

**YOUNG WOMEN CALLED 'MOST IMPRESSIONABLE'**

# Study finds less violence on TV shows

By KAY MILLS

Star-Ledger Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Fewer killers are appearing in television shows and overall TV violence has dropped, a University of Pennsylvania study shows.

But the same study shows an emerging "television generation" which may have exaggerated views of its chances of encountering violence in the real world.

"Killers are much less visible, but victims are still very much there," Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at Penn, said in explaining why an overall "violence index" has declined markedly since 1967, yet the number of programs containing some episodes of violence hasn't dropped as sharply.

The report, prepared by Gerbner and colleague Larry Gross, shows that in 1967, 80 per cent of television programs contained some violence. The figure is now about 70 per cent. Cartoons remain the most violent type of program, even though they have "virtually eliminated killing."

The index for all programs stood at just under 200 in 1967 and now hovers between 160 and 170 on a scale of zero to 300. Gerbner attributes the

drop to declining violence in TV plays, which include detective series.

This index takes into account the prevalence of violence in programs, the frequency with which it occurs and the number of people committing violence and victimized by it.

"Unmarried males generally fare better than married, but unmarried women far much worse than anybody," Gebner and Gross found. "Single women are the most likely of all groups to be killed; they have five killed for every two killers."

That finding may account for the results in another aspect of the Gerbner-Gross study showing that young women are "the most impressionable" when it comes to expectations of violence in real life.

In their study of viewer conceptions of reality, the researchers asked viewers to estimate their chances of encountering violence, the proportion of crimes that are violent and the number of people who work in law enforcement. Television gives vastly different answers to these questions than do real statistics.

Gerbner and Gross found that people who watch televi-

sion frequently tend to err in the direction TV teaches. "The college group is usually less likely to give the television answer than the no-college group," they wrote, "but heavy viewing tends to neutralize the effects of education."

Through their questioning, the researchers also found "women consistently report

higher estimates of violence and law enforcement than men."

Age also emerges as an important factor, with those under 30 generally conforming more to the TV view of violence than those 30 and over," Gerbner and Gross wrote. People under 30 who are light viewers tend to share the distortions common among older

heavy viewers, they added. "It seems evident to us that those under 30 have grown up in a world in which television was an increasingly persuasive aspect of the cultural environment. In comparison with the older segment of the sample, those under 30 can in fact be considered to be members of the 'television generation.'"

GS - LS

DECEMBER 16, 1974

B1

TV

## Violence:

Many

More

Victims

By John Carmody

While overall violence on prime-time television programs has dropped over the last six years, the number of violence victims depicted has vastly increased during the same period, according to a key annual study of TV violence released today.

As a result, according to the sixth annual "Violence Profile" by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, so-called "heavy" television viewers tend to overestimate the danger of violence in everyday life.

These "heavy viewers" (four or more hours a day) also tended to vastly overestimate the number of violent crimes in the U.S., and the number of men holding jobs in either law enforcement, the professions or in executive positions in American life—all features of current prime-time TV dramas.

These so-called "cultivation differentials" of TV viewers are a relatively new aspect of the Annenberg reports and are intended to "highlight some conceptions of social reality that tend to be cultivated by TV viewing in different groups and in comparison to other cultural or media activities."

## TV Violence: More Victims

VIOLENCE, From B1

- The prevalence of prime-time violence has dropped from eight out of 10 programs to seven out of 10.

- The percentage of all characterizations in prime-time programming involved in violence has dropped from 73 per cent to 56 per cent in 1973.

- But the ratio of victims to each violent character who either injures or kills has risen to 1.4 per "violent," the highest in seven years.

- ABC television, which was by far the "most violent" at the start of the studies is now the least violent, while once least-violent CBS has become slightly more violent than NBC.

Dean Gerbner cautions, however, that network programming changes are so frequent now that such comparisons tend to be unreliable.

- The victims in TV shows tend to be female, foreign, non-white, old and lower class, the study shows.

- Single women are shown in the worst killer-to-

killed ratio on the tube.

"This pattern of victimization," says the report, "demonstrates a structure of social power and, as the research findings indicate, may cultivate an invidious sense of risk and fear."

The report also indicates that the "cultivation differential" in which "TV answers" show a substantial departure from the facts of the real world, now shows up strongly in the under-30 age group, the first generation to grow up with TV.

According to the report, women—particularly young women—are especially vulnerable to television's views of life.

The study showed that in children's cartoons, violence remains the top-ranked theme among 25 compiled (animals, supernatural, etc.) but that killing has virtually disappeared.

Likewise, so-called "cartoon programming," seen on Saturdays between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. "increased in the rate of violence per program and maintained its prevalence at the second highest level in seven years"

—but reduced the visibility of violent characters."

Overall programming indices lead the researchers to conclude that "fear of victimization pervades the world of television drama, and may cultivate a corresponding sense of danger in the world of social reality."

The Annenberg report is certain to be widely circulated among Capitol Hill and Federal Communications Commission aides in upcoming weeks.

The FCC is currently preparing an interim report on the subject of sex and violence for Congress, due Dec. 31.

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In other major findings the Annenberg Report found that:

- TV "action" is now much "closer to home" in the vast bulk of prime-time television—taking place in "present time" and in domestic and urban settings.

When the studies began in 1967 much programming dealt with "exotic, historic and distant" environments, which tended to make their violence more abstract.

*See VIOLENCE, B3, Col. 6*

# Father and Son Play Franklin (Old, Young)

YOU GET the idea in pop history that when young Ben Franklin arrived in Philadelphia around 1732, he quickly took over the town.

Well, it took quite a bit longer, and his progress up-wash wasn't all that easy, according to CBS' second 90-minute dramatic special on Franklin. It's called "The Whirlwind," and co-stars Lloyd Bridges and his son Beau, as Franklin in youth and old age. It will be shown tonight at 9.30 on Channel 10.

This episode has a lot more bite than the first, which starred Eddie Albert as Franklin at age 72 as a diplomat in Paris. Much of it comes from young Bridges' portrayal of the young Franklin in Philadelphia. If we are to believe it, he was a kid full of *hutzpah* . . . impatient with his lot as a printer's apprentice and anxious to get on with running things.

It opens with the elder Bridges, as Franklin in old age, having his famous portrait with the fur hat painted in Paris. As the painter vainly beseeches him to remove the hat, Franklin chuckles and begins to reminisce. His first recollections are of Boston, which he left at an early age for Philadelphia because he couldn't get along with his older brother in the family print shop.

PRODUCERS have created nice colonial Philadelphia sets for young Bridges to play against. His apprenticeship as a printer's apprentice is volatile. Young Franklin becomes impatient and clash

companion whose father has money. Franklin opens his own printshop. But not before his Don Juan qualities lead to his marriage with his boarding-house landlady, Deborah Read. Susan Sarandon plays the youthful Deborah. Sheree North is the older, uncommunicative, petulant Deborah Franklin.

If Franklin's wife appeared sour, she had good cause: he insisted that their family include his illegitimate son William, to which she reluctantly agreed. Although they remained married for 44 years, often separated by the demands of his career, it was not one of American history's most felicitous unions. The script, written by Loring Mandel, makes that clear.

Shortly before age 40, Lloyd Bridges steps into the Franklin character in Philadelphia. It covers many of his activities here, including formation of the Junto, the fire company, his newspaper, the Pennsylvania militia, and his eternal fooling around with science. This episode is much livelier and interesting than the first, and it will have a particular fascination for Philadelphians.

## **EBC in the Red**

THE LARGELY license-fee-supported British Broadcasting Corporation is in deep financial trouble.

The prestigious broadcasting operation has decided to cut its programming next year by \$2.31 million (one million pounds), but even with these stringencies, its deficit will be about 20 million pounds



## **Around the Dials**

By Rex Polier

shut down at 11.30 P.M., Monday through Thursday. Radio will lose about 50 hours per week.

These initial cuts may increase, and lots of employees let go, unless there is an increase in license fees that the

public pays. In addition to the fees, the corporation now receives an annual grant from Parliament. Last year, it amounted to \$261 million.

## **Fewer Killers**

KILLERS and other violent

characters appear less frequently on TV screens today than they did a few years ago. The findings are by George Gerbner and Larry Goss, Annenberg School of Communications professors who have just released their sixth annual TV violence profile.

The educators found, however, that nearly three-quarters of the programs aired still show violence.

## **Nonviolent Sleuth**

SINGER Johnny Cash was so intrigued with a recent acting assignment on Columbus that he wants to star in

his own nonviolent TV detective series . . . Richard Burton's nasty printed comments about Sir Winston Churchill have caused the statesman's family to agree that it will no longer permit Burton to portray the wartime leader in any venture in which they have a part . . . Wouldn't you know it? The Russians went bananas over Tennessee Ernie Ford's compeone and country music during his recent State Department-sponsored tour. Highlights will be seen in an NBC special on Jan. 8 at 10 P.M.

## TV Violence Study

(Continued from page 1)

a series of six yearly studies shows that there is now a "television generation" under 30, and that it "showed significantly greater" effect from the incidence of violence on tv.

The pair noted that on a specially constructed index, tv violence is down from 181 in 1967 to 160 in 1973, but said that three-quarters of the programs aired still contain violence.

The study also found that the message of the medium on violence has increasingly become that it is better to give than to receive. For every 10 violent types shown on "adult" tv in 1973, 14 others were hurt or killed and, in cartoons, the ratio was 17 hurt or killed for 10 victimizers.

Women, it was found, are the most victimized in tv. For every 21 male killers, there are 10 male victims. But there are 15 female victims for every 10 female killers. And in all the most-victimized categories — the old, lower-class, foreign and non-white — women were tv's favorite victims, although on as much as their single sisters. (Marriage for men, on the other hand, was less a sacrament than a sacrifice of power for tv male characters, according to the researchers. Married men on tv were not much better off than married women when it came to being hurt by violence.)

The researchers said that interviews with tv viewers showed that people under 30 who are heavy tv viewers are more fearful of life's dangers than their elders, and, not surprisingly, young women are most fearful.

Newspaper readers who watch tv lightly are, say the researchers, less likely to have a cultivated and "overstated" view of life's dangers than those who watch tv heavily. Watching tv news, however, it was found, does not bring individuals around to what the academic pair see as a truer picture of "social reality"

The study is part of a Cultural Indicators Study, sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health, and is aimed at providing answers to questions often posed by Congress, and industry and viewer groups.

## TV Scares Kids, So It Says Here

Annual tv industry figures show that each year people watch the tube more. But, according to a pair of U. of Pennsylvania researchers, they seem to be enjoying life less as a result.

Professors George Gerbner and Larry Gross, both with the university's Annenberg School of Communications, say that their latest in

(Continued on page 76)

*Variety, 12/18/1974*

LA Times - 12-24-74

# Gerontology and the Media: Few New Ideas

BY KATHLEEN HENDRIX  
Times Staff Writer

"What I fear," Carrie Peterson told the people around her, "is . . . I think aging is going to become a trend with the media, just like civil rights, the women's movement and gay liberation, and I'm afraid it will happen before this group of people can control it."

Ms. Peterson, a free-lance television producer who worked on a private pilot series on changes in attitudes toward old people for WPBT in Miami, had taken the floor during a question-and-answer session at the Media and Aging Conference at the Santa Barbara Biltmore last week.

Cosponsored by the Gerontological Society and the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, the conference consisted of gerontologists, communications researchers, television production people and a few old people. For the most part, when the participants talked about media, they were referring to television.

The conference got under way Sunday when Dr. Alex Comfort, a gerontologist best known to the public for books he has written outside that field on the joys of sex, welcomed the group on behalf of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, where he is a senior fellow. Dr. Comfort acknowledged that aging was anything but a democratic institution, even though it happens to all of us. Instead, our society decrees "that once achievement is over, so is worth," and from that decree stem a number of self-fulfilling prescriptions about the aged—that they be uneducable, unemployable, asexual, unintelligent and a burden.

### Enlightened Redefinition

Dr. Comfort reminded the group that the media have a lot to do with this identification of the old, and can have much to do with an enlightened redefinition of aging based on the results of research being done in gerontology, a comparatively new field of study.

In addition to this role the media play in contributing to identities or stereotypes, Comfort continued, it so happens that the media play a large part in the daily lives of most old people. They watch a lot of television and to a lesser degree read the papers and listen to the radio. They do so, Dr. Comfort told the group, for entertainment, for information, to relieve loneliness and to deal with the identity crisis they face.

Later at the conference, Richard Davis, director of the Media Project at USC's Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center in Los Angeles, described this identity crisis in more detail. Retirement, the death of a loved one, hospitalization, institutionalization, changes in household patterns can force a person to redefine who he or she is.

### No Answers on the Tube

Davis said a man who has defined himself as a worker most of his life suddenly finds that no longer fits. How does he define himself? "He's not going to find an answer on the tube."

The stereotyped images of old people are incorrect, or incomplete at best, and yet they persist. Dr. Comfort urged the group to do something about the situation, observing, warning almost, that the old people of the near future, "who, let me remind you, are going to be us—will be very different from those now old. They will be higher in expectation, better protected against the mythology of useless and valueless age, more militant and a lot less willing" to accept the role and identity given them today.

### Lofty Mission for Television

Where to begin? Dr. Comfort charged the conference participants "to find out two things: first, what questions we need to ask so that media can serve the old; and second, how we can answer those questions. The aim is to better the service they receive and also to correct society's attitude toward aging."

A lofty mission for television; a nebulous task for the conference participants. By Tuesday, the group was frustrated with itself and its task. Television people concerned about aging had enough problems within their own industry and with advertisers—they wanted help from researchers in programming. Researchers didn't want impatient demands, they wanted more questions raised so they could do more research. And the old people felt left out in this conference specifically addressed to their needs.

Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers, an activist group of old people, constantly reminded the group of the necessity to involve old people in planning and decision-making about aging. Some-

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# GERONTOLOGY

Continued from 4th Page

one sympathetically observed that she sounded like a worn-out 78 rpm record.

"Exactly," she said with patient good humor, "and I'm not going to say it again." But she did; she had to again and again as it became increasingly obvious to her that no one else was going to suggest that the old could play any role with the media other than that of passive receiver.

It was almost an archetypal ivory tower and marketplace situation. In fact, the frustrations expressed by the dwellers in the marketplace at times suggested this particular ivory tower stretched into the empyrean.

John Lord, a free-lance television producer who teaches in Boston University's school of public communication's broadcasting and film department, struck out at the researchers' tower: "We are the people who profit from research—not those who engage it. We're not getting what we want here. We don't want your papers. We want your conclusions. What is the stereotype of an old American hero? Show me an old man who's a hero and I'll write a program about him. By the time we get the results, half of the people we're supposed to be programming for will be dead."

## Around the Room

The researchers were unimpressed. Lord said he didn't know what questions to ask of research because he didn't know where he was. People stretched that into a metaphor of a map and took it around the room for a while. Finally Richard Davis, of USC, told Lord, "If you don't know where you are, we can't help you."

Why were the researchers so reluctant to make or part with conclusions about old people, their needs, the process of aging, whatever? Why did they demur so? Couldn't they at least say, "I think thus and such is true" and let the media people proceed on that working assumption instead of deluging them with bundles of research which would be filed in wastepaper baskets?

George Gerbner, a communications researcher from the Annenberg school of communications at the University of Pennsylvania, had had enough of that line of reproach. He compared the television producer of programs about aging who says he or she is too busy to read research being done on aging to a brain surgeon. "You tell me, I'm a brain surgeon, but I'm much too busy doing brain surgery to find out what modern medicine has to say about it!" Gerbner needlessly informed the group he couldn't buy that.

