, "We shall have justice in Athens when those who are not injured are as indignant as those who are." And so shall it be in this country.

TELEVISION AND SOCIAL CONTROLS: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PORTRAYALS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

CEDRIC C. CLARK

As a mass medium of communication, television is involved intimately with social conflict and control. This involvement, however, is much more fundamental than the presentation of some people enjoying the fruits of society while others do not—a common but simplistic response to an issue that is complex and controversial.

Television reflects the social structure of society by *selection and presentation of characters* associated with its structural divisions. The commercial nature of the medium emphasizes advertising of products bought by those at the top of the social structure, and thus reinforces the status quo. And it does this often at the expense of those at the bottom through non-recognition, ridicule, or regulation. Since those at the bottom are largely non-white, charges against the biases of the "white media" have an empirical foundation.

CEDRIC C. CLARK, who holds the Ph.D. in communications from Michigan State University, is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. This fall he will begin a joint appointment at Stanford University as a faculty member of the communications and psychology departments.

Three stages—non-recognition, ridicule, and regulation—relate to whether members of certain groups are presented on television and how they are presented. Certain groups are scarcely represented at all; as a current example, the Puerto Rican community. Child psychologists and prisoners in solitary confinement agree that exclusion is one of the worst forms of human punishment. And non-recognition in a mass medium of communication can be considered as a kind of exclusion. This is Stage One.

In Stage Two, groups formerly non-recognized are "taken-into-account" by television at the price of being ridiculed. Black Americans first appeared on TV in a context of comedy (*e.g., Stephin Fetchit, Amos n Andy, et al.)* that emphasized ridicule. The function of ridicule is twofold. The group that is being ridiculed feels that it is better, at least, than being ignored. Concurrently, by having a ridiculed group to laugh at, members of the dominant culture feel a boost to their self-esteem. So the social structure is not only reflected by television, but maintained by it.

Mexican-Americans and Oriental-Americans currently occupy TV's stage of ridicule. Particularly in its commercials, the medium reinforces the American stereotype of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans as lazy, dirty, and socially unproductive. (One current commercial claims that they don't even finish their cigarettes.) Oriental-Americans are still portrayed in their roles of stereotyped ridicule: as waiters, laundrymen, karate experts, or exotic sex objects.

Such characterizations vitiate the self-image of the minority group, while bolstering the dominant culture's self-image. Self-esteem thus resembles a valuable resource that television takes from groups that need it most and gives to those that need it least. Predictable attempts to regain some of this exploited self-esteem can be viewed as a major impulsion behind demand for power—Black, Brown, Red or Yellow.

The effects of ridicule do not operate *quid pro quo*. One remark that ridicules a minority group might be equal to one hundred such aimed at the dominant culture. Self ridicule is a luxury that those at the top of the social structure can far better afford (cf. the *New Yorker* cartoons).

When groups like the Irish-Americans in the early part of this century and Black Americans today react, either through pressure-group protests or violent rebellion, against the cultural images

the mass media creates of them, they move from the stage of ridicule to Stage Three—regulation. Increasing numbers of American Blacks are relatively new arrivals to this stage. And it is interesting to watch the forces of television exercise on them its third form of social control.

The table that follows presents a complete list of all Black characters who were regular stars in some dramatic series, as of last Fall.

Actor	*Program*	*Character's Occupation*
Diahann Carroll	*Julia*	Nurse
Marc Copage	*Julia*	Child
Bill Cosby	*I Spy*	Spy
Ivan Dixon	*Hogan's Heroes*	Army
Ruby Dee	*Peyton Place*	Housewife
Gail Foster	*Mannix*	Girl Friday to Private Eye
Robert Hoaks	*NYPD*	Detective
Don Mitchell	*Ironside*	Detective
Greg Morris	*Mission Impossible*	Spy
Don Marshall	*Land of the Giants*	Co-pilot
Nichelle Nicholas	*Star Trek*	Communication Officer
Percy Rodriques	*Peyton Place*	Physician
Glynn Turman	*Peyton Place*	Teenager
Clarence Williams III	*Mod Squad*	Policeman
Otis Young	*Outcasts*	Bounty-hunter

With only one exception, *Peyton Place,* a program since taken off the air, all characters have some connection with an organization devoted to the maintenance of law and order, either domestically or internationally. Even a seemingly innocuous show like *Julia* contains regulatory elements. Julia herself is employed by the Department of Defense. The photograph of her husband, killed in Vietnam, finds its way into virtually every program. Her girl friend's husband is a policeman. And surely Julia's young son Corey, when he gets around to it, will say that he wants to become a policeman or a super-spy.

To appreciate the kind of propaganda that finds its way into programs with Black characters, consider a recent *Dragnet* show. Dave Evans, a Black policeman, tells a group of would-be police recruits why he joined the department:

> I wanted to do something for my country...I wanted to do something for my own people...And I'll tell you something else, some of our people talk about white man's law. There's no such thing, not when Black men like you and me wear this uniform—it's everybody's law.

Such explicit verbalizations of regulatory themes may not be necessary to get Black viewers to identify with the "right" side of society. After years of ridicule and limited job opportunities, the mere portrayal of a legitimate occupational role is probably enough.

It may appear ironic, if not tragic, that those who benefit least from society are shown increasingly in roles associated with the protection of that society. Yet, given the nature of mass communication in American society, such characterization is predictable. In fact, as noted earlier, one finds a strong parallel to the portrayal of the Irish-American many decades ago. After he took to the streets to protest violently the injustices perpetrated against him, he suddenly found himself no longer ridiculed in the print media but portrayed instead as that super-guardian of the established order, the Irish cop. Such now is the case with the television portrayal of Black Americans.

In their bid to be recognized in a natural fashion by the mass media, ethnic groups must also pass through a fourth stage, which can be characterized as one of respect. While many European immigrant groups have managed to reach this level, there is serious question whether non-white groups ever will. A full spectrum of natural television drama would have to include romantic entanglements between persons of different colors. And in this regard, Americans' attitudes are quite tribalistic, as evidenced by the popular question: "Would you want your daughter to marry one?" The indictments made by the Kerner Commission and the negative public reaction they evoked make for a prospect far from soothing.

If this be the case, it is likely the processes that now regulate the characterization of Black Americans will be extended to cover *all* non-white minority groups who react against the commercial exploitation of their cultural dignity and identity. For as structural divisions in society become more and more rigid and the allocation of valuable resources more and more unequal, it is hardly likely that protest demonstrations will cease. And it is more than likely that the reaction of the dominant (white) culture will be one of greater and greater control—control reflected not only in more

repressive legislation, but also in the televised presentation of such groups.

Thus the entire process of conflict, control, and communication is a cybernetic one, with no clear demarcation of cause and effect. The more control the television industry exercises over ethnic minorities, the more likely are they to rebel. As this rebellion increased, the control of television—to the extent that its commercial nature links it to those at the top of the social structure—will increase, whether through non-recognition, ridicule, or regulation.

There is no quick solution to the problem. It is easy to say that the television industry should assume greater responsibility and make every effort to break out of the vicious circle. But this responsibility and effort, even if assumed, must still operate under one severe restraint: he who pays the price calls the tune. And if white Americans want continued regulation and control of certain groups, under current operating rules they will get it.

TIME FOR AMERICANS—

BIOGRAPHY OF A SUMMER SERIES

STEPHEN FLEISCHMAN

If the summer of 1968 was a time of black-white confrontation on television, what will the summer of 1969 be?

Last year, Hubbell Robinson, then executive producer at ABC, proposed a series of six one-hour television confrontations on race problems with no holds barred. Elmer Lower, ABC News president, bought it. The series went on the air as *Time For Americans* with Frank Reynolds as moderator. I shared the producing chores with Hubbell. This summer ABC News again will be doing *Time For Americans* with six more one-hour programs, part of *Summer Focus '69*.

Last year's series made for a moving and rewarding summer. It was also a competitive one. CBS had announced their high-powered, high-budget series, *Of Black America*, with Bill Cosby as narrator. Other networks were proliferating programs on the black movement. In network terms, we had little production money, no high priced talent, no stars, no unusual promotion. Yet, audience mail response, ratings, reviews, and press coverage all indicated *Time For Americans* had come across as one of the year's top television documentary series.

Our success potential rested entirely on how imaginatively the ingredient elements were fused, how responsive the participants would be. Central to the entire undertaking was our belief that if whites and blacks could be persuaded to keep talking, some bridges might be built, some understanding might result, and some progress achieved toward a continuing, significant, and productive dialogue.

STEPHEN FLEISCHMAN is executive producer of the documentary unit, ABC News.

We believed, with John Hersey, "that every scrap of understanding, every door-crack glimmer of illumination, every thread that may lead not to just survival of the races but to health—all should be shared as soon as possible. There is so much to be done in so little time."

And we subscribed to Hubbell Robinson's paraphrase, "Never did so many need to know so much about each other."

On Thursday, June 27, 1968 at 10 p.m., moderator Frank Reynolds opened the first program of the series with these words: "ABC News presents *Time For Americans,* an examination of white racism in American life." Period. There was a lot behind this simple statement. It opened the way for a meaningful series. It was a rubric not easily arrived at. We had considered concerning ourselves with an examination of black and white racism. The atmosphere at the time was charged with racist statements from black nationalist and militant groups as well as white-backlash groups. The airwaves were full of charges and countercharges. However, we agreed that this kind of balanced formalism could becloud real issues in an outpouring of prejudice and emotion. It would not serve the purpose of a truly incisive look at the problem.

An examination of white racism would in no way violate the fairness doctrine. It was a legitimate controversial issue of public importance, which merited an in-depth study. Unfortunately, it can be accepted as fact, not merely opinion, that white racism is the core of the turbulence in American society today. To substantiate this thesis, we stood on the now famous government report—The President's National Advisory Commission Report on Civil Disorders. The report categorically stated that (1) white racism was the primary cause of racial violence, civil disorders, and riots, and (2) black racism was basically a reaction to white racism.

The doctrine of fairness and balance was not to be ignored. In the very first program, *Bias and the Mass Media,* we ran into an impasse that required clarification of the principle. This program, as the title implied, was to be a ruthless examination of prejudice and discrimination within the media.

Hubbell Robinson felt strongly that if we were going to do an honest examination of white racism in American life, we should start with a critical look at our own bailiwick—television and the mass media. This would also give us a chance to start the series

with some name-power. Since the "mass media" includes television, movies and theatre, there were box-office names to draw upon—top personalities with "fire in their bellies" on the issues of white racism.

For the first program, we obtained the participation of Harry Belafonte, Lena Horne, black writer Larry Neal, and black psychiatrist Dr. Alvin Poussaint. Since this was sure to be a scathing denunciation of the mass media, we felt that in the interest of fairness the panel should be balanced with some representatives of the media who could defend it. Mr. Belafonte refused to participate on the program if we allowed for rebuttal. He wanted the full hour for himself and the other three black people to present their viewpoints uncontested. The doctrine of fairness and balance re-emerged, not on the issue of white racism but on a matter of broadcast practices. Here again, Elmer Lower permitted us to concede to Mr. Belafonte's request, provided we allowed a second hour on the same subject for representatives of the industry. Consequently, the second hour of *Time For Americans* was made up principally of spokesmen for print, magazine and broadcast media.

This formula paid off in exciting television and a deeper and more thorough probing of the issues without each and every controversial statement countered by an equal and opposite viewpoint. There is something to be said for providing a platform for a single viewpoint in a single program and providing for an equal but separate time for the opposing viewpoint.

