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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
ARTS AND SCIENCES

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11-8-76

Dr. George Gerbner, Dean
The Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
3620 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19174

Dear Dr. Gerbner:

With the March, 1977 issue of Etcetera, an entirely new group of editors will assume responsibility for its publication. Under the direction of Neil Postman, we hope to raise the journal's level of substance and scholarship to a point where it can become a significant forum for the discussion of various relationships among language, media, research, technology, and culture. Toward this end, our first issue has as its theme, "The Roots of Fanaticism," and includes articles by internationally known scholars such as Margaret Mead, Harold Taylor, Stanley Milgram, and Paul Watzlawick. Our second issue (June 1977), will focus on the complex roles of media and symbols in our culture.

It is to our third issue, "The Biases of Research," that we invite you to contribute. What we seek is an essay of approximately 2000 to 2500 words, in which each writer discusses an aspect of the nature and effects of those biases inherent in, and imposed upon, research techniques and questions. We are interested, for example, in issues as broad as the relationship between procedures and phenomena, or cultural and political influences on research; and issues as focused as the effects of experimenter bias, grant control, and so on. In this context, we'd like you to do an article on the biases prevalent in graduate education in communications. For example, the pragmatics of getting a Ph.D, preclude any long term or unpopular research projects. And yet, this is the training ground for student's future research efforts. Of course, if you have other ideas relevant to the issue's theme that currently interest you more, we would be open to discussing the possibility of their inclusion. What we hope for is a distillation on your knowledge of, and reflection on this crucial subject, which transcends all disciplines, and has increasing impact on the quality of, and access to information.

Unfortunately, Etcetera has no money to pay its contributors. We hope that the topic, and the reputations of many of your co-contributors will have sufficient power to draw you into this dialogue.

We are setting a deadline of March 1, 1977. We would greatly appreciate your writing to us care of the address below, and letting us know if you can do this for us. It would be helpful at this time if you could give us some idea of the perspective of the article.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Bruce K. Eckman, Research Editor

Bruce K. Eckman

Jeanne Posner, Managing Editor

c/o Neil Postman, Editor
Etcetera
733 Shimkin Hall
New York University
Washington Square, N.Y.
10003

BKE/pp

November 18, 1976

Mr. Bruce K. Eckman
Research Editor
c/o Mr. Neil Postman
Editor
Etcetera
733 Shimkin Hall
New York University
Washington Sq.
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Eckman:

I was very pleased to read that Etcetera will come under the direction of Neil Postman and his group. That should indeed mark a new departure.

The best place for what I might have to say would be the second issue on "The Complex Roles of Media and Symbols in our Culture," rather than the issue on "The Biases of Research." If you are interested, what would be your deadline on the media and culture subject?

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner,
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:kas

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Nov. 24, 1976

Dear Dean Terkener,

Bruce Eckman has shown me your letter, and I am taking the liberty of answering.

Naturally, it would mean a great deal to us if you would do something for our "media and symbols" issue. The deadline is February 1. The questions we are trying to address go something like this:

How do certain media organize "reality"? What aspects of experience are heightened, or ignored, or distorted by certain media? What are some of the possible effects of media on our values, habits of thought, habits of response, methods of social organization, etc.? Some people are focusing on a particular medium; others are taking a broader view.

Whatever perspective you would choose would be, of course, perfectly acceptable to us. We're hoping for something about 2000-3000 words.

Thank you for your good expectations
of me, and I am most excited about
the prospect of an article of yours.

Sincerely,

Neil Postman

*File
Neil
Postman*

et cetera

The Journal of the International Society for General Semantics

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18 February 1977

Professor George Gerbner
The Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
3620 Walnut Street c5
Philadelphia, Pa. 19174

Dear Professor Gerbner:

Thank you very much for your manuscript, "Television--
The New State Religion?" Neil Postman and I are both
very pleased with it, and delighted to include it in
our special issue on media, symbols, and behavior.
The issue is scheduled for June publication, and you
will receive several copies as soon as it is available.

Again, our thanks,

Sincerely yours,



Chris Nystrom
Guest Editor, Special Issue on Media and Symbols

1/31/77

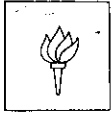
Dear Neil Postman -

This piece originated as a talk to the Internat'l Assn of Mass. Comm. Research General Assembly at the University of Leicester last August. You may use it in media issues if you like.

Thanks for your letter of Nov. 24, and best of luck for the "new" et cetera.

Sincerely -

George Y. Brown



New York University
A private university in the public service

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December 17, 1986

George Gerbner
Annenberg School of Communications
3620 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6220

Dear George,

Your article is, of course, cogent and compact. Were I the editor of Etc., I would print it at once. But I am no longer the editor of Etc. and so I have taken the liberty of sending it on to Mr. Russell Joyner who is the present editor. I have recommended to him that he print it.

As ever,

Neil Postman