The participants frequently acknowledged that besides being research-oriented or action-oriented, they were brought further apart because they spoke entirely different languages.

Barbara Fenhagen, from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, summed it up: "It's as if everyone came here thinking he or she is the resource person. Now who do we deliver our resources to? Maybe we should get together to form a task force and go into some kind of national commission on aging."

She was not the first to mention such a commission, or committee, or group. It was discussed throughout the conference, at one point was almost voted into being right then, got diverted, but is still being planned as part of the followup of the conference.

## Future Functions

Among functions discussed for an ongoing committee were the monitoring of the present situation regarding the aging and the media—what images were portrayed, how frequently old people were on television, what informational needs of theirs were being met, what programming was devoted to aging. Once the situation had been adequately monitored, and programming needs and ideas defined by such a committee, the decision makers could be approached.

There were few at the conference who could be called decision makers—not within the television or advertising industries, and not from the government regulatory agencies responsible for licensing local stations or reviewing the activities of the networks.

Like all conferences, the success of this one would depend on the work done afterward. Despite the frustrations, the participants left generally agreeing that they were united in their concern for the aging and the media's role in that process and generally cognizant that unless some way were found to engage the attention of those who controlled the media, either by reason, sympathy or threat of lawsuit or boycott, such events as conferences on the media and aging would remain little more than academic exercises.

**ANNENBERG STUDY**

# Indexing Violence on Television

**BY JOHN CARMODY***The Washington Post*

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## Closer to Home

In other major findings the Annenberg report found that:

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When the studies began in 1967 much programming dealt with "exotic, historic and distant" environments, which tended to make their violence more abstract.

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—The victims in TV shows tend to be female, foreign, nonwhite, old and lower class, the study shows.

—Single women are shown in the worse killer-to-killer ratio on the tube.

"This pattern of victimization," says the report, "demonstrates a structure of social power and, as the research findings indicate, may cultivate an invidious sense of risk and fear."

The report also indicates that the "cultivation differential" in which "TV answers" show a substantial departure from the facts of the real world, now shows up strongly in the under 30 age group, the first generation to grow up with TV.

According to the report, women—particularly young women—are especially vulnerable to television's views of life.

## Cartoon Violence

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## Views of violence

By John Carmody

L.A. Times/Washington Post News Service

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To *Dr. Gerbner*

GO 3621

From *John Lee*

Date *12/27/74*

*Presumably you have seen this.*



## NO PROGRESS ON VIOLENCE

BY KAY MILLS  
(C) 1974, NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- DR. ELI A. RUBINSTEIN, WHO HEADED THE SURGEON GENERALS COMMITTEE WHICH LINKED TELEVISED VIOLENCE WITH CHILDRENS ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR, SAYS "THERE HAS NOT BEEN SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION" IN THAT VIOLENCE IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE THE REPORT WAS MADE.

"...THERE IS SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT FROM 1968 THROUGH LATE 1972, THE PREVALENCE OF TELEVISED VIOLENCE REMAINED ESSENTIALLY AT THE SAME HIGH LEVEL," RUBINSTEIN, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK, TOLD THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS THURSDAY.

"EIGHT OUT OF EVERY TEN PROGRAMS CONTAINED SOME VIOLENCE IN 1968 AND EIGHT OUT OF TEN PROGRAMS CONTAINED SOME VIOLENCE IN EVERY SUBSEQUENT YEAR, INCLUDING 1972," RUBINSTEIN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT NO EVIDENCE EXISTS TO PROVE THIS PATTERN HAS BEEN BROKEN SINCE 1972.

"AN IMPORTANT MOMENTUM HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN MARCH, 1972," RUBINSTEIN SAID. "UNFORTUNATELY, THAT MOMENTUM WAS NOT MAINTAINED." HE ADDED THAT ONE REASON PROBABLY WAS LACK OF AN INDEX TO MEASURE JUST HOW MUCH VIOLENCE THERE IS ON TELEVISION AND IN WHICH PROGRAMS.

HOWEVER, DR. GEORGE GERBNER, DEAN OF THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, APPEARED AFTER RUBINSTEIN AND SAID HE DID HAVE JUST SUCH AN INDEX. GERBNER HAS BEEN PROFILING TV VIOLENCE AND ANALYZING ITS VICTIMS FOR SEVERAL YEARS ON A GRANT FROM (CAPS) THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MENTAL HEALTH. RUBINSTEIN QUOTED GERBNER'S STUDIES IN HIS TESTIMONY.

IN AN INTERVIEW, GERBNER SAID EXISTENCE OF THE INDEX GIVES BOTH CONGRESS AND THE INDUSTRY A "HOT POTATO" TO HANDLE.

CONGRESS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT BODIES CANNOT REALLY GET INVOLVED IN PROGRAM CONTENT, HE ACKNOWLEDGED, BECAUSE OF FIRST AMENDMENT PROBLEMS. THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS NOT LIKELY TO RESPOND TO AN INDEPENDENTLY-COMPILED INDEX BECAUSE TELEVISION COULD NOT CONTROL THAT THE WAY IT CAN ITS REGULATORY CODE, GERBNER SAID.

AS AN AIDE, RUBINSTEIN POINTED OUT THAT "WHILE THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY CANNOT BE FAULTED FOR NOT HAVING DEVELOPED A VIOLENCE INDEX THESE PAST TWO YEARS SINCE THEY WERE NOT CHARGED WITH SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT DLRS 30 MILLION OR MORE IS EXPENDED ANNUALLY ON TELEVISION MARKETING RESEARCH" AND NOTHING ON STUDYING PROGRAM CONTENT.

IN REPLY, JOHN A. SCHNEIDER, PRESIDENT OF THE CBS BROADCAST GROUP, SAID HIS (CAPS) OFFICE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH HAD FOUND THAT "BETWEEN THE 1971-72 SEASON AND THE CURRENT BROADCAST SEASON, THE NUMBER OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE HAS DECLINED BY ABOUT 25 PER CENT."

IN ADDITION TO INCREASING PROGRAMS FEATURING MORE HUMAN VALUES, SCHNEIDER SAID IN HIS PREPARED STATEMENT, CBS HAS ALSO REDUCED "GRATUITOUS VIOLENCE" IN TV SERIES WHICH FEATURE ACTION AND ADVENTURE, SUCH AS "CANNON" AND "KOJAK".

ONE WAY TO REDUCE VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION IS FOR SPONSORS TO STOP ADVERTISING ON SUCH PROGRAMS, SAID LEO S. SINGER OF CHICAGO, WHOSE MIRACLE WHITE LAUNDRY PRODUCT COMPANY HAS DONE JUST THAT.

SINGER SAID THAT LAST OCT. 5, "SOMETHING HAPPENED WHILE I WAS WATCHING OR AT LEAST TRYING TO WATCH TV -- ALL FOUR CHANNELS TO WHICH I TURNED HAD SHOWS WITH VIOLENT PLOTS.

"READING MY NEWSPAPER FOR AN ALTERNATE SOURCE OF RELAXATION," SINGER SAID, "I CAME UPON THE STORY OF YOUNG EVELYN WAGLER, THE 23-YEAR-OLD SOCIAL WORKER IN BOSTON, WHO WAS DOUSED WITH GASOLINE AND FORCED TO SET HERSELF ON FIRE BY SOME BOSTON TEENAGERS.

"THE STORY TOLD OF HOW EXACTLY THE SAME TYPE OF PLOT WAS CARRIED OUT IN THE NETWORK AIRING OF THE MOVIE FUZZ" ...THATS WHEN I DECIDED THE MIRACLE WHITE CO. NO LONGER WOULD BE A PART OF THAT POTENTIAL MURDER SYNDROME."

SINGER SAID HIS COMPANY WITHDREW SPOT ADS FROM SOME 70 PROGRAMS -- INCLUDING "MOD SQUAD", "HAWAII FIVE-O", "THE WILD, WILD WEST", "KOJAK" AND MANY MOVIES.

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TV IMAGE OF WOMEN

BY KAY MILLS  
(C) 1974, NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- THOSE LONG-SUFFERING HEROINES OF THE SOAP OPERAS MAY PLAY THE BEST AND MOST BELIEVABLE ROLES FOR WOMEN ON ALL OF TELEVISION.

A STUDY BY MILDRED DOWNING, A RESEARCHER FORMERLY ON THE DREXEL UNIVERSITY FACULTY, SHOWS WOMEN HAVE AN EQUAL NUMBER OF ROLES WITH MEN IN DAYTIME TV SERIALS, WOMEN ARE FREQUENTLY PORTRAYED AS PROFESSIONALS, AND HOUSEWIVES AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL WOMEN ARE DEPICTED AS "INTELLIGENT, SELF-RELIANT AND ARTICULATE".

IN CONTRAST, GIRLS IN TV CARTOONS -- WHEN THEY APPEAR AT ALL -- GET LINES LIKE, "HELP. SAVE ME." OR THEY ARE "TEACHY-PREACHY" CHARACTERS IN CARTOONS WITH SUCH MESSAGES AS "DON'T SKIP SCHOOL" OR "MAKE DO WITH WHAT YOU HAVE", WRITES HELEN WHITE STREICHER, SENIOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE FOR THE (CAP) INSTITUTE FOR JUVENILE RESEARCH OF THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN CHICAGO.

BOTH STUDIES APPEAR AS PART OF A SYMPOSIUM ON WOMEN AND THE MEDIA IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION, A PUBLICATION OF THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

MS. DOWNING MONITORED 300 EPISODES OF 15 DAYTIME SERIALS LAST SUMMER AND FOUND THAT 129 OF THEIR CHARACTERS WERE WOMEN, 127 MEN. IN CONTRAST WITH REALITY, MANY OF THESE PEOPLE WERE PROFESSIONAL WHILE "BLUE COLLAR WORKERS ARE ALMOST ABSENT FROM THE DAYTIME SERIAL."

WOMEN ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN THEIR PORTARAYAL, SHE FOUND, IN THAT THEY ARE SHOWN AS PROFESSIONALS ALMOST IN PROPORTION TO THE TRUE NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN. BUT "FOR MALE CHARACTERS, REPRESENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL IS GROSSLY EXAGGERATE (58 PER CENT IN THE TV ROLES, 15 PER CENT IN REAL LIFE AMERICA)."

THE LONGEVITY OF MANY OF THE SERIALS -- SEVERAL HAVE RUN MORE THAN 20 YEARS -- "MEANS THAT THE CENTRAL HEROINE GROWS OLD NATURALLY," MS. DOWNING ADDED.

"THE HEROINE IS DEPICTED AS REMAINING BEAUTIFUL, EFFECTIVE AND NEEDED," THE STUDY FOUND. "THE WOMAN IN PRIME-TIME DRAMA IS UNDER A GREATER COMPULSION TO BE YOUNG, INSIGNIFICANT AND SUBSERVIENT TO THE INTERESTS OF THE MALE CHARACTERS."

WHERE ELSE, MS. DOWNING ASKS, HAVE WOMEN ATTAINED SUCH VISIBILITY IN TELEVISION?

"CERTAINLY NOT IN PRIME-TIME, WHERE ALL LEADING NEWS COMMENTATORS ARE ANCHOR MEN, ALL SERIOUS HOSTS ARE MEN AND THE GIANTS OF THE NIGHTTIME DRAMA SERIES ARE MEN. A FEMALE LEAD WHO IS CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR OR HAS REACHED THE SIXTH DECADE OF LIFE IS UNTHINKABLE. EVEN CANNON, THE FAT DETECTIVE, WOULD BE UNACCEPTED IN A FEMALE COUNTERPART."

ABOVE ALL, MS. DOWNING CONCLUDES, THE WOMAN ON A DAYTIME SERIAL IS A HUMAN BEING; "SHE IS LIKED AND RESPECTED BY HER MALE ACQUAINTANCES, NOT MERELY SOUGHT AS A SEXUAL OBJECT AS SHE IS IN PRIME-TIME TELEVISION DRAMA..."

"SHE IS A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF A FAMILY STRUCTURE, EXERCISING JUDGMENT AND OFFERING SUPPORT TO PARENTS AND CHILDREN ALIKE. HER OPINIONS ARE SOLICITED AND ACTED UPON."

FOR HER CARTOON STUDY, MS. STREICHER "DULY RECORDED DETAILS OF THE ANTICS OF YOSEMITE SAM, POPEYE, SPEED RACER, SABRINA, GIDGET, JOSIE, SCOOBY DOO, FAT ALBERT, BULLWINKLE, MAGILLA GORILLA AND MANY OTHER CHARACTERS."

HER CONCLUSION:

"IN GENERAL, CARTOON FEMALES WERE LESS NUMEROUS THAN MALES, MADE FEWER APPEARANCES, HAD FEWER LINES, PLAYED FEWER LEAD ROLES, WERE LESS ACTIVE, OCCUPIED MANY FEWER POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY, WERE LESS NOISY AND WERE MORE PREPONDERANTLY JUVENILE THAN MALES."

THE ONE FEMALE WHO REALLY HAD A LOT OF LINES, MS. STREICHER SAID, "WAS NAID MARIAN, ROBIN HOODNICKS GIRL, WHO WAS CONSTANTLY NAGGING, COMPLAINING, WANTING, TALKING, UNTIL SOMEONE PUT A BAG OVER HER HEAD."

ENDIT MILLS

## LEANING OVER BACKWARDS

BY KAY MILLS  
(C) 1974, NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- AN ATTRACTIVE, APPEALING COURT DEFENDANT PROBABLY WOULD DRAW A HEAVIER SENTENCE THAN AN UGLY, UNKEMPT PERSON BECAUSE JURORS TRYING TO BE IMPARTIAL OFTEN OVERCOMPENSATE FOR THEIR BIASES.

URGED TO BE FAIR IN JUDGING A SIMULATED COURT CASE, PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS IN AN EXPERIMENT AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (SUNY) AT STONY BROOK CONSISTENTLY RECOMMENDED LESS SEVERE SENTENCES TO SOCIALLY AND PHYSICALLY UNATTRACTIVE DEFENDANTS.

IN CONTRAST, STUDENTS WHO HAD NOT BEEN ASKED FOR A COMMITMENT TO IMPARTIALITY CONSISTENTLY FAVORED LONGER SENTENCES TO UNATTRACTIVE DEFENDANTS, RONALD M. FRIEND, AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AT SUNY, AND MICHAEL VINSON, A FORMER STUDENT, REPORTED IN THE CURRENT ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION. THE ISSUE CONTAINS A SYMPOSIUM ON "LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL COMMUNICATION".

THE STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO "SENTENCE" A WOMAN CONVICTED OF NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE WHILE DRIVING HOME FROM AN OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY. IN ONE CASE, THEY WERE TOLD THE WOMAN, JANE SANDERS, "IS EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE AND WEARS APPEALING CLOTHES THAT SHOW OFF HER FIGURE". SHE WAS FRIENDLY, A GOOD WORKER AND HAD LOST HER HUSBAND -- A CANCER VICTIM -- THE YEAR BEFORE.

A MORE NEUTRAL JANE SANDERS ALSO WAS PORTRAYED. SHE WAS EMPLOYED AND HAD SUFFERED NO MAJOR INJURIES HERSELF IN THE ACCIDENT, AS HAD THE ATTRACTIVE DEFENDANT. NO PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION WAS GIVEN.

UNATTRACTIVE JANE SANDERS PROVED TO BE A JANITOR, SHORT, FAT, SMELLY AND WITH ROTTEN TEETH. HER RECORD SHOWED PETTY THEFT AND DRUG VIOLATIONS.