The Belafonte/Horne/Neal/Pouissant hour was a blockbuster. Their anger, their passion, their articulateness were overpowering. The mass media was excoriated, not solely for ingrained white racist attitudes in content, but for flagrant discrimination practices in employment. Frank Reynolds, who had been asked not to rebut but simply to keep things moving, was the only white person on the program. He appeared to be the symbol of the white establishment and the focal point of the raging black anger. By the end of the hour he was visibly shaken.

Belafonte was eloquent. Some people felt, and as one critic observed, "...he gave the best performance of his career on this broadcast." At a charged climactic moment during the hour, Mr. Belafonte whirled toward Frank Reynolds and said:

> "What are you prepared to do? What are you prepared to surrender? Not surrender in terms of a defeat, but surrender in the service of the human cause, and this human dignity. What

are you prepared to give up in terms of the profit sheet and the profit margins? What are you prepared to give up, and once you know what you're prepared to give up, even if it's nothing, then you will know what you're capable of doing.

"I'll tell you something, Frank, I've come a long way from hate and a great deal of larceny in my heart as a young boy. I grew up in Harlem, I was born in it. And the great danger is what will happen if I am so driven that I begin to revert back to an adolescent condition, I begin to think in nothing but cold hard terms of hate, where I have watched one of the dearest human beings of my life wiped out by the gun. What happens when I begin to consider the guns again... I'm going to be driven to the next logical position in my own evolution, and if you're going to be brutal, and you're going to dehumanize, I will not permit any more black children like this to be laying down in the streets of America with some white cat with a gun and a cigar in his mouth, feeling he's done the day's work...

"I'll not permit it, my manhood will not permit me to do it. I will not see my son that way and if I get driven to great passion to take that up, then let's talk about it, because then everybody is talking about wiping out everybody and that grieves me. And if you want to know what can be done, ask the white community, the white power what is it really prepared to do in this human struggle, and if they can answer that for themselves, then everybody will know where it's at. Either they're prepared to do nothing, or they're prepared to do an awful lot...

"If every network got together and even had a containment with one another and say fine, we'll give one or two hours a week between eight and nine, ABC will do it, NBC will do it, and CBS will do it, so they kind of condition one another at least on the profit margin or whatever. Let's surrender. One hour of our time, or two hours a week of our time to black artists, to black writers, to black people, and let them do their thing...

"What I'm saying is how consistent will it be, how often will it be? And is it going to be just the accepted images of white America? Is it going to be my brother here, my brother there, you know a professor... Is it going to be a psychiatrist, a Lena Horne, and is it going to be me? or is it going to be Stokely and is it going to be Rap Brown, is it going to be Karenga, all of the guys who are not quite palatable to white America? Well, even if they're not, hear him. Don't just excerpt him when he waves and says get a gun, you know. Hear him, give him this much time and let him wax, and judge him based on what he's had to say over this kind of freedom of expression. Don't

contain him, because you're containing the wrong one. You should hear him, you should hear Karenga, you should hear Rap Brown. Don't just interpret him, hear him."

Mr. Belafonte had, indeed, come a long way from the acceptable stereotype. He felt deeply his black consciousness, as did Miss Horne and the others on the panel. And they were capable of expressing the anger of black America which may not be new but is certainly too long repressed.

It was a service to television and to the public, we felt, to allow these feelings to be voiced without rebuttal on this broadcast. Not all of our audience agreed. The mail response was prolific, and split right down the middle. The mail, as a whole, was significant as a portrait of the crisis in the country itself. Some of the letters matched Mr. Belafonte's presentation in their passionate criticism of the panel and of ABC for allowing it.

One week later, at the same time, a second program on *Bias and the Mass Media* went on the air. The panel was all white and composed of a fair cross-section of representatives of the media. If the panel did not respond directly to the charges of the black panel the week before, it did develop some insights into the media's problems in (1) trying to portray the Negro without distortion, and (2) improving the employment statistics of black people in all branches of the media. In fact, at one point toward the close of the hour, Dan Seymour, president of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, apparently not aware that he was appearing on a rebuttal program, looked around the room at his all-white panel of colleagues and said, "I was rather surprised at our cast here today, that there isn't a black person among us. Because I think we're reflecting points of view that are obviously white points of view."

It was left to Elmer Lower, ABC News president, to remind Mr. Seymour that Mr. Belafonte and the other black panelists of the week before had had their say and had not wanted to be on the same program with them. "And that is why the two groups are segregated," he said.

The approach paid off equally well on the succeeding *Time For Americans* broadcasts and, in total, the series made an impact. Producer Ernest Pendrell's report on Newark, *Anatomy of a Riot;* Herbert Dorfman's examination of the Boston school system, *White Racism—Black Education;* the Jim Benjamin produced confrontation in New Rochelle, *Can White Suburbia Think Black?*

and the Houston, Texas group therapy experiment with members of the police department and black citizens, *Prejudice and the Police*—all moved with the same force, gaining power and interest from the fact that we followed through on our basic commitment to attempt an honest examination of white racism in American life.

Out of all these widely divergent programming experiences, these confrontations produced what seemed to us a most compelling result. No matter how hostile the groups when the talks began—and they were all hostile in varying degrees—the hostilities showed areas of abatement as dialogue wore on. Participants black and white, who opened the dialogue with shouts, deaf-eared shouts, and deaf ears, concluded by listening and *talking*, not shouting. Questions replaced doctrinaire statements. Curiosity contended with dogma. It represented a beginning, and suggests that the use of television to bring the races together in open debate (traumatic though it may often be), is a means of contact and communication whose potent possibilities we have merely scratched.

One year after the President's National Advisory Commission Report this past March, the Urban Coalition came out with a follow-up evaluation. Entitled "One Year Later," it concluded that white racism still dominated race relations to such an extent that the nation still moves in the direction of two societies, separate and unequal.

If it is indeed true that some of the ferment and confrontation has simmered down, particularly on television, then what there was of it has had an overall beneficial effect. More conflicts most certainly will arise. In the meanwhile, more dialogue between races seems to exist, much of the dialogue centered on more concrete issues. It may be that we are getting down to *the* difficult task—to grapple more honestly with some of the problems in education, in employment, even in attitudes toward black consciousness.

Despite the Urban Coalition's disappointing report, I feel that the year of confrontation *has* produced positive results. In my view, black people have learned to be more honest in expressing their true feelings, including anger and hate. Whites have learned to be more accepting of black feelings and more capable of dealing with them. Thus, both blacks and whites are in closer touch with reality.

Perhaps an indication of some progress is the fact that this summer's *Time For Americans* series deals even more directly with issues of relevance. *Welfare*, for example, is an hour-long series

subject. The unusual progress in race relations in the city of Atlanta will be studied in *It Can Be Done.*

A third program, *Prejudice and the Negro,* will deal with the question of black anti-semitism real or imagined, by focusing on an all-black student cast from Junior High School 275 in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn as they present the Jewish folk musical, "Fiddler on the Roof." A catalytic agent in surfacing Jewish-Negro antagonisms that have had national implications this year, the production suggests a wider acceptance of the fact that the black man, too, has prejudices, a failing that makes him human like everybody else.

Additionally, the series will deal in successive programs with psychiatric aspects of black rage; the black movements on college campuses, and other subjects.

Reactions to these programs should provide an interesting barometer of the progress, if any, that may have occurred in white-black relations in the past year. In any case, this is, indeed, still a Time for Americans.

In this age of professional "image-building," of public relations often deficient in moral feedback, constructive criticism of one of television's major experiments, presented by a most knowledgeable "insider," is not easily come by. Av Westin, who resigned in March from his position as Executive Director and Executive Producer of the Public Broadcast Laboratory to become Executive Producer of ABC News, has some cogent things to say about the future of Public Television in this country.

In the form of an Open Memorandum (addressed to the President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting), Mr. Westin presents a forthright and hardhitting appraisal of P.B.L.'s two-year experiment. He predicts the future, and based on an insider's experience, he makes some hard recommendations. While many of the problems he cites are endemic to all large organizations, they bear particular implication to those of us involved in television.

Mr. Westin scores the practice of "decision by committee," or, more dangerous, of self-imposed restrictions. Noting the underlying bugaboo of financial survival that breeds self-destructive rivalry, he questions the lack of mere *definition* of the ultimate scope and purpose of PTV. He compares the logistics and goals of commercial to public television, often to the latter's detriment. He delineates the complex battlefields: commercial vs. public scope; national vs. local programming; experimentation vs. technical capacities; TV journalists vs. academia.

His views will not leave the reader yawning. They may raise hackles; rebuttals may be called for. Self appraisal such as Mr. Westin provides is crucial as we consider the future of this yet unknown quantity, Public Television.

AN OPEN MEMORANDUM TO MR. JOHN W. MACY, JR.,

PRESIDENT, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

AV WESTIN

Subject: Observations on problems existing in Public Television and some suggestions based on two years of experience as Executive Director and Executive Producer of P.B.L.—The Public Broadcast Laboratory.

In the early weeks of April, 1969, I read with interest your speech to the N.E.T. Affiliates' Meeting at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. I read also of the grants being given or contemplated by the Ford Foundation to support the development of Public Television in the United States. As one who believes that there is a place for Public Television in the United States, I am concerned that some of what I read indicates a repetition of mistakes, lack of planning, and above all, a failure to really come to grips with the problems that exist in PTV/ETV today. I propose to be presumptuous and offer advice to you and to my former colleagues in PTV/ETV.

First, please note I refer to PTV/ETV. The key people in noncommercial broadcasting—the FCC licensees who control their stations and are in touch with their local communities—by no means agree on a definition of what educational television (ETV) or public television (PTV) really should be. It is all well and good to declare that, henceforth, educational television will be known as Public Television, but I warrant you will discover that Public Television means instructional television in one place; experimental television in another; community-service television in a third; public affairs television in a fourth; cultural television in a fifth; sports television in a sixth; and Yves Montand and ratings in a seventh. Indeed, none of these forms of television are incompatible with one another or with the goal of creating a Public Broadcasting System (P.B.S.). But there is a lot of homework to be done before everyone will accept your goal.

AV WESTIN has been associated with the television industry since 1950, when he began his career as a writer for CBS News. A producer and director since 1958, he served as a CBS producer in Europe from 1961 to 1965. Mr. Westin has received numerous awards for documentaries, including the Peabody, Sylvania and Albert Lasker awards. He won an Emmy Award in 1958 for a documentary and again in 1968 for his association with the Public Broadcast Laboratory where he served the past two years as executive director and executive producer. He received his B.A. from New York University in 1949 and his master's degree in public law and government in 1958 from Columbia University. He has served as executive director of Columbia University's broadcasting laboratory since 1967. He returned to the networks in March of this year as executive producer of ABC News.

And it is, sir, at the moment *your* goal. Have no illusions that it is universally shared and that P.B.S. will be supported by all the competing factions in PTV/ETV. The strong "Big 8" stations have one view of the future. Regional networks like the Eastern Educational Network (E.E.N.) have another. Small stations have still a third view. And the truth is that within each of these groups are sub-groups sometimes reluctantly dominated by the largest member. (An examination of the uneasy relationships that exist within the New York network, between Channel 13 in New York City and the smaller upstate stations, will be most illuminating.)

