



DELACORTE PRESS

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February 17, 1982

Dean George Gerkner
Dean of Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Dean Gerkner:

Neil Postman has suggested that we send you the bound galleys of his forthcoming book, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CHILDHOOD. If you can find the time to read it, and would care to comment on it, we would be very grateful indeed.

Best regards,

Betty Kelly
Senior Editor

BK:lj

March 1, 1982

File
POSTMAN

Betty Kelly
Senior Editor
Delacorte Press
1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
245 East 47th Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ms. Kelly:

I read The Disappearance of Childhood by Neil Postman and am pleased to make the following comments:

Neil Postman's new book is an historical and analytical tour-de-force of great sweep and power. It confronts liberals and confounds conservatives with its bold challenge: a society that uses media to subject children to the full impact of adult cultural environment -- as American television does -- abolishes the very concept of childhood. Whether one is inclined to resignation, resistance, reform or rebellion vis-a-vis the swift currents of the television age, one cannot fail to be enlightened and provoked by this book.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

Alfred · A · Knopf *Incorporated*

PUBLISHER OF

Cables: KNOPF NEW YORK
Telephone: (212)751-2600



BORZOI BOOKS

201 EAST 50th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022

June 30, 1988

Professor George Gerbner
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Professor Gerbner,

Both Neil Postman and I wanted you to have this early proof of his new book, which Knopf will be publishing in October. I'd be delighted to have your comments--if any!--and of course in any case hope you enjoy the book. In these dark times, I find Postman's work to be a wonderful tonic, I must say.

With kind regards,

Yours,

Elisabeth Sifton
Executive Vice President

ENS:jl

Dictated by Elisabeth Sifton but signed in her absence.

July 11, 1988

File Postman

Elisabeth Sifton
Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
201 East 50th Street
New York, NY 10022

Dear Ms. Sifton:

I read Neil Postman's new book you kindly sent me, and here is my comment (you are welcome to edit):

Writing in the tradition of Jacques Ellul, Walter Ong, and Marshall McLuhan, but with unmatched lucidity and sparkle, Postman explodes more myths and conceits of our common culture. These are stories (non-fiction variety) of resistance and challenge that will delight some and provoke others but make all readers examine their own conscience and come out wiser.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

File Postman

Alfred · A · Knopf *Incorporated*

PUBLISHER OF

BORZOI BOOKS

Cables: KNOPF NEW YORK

Telephone: (212) 751-2600



201 EAST 50th Street

New York, N. Y. 10022

July 28, 1988

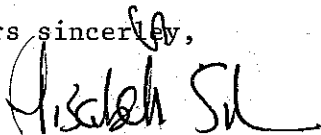
Dear Professor Gerbner,

What a generous and elegant letter about Neil Postman's book! We are very grateful for your comments, and I trust you will allow us to put your words on the jacket? It has made a great difference to Neil to have your endorsement, and of course we at Knopf are delighted, too.

Finished copies of the book will be ready in the early autumn, and I shall make sure that you will have an early copy.

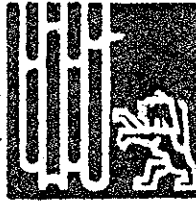
Again, my thanks for your kind words.

yours sincerely,



Elisabeth Sifton

the jerusalem
international book fair



ירושלים
יריד הספרים הבינלאומי

10 August 1988

Prof. Neil Postman
Dept. of Communication Arts and Sciences
New York University
733 Shimkin Hall
Washington Square
New York, NY 10003
USA

Dear Neil,

I am sorry that it took longer than anticipated with the Book Fair Board, but all were very much in favor of going ahead with your very interesting seminar.

I would like to pass on a suggestion made by a few of the Board members. Since the forum will take place within the framework of an apolitical Fair, it would be preferable to have the word "political" omitted from the seminar title. It should read: "The Prejudices of Media: The Book Vs. Television."

Otherwise, the program was enthusiastically accepted. We would like to suggest a number of Israeli panelists who may be more appropriate than some of those you had in mind. Offhand, I am thinking of Elihu Katz, Shlomo Avineri, Shlomo Aronson, Yirmiyahu Yovel, etc.

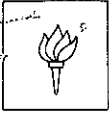
It goes without saying that I shall be happy to assist you in choosing the Israeli panelists and in arranging all the seminar logistics. Please let me know how you progress, and in the meantime, all the best.

Yours,

Best as ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Zev Birger'.

Zev Birger



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A private university in the public service

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George Gerbner
Annenberg School of Communications
3620 Walnut Street C5
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3858

August 26, 1988

Dear George,

Yesterday I received a copy (hot off the press) of my new book, Conscientious Objections. On its back cover, shining like a newborn star, is your lovely compliment about the book. This is not the first time you have been gracious to my work, and I would like to thank you for lending me your support. It means a great deal to me.

What I have said in the paragraph above has nothing to do with what I am about to say. (I include the following to save a stamp on a second letter.) The Jerusalem Book Fair will be held in March of next year. Ziv Birger, the Executive Director of the Fair, has asked me to organize a symposium. I've enclosed a copy of the proposal I submitted which, you will note, includes your name as a possible speaker. Note that each speaker would be limited to 15 minutes. I have also included a copy of Mr. Birger's last letter to me in which he suggests a modification of the topic. Assuming that all your expenses would be paid, but that no honorarium (not for me or anyone else) would be, would you be interested in participating?

Best,

Neil Postman

NP/cm
encs. 2

THE POLITICAL PREJUDICES OF MEDIA:

THE BOOK VS. TELEVISION

As the uses of television increase on a world wide scale and begin to replace the functions of the book, questions arise, Is television a friend or an enemy to the tyrant? Does television enhance or undermine diversity of political opinion? The issue is complicated by the fact that these questions have not yet been settled in reference to the book itself. Some, like David Riesman, believe the book to be the "gunpowder of the mind." But others believe the book is an effective instrument of political control.

This two part program will feature four talks and two panel discussions on the question of which medium, the book or television, is more favorable to the development and expression of diverse political ideas.

In session one, there will be two speakers, each making a fifteen minute presentation. A Panel, consisting of three people, will comment, critique and elaborate on the views expressed. Thirty minutes will also be allotted for comments and questions by the audience. The program will be repeated the following day with different speakers but with the same panelists.

Proposed speakers

Neil Postman, U.S.A.
Umberto Eco, Italy
Elizabeth Eisenstein, U.S.A.
(?) Leybowitz, Israel

Possible other speakers

George Gerbner, U.S.A.
Terry Eagleton, U.K.
Rolfe Zitzelberger, Germany
Michiel Schwarz, Holland

Panelists

James Beniger, University of Southern California
Christine Nystrom, New York University
Asa Kasner, Israel
William Petkanas, New York University (Moderator)

September 23, 1988

Dr. Neil Postman
Department of Communications
Art and Science
New York University
733 Shimkin Hall
50 West 4th Street
New York, NY 10003

Dear Neil:

Thank you for your letter and very kind words of August 26.

I am afraid that March of next year will be a very busy month for me. The dean search has been extended (see enclosed Penn ALMANAC announcement) and I am also teaching two classes, plus large research project. So I better not take off on long trips, even for a short stay. I am sorry to have to decline because the topic and occasion are very tempting. Thank you for asking.

With best regards.

Sincerely,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

Enclosure