THE EXPERIMENTERS HAD STRESSED TO ONE GROUP THE IMPORTANCE THAT THEY "COMPLETELY DISREGARD THE PERSONALITY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEFENDANT IN JUDGING THIS CASE".

AFTER READING THE CASE, STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP "FELT THAT THEIR JUDGMENT WAS FAIRER, LESS BASED ON PERSONALITY, AND BASED MORE ON FACTS," FRIEND AND VINSON REPORTED.

THE GROUP COMMITTED TO IMPARTIALITY GAVE ATTRACTIVE DEFENDANTS SENTENCES OF 8.4 YEARS, NEUTRAL DEFENDANTS 9.23 YEARS AND UNATTRACTIVE DEFENDANTS 5.48 YEARS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE "NO-COMMITMENT" GROUP SENTENCED ATTRACTIVE DEFENDANTS TO FIVE YEARS, NEUTRAL TO 6.56 YEARS AND UNATTRACTIVE TO 8.58 YEARS.

AS A RESULT, THE AUTHORS CONCLUDED THAT COMMITMENT TO IMPARTIALITY BY ITSELF -- AS STRESSED BY EITHER THE JUDGE, LAWYERS OR EVEN THE JUROR DURING THE SELECTION PROCESS -- IS AN "IMPORTANT" MODERATING FACTOR IN THE SEVERITY OF SENTENCES GIVEN.

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Carlo Gagliardi

*Televisione, comunità, partecipazione*

## TELEVISIONE, COMUNITA', PARTECIPAZIONE

Carlo Gagliardi

Si è detto da più parti che la televisione (*medium-dei-media*, *Supermedium*) non può non essere strumentalizzata al fine del rafforzamento del potere, all'estensione dell'area del consenso. Il fenomeno si verificherebbe puntualmente sia nei regimi controllati dallo stato sia nei sistemi commerciali, trattandosi nel primo caso di potere politico e nel secondo di potere economico (quanto indipendente dal primo?). Indagini qualificate hanno d'altro canto dimostrato come il mezzo televisivo contribuisca, indipendentemente dal tipo di gestione, all'evoluzione delle abitudini e dei modi di vita delle classi culturalmente meno dotate, facendosi strada dapprima quale fonte di svago e poi, con gradualità, quale stimolo all'informazione, alla conoscenza, al recupero. Non va certo sottovalutato il pericolo che il video induca — con i suoi modelli — imitazione, consumismo, divismo, ed anche surrettizi orientamenti politici della classe al potere, anziché circolazione delle idee e confronto democratico. Occorre in ogni caso evitare, in quanto perniciosi per il rapporto di fiducia tra utenti e fonte dei messaggi, sodalizi verticistici tra televisione e autorità. La televisione deve poter coincidere con la società: non essere servizio del potere imposto ad un pubblico senza diritti di obiezione, ma servizio « del e per il pubblico » in tutte le sue manifestazioni socioculturali, economiche e politiche.

La sovranità del popolo, che negli ordinamenti democratici si traduce tra l'altro in « libertà di associazione » e « libertà di espressione », non può incontrare remore in strumenti tecnicamente raffinati e persuasivi come la televisione. I paesi come il nostro, che hanno preferito la via gestionale pubblica (anche se in concessione), sono investiti di responsabilità nei confronti degli individui e delle comunità intermedie, in quanto i messaggi televisivi non dovranno abdicare agli obblighi di promozione della crescita civile, della consapevolezza sociale,

della maturazione politica del cittadino. In prospettiva dovranno inoltre essere adottate tutte quelle innovazioni che consentano di moltiplicare le occasioni di intervento dell'individuo nella vita comunitaria. La presentazione, mediata dalle associazioni riconosciute, della problematica che investe il mondo del lavoro, la produzione, la realtà sociale e politica del paese costituisce quanto di meglio la tecnologia può fare per riscattarsi dalla fama di condizionatrice dell'uomo nella spirale del progresso-per-il-progresso.

Alla società è addossato l'onere di favorire, nel rispetto della libertà di scelta, le occasioni più idonee ad assicurare al singolo uno sviluppo completo della personalità. Essa stessa è chiamata ad educare alla ottimizzazione degli impieghi del tempo libero che, oltre al necessario recupero delle energie, non possono non tendere all'arricchimento delle potenzialità umane, ad una migliore comprensione del meccanismo produttivo in cui si è inseriti, a spazi più agibili alla solidarietà nell'ambito della divisione del lavoro.

Nella televisione, come negli altri strumenti avanzati della comunicazione, l'uomo deve poter trovare i canali per una effettiva partecipazione a livelli di micro e macrosocietà. Viviamo in un'epoca di « immediatezza ubiquitaria »; la televisione ci rende spettatori degli avvenimenti mondiali e dei viaggi extraterrestri. Il problema è quello di essere spettatori « partecipi », non in senso meramente psicologico (di fruizione attiva) ma in senso sociologico (di responsabilizzazione di fronte ai problemi comunitari). La comunicazione di massa impone di rivisitare, con Max Weber, il concetto di « comunità » inteso quale rapporto sociale fondato sul sentimento soggettivo della comune appartenenza.<sup>1</sup> Questo aumenta a dismisura la responsabilità dei comunicatori, che debbono rispondere, come giustamente osserva Skornia, a un codice professionale all'insegna dell'obiettività e dell'impegno civile.<sup>2</sup> Superato il mo-

<sup>1</sup> MAX WEBER, *Economia e società*, Comunità, Milano 1968, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> HARRY J. SKORNIA, *Broadcasting as a Profession - Some Suggested Indications*, relazione all'Incontro internazionale *L'insegnamento universitario televisivo nel mondo*, Perugia 21-25 novembre 1972.

mento dell'accaparramento delle masse, la televisione deve inserirsi nella dinamica socioculturale e porsi « al servizio delle masse ». In modo che « partecipazione » significhi, per il pubblico, conoscenza della realtà e della comunità ai vari livelli locali, regionali, nazionali, internazionali, nonché capacità d'intervento attivo nelle scelte di portata sociale e di incidenza sul meccanismo della cosa pubblica.

La partecipazione rappresenta il crocevia al quale la politica della programmazione televisiva può incontrarsi con la democrazia culturale. Il tema, tra i più suggestivi che emergono dal dibattito sui mezzi di massa, è all'ordine del giorno in più paesi. Da noi ha trovato eco, all'inizio di quest'anno, in occasione di un incontro di studio che alcuni esperti americani hanno avuto a Roma, presso la RAI, con i dirigenti responsabili della produzione televisiva.<sup>3</sup> L'iniziativa ha permesso di porre a confronto due modi di intendere e gestire la televisione basati su presupposti completamente opposti. Tuttavia l'incrocio di esperienze tra il « sistema commerciale » e il « sistema di servizio pubblico » non può non dirsi utile, almeno quanto a caduta di luoghi comuni e ad apertura di orizzonti.

<sup>3</sup> L'incontro, svoltosi alla Direzione Generale della RAI nei giorni 17-19 gennaio 1974, ha avuto come oggetto: « *La televisione per lo sviluppo sociale e culturale con particolare riguardo alla capacità di favorire atteggiamenti di partecipazione alla vita della comunità* ». La delegazione USA era formata da Dean Burch, presidente della FCC-Federal Communications Commission; George Gerbner, preside della Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania; Richard Heffner, docente di Communications and Public Policy nella Rutgers University, New York; Paul Lazarsfeld, docente al Department of Sociology della Columbia University di New York; Harry Skornia, docente al Department of Speech and Theater presso la University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. L'introduzione e le conclusioni sono state dirette dal presidente della RAI, Umberto Delle Fave. Tre sedute di lavoro sono state dedicate rispettivamente allo spettacolo, all'informazione, ai programmi culturali; ciascuna seduta, aperta da una selezione di produzioni, ha contemplato una relazione di base del responsabile di settore (nell'ordine Angelo Romano, Villy De Luca e Jader Jacobelli, Fabiano Fabiani) e una serie di interventi degli americani. Questi ultimi, oltre ad esporre il proprio pensiero e le esperienze condotte negli Stati Uniti, hanno chiesto parecchie delucidazioni riguardo ai programmi della televisione italiana.

*Televisione e partecipazione in USA*

Iniziativa e direttiva pubblica, osserva Dean Burch, cercano di bilanciare, negli Stati Uniti, quella « impresa privata » globale che costituisce il sistema televisivo.<sup>4</sup> La Federal Communications Commission regola le comunicazioni e rilascia le autorizzazioni necessarie per impiantare stazioni e trasmettere programmi, trovando un limite costituzionale nell'impossibilità di esercitare un controllo sui contenuti. Nell'ambito del sistema commerciale della televisione americana, che conta oltre 900 stazioni locali, operano tre reti di portata nazionale (ABC, CBS, NBC). Le funzioni della FCC comprendono tra l'altro: 1) valutazione dell'opportunità di rinnovo dell'autorizzazione alle stazioni attraverso l'analisi di un rapporto che, a scadenza triennale, ciascuna di esse deve presentare riferendo sulle attese del pubblico locale e proponendo il programma di attività che intende svolgere; 2) analisi dei rapporti informativi sull'andamento dell'attività inviati periodicamente dalle stazioni, durante il periodo di validità della licenza; 3) fissazione di standards di durata secondo le esigenze locali, rispettivamente per le trasmissioni informative, educative e di intrattenimento.

Senza pretendere di considerare il sistema televisivo americano una formula « esportabile » e adattabile a qualsiasi *background* sociale, Burch ritiene che esso risponda alle attese di quel pubblico. Di avviso contrario è Harry Skornia, il quale si domanda se tale « sistema » (commerciale, quindi propenso ad incantare, colpire per vie facili e sensazionali, a scapito delle responsabilità civili) non contribuisca piuttosto alla distruzione della società statunitense.<sup>5</sup> Basti pensare alla presentazione di scene di violenza. La violenza trabocca, dal video, trovando spazi nell'informazione d'attualità, nei racconti gialli e polizieschi, negli sceneggiati drammatici, negli originali apparentemente più innocui, perfino nei cartoni animati, dove —

<sup>4</sup> DEAN BURCH, *Guidelines on How Television Can Promote the Individual's Participation in Community Life*, relazione introduttiva al cit. Incontro.

<sup>5</sup> HARRY J. SKORNIA, *Television and Participation - Introduction*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

contrariamente a quanto ci si potrebbe aspettare — costituisce la più frequente conclusione delle storielle basate sull'azione.<sup>6</sup> E sono troppi i fatti violenti (uccisioni, ferimenti, rivolte, nuove tecniche di attentato) che si moltiplicano nella realtà, per non riconoscere un rapporto di causa ed effetto con la televisione. Gli aspetti ricreativi e informativi del medium non possono essere separati schematicamente (e semplicisticamente) dagli aspetti formativi. Donde la necessità, secondo Skornia, di estendere il controllo delle trasmissioni ai contenuti.

Il sistema commerciale della televisione americana, prosegue Skornia, è malato di elefantiasi, perdita progressiva del rispetto per i valori umani, contraddizioni di fondo. Sotto questo profilo si possono citare, per limitarci a un caso di bruciante attualità, le raccomandazioni che programmi di ogni genere fanno per il risparmio dei consumi di energia, le quali sono interrotte e circondate da messaggi pubblicitari di segno opposto, che sollecitano all'acquisto di elettrodomestici il cui consumo supera spesso i mille watt (pari a quello di tutte le luci di un appartamento). Un sistema completamente basato sulla pubblicità, i cui profitti sono legati ad un « consumismo dello spreco », non può servire l'interesse nazionale né allinearsi a direttive internazionali emergenti a favore della riduzione dei consumi energetici e dell'inquinamento dell'ambiente. In prospettiva la televisione via cavo rischia di ricalcare il modello tradizionale della televisione. Potrebbe essere questa, invece, una delle forme idonee a consentire l'accesso delle minoranze al progresso comunitario. Skornia auspica la nascita e la diffusione di piccole stazioni locali, con interessi limitati alla comunità, capaci di riportare a una dimensione umana i contenuti delle trasmissioni.

In effetti la tendenza al « localismo », al decentramento dei sistemi di comunicazione, sembra affermarsi, negli Stati Uniti come in altri paesi del mondo, come il nuovo capitolo della « massmediologia ». Il problema sta nel tradurre in pratica le

<sup>6</sup> *La violenza negli spettacoli televisivi degli Stati Uniti*, « Informazione radio tv », n. 1, gennaio 1970.

enunciazioni di principio. Un esempio macroscopico: i programmi di spettacolo.<sup>7</sup> Indirettamente insegnano più cose, a un numero maggiore di persone, di quanto non facciano i programmi educativi veri e propri. Con una disponibilità più aperta, marcata dalla prospettiva del divertimento, l'individuo fin da bambino è suggestionato, attraverso la fascinazione delle immagini, da modelli di comportamento contrari a quelli proposti dalla scuola. In luogo dell'intellettuale o comunque dell'uomo che si afferma per la sua volontà di apprendere (una scienza o un mestiere pratico) prevale l'eroe, il divo, la stella che brilla di luce propria, il « dritto » che emerge spezzando le ali del prossimo. Valori mediati: la popolarità, il successo, la ricchezza, il potere. I mezzi di comunicazione, con in testa la televisione, raramente si preoccupano della « qualità della vita » e della « responsabilità comunitaria ».

Ebbene, la televisione locale può dimostrarsi in grado di ridimensionare la « parata delle stelle » e di restituire al « piccolo uomo » (impiegato, operaio, contadino, dirigente d'azienda, casalinga, ecc.) la statura che gli spetta in quanto pilastro della produzione e della società. Il diritto di accesso, regolato nell'ambito della comunità, è la base del pluralismo che contrassegna una vera democrazia. Favorita da un moltiplicatore come la televisione, la partecipazione alla problematica locale linfatizza, per osmosi, la partecipazione alla problematica nazionale e internazionale. Tornando al caso dello spettacolo, l'arte popolare può intrecciarsi con l'arte colta e combattere, di comune accordo pur nella diversità dei ruoli, il *kitsch* che attualmente permea l'intrattenimento televisivo. Senza scendere nel dilettantismo, la creatività ha bisogno di un recupero del genuino. Se non vuole estendere il *gap* che la divide dalla realtà, la televisione deve attingere direttamente alle fonti artistiche, culturali e sociali delle differenti comunità locali.

Una sfera ancor più delicata è quella dell'informazione.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> HARRY J. SKORNIA, *Television and Participation - Entertainment Programs and Community Life*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

<sup>8</sup> HARRY J. SKORNIA, *Television and Participation - News and Public Affairs Programs and the Local Community Service*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

L'attuale prevalenza di notizie scandalistiche, fortemente visualizzabili, o comunque riferentesi ad avvenimenti nazionali e internazionali « distanti », mentre trasforma effettivamente il mondo in quel « villaggio globale » di cui parla McLuhan, allontana lo spettatore dalla realtà vicina con l'illusione di una « partecipazione anticipata ». E' certo un progresso poter spingere lo sguardo oltre l'orizzonte del proprio ambiente d'origine; ma non è più un progresso quando l'ottica, anziché favorire una più chiara consapevolezza delle responsabilità che ciascuno ha nei confronti degli altri, distorce la visione proiettando l'individuo in un « sistema di segni » organizzato secondo il codice dell'estraneità. La limitata attenzione per i « fatti di casa », tanto negativi quanto positivi, si spiega (ma non si giustifica) in base al criterio di un giornalismo del sensazionale che, se soddisfa il rapporto comunicatore-titolare, non fa l'interesse del destinatario. Una maggiore « localizzazione » delle fonti televisive giocherebbe a vantaggio di una migliore comprensione di « ciò che sta veramente accadendo ».