N.E.T. and its executives have one concept of how the future should be organized, P.B.L. executives a second and the Ford Foundation, along with most of the money presently available, a third. These conflicting forces provoke some of the fiercest internecine politicking in broadcasting. It even outdoes commercial television vendettas, because it acknowledges no ground-rules except one: Get money to live! Survival is the goal of most PTV/ETV stations. Not national programming or training talent or production capability. Survival.

People have asked what single factor led me to leave PTV/ETV and return to commercial television. Simply put, I left because I feel that the *politics* of Public Television are over-riding the *production* of Public Television. I am essentially a producer who enjoys working in the production of television more than participating in its politics.

So, I have gone back to being a Producer. In commercial television, there *is* a ground-rule. Reprehensible as it may seem at the outset, the name of the game is: Make the corporation look good by doing good programs, getting good ratings, and thereby making the profits go up. One may not like it, but at least there *is* a game. One program's success, one division's success within a network, means that the entire network benefits. In my experience, this is not so in PTV/ETV.

One group's success, be it N.E.T., P.B.L., a regional network or a single station (oh, the resentment in PTV of the superb work done by WGBH in Boston) is not evaluated by the other groups as a born to the prestige of PTV/ETV as a whole. Instead it is felt to be a dimunition of others in the non-commercial broadcast spectrum. Why? Because success by one entity will probably mean a renewal to it next year of the Ford Foundation's grant. The Foundation, generous to a fault, does not have unlimited funds

and there is a "bottom line" to the amount of money it can give away each year. To subtract from that total at the expense of one station for the benefit of another is to reduce the first station's chances for survival.

When P.B.L. was "siphoning off" 12 million dollars over a two-year period, it experienced instant resentment from many stations. Local station managers who had been laboring heroically to make ends meet on total annual budgets of $150,000 or less were understandably upset when a new entity was created to prove that national inter-connected programming could work and that a fourth network was feasible.

Bluntly put, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (C.P.B.) and the Ford Foundation are victims of the worst self-delusion if they believe widespread support for their proposals for a Public Broadcast System (P.B.S.) will come from local PTV/ETV stations, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that those stations will get a piece of the *financial* pie. Rhetoric about good programming will not suffice. When it is a question of staying on the air or having the luxury of a nightly broadcast from Washington, D.C., very few station managers can afford to opt for the luxury. It's that simple in too many PTV/ETV markets.

Even in those stations where survival is not the question, the need for money to program on a local level is important. Again, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Ford Foundation must realize that local stations want to control their own destinies as much as possible. Yet, they are forced to compromise. In the summer of 1968, the Foundation offered grants to stations for public affairs programming on a community level. The Foundation considered this an important step toward encouraging local stations to accept the challenge to produce good material.

Because of a close personal and professional relationship with Fred Friendly, the Ford Foundation's Advisor on Television, I received calls from station managers around the country asking for my advice, their over-riding question: "What will appeal to Mr. Friendly?" My reply was standard: "I don't know specifically, but excellence might be a good place to begin."

The essential point: station managers were perfectly willing to tailor their program concepts to meet whatever they thought the Ford Foundation would prefer. Inadvertently, they were competing desperately not for excellence or originality but for funds.

Though money poses the paramount question to PTV/ETV, it is matched by others. The P.B.L. experiment defined some, answered some, and raised some.

Webster's defines 'experiment' as: "An operation carried out under controlled conditions in order to discover an unknown effect or law, to test or establish a hypothesis." P.B.L. was set up to test a number of hypotheses, and the Ford Foundation, which put up the money, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting are entitled to whatever answers P.B.L. came up with. What follows, then, ties in to lessons I learned at P.B.L. At best, my observations will provide some guidance for the future. At worst, they can be taken simply as one man's presumptuous opinion.

Background

In late 1966, the Ford Foundation proposed to collect the "people's dividend" from the NASA Space Program by utilizing existing technology to launch a domestic synchronous communications satellite that could provide multi-channel television service within the Continental United States.

The Plan purported to eliminate the high cost of inter-connecting local television stations by removing A.T. & T. from the scene. Various proposals boiled down to one fact: under any one of them, some form of low cost or free inter-connection of educational television stations would evolve to form a new national network.

Concomitantly, the Carnegie Corporation issued its study of Educational Television's needs. The report concluded that Educational Television needed, among other things, a new name: *Public* Television. Bill S1160, setting up the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, was introduced and Congressional hearings begun. It soon became clear that Congressmen required a demonstration of what was meant by the high-sounding testimony that depicted a new future for non-commercial broadcasting in general, and television in particular. So, to show Congress that PTV could do a unique job, P.B.L. was created.

At the beginning, the Ford Foundation gave its Broadcast Laboratory the widest possible latitude. Later, it reined in the mandate. At first, it was to be the University Broadcast Laboratory, headquartered at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. But when the University's Board of Trustees entered so many reservations, caveats, preconditions, and taboos, it was agreed by mutual consent of the Foundation and Columbia to annul the

relationship. The Broadcast Laboratory, at the stroke of McGeorge Bundy's pen, acquired the name *Public* Broadcast Laboratory, and nestled uneasily into a state of semi-autonomy to N.E.T.

In the early spring of 1967, a memorandum outlining the concept of P.B.L. was written and agreed to by high Ford Foundation officials. In sum, this is what the broadcast was to be: P.B.L. was to provide a weekly, two-hour-or-longer, interconnected, highly topical or relevant broadcast, which was also to present the latest in cultural performance—*avant garde* or standard. It was to be produced either by its own staff or by independent producers, including staffs at local PTV/ETV stations. Professionals were to be recruited by offering salaries competitive with going rates in commercial television. The best academic minds in the nation were to be solicited for their views, which would be presented regularly. At the same time, experimentation was to be actively encouraged in developing new techniques for presenting information on television.

On the basis of this concept, a news-oriented reportorial and production staff was recruited, and organized along "Editorial Desk" lines. Talented reporters arrived from news magazines and from network and local television stations. (Some of P.B.L.'s choices decided to stay with the networks. They were "bought back" by raises, or by sudden "go-ahead" signals for then-dormant pet projects.)

Then, in September, the entire project found itself under review by an Editorial Policy Board. This group of distinguished men, mainly professors and Deans from Columbia University, was organized by the Ford Foundation to "protect the independence" of P.B.L. from outside pressure. But each member had been induced to serve by appealing to his own area of expertise. None apparently knew that a concept already existed and was being implemented.

The principle, primary in the original concept, of proving to Congress that a highly topical and relevant *interconnected* broadcast was feasible for Public Television, was not primary to this group. If P.B.L. was to succeed under its own tightly set schedule for a November premiere, everything had to work perfectly. (P.B.L. literally had no office space until July, no cutting rooms until October, and did not sign the contract for studios to originate the series until shortly before the first dry-run.) The entire project was similar to the flight of Apollo 8 around the moon: No margin for error or the result would be destruction.

The misunderstanding of basic mission between the executives of P.B.L. and the staff on the one hand, and the Editorial Policy Board on the other, destroyed the chance for everything to work perfectly. P.B.L. was crippled before its first broadcast. Its internal dynamic was lost, never to be fully recovered in the course of its two-year life, simply because of the confusion higher up. What does that mean for C.P.B.? It means P.B.L. demonstrated that a clear understanding of purpose must precede everything else. This simple fact was not so much overlooked as lost in the excitement of creating an entity that could prove so much.

As I read of the plans for Public Television in 1969 and beyond, I fear a repetition of failure to be crystal clear on roles, mandates, goals and priorities. Golden dreams will not become reality because convention speeches say they will. Television producers know that a single broadcaster's outlines must be well defined before a single foot of film is turned. That rule certainly applies to a new network's plans.

That too broad a scope can be counter-productive also was demonstrated by P.B.L. As a once-a-week, two-hour broadcast, it supposedly was to equal a network's seven-day, ten-hour-day programming scope. According to press reports, P.B.L.'s plans for the fall suggest yet another attempt to prove that impossible equation: a single Sunday-night show is to equal a network's entire programming range. Even if funds were unlimited, talent unfettered, time-to-produce infinite—it simply could not work.

P.B.L.'s experience has shown what should be done. Separate mandates should be marked out for N.E.T., P.B.L., regional networks, local stations and that unit of larger PTV stations known as the "Big 8." Producers of broadcast series should have their areas of responsibility defined so that duplication and internecine competition will be reduced. To return to an old theme: Spend the time, the effort, and the money on the *production,* not the *politics,* of Public Television.

To its disappointment, P.B.L. discovered sharp gradations of production competence among ETV stations. Size does not necessarily determine quality. Two stations, KQED in San Francisco and WGBH in Boston, have the money, the staff, existing well-designed broadcast plants, and, most important, the ardent support of their viewers—to do any job as well as P.B.L. No small amount of credit is due to the management of those two stations for enthralling

audiences in San Francisco and Boston into believing that they can do no wrong.

Both stations experiment in the true sense of the word, by presenting *continuing series* of broadcasts designed to innovate techniques, display new people, and even test the airwaves with four-letter words. KQED and WGBH produce broadcasts (plural) for an entire week...not a broadcast (singular) for an entire week. And that simple fact, overlooked in the planning, is important. The very breadth of the mandate for P.B.L.—to do everything—was self-defeating.

P.B.L. demonstrated that the essential complications of the TV business prevent professional producers, reporters and editors—even with money—from producing the "blockbuster" broadcast week in and week out. By the same reasoning only the commercial television networks have the depth of staff—in position around the world, with all the necessary support of traffic managers, film editors, cameramen, researchers and writers—to turn out the highly polished product the viewing public has come to expect and deserve.

P.B.L. had to broadcast its mistakes. There was no way to write off an error or bury it in another "budget center." Obviously it was an experiment, an experiment in the words of one N.E.T. station manager, to succeed, not to fail. (Despite assurances to the contrary from the Ford Foundation, a feeling grew among the executives and staff of P.B.L. that nothing succeeded like a good Jack Gould review.) The word "experiment" became the millstone. Cultural performances were either too *avant garde* or too *déja vu*. The P.B.L. Editorial Board believed in "art for art's sake." The larger PTV stations wanted something they could not otherwise afford. The smaller ones seemed to prefer "Americana" cultural festivals—usually those originating in their area.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, as it organizes the Public Broadcasting System, must determine what is acceptable for broadcast and what is not. Commercial networks have run into this question—most recently, in the case of the Smothers Brothers on CBS and Turn On! on ABC. Often what passes for clean living room humor in New York or Los Angeles is regarded with distaste by Fort Wayne or Phoenix. But aside from the question of taste, editorial control of program content presents another problem, a hard and imminent one.

Recent conversations I had with staff members of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting made it quite clear that they, at least,

had not grasped the fierce competition for access to the public's airways that is sure to develop when the Public Broadcasting System shortly becomes a reality. Conflicts between N.E.T., P.B.L., and individual stations for a specific bloc of network prime time can be resolved, because all these groups are, in fact, "members of the Public Television Club." But what of people not "in the Club" who also want to produce television broadcasts because they have a particular view to put across?

Last year, a group calling themselves the "Theatre of Ideas" set out to radicalize public television by "capturing" P.B.L. or N.E.T. The threat could not be carried out, because P.B.L. controlled the content of the two hours of program time. But C.P.B. should not deceive itself. At least one group of television producers, sharply conservative and backed by funds from the Southwest, are prepared to demand time from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to present a regular series of documentaries on life in the United States as they see it. These are not "members of the Club." Neither are the producers who belong to the "Theatre of Ideas." They will want Public Television air time *when* they want it, and they will charge refusal to censorship. And when that charge reaches Congressional supporters on either side, the precarious position of Public Television's federal funding will be further threatened.