Malgrado i suoi difetti, non solo formali, la televisione continua ad occupare una posizione di primo piano tra le fonti di informazione americane. Indagini anche recenti confermano la crescente fiducia che il mezzo riscuote, presso i cittadini statunitensi, quale fornitore più attendibile di notizie. Il primato, anche nei confronti della stampa scritta, non esclude la preoccupazione per l'univocità informativa, un pericolo da evitare in un mondo che richiede piuttosto pluralità e confronto di opinioni. Burch sottolinea in proposito un dato di fatto: la copertura televisiva si limita, come rivelano le analisi di contenuto, ad alcuni fatti principali, generalmente « drammatizzabili », suscettibili di rappresentazione spettacolare.<sup>9</sup> La « dottrina dell'imparzialità », oggetto di viva discussione nel paese, vede una parte di opinione (quella delle stazioni emittenti) obiettare che si tratta di un limite alla libertà di espressione, mentre l'altra parte sostiene che tale libertà non può consi-

<sup>9</sup> DEAN BURCH, *The Impact of News and Information Programs on the Individual's Community Activities*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

derarsi un fine a sé, bensì un mezzo per l'accesso all'informazione di tutti gli strati della popolazione.

Il problema dell'imparzialità riporta in ballo la questione del controllo. Secondo Lazarsfeld gli americani diffidano per tradizione delle interferenze governative nella conduzione dei mass media. Ciò rientra in quella « libertà d'informazione » che è andata storicamente evolvendosi, peraltro, in un gioco di coalizioni tra le forze in campo (industria delle comunicazioni, utenti, amministrazione).<sup>10</sup> Lazarsfeld sfata il mito dell'influenza decisiva della radio e della televisione sul mutamento sociale. Effetti diretti di cambiamento potrebbero essere indotti, in prospettiva, con l'avvento dei satelliti per trasmissione immediata e delle comunicazioni a due sensi (contatto utente-emittente). Limitata è la comprensione degli effetti dei mass media e spesso esempi clamorosi (come quello della campagna contro il fumo) hanno rivelato una forte « resistenza » contraria alle aspettative della fonte dei messaggi. Se effetti si riscontrano, essi sono indiretti, a lungo termine, e di modificazione dell'atteggiamento nell'ambito dei rapporti interpersonali, rafforzanti — per quanto in forme articolate — il « doppio flusso di comunicazione » incentrato sui *leaders* d'opinione.<sup>11</sup>

Il discorso della partecipazione ha senso, per Lazarsfeld, se formulato in termini di diversificazione sociale, quale impatto di programmi formativi specificamente destinati alle comunità culturalmente e socialmente periferiche. I risultati di ricerca concordano nella constatazione che la televisione non muta radicalmente gli atteggiamenti ma riflette, in prevalenza, quelli dominanti. Più si va in basso nella scala sociale e più si rivela delicato l'uso del mezzo, che non può prescindere dalle responsabilità collettive. Queste qualificano ma rendono anche elastico il ruolo sociale della televisione. In proposito George

<sup>10</sup> PAUL F. LAZARSFELD, *The Overall Social Role TV is Currently Playing in the U.S. and in Italy*, relazione introduttiva al cit. Incontro.

<sup>11</sup> ELIHU KATZ - PAUL F. LAZARSFELD, *L'influenza personale nelle comunicazioni di massa*, ERI, Torino 1968.

Gerbner cerca di fissare alcuni punti.<sup>12</sup> Anzitutto la televisione, quale mezzo di integrazione di attività culturali, va osservata sullo sfondo dell'ambiente (familiare, sociale, ecc.) in cui si esprime. Presso contesti anche diversi si rivela forza capace di mobilitare le idee, tuttavia difficilmente induce cambiamenti totali. La sua influenza si svolge soprattutto nel senso del « rafforzamento delle idee già consolidate », per cui coltiva una « struttura stabile » tanto in regime commerciale quanto in regime di monopolio pubblico. Le istituzioni utilizzano i media per mantenere il proprio sistema resistendo al cambiamento con modifiche che non ne intaccano i fondamenti. « Vera partecipazione — sostiene Gerbner — è quella che riesce ad allargare le maglie del controllo istituzionale trasformando le strutture ». La televisione non è idonea, in sé, a una presentazione di valori che possa sviluppare direttamente il senso della partecipazione. Il messaggio televisivo ha tuttavia il potere di formare una comunità primaria, rappresentabile in schema triangolare: al vertice la fonte di comunicazione, alla base un individuo accanto a un altro individuo « accomunati » per la prima volta dall'evento della ricezione.

Dobbiamo cercare di comprendere il modo in cui la televisione ha contribuito a creare la « nuova comunità » cui partecipiamo. Il mezzo è così potente che bisogna preoccuparsi della sua potenza. Le preoccupazioni, manifestate da Heffner, vertono in particolare sui contenuti e sul ruolo « globalmente educativo » del medium.<sup>13</sup> Cambiamenti possono essere indotti attraverso la presentazione di nuovi valori, il rafforzamento delle opinioni, la formazione di una coscienza comunitaria. « La televisione è partecipazione non appena c'è un pubblico interessato », afferma Heffner: il pubblico è la base del sistema televisivo, senza la quale il sistema non esiste e non ha senso. Il solo modo per coinvolgere lo spettatore è quello di invo-

<sup>12</sup> GEORGE GERBNER, *The Influence of Cultural Programs on the Individual's Participation in Community Life*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

<sup>13</sup> RICHARD HEFFNER, *How Entertainment Programs Influence the Individual's Participation in Community Life*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

gliarlo all'ascolto. Il tessuto comunicativo della televisione, fatto di modelli di comportamento e immagini dell'uomo, fa sì che « noi diventiamo ciò che vediamo ».

### *La partecipazione nel quadro socioculturale italiano*

In Italia, venti anni di televisione hanno portato un contributo non indifferente alla modernizzazione, all'apertura psicologica, al superamento dell'immobilismo. Se non si può parlare di maturità, gli italiani hanno almeno scoperto, attraverso il video, di appartenere a una comunità nazionale, fortemente differenziata ma capace di giocare un ruolo nel concerto internazionale. Un certo rilievo ha assunto l'impegno, già percorso dalla radio, per l'abbattimento degli steccati dialettali e la diffusione di una lingua unitaria in tutta la penisola. Nonostante il permanere degli squilibri tra nord e sud, l'integrazione televisiva ha fatto del paese un campo dissodato e adatto ai semi delle più diverse colture.

Come si inquadra, in tale contesto, il problema della partecipazione? Nella maggior parte dei paesi in cui la televisione si è sviluppata nell'ultimo ventennio, essa si è fatta luce — secondo De Rita — in autonomia, senza collegamento con i più generali processi della politica culturale.<sup>14</sup> Talché il discorso sul ruolo promozionale del mezzo nei confronti della partecipazione è stato fatto, finora, in termini di prospettiva. Storicamente la situazione italiana si è caratterizzata per una struttura sociale con forme di solidarietà primarie (famiglia, parentela, vicinato), non estese ai meccanismi più complessi della convivenza; per una cultura tradizionalmente di élite, poco legata alla realtà locale e insensibile allo spirito popolare; per una gamma molto ristretta di stimoli culturali, in assenza di un pluralismo di centri e mezzi. Neppure gli anni del boom economico e della mobilità sociale (1955-1970) sono riusciti

<sup>14</sup> GIUSEPPE DE RITA, *La partecipazione nel quadro socioculturale italiano*, relazione introduttiva al cit. Incontro.

a invertire la tendenza. I processi di trasformazione hanno provocato un'impennata delle migrazioni (sud-nord, campagna-città), con conseguente rottura delle piccole comunità d'insediamento e costituzione di informi periferie urbane, e una espansione del settore terziario-burocratico, con conseguente moltiplicazione di comportamenti formalistici e anonimi. Tutto questo ha determinato un calo ulteriore della « capacità di partecipazione », cioè delle possibilità di azione collettiva e di decisione comunitaria. L'espansione di alcune strutture (scuola, radio, televisione) è stata meramente quantitativa, limitandosi ad assicurare al nuovo pubblico una « prima lettura » del preesistente patrimonio culturale. Sul piano istituzionale sono andati in crisi gli enti locali, e in particolare i comuni, vale a dire le strutture più vicine al meccanismo di partecipazione.

Non sarebbe tuttavia corretto, afferma De Rita, accettare la constatazione come una « condanna senza scampo ». La situazione attuale presenta germi da non sottovalutare: progressivo pluralismo delle sedi culturali e decisionali; maggiore ricchezza dei canali di socializzazione; progressiva complessità del vivere sociale (grandi agglomerati di insediamento, crescente domanda di servizi civili e sociali, ricerca di nuovi moduli di comportamento collettivo); insorgenza di una solidarietà collettiva su basi differenti (operai, studenti, abitanti di una zona); bidirezionalità del rapporto di comunicazione culturale e di massa (valutazione selettiva dei messaggi). Si tratta di fenomeni che, ormai affiorati a livello di sufficiente chiarezza, richiedono di trovare un più esplicito impatto sulla realtà sociale. Nel contesto emergente la televisione è chiamata a modificare il suo ruolo nella direzione della partecipazione comunitaria.

Per Angelo Romanò il coinvolgimento operato dalla televisione anticipa, al di sotto di qualsiasi controllo, una realtà socioculturale cui dovranno adeguarsi istituzioni, norme e codici.<sup>15</sup> Sappiamo abbastanza bene cosa è convogliato sui mi-

<sup>15</sup> ANGELO ROMANÒ, *Televisione e partecipazione - Introduzione ai programmi di spettacolo*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

lioni di antenne che coronano le nostre abitazioni, ma quasi nulla sappiamo di quanto « arriva » agli spettatori. In una televisione coesistono tante televisioni quanti sono i codici culturali in possesso dei ricettori. Se è vero che la cultura televisiva provoca, nel suo impatto con le culture nazionali, regionali e locali, una profonda crisi di sopravvivenza alle medesime, non è meno vero che, subito dopo, si organizza una reazione contro la cultura vincente, la quale entra a sua volta in crisi.

In Italia, al movimento d'integrazione registratosi tra gli anni '50 e '60 è subentrato, a cavallo tra i '60 e i '70, un fenomeno opposto per cui si sono esaltati, all'interno del corpo sociale, elementi di divisione e conflitto. I mass media, e in primo luogo la televisione, agiscono come fattore di accelerazione e svolgono un ruolo positivo se vengono rispettate le condizioni di un libero svolgimento. E' su queste condizioni che oggi, non soltanto in Italia, il dibattito è particolarmente animato. Quelle offerte dai due tipi di sistemi attualmente dominanti (enti sovvenzionati dalla pubblicità e enti controllati dal governo) non sono del tutto soddisfacenti. Occorrerà impegnarsi per concretizzare ordinamenti che garantiscano il diritto della collettività al rispetto, alla libera espressione, alla salvaguardia dei propri valori.

La diversità dei sistemi televisivi vigenti negli Stati Uniti e in Italia è legata, a giudizio di De Luca, alla differenziazione dei rispettivi contesti storico-sociali.<sup>16</sup> In America, l'aspirazione alla giustizia fa seguito all'aspirazione alla libertà. In questa prospettiva si sviluppa la dialettica tra stampa e potere, tra radiotelevisione e potere, tra mezzi di massa e opinione pubblica, con una mobilitazione sui temi civili che alimenta i ripensamenti critici. Il richiamo ai valori primari è civile, libero, perfino spietato. L'Italia è « un paese antico che sa poco di partecipazione ». La democrazia — con la persistente divisione tra nord e sud, le emigrazioni, l'industrializzazione

<sup>16</sup> VILLY DE LUCA, *Funzione informativa della televisione e partecipazione - Introduzione ai programmi informativi*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

accelerata, le autonomie locali più concesse che conquistate — ha in fondo vitalizzato le ideologie. Scuola, sindacati e regioni sono alcuni dei momenti di partecipazione colti da una televisione in regime di monopolio. « Al nodo del profitto, che caratterizza il sistema televisivo americano, corrisponde da noi il nodo del rapporto con il potere ». Il superamento del *gap* tra società politica e società civile passa per l'imparzialità. Il futuro, con gli sviluppi tecnologici della comunicazione bidirezionale, si prospetta all'insegna di una maggiore partecipazione. Un confronto di opinioni sulla « funzione culturale » della televisione, osserva dal canto suo Fabiani, apre la strada al « giudizio globale » sul mezzo e all'individuazione del rapporto che sussiste tra il « modo di fare » la televisione e le caratteristiche socioculturali dell'ambiente.<sup>17</sup> Per quanto riguarda l'Italia, l'ambiente appare marcato dagli squilibri tra nord e sud, tra civiltà contadina e civiltà industriale, nonché da un sistema politico con preminenza di determinate componenti. In tale contesto il monopolio è sembrato, per la televisione, una garanzia di libertà e obiettività.

Quali sono dunque gli effetti socioculturali della televisione? Quali possibilità esistono di mutare nel senso della partecipazione il suo ruolo? A questi interrogativi hanno cercato di rispondere, nel ricordato incontro di Roma, americani e italiani. Dal confronto dei principi e delle esperienze resta confermata la diversità di approccio tra il sistema commerciale e il sistema di servizio pubblico. Un'idea è sembrata legare i due indirizzi: la televisione è piuttosto idonea a rafforzare le idee dominanti che a costruire o distruggere gli equilibri culturali, per cui diventa pericolosa per la collettività una gestione (di qualsiasi tipo) fondata sull'interesse di un solo gruppo. La televisione potrà portare un contributo decisivo allo sviluppo comunitario nella misura in cui il pubblico, la società, parteciperà, con le sue strutture intermedie, al progresso del medium nella direzione del pluralismo, del localismo, del « contatto » con la realtà.

<sup>17</sup> FABIANO FABIANI, *Televisione e cultura - Introduzione ai programmi culturali*, relazione al cit. Incontro.

**Informazione**

**RADIO TV**

studi documenti e notizie

*A little report of Rome Meeting,  
January 17-19, 1974 .  
With best regards*

*Carlo Gagliardi*

**rai**

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RADIOTELEVISIONE ITALIANA

# The "Real" World of Television

By LARRY GROSS

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Imagine a hermit who lives in a room which is linked with the outside world via a television set that can receive only dramatic programs. His knowledge of the world would be built exclusively out of the images and "facts" which he could glean from an unending diet of fictional events. Clearly, the importance of the various elements of his "reality" would be determined by the frequency of their appearance and the centrality of their roles.

Similarly, the ways in which constituents of the television world are portrayed and organized would be the only source of his knowledge of their value and of their interrelationships. The population of his world would be that of television drama; his expectations and judgments would be derived from the conventions of plot and outcome that dominate television drama; his view of human nature would be based on the shallow psychology of central-casting characterization.

While few are likely to find themselves solely dependent upon television drama for their knowledge of the world, it seems worth asking how much an average adult's view of the world actually resembles that of the hypothetical

hermit. And, possibly more important, how similar will a child's view be, given his relatively limited exposure to the complexities of the "real" world and his steady diet of exposure to the world of television?

The dominant stylistic convention of Western narrative art—novels, plays, films, TV dramas—is that of representational realism. However stereotyped television plots are, viewers assume that they take place against a backdrop of the real world. Characters must behave as normal people would in most situations. When the impossible does occur, it will often be treated as if it, too, were part of a natural order in which nuns can fly and horses speak.

If the premise of realism in television drama seems a bit thin for sophisticated adult viewers, it is certainly more plausible for children, who are not as skilled at discerning the evidence of "poetic" license.

A doctoral dissertation completed recently by James Murphy at the Annenberg School has shown the extent to which children will respond to a story shown them in the form of photographic slides by stating that it was "real"—that it really happened. The reasons the children give for their judgments tend to be based precisely on the assumption of realism. They "know" the story is real because in real life they have seen the kinds of things that are in the story.

The basic topography of TV drama offers to the unsuspecting viewer a continuous stream of "facts" and impressions. The

premise of realism is a Trojan horse which carries within it a highly selective and purposeful image of the facts of life.

What are the lessons of this hidden curriculum, and are they indeed learned by the unsuspecting pupils of television? These are the questions which George Gerbner (my co-researcher) and I are currently addressing in an attempt to analyze the critical symbolic messages of television drama and to trace their impact on the beliefs and values of its audiences.

The central realities which television depicts may well be those dealing with power. Power can be expressed in many ways, only the crudest of which is violence and its outcomes. The basic reality of the television world is the reality of the American middle-class establishment; its morality is the conventional and rigid Sunday-school morality of the middle class; its heroes and villains are those of the great silent majority.

Power and success are the province of the white, the male, the middle/upper-middle class. If the ability to inflict violence without suffering it in return is a measure of power, such power is held by whites against nonwhites and by males against females. Although the messages of television are often more subtle, the primary message is always the centrality of the white male. In fact, the most glaring discrepancy between the television world and the viewer's image of reality is probably the four-to-one preponderance of men over women in evening television

*(Continued on page 89)*

The research reported in this paper is part of the "Cultural Indicators" project (NIMH Grant #MH21196 to George Gerbner and Larry Gross) currently being conducted at the Annenberg School of the University of Pennsylvania.

drama (the numbers are evenly balanced in the daytime soap operas).

Women's role in television is defined almost exclusively in terms of their relationship to the male heroes and villains. This relationship is most often romantic and, therefore, most women are young and attractive—the spoils that go to the victor.

The patterns of violence and victimization in television drama must be seen in terms of the overall population of the television world. Nonwhites make up one-fourth of the population of television drama but are more likely to be involved in violence than are whites.

When we compared men and women characters who were involved in violence, we found the women far more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violence.

After comparing the facts of life on television with those available for parallel aspects of the "real world," Dr. Gerbner and I are trying to ascertain what respondents (adults and children, viewers and nonviewers) think is the true state of affairs (and, often, how they think these are depicted on television). By matching the judgments of our respondents with the data derived from our analysis of television drama and from real-life sources, we can build a composite picture of the relationships between these three images of the world.

In many cases, it should be possible to trace a line extending between the image of the world via TV and that image which presumably reflects the true world of fact, and then place our respondents at various points along the dimension. In such cases, we may be able to see how close our viewers come to seeing the world as would our hypothetical hermit.

Instead of the projective tests commonly used by clinical psychologists, we are using a semiprojective procedure as the central methodological tool to examine the images of reality which may be cultivated by television drama.

The first semiprojective material we have assembled consists of a large set of passport-type photographs of a heterogeneous group of people. These have been reliably coded in terms of sex, age, and race and can be put together in various ways. We have used somewhat different sets for different purposes and are currently testing a group of 40 pictures divided into equal subgroups of black and white, male and female, young (18-30) and old (35-60). In addition, we can utilize groups which represent other population segments, for example, the elderly or Asians. Most of our data were gathered from children—most of whom were white.

As mentioned earlier, in the world of television, the "victimization" ratios demonstrate the power of the white and the male over the nonwhite and the female. When we asked children to make judgments about our picture-set people, we found very similar patterns. Employing one method, we asked children to rate each picture in a group of white individuals in terms of the

likelihood that the person might murder someone or be murdered.

Another group of children was asked to pick, out of a biracial set, all of those who might be murderers and all who might be the victims of murder (these are not mutually exclusive). They were also asked to make the same choices in terms of TV.

Looking at the ratios of murderers to victims by race, sex, and age, one finds a pattern which is familiar to television viewers. White males are judged to be equally murderous and victimized, black males are mainly murderous, and black and white females are victimized. The killers are the young males. The victims are young females and old males. Children see this pattern as essentially the same in terms of life and television.

The picture sets have also been used to explore the casting of characters for more mundane roles. We have asked children to pick out of our sets those persons who might be found in a variety of occupational roles.

The patterns here are mostly quite consistent with the world of television. Doctors are men, and nurses are women. As one eight-year-old put it, "Anyone can be a doctor, as long as he's a man." Doctors are also relatively mature; nurses, especially in the opinion of heavy viewers, are young (as is the case on television but not in real life).

When we asked children to assign professions to our picture-people, we find that scientists are primarily white males, police are white and nonwhite males, teachers are about evenly divided between white and nonwhite and for heavy viewers (but not in reality), more likely to be male.

We are also working with a survey questionnaire in which we ask adults to answer over 40 "factual" questions. The questions are constructed so as to offer the respondent a choice

between two or more answers, all of which, in fact, are incorrect.

The incorrect answers are chosen so as to reflect either the bias that is characteristic of television drama or to represent a bias in a direction opposite to that which would be found on television. In other words, these questions require the respondent to choose answers which may reflect either a "television" or a "nontelevision" (which often means "real world") bias.

For example, respondents were asked to guess their own chances of encountering violence in any one week. The answers provided were typical either of television patterns (50:50, 10:1) or of the real world (100:1).

The questionnaire was administered to a probability sample in four metropolitan areas that had been prescreened to include equal numbers of "heavy" TV viewers (4 hours or more per day) and "light" viewers (less than 2 hours), matched on the basis of sex and education. The survey was conducted in April 1973, and although we have only partially analyzed the results at this point, some rather striking patterns are emerging.

Heavy television viewers are consistently, often to a statistically significant degree, more likely to choose the television-biased answer than are light viewers.

Heavy viewers, for example, are much more likely than light viewers to overestimate the U.S. proportion of the world population, to overestimate the percentages of those employed as professionals, as athletes and entertainers, and of males employed in law enforcement. They are also more likely to overestimate the rate of violent crime and their own chances of being the victim of violence.

We have been interested to note that television news programs cultivate assumptions about reality and encourage the development of values in viewers in much the same pattern

as the drama shows do. This is particularly striking in view of our finding that heavy readers of newspapers and news magazines show an opposite tendency: They are less likely to pick the television-biased answers.

We feel this is an important finding which may help identify the cultivating powers of the various media and allow us to assess the effects of television in the overall context of media exposure.

Somewhat more surprising is the fact that education does not seem to predict cultivation patterns in a completely consistent manner. As we had supposed, respondents with a college education are less likely to choose the television-biased answers but, in some cases, they seem just as likely to do so as those with only high school or grade school education.

It is reasonable to ask whether the picture of the world as seen on television is, in fact, very distorted. It would be hard to argue that women and blacks are not relatively subservient to a power structure dominated by white males. The realities of that power may be more complex in real life, but the lesson is not false in essence.

Why then, some might argue, should our children not learn the truth about the world they are going to live in? Our answer is that the manner in which television cultivates the images and expectations of such a reality may well strengthen the hold of the powers it portrays.

The audience for which the message of television is intended is the great (sometimes silent) majority of white, middle-class, patriotic citizens who believe that America is a democracy (the leaders act in accordance with the desires of the people), that our economy is based on a free market (which is governed by the laws of supply and demand and free competition), and (most likely) that God is alive, white, and male. The middle class is the message.

Many people may disapprove of the fact that television clearly reflects the concentration of power and success in the hands of the white, male, middle-class majority, but few seem concerned with the fact that television ignores what many believe is an overwhelming concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a very small white, male elite, whose power may well be in-

creasing as a result of the rapid acceleration of national and cross-national conglomeration.

The silent majority may believe that it is the ultimate source of power in our great democracy, and television drama confirms this belief. It seems reasonable to assume that what people see in the world of television does conform in large part to their image of reality, if it does not, indeed, determine that image.

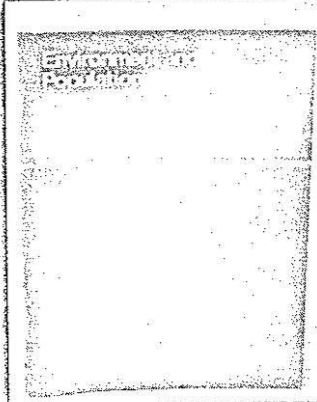
Dr. Gerbner and I are less concerned with proving a cause-and-effect relationship between the two images of reality than in estimating the degree of similarity and the areas of disparity. To the degree that television reflects the beliefs and values of the majority culture, that similarity should exist regardless of specific viewing habits or patterns.

The pessimistic tone of our analysis may lead the reader to wonder why we should seek to gather more proofs of an altogether too tangible and distasteful pudding. The answer, once again, lies in the peculiar nature of the conventions of dramatic fiction. The power of the hidden message of the television world may well derive precisely from its invisibility. What is not seen, or, if seen, is taken as natural and real, cannot be questioned. Only by spelling out the latent message can one evaluate and then, perhaps, reject it.

Research on the nature of resistance to persuasion has shown that many of the beliefs that people are least likely to question are relatively vulnerable to counterpersuasion precisely because people have never questioned them and, therefore, have never seriously thought about why they have them, or whether, in fact, the beliefs hold up under scrutiny.<sup>2</sup> There is no need to assume that the implicit and powerful lessons of our cultural false consciousness are unchangeable. It is certainly clear, however, that they must be made explicit before they can be challenged and possibly changed. □

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Environmental and  
 Consumer Education  
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The primary objective of  
 this sourcebook is to help  
 you relate the causes and  
 consequences of  
 population change to other  
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## THEORY TESTED

# Naive Murder Plan Laid to TV Violence

By **BARRY SIEGEL**  
Times Staff Writer

WHEATON, Ill.—This is a story about television and violence—but it differs from most.

No one here suggests that Robert W. Nelson, 23, hit his mother on the head with a baseball bat and pushed her out a 12-story hotel window because he had seen something similar on TV. No one suggests that Nelson killed his mother because of subliminal urges aroused by TV violence.

What Thomas Knight, assistant state's attorney for DuPage County, does say is that Nelson got caught because of TV. Knight suggests that Nelson put together a puzzlingly naive murder plan because all he knew about murder and violence came from TV.

Knight can't prove this, of course, but he was sure enough about his theory to bring it up before a jury during his closing argument on the final day of Nelson's trial. Knight, who, as prosecutor is chief of the criminal division in the DuPage County state attorney's office, says the TV theory was the only way to make the evidence logical, and to suggest to the jury why Nelson would try such an unworkable murder plan.

The story began when Oakbrook, Ill., police officer Donald Craft arrived at the Sheraton Oakbrook, 23 miles from Chicago, at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, July 15, 1978, knowing only that a woman had gone out a window of the 12-story hotel.

As he approached the hotel's west entrance, Craft testified in court, he saw a young man in his early 20s, of medium height and build, with curly blond hair and wearing eyeglasses. "My mother fell out the window," the man told the officer.

Craft continued into the hotel where he was met by officer Paul Tadelski at the elevator. The young man again approached them, and the policeman noticed he was bleeding from his left wrist and had blood on his shoes and clothes. "My poor mother, she fell, please help her, please help her," the man said, according to Craft's testimony. The officers told him to go sit in the lobby.

Soon after, Oakbrook Police Detective Mike Golz arrived, and the body of Dorothy M. Nelson, 52, a secretary from nearby Elmhurst, Ill., was found on the second-story roof above the hotel's driveway canopy. Looking up from where the body lay, the officers could see a broken window directly above, on the hotel's top floor. The young man in the lobby was the dead woman's son, Robert, a student at Western Illinois University.

Because he was bleeding from his wrist wound, Nelson was driven to Hinsdale Hospital by officer Al Piszarek and a paramedic from the Superior ambulance company, Karen Brittner. Craft returned to the Oakbrook police station and typed up a sick/injured report about the incident—not a murder report.

But Golz, remaining at the hotel, began gathering a puzzling set of clues. Upstairs in Room 1221, from

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LA Times

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which Dorothy Nelson fell, Golz would later testify that he found blood everywhere—on the carpeting, on both sides of the door handles, on the bathroom floor and commode, on the window and on the ledge outside. There was also a hole in the carpet, where a patch had been cut out, and a camera loaded with film.

The room was partially decorated for a party—a party, it would later emerge, celebrating the son's engagement to a fellow student at the university.

Golz decided that Nelson would have to be questioned further.

Brittner, the paramedic, rode in the back seat of a patrol car with Nelson as Pisarek drove them to Hinsdale Hospital. She later testified that during the ride she saw Nelson take a razor blade from his wallet and put it in his right front pocket. When they arrived at the hospital, Brittner pulled Pisarek aside and told him that Nelson had a razor blade.

Pisarek testified at the trial that he approached Nelson as he lay on a hospital emergency room table and—fearing that Nelson might harm himself—reached into the young man's pocket in search of the razor. Nelson started to sit up, but Pisarek told him to lie down.

Pisarek testified that he did not find the blade but did find a hotel key, another set of keys and a key ring, and a crumpled piece of paper, thick as a postcard, about 3 inches long and 2 inches wide. Pisarek unfolded the paper. Written on it was a list.

In order, it read: "First trip. Bring tape. Bring up snacks. Bring up razor blade. Fix room decoration. Put out snacks and soda. Hide bat."

Those items were crossed off. The remaining were not: "Go home. Bring mums. Bunt. Sacrifice. Arrange room (couch). Take off clothes. Crack glass. Put on suit pants and shirt. Bat in suit coat. Vator—second floor dispose. Stairs down to 1. Come up same way. Dispose. 1/2 shave."

Pisarek had no search warrant and did not arrest Nelson. He did ask hospital personnel to keep Nelson's clothing in a secure place.

Later that afternoon Golz and hotel manager Richard Betty followed the path as outlined on the list. In the stairwell of the hotel near the first floor, according to court testimony, they found a baseball bat with blood stains and part of the handle sawed off. On the floor nearby were pieces of bloody cellophane. A hotel employee, Kim Kelly, found a wastebasket outside the west door of the hotel, 15 feet from the bat, containing bloody towels, a small piece of bloody carpet and more bloody cellophane. The prosecutor later suggested the cellophane appeared to be a sleeve of sorts.

Golz eventually discovered that when Nelson reserved a room at the Sheraton Oakbrook he requested one on the 12th floor, facing north. The state attorney's office devel-

### **Witness tells of hearing crash, seeing window broken and a body falling.**

oped the film in the camera found in the hotel room. There was a photo of Dorothy Nelson standing with her back to the window, a photo of her son standing with his back to the window, and a photo of the window only.

Then came what the police detective considered the clincher. Three days after the mother's death, Golz received a phone call from Chicago attorney Louis Biro. Biro said he wanted to make a statement.

Biro later testified in court that he, his wife Irene and a family friend, Byron Jones, were entering their car in the east lot of the hotel on the afternoon of the death. They heard a crash, looked up and saw a small hole the size of a softball in a window on the top floor. They heard another crash, looked up again, and saw that the hole was now larger. Then they saw a hand appear, knocking and pushing out more glass, making the hole larger and larger. Then they saw a person's head and shoulders come out the opening very slowly, and a body fall the height of the building.

The same day that Biro called Golz, July 18, Nelson was charged with the murder of his mother.

At 7 p.m., police went to the Nelson home in the middle-class suburb of Elmhurst, where mother and son had lived together. Nelson was not home, but one hour later he turned himself in at the Oakbrook police station. Bail was set at \$350,000.