Two P.B.L. findings relate to the determination of broadcast content. One deals with decisions by committee, the other with self-imposed restrictions.

Good television is not television produced by committee or boards. So many elements enter into a broadcast once production gets under way that areas for discussion, debate and argument are really quite limited. In terms of clearly presenting sharply defined ideas, consensus is no way to achieve anything meaningful. Consensus always skews the argument, not toward the enterprising leading edge, but toward the muddled middle.

In my view, provocative television must do just that: Provoke thought. Even if ideas annoy the audience, at least they will be reacting to them, and debate can begin after the presentation. "Balanced" programming can mean broadcasts with all the stimulative quotient of oatmeal.

If one broadcast in a series presents an outrageous view from one side of the political spectrum, then let another, if needed, present the other. Attempts to present "all sides" on one broadcast gives

insufficient time to both sides and provokes scarcely any thought. Except, perhaps, to turn off the program.

P.B.L. demonstrated, I believe, that public television surpasses commercial television in self-imposed restrictions. To many at P.B.L., it came as their greatest disappointment when they realized that members of the N.E.T. Affiliates Board often had more conservative ideas than commercial television about what was acceptable for broadcast.

Why? An anecdote may explain. In P.B.L.'s early days, we began to publicize so-called "anti-commercials," spoofs of the commercial format but carrying a positive message. (Remember, this was before anti-smoking commercials appeared on commercial television as standard fare.) One of the first anti-commercials planned to compare the claims of latter-day headache remedies with those of simple aspirin. The gist of the message: aspirin was as good as any of the so-called "combination of ingredients."

Word of our plans reached the advertising agency of one of the manufacturers of a better known brand. An executive of that agency called an East Coast educational television station and threatened to withdraw a special grant if the station did not bring pressure on P.B.L. to stop production of the anti-commercial. Fortunately, the station management told the agency man what to do with his suggestion, and when the manufacturer heard about the threat, high executives called P.B.L. with assurances that no threat was officially intended. A public scandal was avoided, but it illustrates the precarious position most of the ETV stations find themselves in.

Here's another true illustration. I'll leave out the locale to protect the station involved. A consumer information broadcast produced by N.E.T. exposed the fact that a certain gasoline additive, highly advertised, is, in fact, present in most gasolines. The well-advertised gas is apparently no better at providing extra mileage than similar gasolines on the market. The morning after the broadcast, the local distributor of the gasoline in question telephoned an ETV station manager in the Midwest and announced that he would no longer be contributing his $500 to help the station's annual fund drive. The financial pressure point is obvious. When Tommy Smothers talks about censorship on TV, he doesn't know how bad it can get out there.

Most PTV/ETV stations are governed by Boards of Directors representing the more "substantial" elements in the community.

Bankers, insurance executives and corporate officials constitute a good source of revenue and fund raising. These people tend to be conservative, middleclass, white, and older. In some states, they are political appointees or university officials. They are not the long haired kids, the blacks or the political radicals. And what is worse, they are not likely to be too tolerant of nonconformists. P.B.L. was often faced with complaints from station managers who were, of course, reacting to their Boards of Directors. At the same time, P.B.L. would receive complimentary letters from the young staff members at the same stations or from students in the university communities served by the very same ETV stations whose management was complaining.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting must encourage stations to be bolder, to become closely involved with their community's problems, to be, indeed, the public's television. The worst censorship will not be imposed by Washington, but by the overcautious station manager reacting to what he thinks is the consensus of his Board of Directors. In casting about to find production executives and program concepts for P.B.S., the Corporation would, I believe, benefit greatly from one conclusion inescapably reached by P.B.L. Television ought to be left to the professional communicators.

I agree that outside counsel and advice should actively be sought, but put the decision-making in the hands of people who know how to make information flow through the screen into the minds of the viewers. In its attempt to broaden or deepen P.B.L. content by relying on the judgment of so-called "academic experts," P.B.L. found that these people were usually less courageous, less informed and less aware of where the world really is than professional television journalists. Fred Friendly has said television is "too valuable to be left to the television journalists, just as war is too dangerous to be left to the generals." I agree with the part about the generals but I disagree with Fred Friendly about television. It is too valuable to be left to beclouded non-professionals. Harsh words? Yes, indeed. But they should not be construed as an attack on intellectuals.

P.B.L. tried to test the hypothesis that the best academic minds on a subject would add to the public's understanding of that subject. To our dismay, the best minds were generally the poorest communicators, gentlemen who had lectured only to students and perhaps other captive audiences. One highly esteemed American

historian said he could not understand how any idea could be presented meaningfully in four minutes, since it took him that long to get through his introductory remarks to his class. I wish I had thought of it at the time, but a retort might have been to suggest that he time the reading of a James Reston column, a New York *Times* or Atlanta *Constitution* editorial, or the letters to the editor of any magazine.

P.B.L. constantly found academicians apparently eager to prove that George Wallace was a fool, that the war in Vietnam was a crime, or that the President should follow a different course in handling the gold crisis. Once on the air, however, their convictions would soften. They seemed to fear the "foot-in-mouth" disease. Qualifying phrases crept in. The "might be's" replaced the "should be's" and references like "some of my colleagues will disagree..." larded the commentary. We were choked in obfuscation.

And lest there by any illusion about it, all educators do not necessarily regard educational television as a special God-child to be fostered and nurtured. P.B.L. was often denied an academician's services because of a commercial network's higher fee...or honorarium, if you prefer. That was no surprise to the benefactors of an organization who believe that educational TV, as a "university without walls," would provide a most welcome forum to people who really had something to contribute. But it certainly came as a surprise—and a disappointment—to me.

Finally, P.B.L., through its stable of nationally known academic "experts," often repeated precisely what the PTV/ETV stations were doing on a local level. Professors of Fine Arts, Belles Lettres, History, Government, and Finance now populate university campus all over the nation. I question whether the expertise of the "national" expert surpasses, in most situations, that of the local "expert."

And that raises the final question: what can P.B.S. provide that CBS, NBC or ABC can not provide simply by moving a "silly millimeter longer" in their prime-time public service programming? Won't the national networks' proven electronic capability to interconnect stations get in the way of a service, which should husband its responses to provide *local* community service? One may ask, doesn't the idea for a national educational network simply provide ego-satisfaction for the executives who are in line to run it? Who needs Public Television on a national level anyway?

The answer is: *We* do! There is no doubt that P.B.S. can provide

complementary services on a national level. PTV/ETV has the air-time to devote to longer treatments of current subjects, uncut plays, new performances that are unappealing commercially, and full-scale live coverage of major events. PTV/ETV can become the network of record for Congressional hearings and debates on issues that really matter.

But this can not happen overnight. An audience for this kind of programming is bound to be limited at first. Adequate, unrestricted funding must be found. Stations must be encouraged to combine as a forceful unit rather than argue as jealously-guarded fiefdoms.

How is this to be done? For what they are worth, here are some hard recommendations:

1. Immediate priority must be given to strengthening all local stations, with the specific purpose of involving them more deeply in the lives of their communities. Public television stations must pay attention *first* to what is happening at home, in the ghettos, on the local campus, at City Hall, in the hospitals, on the streets, and in the minds of all the people in the community—rich, poor, black, white, young, old, educated, and drop-outs. When that has been accomplished, then attention can be turned to broadcasts with national impact.

2. Money must be provided to equip every PTV/ETV station minimally for the production of simple broadcasts related to their communities. This does not mean heavy investments in gleaming studios, multiple videotype machines, and fancy board rooms. It does mean a simple mobile unit, two tape playback machines with editing capability, and some portable film gear. Obviously, money must be provided to employ people with the talent to use this material. This will change many stations from passive "grind houses" that live on tape and films into beehives of original production.

3. Money must be provided so that all PTV/ETV stations can be visible in, and thus provide service to, their local communities. The Public Broadcast Laboratory once gave an ETV station $50 to buy an antenna that could pick up off-air signals from another station. It was the only way the first station could transmit its P.B.L. Sunday night broadcast. In Washington, the signal is not received in most of the city; on one occasion the reviewer for the New York *Times* could only see the P.B.L. program by visiting the station itself. When such a sub-level of technical capability exists, it is absurd to talk of funding experimental programming.

4. A demonstration of what can be done by an aggressive local station must be provided. To accomplish this, I recommend that the Corporation for Public Television arrange to "own and operate" a flagship station, where news and public affairs formats can be tested, talent can be trained, fellowships given, and interest generated for Public Television. This station should be WETA in Washington, D.C. Its output could ultimately be fed to the network. Not only would a modest annual budget suffice, but the excellence of its locally-produced programs would impress the potential of PTV on Congressmen who live in Washington. They not only could vote needed funds, they might even urge their local stations to follow in the path being blazed at WETA. What a lobby!

5. *Secondary* priority should be given to maintaining the national programming franchise. To this end, a new definition of the role of N.E.T. is required, and perhaps a reorganization. N.E.T. operated for too long in the era of consensus, accommodating the most conservative stations. As a result, many of its executives suffer from combat fatigue. They need to turn their eyes upward to new heights from the plateau they have been forced to accept up to now. P.B.L. should be merged into N.E.T. The best producers from that unit should be included in a *new* national programming organization.

Internecine warfare must be ended. There simply isn't enough money available, nor enough trained talent willing to take the risk on Public Television, to waste time in organizational squabbles. To ease the bruised egos, change the name of the organization and start with a fresh title and table of organization.

6. Money should be given to the "Big 8" stations to produce a series of broadcasts whose outlook should be regional or local, rather than national. Of course, these should have sufficient universal appeal to be fed on the national network. But there is little sense in having these eight stations duplicate programming that commercial television can do nationally. Perhaps repertory theatre could be a start, or examination of social trends region by region, or documentaries using the situation in one locale as an example for the nation. Again, duplication of national programming must be avoided. And again, if producers at the Big 8 stations can do the job with a high level of professionalism, they should be funded by the national organization to produce a national broadcast.

7. The ideal of experimentation must not be allowed to transcend everything else. Viewers want to see things that are new and different, but the answers to PTV/ETV's problems do not lie in developing new program concepts. This *does* constitute a viable assignment, however, for enterprising local stations to whom special developmental grants can be awarded.

8. Interconnection should be used when it has meaning. Tying 180 stations together in a national network for the sake of tying them together is not new. And though simultaneous availability may increase the impact of a given broadcast on audiences all over the nation, it is the quality of the program that matters. In these days of satellite communications from Europe and Asia, one scarcely impresses a viewer by telling him a program is coming live from New York or Washington, D.C. What pays off is the content of a broadcast—interconnected or shipped by Railway Express.

In conclusion, I remind Public Television that whenever it does do something that catches the public's fancy, the commercial networks will move that "silly millimeter longer" and copy it. (Julia Child's *French Chef,* two-hour magazine formats, anti-commercials, black-white confrontations.) Yet that is the challenge to public television! It is no easy task to stay ahead of the commercial networks. It is easier to coast in the present situation, with each station, regional network, and national organization jealously guarding prerogatives. But meanwhile the vast television audience goes unrewarded in its search for a complement to what they already have available from ABC, CBS and NBC.

There is no deadline for public television. It will happen sooner or later. But there is now a chance for it to be sooner. I hope that C.P.B. can profit from P.B.L.'s experience to make it sooner.

IN THE NATION: WHAT SENSE IN CENSORSHIP?

Violence on television, it is widely believed, helps produce violence in human beings, particularly young children. But if this is true, is the remedy merely to excise violence from the home screen?

In the first place, those who would censor violence on television—either by industry self-regulation or Government regulation—are deluding themselves. To seek the causes of violence in modern life in television programs is to put one's head in the sand, to deny the truth of man's nature, and to seek a culprit to explain problems one does not wish to face.

In the second place, some studies have suggested that watching television too much is a greater danger to children than what they see, whether it is Captain Kangaroo or Mission Impossible. In this view, a life before the set is substituted for a real life with its opportunities for natural working-off of energy and aggressions.

Ignoring all this, Senators and citizens alike want to exorcise the evil with a cheap, easy stroke. All they will achieve is even more caution, banality, intellectual vacuity, dramatic absurdity and artistic aridity in a medium already terrified—except in news programing—of anything bold, controversial, innovative or truthful in artistic purpose. Is that medium now to pretend that violence does not exist in the artificial life it already depicts?

The networks have their sins to answer for in their programs that pander to an assumed American idiocy; but before censoring them for that, maybe Americans ought to ask themselves where the networks ever got such an idea.

TOM WICKER
The New York *Times*
April 3, 1969

A COMMUNICATION POLICY FOR THE 70's

EUGENE V. ROSTOW

I should begin with a clear disclaimer: I am not going to discuss the Report of the President's Task Force on Communications Policy, which is said to have been submitted to President Johnson on December 7, 1968. I am an old-fashioned lawyer who respects legal fictions. Indeed, I sometimes enjoy them. While I realize that copies of the Report, in plain wrappers, are hawked at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets for fifty cents apiece, or less, I shall address you today in my personal capacity, as one who has been a student of industrial organization for a considerable part of his professional life.

I shall not strain your credulity, or your respect for legal fictions, beyond endurance. I shall not pretend that I did not serve as Chairman of the Task Force for 17 spirited months, and that the experience did not teach me a good deal about the communications industry, and its extraordinary capacity to keep itself informed—invisibly, unobtrusively, but nonetheless effectively. But any resemblance between what I say and the Report will be purely coincidental. And I assure you that some of the positions I shall suggest today are not reflected in that famous—or notorious—document, which, according to law at least, is still shielded from profane view by the doctrine of Executive Privilege.

I should be less than human, too, if I did not also disclose to you my hope that President Nixon will decide to release the Report

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His article is based on his speech presented to the American Management Association in March.

in the not very distant future. The issues of policy discussed in the Report are difficult. They all involve close choices. Reasonable men can and do disagree with the conclusions we reached. But I believe that anyone who examines the framework of this turbulent industry, bursting with innovation and potentiality for innovation, would agree that the decisions of policy which simply have to be made in this field, and made soon, should be based on the fullest possible examination of the problems treated in the Report, and in the Staff Studies which lie behind it—an examination by the Executive Branch, by the Congress, and by the public.

Let me start by setting out some general principles which define my approach to the subject.

In the first place, the communications industry is not an ordinary business providing services to the public. It is affected with profound public interests. We live today in a maze of electronic signals. Their influence on the quality of our lives—for good and for ill—is incalculable. The mass media make the best and the worst in men instantly available—great plays, knowledge, and the conversation of philosophers; cruelty, distortion and propaganda as well. They enrich the fabric of society, and at the same time, they strain it.

Let me cite an example which is much on all our minds. Many who seek to change public opinion have taken the famous message of the Canadian Medium to heart. They have abandoned the pamphlet and the soapbox, and the other time-honored means of sober persuasion, in favor of staging bloody dramas for television. "Getting into the media demands a price," a Stanford student activist recently wrote. "Spokesmen for the major parties pay with money.

"Poor people, black people, and students pay with blood, or at least with violence...When the news media do grant time to student leaders in formats off-the-street, it is usually in the aftermath of violence or in its expectation." These men, women and children do not appeal to reason, but to fear. They are not trying to persuade, but to shock, to intimidate, and, in some instances, to destroy important institutions of society.

The relative success of their tactics, and the bewilderment thus far of society in trying to deal with them, raise intensely difficult problems of policy and responsibility. But they are problems which our society will have to resolve, and resolve wisely, if we are to survive as a free people.

On the other side, we know too that television and other electronic tools are desperately needed to supplement the work of

teachers, if we are to meet the world-wide yearning for education. The most depressing statistics I know is that the rate of illiteracy in the world is rising, as population growth in many countries outstrips the training of teachers. Electronic communication media will have to be used in new and imaginative ways, if we want education to release man from his bondage to ignorance and superstition.

We know also that good programs of communication, at home and abroad, can help build and reinforce the sense of community which is the only possible foundation for social peace. *Per contra,* we know that bad programs, and the breakdown of communications can help to intensify suspicion and distrust, and weaken the bonds of concord that define a living community.

In communications policy, our flag is nailed to the principles of freedom of speech and of the press. On the one hand, telecommunications provide a vehicle for vastly enlarging the reach and impact of individual expression. On the other, access to the medium is not unlimited. Recognizing this dilemma, national policy has carefully sought, at least since the passage of the Communications Act of 1934, to develop a legal and economic framework for communications policy that allows many voices to compete in the marketplace of ideas and of taste.

We have taken pains to protect society against the risks of concentrated power, in the hands either of government or of the communications companies. Many fundamental problems in this area are as yet unsolved. We have by no means made sure, for example, that the views of all branches of government are fully available to the citizen without distortion. In this connection, let me note with high hope the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, and welcome the contribution it should make to the quality and variety of the broadcasting available to our people.

The communications industry should be viewed in other perspectives as well. It is fundamental to our security, and to the security of our Allies. And it is vital to the economic progress of advanced and developing nations alike.

Telecommunications is in many ways a new industry, based on technologies which are advancing at an unprecedented pace. They offer unlimited opportunities for improving customary methods of business and finance, of learning, of entertainment and leisure. Above all, they offer the citizen everywhere the chance to acquire the knowledge and the insight essential to the mature exercise of his responsibilities.

In the light of these considerations, I approach the problem of communications policy with these hypotheses in mind:

1. First, the legal and economic environment of the industry should be structured in ways which assure the citizen a wide range of choices—as wide a range as technology and economics permit—in the information, the opinion, and the tastes to which he is exposed.

   This principle applies as much to world communications as to communications within the United States. The long, painful struggle of our foreign policy to create a new system of peace simply cannot succeed unless communications begin to establish a firmer web of understanding and sympathy among peoples.

2. Second, it is an important goal of policy, and not merely of pride, that the United States remain preeminent in this critical field. Policy should therefore seek every opportunity to provide incentives for innovation, both in technique and in management.

3. Third, the communications policy of the United States should give special consideration to the needs of the developing countries. For those countries, modern communication systems are an urgent concern, both to make available to them the full resources of available information and knowledge, and to provide an indispensable catalyst for their educational, economic and social progress.

I suggest that we should analyze the communications industry as a system—a continuum of relationships extending from public and private research at one end of the spectrum, to the provision of private and common carrier communications services, at home and abroad, at the other. For me, one of the strongest lessons of our Task Force effort was the connection among the various segments of the problem, and the risk of viewing them in isolation.

Technology is abolishing one after another of the boundaries between parts of the industry. The vanishing distinction between voice and record transmission is only one instance of the phenomenon, and perhaps not even the most important. That process is continuing, and it will surely accelerate as the full impact of improvements in satellites, micro-wave transmission, cables, and even newer techniques begin to affect familiar patterns of behavior.

These changes will be felt everywhere, as the potential of private systems is realized, and the market for computers expands radically. These potentialities will surely be realized, unless they are held back by needlessly restrictive regulatory policy.

Communications services are now provided by private and common carriers, and by radio and television broadcasters, who in turn depend to a considerable extent on communications services provided by common carriers, as well as their own transmission facilities. There has been rapid recent growth in private communications systems of all kinds, and in CATV, originally as an extension of the reach of broadcasting, and more recently as a vehicle for the origination of broadcasting, and the provision of new and specialized communications services.

These providers of ultimate communications services operate in markets of different dimensions, and they face different problems of competition and regulation. They serve many classes of customers, from the users of computer services and of company or industry networks to the ordinary private home telephone user, the radio or television listener, or the cable television subscriber.

Both the providers and users of communications services constitute a gigantic and growing market for communications equipment. Some providers of communications services have relied for equipment primarily on their own subsidiaries, others on overlapping national and international markets of large and small manufacturing companies. The number of companies participating in this market has grown, and many new entrants have made spectacular and important contributions. To maintain, and indeed increase the pressures and incentives of competition in this area—the manufacture of communications equipment—is a matter of fundamental importance, if we are to give continuing priority to technological innovation as a major goal of policy. Diversity and ease of entry here, based on the fullest possible access to the resources of research, are the surest foundation for continued advances in technique, and alertness to the opportunities for new methods and new services.

In short, the area of equipment manufacturing seems to be a sector of the communications system where policy should rely on competition, not regulation, and where the basic principle of market organization should be maximum feasible freedom of entry, policed by the antitrust laws, and stimulated by the procurement arrangements of private and public policy.

Now, let me comment on two parts of the communications system where systems of regulated monopoly are, I believe, justified.

The general approach of our law of industrial organization, the Supreme Court has said, is that competition is the rule, monopoly the exception. We all recognize the considerations of economic, political, and social policy which lie behind this thesis—our fear of concentrated power, and our conviction that pluralism and widely dispersed opportunity are the necessary conditions for social and political freedom and for economic efficiency and progress as well.

There are situations, however, where our preference for competition yields to economic necessity and advantage. Our integrated domestic system for providing a unified public message telephone service is one such case. And the problem of providing international communications service from the United States by satellite, cable or any other technique has now become another.

In the field of domestic telephone service, I am persuaded that the case for maintaining and strengthening our present methods for conducting the switched telephone network are sound. This conclusion rests on considerations of convenience to the public, and equally on grounds of system integrity, system optimization, and system viability. It is supported as well by weighty arguments of national security.

In the international field, I have concluded that the extraordinary recent increase in the capacity both of cables and of satellites requires the unified operation and control of all forms of international transmission. With prospective capacity both for cables and for satellites far in excess of prospective demand, anything like effective competition between the rival technologies has become inconceivable while the present pattern of ownership survives. On the other hand, if existing facilities are consolidated into a single company, that company should be in a position to make economic choices, based on considerations of cost, among alternative ways of handling existing traffic, and of building capacity to handle future traffic.

In general, it is a corollary of the proposition I have just stated that monopoly should be confined to the functions and the areas where factors of cost and scale make monopoly inevitable or preferable. In the first instance I have mentioned—that of the integrated domestic telephone network—it would follow from this principle that policy should seek to promote an environment

assuring free and effectively competitive opportunity for all sorts of business initiatives and developments. These may be related to the switched network in one way or another, but their development would not as such impair the integrity or viability of the network.

An expansion of private services, including private services for hire, is one area where this principle should apply. Some regulation will obviously be necessary to assure the viability of the network in the face of developments of this kind. The telephone companies should be allowed more flexibility in rate-making to meet such competition from private carriers. And regulation should not be restrictive in spirit, but dominated by the public interest in diversity, experiment and innovation.

The prospect for continued secular increase in the demand for communications service should give assurance that growth in private service can be accommodated without threatening the viability of the basic system. Such private systems should be allowed the privilege of interconnection without impairing the technical integrity of the basic switched telephone network. The same principle should apply to assure maximum freedom for the unregulated development of teleprocessing.