The case of the People of the State of Illinois vs. Robert W. Nelson, which went to trial in July, 1979, would seem to be just another of the seven or eight murder cases prosecuted in affluent DuPage County every year—except that this one did not make sense. The murder plan, as outlined by the prosecutor, seemed illogical.

Using the crumpled list found in Nelson's pocket, Knight laid out to the jury what he considered to be the defendant's murder plan.

Knight told the jury that Nelson intended to make it look as though he and his mother were decorating the hotel room for his engagement party. Then, Nelson planned to hit his mother with a bat that was covered with a cellophane sleeve, so there would be no transfer of wood fibers, which could be used as evidence.

He then intended to break the window, Knight said, throw the body out, take the elevator to the second floor and the stairs to the first floor, dispose of the bat, return to the room, and start shaving in the bathroom. (Knight took

the word "vator" on Nelson's list to mean elevator). Nelson planned to emerge half-shaven from the bathroom and pretend to discover that his mother had fallen out the window, Knight contended.

But given the large amount of blood found all over the room, and the loud, lengthy banging away at the window, how did Nelson think he could make the murder appear to be an accident?

After all, no one, including Nelson's defense attorneys, ever suggested Nelson was insane or of diminished capacity. He was clever enough, in Knight's scenario, to cover the bat with cellophane and saw off the bat handle so it would fit under his suit coat.

"Bob had three years of college, and is a bright person," George Hesick, one of Nelson's attorneys, said. "As laid out by the prosecution, it (the crime) is a stupid thing to do."

"Very strange, on a bright Saturday afternoon." "I think everyone connected with this case would agree this doesn't make sense," Circuit Court Judge John Bowman said at one point from the bench.

Knight also worried about this question. Despite the overwhelming package of evidence, a jury might hesitate to convict Nelson if all the details failed to make sense. Nelson's attorneys, after all, were not putting their client on the stand and were not offering a defense. Clearly, they were hoping that the jury just wouldn't buy the prosecution's scenario.

"So I tried to figure out what the list meant, how the plan went wrong, and why it went wrong," Knight said in a recent interview. "I decided Nelson obviously hadn't taken into account all the blood, and hadn't taken into account how hard it would be to break the window, and how hard it would be to lift a dead body up and out of a window. I asked myself why. I decided we could infer this was because Nelson had an unrealistic sense of what happens

# to TV Violence

when you hit someone on the head, or try to break a modern hotel window."

It was then Knight started thinking about TV. Television was not a new topic for him. Some time before, he had told his two young children, ages 4 and 6, that they could not watch any prime-time TV programs.

During his 10 years as a prosecutor, Knight had noticed more than once that TV seemed to affect people's sense of reality. Knight particularly worried about jurors and had found it useful to warn them at the start of many trials that the real criminal justice system is nothing like what is seen on shows such as "Perry Mason"—where the defendant is always innocent.

Often, jurors approach him after a trial to ask why something hadn't been done—such as why fingerprints hadn't been introduced during the trial. Knight has to explain that although Kojak always gets them, fingerprints in reality are physically difficult to lift off any surface.

Eventually, Knight started mentioning this fact to jurors before trials began, in his opening statements. Sometimes, he even brought a fingerprint expert into court to explain during the trial why the prosecutor did not have any prints. Knight also explained to the jury that in real trials, witnesses may not be as glib and consistent as they are on TV.

Finally, Knight thought about a case he had prosecuted just months earlier. An 11-year-old boy had been kidnapped from his home during a burglary by four teen-agers. The child's body was found a week later, in a forest preserve, with 22 stab wounds. The teen-ager responsible for the murder explained to a reform school official why he had stabbed the boy 22 times: "It wasn't like on TV. When I stabbed him, the knife would only go in a little way. He wouldn't die."

Knight theorized that Nelson's naivete in planning a murder came from watching TV. It was a speculation, he knew, but he considered it "a good speculation." He decided to include these thoughts in his 1½-hour closing argument to the jury.

"Like many of us," Knight told the jury, "Nelson was trapped by images of what happens on TV. On TV, when someone is hit on the head, he merely slumps to the floor, and doesn't bleed. In real life, if you strike someone on the head with a bat, the skin breaks and there is quite a lot of blood. It often spurts out. Robert Nelson did not anticipate this."

In the same way, Knight said, "Breaking a window seems easy on TV. You hit it, and it shatters. But just try to

## *Knight speculates naivete in murder came from watching TV.*

do that in real life, especially to an upper-floor window in a modern hotel. It doesn't work. It takes a long time and makes a lot of noise."

(Knight guessed that Nelson had cut his own wrist while trying to break the window—or perhaps he had done it on purpose in an effort to explain all the blood in the room).

Noting the large amount of blood on the hotel window ledge, Knight also suggested to the jury that Nelson couldn't lift his mother's body out the broken window as quickly as he had planned, since in real life, unlike on TV, a dead body makes a heavy burden.

Because of the unexpected blood and the extra time taken with the window, Knight told the jury that Nelson had to change his plans. He couldn't be seen in the elevator and he wouldn't have time to double back upstairs and start shaving. So instead, Knight suggested to the jury, Nelson stuffed a wastebasket with bloody towels (used to wrap his mother's head) and the patch of bloody carpet he had inexplicably cut out, perhaps to eliminate evidence.

By the time Nelson reached the first floor, Knight concluded to the jury, the police officers were already there. Nelson practically ran into them and he had to dump the bat and wastebasket wherever he could.

Others involved in the Nelson murder trial were not at all impressed with Knight's TV theory.

Nelson's chief defense attorney, George Lynch—a beefy, broad-faced impatient lawyer with a deep bass voice, a sarcastic, belligerent courtroom manner, and the reputation as one of the best criminal attorneys in the business—simply laughed and laughed upon mention of the TV idea.

Lynch's associate, Hesick, called the theory "sensationalism . . . it goes into the category of SPC—'stupid prosecutor comments.' There's nothing to it at all. No connection."

Even Judge Bowman, speaking privately in his chambers after the trial, called Knight's TV ideas "purely speculative." In a courtroom case like this, the judge said, "You've got to stick with the tangible evidence."

Some courtroom veterans noted that Knight was known as a "moralistic, narrow law enforcement type."

It was the sociologists and psychologists who study TV's effects who agreed most readily with Knight. To many of them, in fact, the idea is a familiar one. Knight did not know this; he had never read scientific studies about TV.

When questioned, George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, well-known for his analyses of violence on TV, said, "The idea that TV leads to a gross naivete in planning a murder is a very valid, interesting point. It is an acute perception . . . It is not inconsistent with what we know."

George Comstock, professor of public communications at Syracuse University, is considered to have as comprehensive a knowledge as anyone about research on violence on TV. He was one of the principal scientists behind the 1972 Surgeon General's inquiry into TV violence, and later as senior social psychologist at the Rand Corp., he edited the

# MURDER ON TV

Continued from 28th Page

definitive three-volume guide to all literature pertaining to TV and human behavior.

When questioned, Comstock said most psychologists, with "a few dissidents", would agree that if you show viewers the actual consequences of a violent act—the bleeding, the pain, the broken bones—this tends to inhibit the viewers' violent tendencies. If you show viewers the act of violence, but sanitize the results, it tends to enhance their violent tendencies.

The professors' opinions were not, of course, introduced during the Nelson trial. But on Sept. 12, a Circuit Court jury of 10 women and 2 men found Robert Nelson guilty of murder.

At a sentencing hearing on Nov. 13, Dorothy Nelson's mother, sister and mother-in-law took the stand to say Robert had been a good son and they still believe him to be innocent. (They would not speak to a reporter, and the defense lawyers forbid interviews with Nelson). Judge Bowman, from the bench, said that "nothing in the defendant's background would indicate this type of behavior."

Then the judge sentenced Nelson to 40 years in prison.

A full understanding of Robert Nelson's case may never be reached. A Roman Catholic by birth, middle-class by upbringing (his father was treasurer for a manufacturing firm), engaged to be married, Nelson had two previous convictions, both minor, one for shoplifting and one for petty theft. A college roommate told a county investigator that he knew Nelson had a criminal record but felt "he didn't act like a criminal."

No motive for the murder was ever introduced into evidence. According to county investigators' reports in Knight's case file, the mother's co-workers said she had been arguing for years with her son over division of her late husband's estate, estimated at about \$250,000. These co-workers gave testimony to this effect in open court at the sentencing hearing, but Judge Bowman ordered it all stricken from the record because it was "too remote in time" to be material.

The issue of TV will play no role in the appeals that Nelson's attorneys plan to file. The main issue on appeal will be the crumpled list found in Nelson's pocket. His attorneys will argue that officer Pisarek committed an illegal search and seizure in the hospital emergency room, and that the note should never have been introduced into evidence. Courtroom observers here think this issue may be contested all the way to the Supreme Court.

In fact, it is the issue of search and seizure that makes this case particularly interesting to the legal community—not the matter of TV's impact.

But to prosecutor Knight, the Nelson case raises more than legal thoughts. For all his dislike of violence on TV, he has come to believe that if violence is to be shown at all, it perhaps should be shown in all its bloody gore.

"If this boy had seen only a steady diet of Sam Peckinpah films," Knight said one day recently, "he might not have tried to commit this murder."

# Los Angeles Times

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## Archie Bunker may be hazardous to bigots

By KAY MILLS

WASHINGTON — Archie Bunker's "meathead" son-in-law may be on the right track: watching Archie could be hazardous to a person's racial and ethnic outlook.

Reporting on a joint U.S.-Canadian study, a sociologist and a psychologist have concluded that "All in the Family" is "more likely reinforcing prejudice and racism than combating it."

Neil Vidmar, associate professor of psychology at the University of Western Ontario, and Milton Rokeach, professor of sociology and psychology at Washington State, found "that many persons did not see the program as a satire on bigotry" but instead tend to agree with Archie's ethnic slurs.

Vidmar and Rokeach entered the running debate on "All in the Family" through an article in the upcoming winter issue of *Journal of Communication*. The journal is a scholarly publication on media research's impact on public affairs put out for the International Communication Association by the Annenberg School Press in Philadelphia.

SOON AFTER the program debuted, CBS conducted a telephone survey for audience reaction. Its report, says Vidmar and Rokeach, "implied that most viewers perceived 'All in the Family's' satirical intent — and therefore its impact would, if anything, be to reduce prejudice."

To try to bring social scientists' methods to bear on the controversy, Vidmar and Rokeach surveyed 237 American teenagers in a Midwestern school and 130 adults randomly selected in London, Ontario. Both groups answered questions about the program as well as others designated to measure prejudice or ethnocentrism.

For example, they were asked how funny they found the show; whether they liked Archie or son-in-law Mike whom Archie always calls a long-haired bum; or who is made fun of most often.

The research tested two hypotheses: One on selective perception, suggesting that viewers would find "All in the Family" more or less entertaining depending on their degree of prejudice; and the other on selective exposure, predicting that people will not watch the program to the same extent depending on their prejudice.

THE SOCIAL SCIENTISTS found that highly prejudiced people "were significantly more likely than low prejudiced people to admire Archie over Mike and to perceive Archie as winning in the end."

Looking at the second theory, Vidmar and Rokeach found that frequent viewers of the program also admired Archie more than Mike. Frequent watchers in both samples "condoned Archie's ethnic slurs significantly more often than infrequent viewers," they said.

"All In the Family" producer Norman Lear and various critics contend that by "mixing humor with bigotry, the show leads to a cathartic reduction of bigotry," Vidmar and Rokeach said.

But they added that if highly prejudiced persons do not see the show as making fun of bigotry, they will not experience the cathartic reduction in prejudice.

"On balance," they concluded, "the study seems to support critics who have argued that All in the Family has harmful effects." *L1 Press 12/21/73*



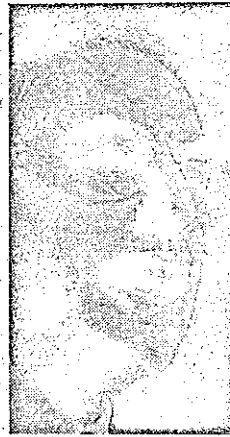
## Norman Mark

### Pastore keeps pushing for TV violence curbs

By Kay Mills

Newhouse News Service

WASHINGTON — Health, Education and Welfare Sec. Caspar Weinberger has reported to Sen. John O. Pastore (D-R.I.) that development of



Sen. John O. Pastore

a comprehensive television violence index will take at least two or three more years.

In turn, Pastore, who chairs the Senate subcommittee on communications, plans to hold hearings sometime this year on whether networks really have tried to curb violence in their programs. One research report has found, for example, that the level of televised violence has remained fairly constant since 1970.

A spokesman for Pastore's subcommittee said the panel would call in the networks, researchers from the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) who are studying

the question and members of the surgeon general's TV violence advisory committee.

PASTORE EVIDENTLY WANTS to make sure the issue isn't forgotten while research goes on. He had asked Weinberger to report on how HEW was implementing the sur-

Norman Mark is on assignment.

geon general's report. Pastore had particularly plugged for one of former Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld's recommendations: a violence index or profile to keep track of levels of mayhem and its effects on viewers.

Weinberger wrote Pastore that in the last fiscal year, five projects already under way received \$233,511 from NIMH and six new research studies got grants of \$123,437.

One project in progress by Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania found "the first clear demonstration of significant media effect" on what viewers know about the world, including threats from crime and violence, Weinberger said.

But he added that the NIMH staff and its consultants believe developing an adequate violence profile "will require a minimum of two to three additional years."

WEINBERGER SAID NIMH consultants advised that planning, development and application of any violence profile should be done outside government with federal financial support. That squares with a recommendation by Eli Rubinstein, psychiatry professor at the State University of New York, and editor of the surgeon general's report.

Writing in the winter issue of the *Journal of Communication*, Rubinstein has suggested this long-term body be organized in such a way as to avoid "First Amendment problems, adversary pressures or special interest influences."

Its major activities might be research on enhancing the value of TV to children, serving as a clearing house for progress reports and providing expert testimony on matters relating to children and television.

A SCHOLARLY STUDY

# Do Bigots Like Archie's Bigotry?

By **NORMAN DRESSER**  
Blade Entertainment Editor

Does "All in the Family" promote bigotry and prejudice?

This has been a controversial issue since the CBS series made its premiere just three years ago this week. Now comes a scholarly study in the *Journal of Communication*, published by the Annenberg School Press at the University of Pennsylvania, which supports the view that "All in the Family" does have harmful effects in that it possibly "encourages bigots."



**Norman Dresser**

In an article entitled "Archie Bunker's Bigotry: Perceptions in the Eye of the Beholder," two university professors, Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach, report that a study conducted among American adolescents and Canadian adults shows two primary reactions to the popular TV series.

In summary, they write, "Nonprejudiced viewers and minority group viewers may perceive and enjoy 'All in the Family' as satire, whereas prejudiced viewers may perceive and enjoy the show as 'telling it like it is'."

What they're really saying here is that the show confirms

the prejudices (good or bad) which already exist in the viewer's mind. This is not a very original or startling conclusion. The series might encourage bigots, although I've found that bigotry seldom needs a favorable climate to flourish.

But the point, really, is that "All in the Family" exposed bigotry on network television for the first time in the form of a situation comedy. This surely represented an advance over all sitcoms before this, which were wholly artificial and unreal. It broke new ground in a medium which advances about as fast as a crippled turtle.

It's true that some viewers admire Archie and condone his ethnic slurs. It's true also that Archie is portrayed sympathetically, despite his multitude of sins. But I can't help but think that more people regard "All in the Family" as satire rather than confirmation of their own prejudices.