The suggestion I made with regard to the possible consolidation of international facilities obviously raises a number of questions both of regulatory and of Congressional policy. If this approach should be adopted, I believe the new entity should be strictly confined to the function of providing international communications services, both to domestic carriers and to other large users, like the government. It should not engage in manufacturing, but should be freed to procure from all possible suppliers of equipment. Manifestly, such an approach would require amendment of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962, and of other legal dispositions as well.

This proposal, if adopted, would put the future of satellites in domestic communications in a new light. I do not interpret the Communications Satellite Act of 1962, or the Intelsat agreement of 1964, to give Intelsat a global monopoly of communication by satellite, so far as the United States is concerned. As I read the Act and the agreement, Comsat and Intelsat are our chosen instruments for international communications by satellite. But this view does not imply that domestic satellites are entirely excluded from the reach of the important policies embodied in the Intelsat agreement.

I believe that the Intelsat agreement does impose certain obliga-

tions on the signatories with respect to projects which may affect the viability of Intelsat as a single global system either technically or economically. It follows that domestic satellite projects, and projects of like effect that may be authorized in the definitive arrangements, which I hope will emerge from the conference now underway in Washington, should be undertaken only on the basis of understandings with Intelsat. Such understandings may result in a wide variety of agreements for cooperation, depending upon circumstance—cooperation in research and development, cooperation in the provision of services, or cooperation that will protect the capacity of Intelsat to provide the worldwide services which are its great mission.

For the United States, I should favor a pilot domestic satellite project. It should be instituted as rapidly as possible, and organized on an experimental basis to provide as much information as possible about the technical and economic promise of satellite technology as a supplement to our existing long-distance transmission facilities, both terrestrial and micro-wave. If we want prompt progress in this field, there is no real alternative to entrusting the management of the pilot project to Comsat as trustee.

But no vested interests should accrue as a result of such a venture. No sector of the industry should be barred from access to satellite technology in the long run, when the international part of the industry is reorganized, and no sector of the industry should have a monopoly position in domestic satellite communication. Broad participation in the pilot project should be provided for from the beginning, to give a desirable impetus to public and educational broadcasting, and to allow the broadcasting industry as such to share in the ground environment of the new system.

Let me say a few words about the implications of this many-faceted approach for our domestic television industry. It is an industry with almost unlimited future prospects, both in fulfilling its present functions, and in helping to meet the many new demands upon our social system—demands for more rapid social change, for education, for participation, and for the integration of the alienated and the disadvantaged into the larger American community.

I have said that our national communications policy has been dominated at least since 1934 by twin ideas—maximum feasible diversity and localism, and maximum encouragement for the process of technological business change.

In this area, the burning issue at the moment is the future of

CATV, in the light of the recent decisions of the Supreme Court. I believe that CATV has much to contribute to the realization of both these basic goals of communication policy. On the one side, it should help offer every citizen a wider choice of programs that can now be made available. And it should permit the provision of many new and useful services in addition to the transmission of television signals. On the other, its development could help economize in the use of the spectrum.

Manifestly, the unregulated development of CATV could in theory threaten the viability of some over-the-air broadcasting, especially in the UHF class. While I myself believe this fear is exaggerated, the possibility raises a legitimate question for Congress and for the FCC to keep under careful review.

Meanwhile, the FCC has taken action that seems inconsistent with its professed goal in instituting its proposed inquiry into CATV rules. Expressing a positive interest in the future development of CATV, it has ordered what is for all practical purposes, a standstill in the industry for an indefinite period, while Congress considers new legislation in the copyright field, and the Commission studies the regulatory situation in the light of the Supreme Court decisions.

I cannot believe that such drastic action was necessary, or that it can serve the desirable ends articulated by Chairman Hyde in explaining the Commission's action.

I have commented briefly on a few of the principal current issues in the field of communications policy, to illustrate some of the implications of the general principles I stated. You will have no trouble in drawing inferences from the points I have made about information market opportunities during the decade ahead.

In conclusion, I should like to stress what is to me the most important recommendation I can make about public policy in this field.

Communications is an industry in a state of explosion. The cause of that explosion is the continuing process of explosion in technology. Public policy now lacks an essential instrument for executive leadership in studying, proposing, planning, initiating, and negotiating the flow of changes in policy which the strong continuing flow of changes in technology will require in the years ahead.

What I suggest here is in no way to criticize the FCC. The FCC is a quasi-judicial agency, and it will continue to be needed. Indeed, it should be strengthened, to be able to perform its present functions

more expeditiously and effectively. But the FCC was not designed as an executive catalyst, a planning agency, and a force for action in keeping policy abreast of the processes of change.

The greatest single need in our present machinery for making communications policy is an enlarged and strengthened executive agency, which could function in this area roughly as the Department of Transportation was intended to function in the field of transportation policy. It should coordinate existing executive functions. It should be given the responsibility for managing the allocation of the spectrum, to relieve existing shortages, through the use of more flexible management policies and the judicious use of market incentives.

The current congestion in the use of the spectrum for mobile services can be cured by more flexible management procedures. Such an agency should plan, propose, and intervene where necessary, to prevent policy from becoming ossified and to see to it that shortcomings in the system are met before they become crises. It should take the lead in organizing and financing experiments in the social uses of television—in our ghettoes, our rural slums, and in other isolated sectors of our society.

Beyond this need, which I regard as self-evident, I should call on the universities, the foundations, and the research institutions to devote more time and effort to critical studies in many parts of this field. Communications policy has not been a fashionable subject for teaching and research. Yet much is at stake in this field—much that is fundamental to our hope that we can survive the stresses of the times as a free and united people. To be good, government policy-making requires the pressures of an informed and critical public opinion, an opinion which can see trends invisible to most public servants, however devoted and intelligent, and raise alternatives for timely consideration.

If my recent tour of public service taught me anything, it was the wisdom of Jefferson's comment about the importance of newspapers. I should broaden the field to include not only journalism, but scholarship as well. To be useful, the steady drumbeat of external criticism of government should be as rooted in reality as government policy itself. It should of course be responsible and well informed. If it is independent, tough-minded, and disciplined, it can illuminate, and it can lead.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON TELEVISION AND SYMBOLIC SPEECH

ROBERT J. GWYN

The way in which the mass media—particularly television—designs its content has a multitude of consequences for the total society. Many of these consequences have been debated but rarely have they been pinpointed. Given the volume of discussion concerning the forms of dissent in contemporary American society, it is strange that there has been very little consideration of the probable relationship between the structuring of television news and the development of what has come to be called "symbolic speech."

In this decade, news has become a significant feature of the program structure of commercial television. In 1968, the TV networks alone spent some 150 million dollars on news, and news produces significant revenue for the networks and the stations.[1] Today most people use television as their primary news source.[2] The news broadcasters have achieved star status.

Within recent years the networks have assumed leadership in the origination of stories, reversing the previous tendency of broadcast news merely to report or develop stories originated by newspapers. Indeed, a recent photograph, published in *Esquire* magazine, which shows a group of New York *Times* editors and writers huddled

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around a portable television set in the *Times* newsroom, points up this shift.

Television news has had and continues to have an impact on the public's consciousness of national and international affairs and consequently an impact on public policy. The two areas where television's effect has been most clearly recognized have been the Vietnam War and the Black Revolution. Concerning the TV reporting of the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam, critic Jack Gould wrote:

> ...for the huge TV audience the grim pictures unfolding in the last week cannot fail to leave the impression that the agony of Vietnam is acute and that the detached analyses of Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, who appeared yesterday on 'Meet the Press,' could be incomplete. Television's depiction of chaos may register more deeply in the viewer's mind than diplomatic or military contentions. Television's capability of relaying almost immediately lifelike scenes of the horrors of battle is something new in war reporting. For Washington the fact imposes a new burden. Answering enemy communiques or advancing hopeful or optimistic preditions is not enough. What millions of persons are seeing for themselves on TV cannot be ignored.[3]

The impact of television reporting on civil rights legislation impelled New York *Times* correspondent Fred Powledge to write,

> A major reason for the /Voting Rights Act of 1965/ was Selma. Last spring Negroes demonstrated here by the thousands, and the climax of their protests was a massive march to Montgomery, the state capital. The resistance of local authorities, especially Dallas County Sheriff James G. Clark, Jr. was widely credited with producing a national climate of opinion in favor of a voting rights act, just as police action against Negroes in Birmingham influenced the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[4]

News presented on commercial television is gathered and produced within a context that is shaped by (1) a marketing orientation, (2) the non-linear total impact nature of television, (3) emphasis on visual communications, and (4) severe time restrictions.

The essential function of sponsored television programs is to attract an audience for the advertisers. From this frame of reference, TV news broadcasts are evaluated by TV decision makers on the same basis as other program categories: their capacity to attract and hold a particular type of audience which may be receptive to commercials.

Thus, program producers tend to avoid material that moves slowly and contains little dramatic value. Producers avoid "talking heads"—shots of the news broadcaster reading the news without pictorial illustration. It is also an article of faith that the audience is more interested in people, particularly people in conflict, than in ideas. Thus the "human" side of the news tends to be emphasized at the expense of abstract content that cannot be personified.

Marshall McLuhan has emphasized that the perception of television is a gestalt: it is perceived all at once. It is both verbal and non-verbal, both audio and visual. Both the television news broadcaster and the subject of a filmed story communicate meaning not only by what the broadcaster says but also through a variety of non-verbal and gestural activity.

The pressure to develop a viable daily news program from a marketing framework and the effort to exploit the full potential of the medium influence the news producer to think in visual terms. He emphasizes strongly the acquisition of film to illustrate and, indeed, seeks out stories that are inherently visual. Walter Scott, NBC Board Chairman, has been quoted, "Because television is a visual medium, it may scant the background and significance of events to focus on the outward appearance—the comings and goings of statesmen instead of the issues that confront them."[5]

How the emphasis on acquiring film stories affects news selection was discussed by former NBC correspondent, Robert MacNeil, in his book, *The People Machine.* MacNeil wrote:

> If treatment of the Buddhist discontents in South Vietnam was worth three hundred word reports on both NBC and ABC, why was serious American debate about the war not worth at least that much space? The answer, inevitably, was picture. If the Senators had scuffled in the corridors with hostile demonstrators, the networks might have been more interested. Even then, the emphasis would have been on the scuffles and not on the issues.[6]

It can be noted that film has always had a proclivity for violent events. Siegfried Kracauer comments in his book, *Theory of Film:*

> There is practically no newsreel that would not indulge in the ravages of an inundation, hurricane, an airplane crash, or whatever catastrophe happens to be at hand. The same applies to feature films.[7]

Television news programs must also fit within severely limited time periods. Only about 25 minutes of program time in a 30-minute program are available for news after commercials and

program introductions and closing. The text of an average 30-minute Walter Cronkite evening news program, if set in type, would occupy barely six of the eight columns of the front page of the New York *Times*.[8]

Rarely does any single filmed story consume more than 5 minutes (180 feet of 16mm film). Film cameramen, however, routinely shoot considerably more footage. The editor must select from the available film. His criteria for selection inevitably is determined by consideration of pictorial or audience interest. No film editor would tend to select footage of people standing around doing nothing when he has available action that is pictorially exciting.

Similarly, the editor seeks cogent, interesting quotes of not more than about a minute in length from the available sound-on-film interviews. Aware of these tendencies, the camera and reporting crews feel the need to shoot film that reflects these norms. As NBC Chairman Scott pointed out, television news devotes little of the precious 25 minutes to non-visual background and the significance of events.

Now let us examine the relationship of radical dissenters to the mass media. Dissenters are by definition without a political power base. They are outside the mainstream, not significant enough to be noticed. To achieve power, dissenters must first penetrate public awareness. Then it becomes necessary to widen the spectrum of discussion to include the dissenting position. For example, the Committee for Non-Violent Action, a pacifist group, staged a dramatic walk across the United States and Europe. They attempted, in the words of their leader, Bradford Lyttle,

> To bring to as many elements of Western and Eastern society as possible CNVA's outlook on peace, and to touch them deeply with our concern. Therefore, the March was fashioned to push the entire spectrum of public and private opinion in West and East farther toward our ideological position and stimulate people everywhere and in all positions to exert themselves for peace.[9]

Dissenters need to gain the sympathy and support of a larger public. Such sympathy is gained most quickly when it becomes evident that protesters are suffering. The nation was shocked when it saw the police in Birmingham using cattle prods on Negro demonstrators, and public sentiment was quickly marshalled for civil rights legislation. Another example of such rapid public

response came out of the experience of the San Francisco to Moscow peace marchers:

> Violence broke out in El Paso, Texas, when a local citizen knocked two of the Walkers to the ground as they were picketing the Army Recruiting Station. The two got up and were kicked to the ground again. The incident was filmed by a television camera man and shown on a news broadcast. A larger than usual crowd came to hear the Walkers that evening.[10]

Finally, it is necessary for dissenters to engage in those activities that will sustain and consolidate the support of the members of the dissenting group. Activities need to be designed that will provide emotionally satisfying experiences to group members. Individuals need to feel they are having an impact, and are not being ignored.

The forum for ideas today is the mass media. The medium most people turn to for news and information is television. It becomes essential, therefore, for a group that wishes to make a significant impact on public consciousness to gain access to television. However, the small dissenting group in the past encountered a disinterested mass media. The news editor did not see a pacifist group's manifesto on nuclear war or an obscure civil rights group's statement on racial injustice as particularly newsworthy, compared with the mass of more interesting stories from which he could select.

While it is sometimes possible for dissenters to buy advertising space, the cost is often prohibitive, and perhaps the ad is not as effective in reaching the public as a news story. It might be noted that a 1968 study conducted by the author of the mass media in the 20 largest markets in the United States revealed that the policy of 30% of the television stations was not to sell time for opinion advertising.

The feeling that the media has been closed to them has been felt keenly by dissenters. This point of view was expressed by Wilmer Young, a Quaker who was a founder of the Committee for Non-Violent Action and A Quaker Action Group, both pacifist groups. Wilmer Young wrote about a direct action project, which involved attempts to get into a missile base in Nebraska:

> What is the process of arousing public opinion? Of getting laws changed? The chief method is the use of the mass media of communication: the newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. But these are almost entirely closed to pacifists. Pacifists in our country can indeed print their own ideas, and for this much we should be and are extremely grateful. But we do not reach the general public with our printed words.[11]

To elaborate this point, Young told of the reaction of an official to the act of civil disobedience at Omaha.

> Before our meeting for worship began, the Chief Probation Officer simply asked me to come with him in his car. We had a very friendly talk in the 30 miles drive to Omaha. He said that if I didn't mind, he'd like to make some suggestions. Instead of stirring things up this way, why did we not do educational work in the usual way, write books and articles for magazines, give lectures, use the radio? This would not make people angry and excited, and they could think more clearly. I assured him that we had been trying to do these things for 25 years and here he didn't even know about it...but I reminded him that one could not get the radio or any of the mass media to accept and use what we were offering. I told him that the very fact that he knew nothing about the writing and lecturing on peace that had been going on for years was a clear indication that other methods are needed.[12]

The "other methods" were what the pacifists called "direct action": picketing, vigils, invasion of missile sites, attempted boarding of Polaris submarines, etc. Direct action or street demonstrations are probably the oldest form of communication of dissent. One need only recall the Boston Tea Party, the anti-draft demonstrations of the Civil War, the women's suffrage marches, etc. Historically demonstrations have been devices of reaching the public and the decision makers directly. In the past they were not designed primarily to be reported. In fact, little thought was given to the requirements of the media—deadlines, dramatic action, etc.

However, in the early 1960's television news soon noted that direct action produced interesting filmed stories. So, too, did the dissenters. In 1961, the CNVA *Bulletin* noted: "Polaris Action and the Transcontinental Walk for Peace have shown that the mass media are not impenetrable to the most radical peace message, if that message is embodied in dramatic, stirring action."[13] Television news increasingly became an important tool in the strategy of protest. Direct action projects that began as "real events" were transformed into "pseudo events."[14]

Sensing the need of television for visual, dramatic news, protest has increasingly taken to the streets where dramatic action has been staged. Radical dissenters have effectively met the needs of television for highly visual, dramatic events—events often involving confrontations. Television news in turn has provided national exposure for relatively small, powerless groups. The

national attention provided the dissenting groups with a sense of significance, which helped to coalesce the members. Often, especially as a result of confrontation with police or a counter-demonstration, widespread sympathy has been aroused.

The message of dissent has become non-verbal and symbolic. The street demonstration has become a symbolic drama played to a national audience. Often it is used to create a sense of disorder out of which change might occur. It is used to ridicule the establishment and establishment figures. The Walker Committee report, commenting on the tactics and skill of Abbie Hoffman, an organizer of the "Yippies," stated:

> This theatrical concept was a primary ingredient of their approach. The audience would be the American public, the means of communication would be the mass media, manipulated to create distorted images of themselves. The stage would be the streets and the message would be a demonstration of disrespect, irreverence, and ridicule.[15]

The symbolic nature of protest is probably best epitomized in demonstrations against the draft. The symbol of the authority of the Federal government through Selective Service over the individual is the draft card. In order to symbolize a rejection of that authority, public draft card burnings have been held. Through this dramatic gesture an icon was destroyed and the legitimacy of the government was denounced.

A similar non-verbal strategy was used by Jerry Rubin against the House Un-American Activities Committee in the fall of 1968. His appearance each day at the hearings in a different comic costume enabled him to draw attention of the media to himself and to diminish the dignity of the hearings.

The non-verbal communication of dissent has been recognized as "symbolic speech" by the courts. The plea that even civil disobedience should be protected as symbolic speech was used by the defense in the case of the United States vs. O'Brien. The United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in 1967 refused to convict O'Brien for burning his draft card on the ground that a statute to make draft-card burning criminal was an abridgement of freedom of speech. The Supreme Court later reversed the decision with Mr. Justice Black writing: "We cannot accept the view that an apparently limitless variety of conduct can be labeled 'speech' whenever the person engaging in the conduct intends thereby to express an idea."[16]

Whether television induced or not, the forms of non-verbal dissent change rapidly. Television news does, indeed, seek out the new and the unusual. Today a public draft card burning is no longer "news"; students occupying a college building might be. Thus the radical dissenter seeks new approaches with which to make an impact and the television news director seeks out dramatic, novel events.

Television news and dissenters need one another. No one can seriously expect a television news editor to ignore a good story; nor can anyone expect a radical dissenter to limit his propaganda to verbal statements. To the extent that "symbolic speech" and television news feed on one another, a definable relationship can be said to exist.

It seems clear that the increase in the frequency and variety of the non-verbal forms of communication has occurred within the context of the dominant position of television news. Out of this context, perhaps, a very old form of expression—the demonstration—has been transformed into a qualitatively new form—symbolic speech. The Supreme Court has yet to determine clearly its legal standing and the television decision makers do not have a firm notion of how to deal with it.

What seems clear is the need for further research into the various consequences for the political process of the seeming paradox of mutual support of television news—an arm of the establishment—and the radical dissenters—enemies of the establishment.

Has the emphasis on the non-verbal in dissent lessened the possibilities for rational discussion of differences? Is television news reporting of non-verbal protest tending to diffuse the concentration of power thus opening the way for a wide variety of groups to initiate action for change? These and other questions that relate to both the operation of a democratic society and to the processes of communication deserve more careful attention than they have heretofore received.

NOTES

1. *Broadcasting Yearbook,* Vol. 76, 1969, p. 13.
2. Ibid.
3. Jack Gould, New York *Times,* February 6, 1968, p. 87c.
4. Fred Powledge, New York *Times,* August 11, 1965, p. 20C.
5. Robert MacNeil, *The People Machine* (New York: Harper and Row), 1968, p. 35.
6. Ibid., p. 54.
7. Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1965, p. 57.
8. MacNeil, op. cit., p. 40.
9. Robert J. Gwyn, *Public Witness and the Press,* unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois, 1963, p. 86.
10. Jhan and June Robbins, "A Very Unusual Love Story," *Redbook,* CXVIII, April, 1962, p. 46.
11. Wilmer J. Young, *Visible Witness: A Testimony for Radical Peace Action* (Wallingford, Pennsylvania: Pendle Hill Pamphlet), 1961, P. 29.
12. Ibid., p. 7.
13. Committee for Non-Violent Action *Bulletin,* January 30, 1961, p. 6.
14. See Daniel Boorstin, *The Image* (New York: Harper and Row), 1961, passim.
15. Daniel Walker, *Rights in Conflict* (New York: Bantam Books), 1968, p. 41.
16. U. S. vs. O'Brien 389 U. S. 814.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Charles Sopkin. ***SEVEN GLORIOUS DAYS, SEVEN FUN-FILLED NIGHTS.*** New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.

One of the choicest thoughts about television to be found in this book is that TV programs need a *schtick* or "gimmick" in order to beat out the competition and stay alive for at least a couple of seasons. Charles Sopkin, author of *Seven Glorious Days,* etc., is a formidable *schtick* man himself. For what he undertook was nothing less than the viewing of one week's entire output of TV programming, as received on New York City's six commercial channels—"a unique experiment in the behavioral sciences," as the jacket blurb puts it, suggesting a lighthearted spoof of mass media scholarship.

It was fun to anticipate a put-on of all those weighty content analyses ("How do TV Westerns mirror our sexual hang-ups?" and that sort of thing). But Sopkin is no satirist. He means us to take all of this quite seriously. After all, didn't Fred Friendly suggest in *his* book that the network bosses look at their programming for one *day* to see how long they could endure it? Why not top Friendly by six days, set up a string of receivers, get it all down on paper—the tedium, the blandness, the inanity—cap it off with one of those "TV-is-a-gigantic-garbage-dump" chapters, and market the final product, ambiguously, as a curious mix of criticism, research, and humor? The result is more a stunt than a book.

Sopkin's objectivity in taking on this "experiment" is never in question—he has none. The seven-day marathon is merely a flimsy peg for a string of breezy program reviews that offer the kind of hollow cynicism and airy condescension that too often pass for media criticism.

The tone and style of the book can best be described as "Eastern intellectual wise-guy"—an approach that reveals far more about the author's smug parochialism than it does about network television. Sopkin's idea of trenchant criticism is to have a go at the daytime game shows and conclude that "those folks out there in Cedar Rapids are slapping their thighs in hilarity." His regional humor is typified by a labored account of an appearance by Jack Valenti on a panel show, with Valenti's Texas speech reproduced in the manner of a bad dialect joke—presumably to evoke thigh-slapping hilarity in Sopkin's readers. Somehow, Valenti emerges with his dignity intact. As for Sopkin...