And as I wrote in my review of the premiere show back in 1971, "There'll be a slightly uneasy feeling amid all the laughter — that this spotlight on prejudice flickers on most of us now and then."

I'm still proud of that review, which was an all-out rave for the show. But just to keep my hat snugly fitted onto my pointed head, let me confess that I commented in this same review, "It can be safely predicted that 'All in the Family' will not win big ratings." Well, that figures. I also forecast that the "Julie Andrews Show" would be a smash hit.

## Premiere Of New Ch. 11 Show Slated

"Axs Time," a new weekly half-hour entertainment show featuring personalities from minority groups, will make its premiere at 4 p.m. Saturday on WTOL-TV (Ch. 11).

The locally produced program will present popular music by guest artists and inter-

views with entertainment and business personalities. Producer and host is Dee Wolf.

## 'Merv Griffin Show' Extended Two Years

The "Merv Griffin Show," a syndicated variety series now being telecast in more than 100 markets in the U.S. and Canada, has been extended two years by Metromedia Producers Corp., distributor of the program.

The Griffin show, which is seen in this area on Chs. 13 and 2, is one of the nation's top syndicated programs. It holds the No. 1 ratings spot in its time slot in many top markets, including Boston, San Francisco, Oakland, Cleveland, and iMiami.

## Mitzi Gaynor Star Of Variety Special

Mitzi Gaynor, fondly remembered by many Toledo-

ans for her great revue last year in the Summer Star Theater series at the Masonic Auditorium, will star in a one-hour variety special on CBS-TV Monday, Feb. 4.

"Mitzi . . . A Tribute to the American Housewife" also will feature Ted Knight, Suzanne Pleshette, Jerry Orbach, and Jane Withers.

## 'Tomorrow' To Tape Six Shows In Gotham

NBC-TV's "Tomorrow," the late, late talk show which follows "Tonight," will tape six programs in New York in late January, the first time the series has originated outside its Burbank, Calif., studios.

# TV Now Our Society's Cultural Mainstream, Study Concludes

By Malcolm G. Scully

PHILADELPHIA

"If you don't watch television more than four hours a day, you're in the culture, but you're not of it," says Larry P. Gross.

In fact, Mr. Gross and his colleagues at the Annenberg school of communications of the University of Pennsylvania here believe, "for most Americans most of the time, television is popular culture."

"Never before have such large and heterogeneous publics—from the nursery to the nursing home, from ghetto to penthouse—shared so much of a system of messages and images, and the assumptions embedded in them," adds George Gerbner, dean of the school.

Mr. Gross and Mr. Gerbner run a project called "cultural indicators," in which they are seeking to identify the assumptions of television drama and chart their impact on viewers.

Mr. Gross notes that 10-year-olds look at television five hours a day, on the average. Some watch it for as much as 12 hours a day.

They get in a couple of hours of viewing before they leave for school and turn the set on again as soon as they return home in the afternoon, he explains.

## Designed as 'Crowd-Catchers'

Mr. Gerbner and Mr. Gross believe that television programs are essentially "crowd-catchers," designed to capture audiences for advertisers.

But, they say, in the process of serving corporate needs, television has also become "the mainstream of the symbolic environment cultivating common conceptions of life, society, and the world."

After a two-year pilot study, financed by the National Institute of Mental Health, they have made some profound and disturbing discoveries about both television drama and the people who watch it heavily—more than four hours a day.

For instance, they have found that half of all the characters on prime-time television commit vio-



George Gerbner: "The world of television drama does cultivate dominant conceptions of life and society."



Larry P. Gross: "Television both expresses and perpetrates a false consciousness about the way society works."

CHRONICLE PHOTOGRAPHS BY MALCOLM G. SCULLY

lence of one form or another. One fifth perpetrate a crime, 6 per cent kill someone, and 3 per cent are killed.

As a consequence, Mr. Gerbner notes, heavy viewers of television "significantly overestimate their own chances of encountering violence in real life."

Television, he adds, "is making some people more afraid of their safety than they need to be."

## Among the other findings:

► Even though in real life women school teachers outnumber men by two to one, school children who are heavy viewers think that most school teachers are men. Hence, they view their own experience as abnormal.

► Heavy viewers believe there are more policemen and private detectives in real life than there are. They also overestimate America's percentage of the world population, and they believe population density in the United States is greater than in other countries.

► Heavy viewers of television have developed a distorted view of the judicial process.

"Most criminal cases involving violence are decided by judges. On television, however, courtroom trials are an important dramatic arena, and guilt or innocence is usually determined by juries," says Mr. Gerbner.

Mr. Gross adds that plea bargaining, a common feature of the judicial process, is rarely if ever shown in television drama, so heavy viewers think it is unusual rather than commonplace.

He cites also a district attorney in New York who recently complained that television was making it more difficult to obtain convictions. Jurors have come to expect some kind of dramatic confession or revelation as evidence of guilt, he says.

Summarizing such findings, Mr. Gerbner says: "The world of television drama

does cultivate dominant conceptions of life and society even (or especially) when the real-life facts or overt values hold otherwise."

## 'A False Consciousness'

Mr. Gross says: "Television both expresses and perpetrates a false consciousness about the way society works; and perhaps about the way it should work."

The Annenberg school first began studying the content of prime-time television six years ago, and added the study of viewers' perceptions of reality when it received support for the pilot project from the National Institute of Mental Health.

During the six years, researchers have seen 656 different programs, with 1,907 leading characters and 3,505 acts or episodes. They watch dramatic programs in prime time (7 p.m. to 11 p.m.) during the week,

and all day Saturday for one full week in the fall of the year.

They confirm some suspicions about the content:

► Women are outnumbered by men, four to one. Most female characters do not have jobs; of those who do, half are entertainers. Most of the rest of the employed women are in nursing or some other health-related field.

► Poverty occurs only once in every 100 settings on television. When it does show up, says Mr. Gerbner, "it is comic."

What the researchers find most disturbing about television drama is that its realism makes it more difficult for viewers to distinguish between what they see on television and real life.

"The premise of realism is a Trojan horse which carries within it a highly selective and purposeful image of the facts of life," says Mr. Gross.

## Sickness and Reality

In addition, he says, the realism is presented with such technical competence that viewers have come to see sickness of production as a sign of reality and quality.

Mr. Gerbner sees television as a new religion that provides viewers with a complete world view. It offers them an acceptable view of society in which problems are solved, and the inexplicable is explained.

The fact that the world view is distorted is irrelevant, Mr. Gerbner says, just as it has been irrelevant in other religions.

Mr. Gerbner is worried that most educators have failed, thus far, to take the impact of television into account when they talk about students.

Few schools of education now prepare teachers to be sensitive to the impact of the media, especially television, on their students, or even to understand "the hidden curriculum" that television teaches.

Mr. Gerbner and Mr. Gross believe their research provides the

"first clear-cut evidence of massive influence of television viewing and other media exposure upon public conceptions of social reality."

## Study to Go On

They hope in the future to provide continuous monitoring of the content and impact of television as part of an effort to become more culturally "self-conscious," and to try to affect the content of television drama itself.

In addition to the study of cultural indicators, faculty members of the Annenberg school have prepared studies of other aspects of television.

► Economist William Melody, author of *Children's Television, the Economics of Exploitation*, has developed a formula for eliminating advertising from children's television without, he says, serious financial hardships for broadcasters.

► Robert Lewis Shayon, critic of the media, has conducted a study of cable television, financed by the United Church of Christ, in which he finds that development of the system has been disappointing thus far, in part because of policies of the Federal Communications Commission.

In the meantime, Mr. Gross points out that the study of television and its impact has raised a number of issues still to be studied in detail.

## 'Spectator Skills'

What, he asks, is the impact of heavy viewing on the development of "competence" in areas of arts and crafts? Television, he says, is a passive medium in which whatever skills are developed are "spectator skills."

He notes also that television in the United States, while it shows a single image of social reality, "atomizes" people rather than bringing them together.

What, he asks, are the consequences, if any, of having "popular culture" absorbed in isolation rather than in groups?

## 'Sesame Street' Hit

### By 50-Pct. Fund Cut

NEW YORK

The Children's Television Workshop, which produces two of public television's most respected educational programs for children—"Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company"—has been forced to drop 13 staff members because of a 50-per-cent cut in federal support.

The Office of Education recently announced that its allocation to the workshop for 1973-74 would drop from \$6-million to \$3-million.

Joan Ganz Cooney, executive director, said that in addition to cutting staff, "we have been forced to cut back in much of our experimentation, including production and research in such areas as animated and live-acting films."

She said the savings would enable the workshop to produce both series through the current season.



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# UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA 19104

## News Bureau

Franklin Building  
3451 Walnut Street

Mr. Donald Johnston  
Week-in-Review Section  
The New York Times  
229 W. 43rd Street  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Johnston:

Enclosed is a short article which I believe might form the basis for an interesting and provocative article in the Week-in-Review section of the Times. Save for a few minor errors, it outlines some of the discoveries being made about the role of television in our culture.

Dr. Gerbner has expressed interest in writing a piece for the section. Several different perspectives are possible.

If you feel such an article would be valuable, please contact me at the above address or at (215) 594-8721.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chat Blakeman  
Staff Writer  
News Bureau

23 January, 1974  
encl.

bcc/ Dr. George Gerbner

population. The adaptability of the students, the enthusiasm and ability of the faculty and supporting staff, the energy and skill of the administrators and, above all, the talented and sensitive leadership of the President, have contributed to the building of a Community College of which all concerned are justifiably proud.

The evaluation team finds that Kingsborough Community College is not only a first rate institution of higher learning overall but may well be "the bellwether of the flock" in dealing with the problem of Open Admissions. In this and other areas, Kingsborough might well serve as a model for her sister institutions.

Of course, if the tremendous potential inherent in this fine institution's programs is to be fully realized there must be an intensive and ongoing program of research and evaluation.

Kingsborough has addressed itself to the problems inherent in an open admissions policy in a realistic and constructive fashion on numerous different fronts. Although there are varying degrees of enthusiasm for the program among the faculty and staff, it is quite evident that the vast majority are supportive of the concept and new converts are being made.

With gifted instructors who - first and foremost - want to teach, and inspired counsellors who possess the special skills and desire to work with educationally deprived students, the College believes it can deliver on the promise of Open Admissions. The Committee shares that belief.

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### IT'S OFFICIAL WE'RE IN THE GROUND

"Officially we have started construction on the Science and Art building near T-5 and along the shore and are about to break ground for the Physical Education building," according to Henry Fournier, Campus Facilities Officer. The Physical Education building is to be located near

the present faculty parking lot opposite the T-1 building. The sea wall contract has been bid and will begin construction shortly. This work will cover rehabilitation and construction along the entire campus waterfront. Beach rehabilitation will begin later in Phase I as part of the landscaping.

The library and the Classroom Cluster have already been bid and contracts will be awarded shortly. The remaining buildings in Phase I have been bid with the exception of the Student-Faculty Center and the Administration-Theatre complex.

"We expect that everything in Phase I will be under construction by the beginning of summer," he said. The Science and Art building should be completed toward the end of 1975 along with the Physical Education building. "Hopefully, we will begin to occupy these buildings for the spring semester of 1976. The remaining buildings of Phase I are to be completed in the summer of 1977."

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*Campus News - Kingsborough Community College*  
*Feb. 1971*

### TV NOW SOCIETY'S MAINSTREAM

"If you don't watch television more than four hours a day, you're in the culture, but you're not of it," says Larry P. Gross.

In fact, Mr. Gross and his colleagues at the Annenberg school of communications of the University of Pennsylvania here believe, "for most Americans most of the time, television is popular culture."

"Never before have such large and heterogeneous publics -- from the nursery to the nursing home, from ghetto to penthouse shared so much of a system of messages and images, and the assumptions embedded in them," adds George Gerbner, dean of the school.

Mr. Gross and Mr. Gerbner run a project called "cultural indicators," in which they are seeking to identify the assumptions of television drama and chart their impact on viewers.

Mr. Gross notes that 10-year-olds look at television five hours a day, on the average. Some watch it for as much as 12 hours a day.

They get in a couple of hours of viewing before they leave for school and turn the set on again as soon as they return home in the afternoon, he explains.

Mr. Gerber and Mr. Gross believe that television programs are essentially "crowd-catchers," designed to capture audiences for advertisers.

But, they say, in the process of serving corporate needs, television has also become "the mainstream of the symbolic environment cultivating common conceptions of life, society, and the world."

After a two-year pilot study, financed by the National Institute of Mental Health, they have made some profound and disturbing discoveries about both television drama and the people who watch it heavily -- more than four hours a day.

For instance, they have found that half of all the characters of prime-time television commit violence of one form or another. One fifth perpetrate a crime, 6 per cent kill someone, and 3 per cent are killed.

As a consequence, Mr. Gerbner notes, heavy viewers of television "significantly overestimate their own chances of encountering violence in real life."

Television, he adds, "is making some people more afraid for their safety than they need to be."

Among the other findings:

-- Even though in real life women school teachers outnumber men by two to one, school children who are heavy viewers think that most school teachers are men. Hence, they view their own experience as abnormal.

-- Heavy viewers believe there are more policemen and private detectives in real

life than there are. They also overestimate America's percentage of the world population, and they believe population density in the United States is greater than in other countries.

-- Heavy viewers of television have developed a distorted view of the judicial process.

Summarizing such findings, Mr. Gerber says:

"The world of television drama does cultivate dominant conceptions of life and society even (or especially) when the real-life facts or overt values hold otherwise."

Jan. 21, 1974

*The Chronicle of Higher Education*

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## FACULTY REFERRAL SERVICE

Chancellor Robert J. Kibbee has announced the establishment of a faculty referral service within the colleges of the City University of New York.

Under the direction of the Office of Faculty and Staff Relations the new service will attempt to match CUNY job openings with CUNY faculty who have had at least one year of full-time teaching experience.

This service is available only for faculty with satisfactory performance ratings whose employment at one of the CUNY colleges has been terminated due to declining enrollment, or budgetary or personnel limitations.

Dr. David Newton, vice chancellor for faculty and staff relations, said that City University presidents would be asked to supply a list of September openings at their colleges. "To the extent that it is possible, given the different needs of our colleges," Dr. Newton said, "we will attempt to match supply and demand within the CUNY system."

# Is Bunker Boosting Bigotry?

WHEN "ALL IN THE FAMILY" was first televised in January of 1971, CBS executives expected the walls to fall in. While the program was a watered-down version of a British satire it was potentially the most explosive program in the pusilanimous history of American television.



**Joel Shurkin**  
**On Science**

The character of Archie Bunker, your basic lower middle-class bigot, required the use of ethnic pejoratives that were cast iron no-nos in television fiction in this country.

The program instantly won popular success beyond CBS's wildest dreams and the walls did not fall in. But CBS was still worried and commissioned a telephone survey to see what viewers thought of the program.

The results of the poll indicated most liked it, and few were offended by it. That did not still the debate.

One critic said that making Bunker a sympathetic character would condone and encourage bigotry.

Norman Lear, the producer, maintained that satirizing bigotry releases tension and brings prejudice out in the open where people can deal with it.

Lear, who among other things is a leader in the Los Angeles Civil Liberties Union, is probably sincere and he has since branched out into the TV satires considered quite daring.

But no one, has ever scientifically tested Lear's thesis — until now.

Two psychologists, one working in Illinois and the other in Ontario, have done a scientific survey of viewer reaction to "All In The Family" that will displease Lear and may force CBS executives to watch the walls again.

The conclusion: the people who watch the program most tend to be those with the most prejudice, and they fail to see the satire. They think Archie Bunker is "telling it like it is," and their prejudices are being reinforced, not eased.