Inevitably, there are funny bits: Sopkin's daily efforts to untangle the incredibly complex story threads of the soap operas provide a good running gag. His observations on the flagrant and subtle uses of the medium for plugola and promotion add up to a familiar but impressive indictment.

But for all of its facile and fashionable debunking of TV, this is a book that burns itself out by the time we get to the *Late Late Show* on the first night's viewing. Sopkin may argue that the cumulative impact of 119 hours in front of the tube was meant to tell its own numbing story. As an alternative to Mr. Sopkin's book, this benumbed reader would recommend a shorter and less flamboyant work that tells much the same story. It is called *TV Guide.*

University of Maryland Saul N. Scher

Marshall Fishwick, ***THE HERO, AMERICAN STYLE.*** New York: David McKay Company, 1969.

Since World War II a series of critics—Wecter, Hook, Boorstin, Barzun, Krutch—have questioned whether the conditions necessary for the development of tragic heroes still prevail in the United States. Many have felt that Willie Loman was the last and the least of American heroes.

In recent years Tom Wolfe, Robert Warshow, Susan Sontag and a generation of young people have followed the lead of Gilbert Seldes in cultivating their sensitivity to contemporary culture. Now, they have not only discovered new heroes, but a new way of life. Even the most skeptical admit that heroes have emerged, some as traditional as John F. Kennedy and Dwight Eisenhower, others as unlikely as the Beatles, Batman, and Tiny Tim.

The new cool, tribal, multi-media trained heroes of a media-centered culture are difficult to understand. They seem to relate to none of our traditional criteria for heroes: They usually disdain conventional power, they stand for style rather than single ideas, and they express themselves in parodies of accepted language and logic. The mock formula quoted by Fishwick, P+C=PC (Power plus Circuitry equals Pop Culture), stands as an overcast, yet suggestive statement of what it's all about. The heroes seem to be the Beatles, or the memory of James Dean, but their ideas are expressed by others.

They are all-or-nothing heroes: we are either with them, as McLuhan and "Bucky" Fuller seem to be, or we are outside them with such traditionalists as Daniel Boorstin and William O. Douglas. The relation between such heroes and traditional American values is difficult to establish. Some critics take pleasure in denying a relationship, and the difficulty has become built into contemporary thought as something called "the Generation Gap."

Marshall Fishwick does not attempt to relate these present heroes to past conditions. Rather, he relates the heroes of the past to the conditions of the present. And, he modestly describes his categorical analysis of heroic style in America as "suggestions." Nevertheless, he is more successful than any of the critics mentioned above in relating our omnipresent yet inscrutable pop culture to the American heroic tradition.

The principal reason for Fishwick's success can be found in his style. Like McLuhan, he likes telegrammatic sentences that distort the meanings of words and leave the reader sensitized but uncertain. Unlike McLuhan, however, he tries to tie his "probes" into a sequence of thought. The result is a series of terse, ambiguous phrases surrounded by paragraphs which march by with satisfying rhythm and logic. The young-in-mind can underline the phrases and ignore the context; the rest can strike out the telegrams and read the remainder as if it were Emerson's. It's all here: the prose of America past and the verbal chaos of America present; and they relate remarkably well.

In his survey, Fishwick ranges over a long time period, but limits himself geographically to the area he knows. Oddly, although he chooses illustrations from the past with taste and discretion, he frequently fails to find the most obviously available contemporary illustrations. For example, his descriptions of the "Jolly Giants," heroes of superhuman size and/or strength, move from Bunyan to the Cardiff Giant with ease. But the author hesitates when he approaches the Giant with the longevity record on television, *Superman,*

or the Giant who arrived with comic-book production devices and breathless audiences to become the camp hero of 1967, *Batman.*

Fishwick's chapter devoted to the cult of the cool is a revealing exercise in historical writing that also stops short of contemporary application. Few readers will put the book down without accepting Fishwick's proposition that, from Billy the Kid to James Bond, we have consistently conferred the status of hero on cool, alienated outsiders who live by their wits. There is a distinction, however, between the healing, sympathetic "demonstration of Situation Ethics," as one of my students termed it, that we have watched on *Run for Your Life,* and the comic-sadistic organizational outsiders we watched in *The Man From Uncle.* There is a distinction, but Fishwick does not make it because he does not analyze the present with the same care that he lavishes on the past.

These points constitute a major weakness, because his book depends upon the willingness of the reader to accept the author's judgments on contemporary culture.

The author strengthens his hand somewhat in his restatements throughout the book of two major insights. In the first, he reveals that heroes of the present relate in type, but not in style, to heroes of the past. For example, Bill Cody is the Fakestyle version of the cowboy, and both are related to the Popstyle *Bonanza.* It is a useful, satisfying, well-supported insight.

Fishwick's second major point however, sits rather uncomfortably alongside the first. Despite the continuities in heroic types, there is emerging a new style that is electronic, multi-sensory, psychedelic, dacron-washable-coated and re-mythologized. This somewhat spectacular conglomerate he terms Popstyle in contrast to the traditional, oral, unilateral Folkstyle and the slick, sticky, sentimental Fakestyle of the immediate past and present.

The difficulty in relating the notion of continuity in heroic types to the idea of variation in heroic style is imputable in part to the arrangement of the book. The early chapters show the persistence of certain heroic types, whereas later chapters emphasize the culture discontinuity of Popstyle heroes. I have chosen to read them as complementary themes. But others may interpret the latter portions as an indication that the old heroes are gone forever. By failing to clarify the relationship, the author has left the reader to make his own judgment. It is a very Pop thing to do, but not, I suspect, what the author intended.

In arguing that we are leaving the Fakestyle of Barnum and Bailey, Fishwick is optimistic about the cultural fashion that is emerging in America. It is instant, explosive, electronic and promising. "We must not," he writes, "be afraid of America, the things in it, the way it operates."

But what of the hero in Bonanzaland? Will he be in the traditional mold, an unexpected mutation, or merely an electronically disturbed, less rational variation of Fakestyle heroes? As Fishwick notes, Pop heroes are astonishingly periodical. James Dean personified the hopes and frustrations of a generation, but as their youth fled, so did his fame. Clearly, the search for a new style is on, and the heroes of the future will have to relate to it.

In a concluding note, Fishwick suggests that the germs of the new culture "will flourish best in the laboratory rather than in the church." His description of Popstyle, however, leads one to suspect that rigorous scientific thought is as

alien to it as to the work of Tielhard du Chardin. Popstyle heroes may incorporate some of each, but they will be like neither.

And this raises the question: are these Popstyle celebrities and darker-plumaged politicians truly the authentic American heroes of the sixties? Or are the real heroes those intimates who enrich our conversation, and show us how to be solemn, funny, proud, and humble: Chet, David, Walter, Gomer, The Marlboro Man, and the man whose style transcends all styles: Ed?

Boston University Robert R. Smith

Robert MacNeil. ***THE PEOPLE MACHINE, THE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ON AMERICAN POLITICS.*** New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

Robert MacNeil is not just a journalist. He is now a scholar with the publication of *The People Machine*. What Fred Friendly did via a personal approach, MacNeil has done from the point of view of the researcher-analyst. The book is, in part, based on his experience as a reporter for NBC. But the work is largely the result of a year's study after he left the network and before he joined the BBC. Personal interviews, statistical data, library resources document the theme of the book: that the state of television journalism is not healthy.

The book is divided into three parts. At the outset, MacNeil stunningly describes the "audience-electorate." This audience is representative of a cross section of the nation's people. However, the data tell us that only half the audience of the three networks' regular news programs has a considerable knowledge of current affairs. Of the rest of the audience (presumably with a limited knowledge) roughly 18,000,000 people rely almost solely for their image of the world on a half hour of network news nightly. That's a lot of votes in any election! Thus, television journalism's responsibility and influence on the political and social scene are clearly established.

Yet most of Part I of the book deals with the frailties of television news and its failure to live up to that responsibility. In stating, "The first weakness of television journalism is that it suffers from the advertising disease and is neurotic with self-praise" (p. 21), MacNeil cites cases: news programs dropped for sporting events, overpromotion of news shows to garner audiences, and the emphasis on the visual aspects of news. He deplores, as Fred Friendly did, the lack of decision-making power by network news departments. The selectivity problem of television journalism is dramatically demonstrated through a content analysis of network news programs of October 2, 3 and 4 of 1967, compared to the news reported in the Washington *Post* and New York *Times*. The results are predictable. Many important news stories were omitted on TV reports, along with a significant lack of explanation and analysis. Thus, MacNeil charges that the network news programs are largely headline services, although often presented with such an air of confident reassurance that one is left with the impression he is well-informed after a half hour news program.

But it is the responsibility of television to delve deeply into the very social issues to which it tentatively and cautiously devotes its attention. MacNeil's charge is articulate and necessary.

> Television, particularly, must carry through the next generation a great part of the burden of educating white America about the Negro problem. The responsibility is greater even than that which television bears to enlighten Americans about the Vietnam war. The needs are the same, however, in both crises: a major effort toward creative, analytical exploratory journalism, rather than reliance on a ritualized coverage of violence. (p. 74)

The author points out that while newsmen frequently speak out in print, most of the documentaries on television are of the popular culture pablum type. In short, the Ed Murrow approach, so necessary now, is so sorely lacking.

Part II deals with television and politics. He surprises none with his analysis of the use of television to create the "image and personality" needed for election. What is most alarming, and frighteningly intriguing, are the case studies MacNeil includes in this section on the creation of the campaign commercial. The Shapp campaign and Rockefeller's successful campaign in spite of a hostile New York electorate are revealing instances of the use of short political commercials. No matter how skillfully done, the commercial, of all television forms, is least capable of dealing with issues. Commenting on the campaign of the late Senator Clair Engle of California in the 1964 campaign, MacNeil discusses a carefully made 42 second political commercial in which "All Californians saw on television was a middle-aged man saying with some hesitancy, 'The medical men have given me the green light and I am running.'" (p. 136) At the time, Engle was suffering from deteriorating effects of brain surgery and was partially paralyzed. He died before the election. The film was not used, but the case certainly points to the severe ethical questions involved in editing television political spots. MacNeil is correct when he says, "It is difficult to exaggerate the power of a medium such as television, to make *appearance* seem to be *reality*." (p. 137)

Part III, although highly informative to the lay reader, lacks the thrust of the other two sections. He discusses the problem of Congressional influence on the medium, government regulation, and presidential access to television. The FCC is quickly dethroned as an ogre to the industry in terms of real effects. "Broadcasting has not proved that present regulations are an infringement of its journalistic freedom." (p. 291) What is a significant problem is congressional access to the medium, and more seriously, MacNeil feels, is presidential access. He poses the obvious but relevant question, When does the network ever say no when the President wants air time?

MacNeil's sound and carefully supported diagnosis of the television patient's ills is potent. His solution, through the competition of Public Television, is rather bland, and as yet, an untenable and unknown prescription to bring the system back to health.

Yet there is in this well-written, well-organized book (in sum: reporting, politics, government and television) a message for the future. The computer (the "people machine") is new, the political commercial is new, and the methods and problems discussed are already with us and will be for some time to come. Unless and until that "audience-electorate" becomes more aware of television and the socio-political scene, present practices may very well tip us toward "1984." On the other hand, this medium might really provoke and enlighten us to truly make the democratic process effective. Extensive reading of this book by that electorate could well tip the balance in the proper direction.

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