THE SURVEY IS REPORTED in the winter issue of the Journal of Communications, published by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

The two psychologists are Neil Vidmar of the University of Western Ontario (now on leave at Yale) and Milton Rokeach of Washington State University.

There were two samples taken. One involved 237 high school students in Gillespie, Ill. The other involved 130 adults in London, Ontario.

Half the Canadian adults were telephoned and the other half interviewed in person. The American students filled out anonymous questionnaires. The survey was basically the same with some acknowledgement made to diverse cultures (instead of being asked about Negroes the English-speaking

Canadians were asked about French-speaking Canadians and Indians).

First the psychologists tried to find out the prejudice level of the subjects by means of six survey questions (U. S.): are Negroes as intelligent as whites?

"Almost everyone had seen the program; most of them enjoyed it and found it funny, and only a small percentage found it offensive," the survey indicated.

"Over 60 percent of the television viewers in both samples liked and admired Archie more than Mike (the liberal son-in-law) and . . . 40 percent or more thought it was Archie who usually won at the end of the program."

The data showed that "prejudiced persons identify more with Archie, perceive Archie as making better sense than Mike, perceive Archie as winning."

THE SURVEY ALSO SHOWED that "'All In the Family' seems to be appealing more to the racially and ethnically prejudiced members of society than to the less prejudiced members."

" . . . The findings surely argue against the contention that 'All In The Family' has positive effects, as has been claimed by its supporters and admirers.

"We found that many persons did not see the program as a satire on bigotry and that these persons were more likely to be viewers who scored high on measures of prejudice.

"Even more important is the finding that high prejudiced persons were likely to watch 'All In The Family' more often than low prejudiced persons, to identify more often with Archie Bunker, and to see him winning in the end.



**Archie Bunker**

"All such findings seem to suggest that the program is more likely reinforcing prejudice and racism than combating it," Rokeach and Vidmar concluded in direct contradiction to the rationalizations of Lear and CBS.

"If high prejudiced persons do not perceive the program as a satire on bigotry, they will not experience a cathartic reduction in prejudice."

Vidmar and Rokeach point out that the sampling size is fairly small (367). But for technical reasons the survey is statistically significant.

" . . . The basic findings reported here have been replicated with two very different samples, differing in age (adolescents versus adults), nationality (American versus Canadians), and method of interviewing (anonymous written questionnaire versus face-to-face and telephone interviews). The fact that the findings were on the whole similar despite such differences increases confidence in our findings," they wrote.

The survey proves nothing about 50 million people, the audience for "All In The Family," but it does indicate, the men feel, that charges the program encourages bigots to rationalize their prejudices "have a valid psychological base."

3/17/74

*Mary Tyler Moore to Narrate CBS' 'We the Women'*

By Barbara Haddad Ryan

All of a sudden it seems that you can't flip your TV dial these days without finding a program with a woman's viewpoint that wouldn't have been produced just a few seasons ago. The medium is reacting to Women's Lib the way it has to the civil rights revolution—unevenly, but keenly aware that it had better hustle.

Thursday's example is CBS News' "We the Women" at 7 p.m. on Channel 7, the first of 13 specials the network is presenting on U.S. history between now and 1976.

CBS didn't cut corners on this one. The narrator is Mary Tyler Moore. The producer and director is Jack Kuney, an Emmy winner for Play of the Week. The script is by Eve Merriam, a veritable Renaissance woman who has won a Yale poetry prize, has collaborated with lyricist Michel

Legrand and has written for publications from the New Republic to Reader's Digest.

No member of the cast except Miss Moore has a large role, but it still attracted names such as Geraldine Fitzgerald, Kathleen Widdoes and Katharine Houghton.

They appear in dramatizations of historical incidents that are used with actual film footage, animation—and even a scene from the Mary Tyler Moore Show—to summarize three centuries of the female experience in America.

Predictably, the results are superficial. But they should prove enlightening to those with only a casual awareness of persistent sex discrimination in the land that declared all men to be created equal—and meant white males.

Several milestones are presented with notable impact. One is an 1840 antislavery convention in London, which agreed on abolition but not on seating women who had come 4,000 miles to participate. (In a symbolic gesture, William

Lloyd Garrison joined them in their segregated section.)

Another is the cliff-hanger vote in the Tennessee Legislature in 1920 that ratified the 19th Amendment giving women the vote. It was filmed in Nashville, at the state capitol and in the hotel room where the suffragettes had their headquarters.

Miss Moore notes that an equal rights amendment has been introduced in every session of Congress since 1923 and still needs approval by five states for passage, but she doesn't put in a plug for it. Here as in the rest of the show, history is allowed to speak for itself—and it is loud enough.

## TV Charge of Sex Stereotyping

Meanwhile, the spring issue of the Journal of Communication features a symposium whose authors confirm through research the charge of feminists that TV reinforces sexual stereotypes, even when these contradict reality.

The least unacceptable program category turns out to be—surprise—soap operas. At least their women can be likable individuals who act independently, not just the clowns and sex objects on prime time who meekly await orders from some male adventurer.

The scholars cast familiar stones at commercials and cartoons (“The female who really had a lot of lines was Maid Marian, Robin Hoodnick’s girl, who was constantly complaining (and) nagging . . . until someone put a bag over her head”).

The most disturbing findings, though, come from interviews with 63 pre-schoolers. Already the toddlers have learned, mostly from TV, that tasks are either male or female, and male ones are better. The girls envy them—and the boys can't even bring themselves to suggest what they would do if they were girls.



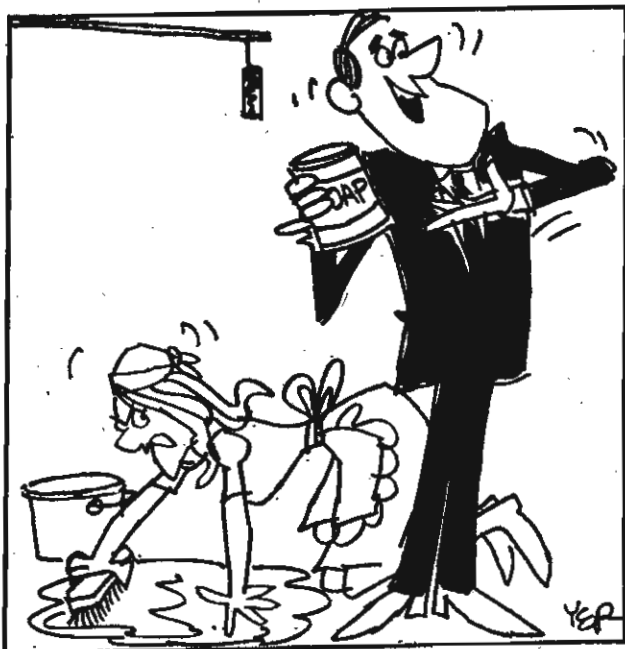
# Norman Mark

## *Baby, you haven't come a long way in TV-land*

You might think you've come a long way, baby, but you haven't. At least not in TV commercials, prime time, and kiddie cartoons, according to studies soon to be published in the spring issue of the *Journal of Communication* of the University of Pennsylvania.

Television fixes subtle pictures in our minds, and its image of women, more often than not, is that of a drudge who adores the kitchen or bathroom.

In a study of TV commercials, two Canadian professors of marketing noted that the "voice-overs," those authoritative



people who tell you what to buy, are men by 10-to-1.

We tend to see women selling deodorants, toothpaste or soap, but not gasoline or oil. When women do the selling, they often demonstrate the product, such as by washing the floor with *Spic & Span*. When men sell to us, they often explain the product. Thus, the authors conclude, women in commercials "continue to clean house, launder, cook, and serve meals, while the men give the orders and advice and eat the meals."

**IN PRIME TIME**, according to a University of Pennsylvania researcher, women are often "powerless." Females often get the comic roles, men the serious ones.

She concluded that males in prime time "are generally active and independent. They are more mature, more serious, and more likely to be employed than females. Males have adventures and get into violent situations. They are powerful and smart. . . . Females . . . are presented as lacking independence. They are not found in adventure situations; they are younger, more likely to be married and less likely to be employed."

Helen White Streicher, a senior research associate with the Illinois Department of Mental Health in Chicago, looked at kiddie cartoons and arrived at similar conclusions.

She found, "In general, cartoon females were less numerous than males, made fewer appearances, had fewer lines, played fewer 'lead roles,' were less active, occupied far fewer positions of responsibility, were less noisy and were more preponderantly juvenile than males. Mothers worked only in the house; males did not participate in housework. In many activities in which a girl showed some form of skill (e.g., cheerleading), her performance was duplicated by a dog or other pet.

"Other stereotypes appeared. The female who really had a lot of lines was Maid Marian, Robin Hoodnick's girl, who was constantly nagging, complaining, wanting, talking, until someone put a bag over her head."

**THE RESEARCHERS FOUND** one hopeful area — soap operas, where women equaled men in numbers and were often as competent.

Even there, Mildred Downing, formerly with Drexel University, saw dulling uniformity. She wrote "All the (daytime) dramas broadcast in the summer of 1973 took place in the present time, in the United States, and in a small town with a euphonious name, the boundaries of which are amorphous and which seems to be located about 50 miles from New York, Chicago or Los Angeles . . . and all the action takes place indoors.

Ms. Downing asked "Where else in television have women attained such visibility? Certainly not in prime time, where all leading news commentators are 'anchormen,' all serious hosts are men and the giants of the nighttime drama series are men. A female lead who is confined to a wheelchair or has reached the sixth decade of life is unthinkable. Even Cannon, the fat detective, would be unacceptable as a female."

**IN DAYTIME** dramas, Ms. Downing wrote "The woman . . . is above all a human being. She is liked and respected by her male acquaintances, not merely sought as a sexual object as she is in prime-time television drama. She does not act solely as a adjunct to male activities and interests. She is a responsible member of a family structure, exercising judgment and offering support to parents and children alike. Her opinions are solicited and acted upon. She enjoys the friendship of other women.

"The woman of the daytime serial is a generally nonviolent person acting from a genuine concern for others . . . Of all the dramatic characters seen on television, she may be the most worthy of emulation."

Only soap operas, which are viewed mainly by women, feature three-dimensional, independent female characters. In TV-land, most women are still girls.

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CCC

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NEWHOUSE WSH

## TELEVISION AND WATERGATE

BY KAY MILLS

(C) 1974, NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON-- ONE OF THE FIRST STUDIES ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TELEVISED COVERAGE OF THE WATERGATE HEARINGS SHOWS PRESIDENT NIXON MAY HAVE LOST RESPECT BUT NOT HIS INNOCENCE IN VIEWERS EYES.

"PRESIDENT NIXON CAME OUT OF THESE HEARINGS LOOKING FURTIVE, BUT NOT FELONIOUS," CONCLUDED POLITICAL SCIENTIST MICHAEL J. ROBINSON.

A LIMITED SURVEY OF ~~REGIONS~~ <sup>OREGON</sup> VIEWERS INDICATED THAT AFTER WATCHING THE HEARINGS LAST SUMMER, FEWER PEOPLE THOUGHT NIXON HELPED PLAN THE ACTUAL BREAK-IN AT DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS THAN THOUGHT SO BEFOREHAND.. BUT MORE THOUGHT HE WAS "KEEPING SECRETS."

ROBINSON, A FACULTY MEMBER AT CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, WARNED POLITICIANS THE HEARINGS "DID NOT PRODUCE OPINIONS THAT WOULD, IN THE LONG RUN, WARM THE HEARTS OF PARTISAN DEMOCRATS WHILE CHILLING THE HOPES OF REPUBLICAN COMMITTEEMEN."

WRITING IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION, ROBINSON CONCLUDED THAT "THESE HEARINGS INCREASED PUBLIC FRUSTRATION WITH POLITICAL LEADERS AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. I FOUND MORE INDEPENDENTS IN AUGUST THAN IN MAY, NOT MORE DEMOCRATS. THE LOSERS WERE THOSE INVOLVED, BOTH THE INVESTIGATORS AND THE INVESTIGATED."

ROBINSON STRESSED THAT HIS FINDINGS WERE BASED ONLY ON A SAMPLE OF 145 NAMES DRAWN FROM PHONE DIRECTORIES IN EUGENE AND SPRINGFIELD, ORE., PEOPLE WHO WERE CONTACTED BOTH AS THE HEARINGS BEGAN AND ENDED. HOWEVER, HE ALSO SURVEYED A SEPARATE GROUP AFTER THE HEARINGS ONLY AND SUPPLEMENTED HIS FINDINGS FROM NATIONAL POLLS BY THE NIELSEN, GALLUP, ROPER AND HARRIS ORGANIZATIONS.

"IN MOST CASES, WHAT WAS TRUE IN OREGON WAS TRUE NATIONWIDE," HE ADDED.

BASED ON QUESTIONS THAT ASKED PEOPLE TO IDENTIFY CORRECTLY SEN. SAM ERVIN (D-N.C.), WATERGATE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, AND JOHN DEAN, FORMER WHITE HOUSE COUNSEL AND A STAR WITNESS, ROBINSON DECIDED THAT TELEVISION WATCHING REALLY DIDN'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE. "EVEN A DAYTIME-NIGHTTIME TELEVISED OCCURRENCE DOES NOT TURN UNATTENTIVE CITIZENS INTO POLITICAL KNOWLEDGEABLES, NO MATTER HOW LOOSE THE DEFINITION."

ROBINSON SAID HIS INVESTIGATION FAILED TO CONFIRM THE STRENGTH OF TELEVISION TO "PERSUADE OR EDUCATE OR EVOKE." IN THIS CASE, HE SAID THE HEARINGS WERE SO THOROUGHLY COVERED BY ALL MEDIA THAT "THE MESSAGE WAS SO ENDEMIC THAT THE MEDIUM COULD NOT BE PART OF IT."

THE SURVEY REPORTED THAT AMONG PEOPLE INTERVIEWED TWICE, THOSE THINKING NIXON WAS "KEEPING SECRETS ABOUT WATERGATE" INCREASED FROM 65 TO 75 PER CENT BETWEEN MAY AND AUGUST, YET THOSE WHO FELT THE PRESIDENT HELPED PLAN THE WATERGATE DECLINED FROM 25 TO 16 PER CENT.

CURIOUSLY, THOSE CONTACTED ONLY IN AUGUST AGREED WITH THE FIRST SURVEY IN MAY ON NIXON AND THE CONVERUP, WITH 67 PER CENT BELIEVING HE WAS LESS THAN CANDID, BUT ONLY 17 PER CENT BELIEVED IN PRESIDENTIAL INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING THE ACTUAL BUGGING OF DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS.

"WHAT DOES ALL THIS IMPLY?" ROBINSON ASKED.

"BASICALLY THIS: THE THREE MONTHS OF WATERGATE TELEVISION DID NOT COMPEL THE PUBLIC TO REGARD NIXON AS A FELON OR AS ONE GUILTY OF HIGH CRIMES.

"IF ANYTHING, THESE DATA SUGGEST JUST THE OPPOSITE. PRESIDENT NIXON CAME OUT OF THESE HEARINGS LOOKING FURTIVE, BUT NOT FELONIOUS."

ENDIT MILLS

April 4, 1974

Dr. Michael J. Robinson  
Department of Politics  
Catholic University  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Dr. Robinson:

Dr. Gerbner thought you would be interested in the enclosed. He sends you his best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Kiki Schiller  
Secretary to  
Dean George Gerbner

encl.

April 4, 1974

Mildred:

Dr. Gerbner asked me to send you a copy of  
the enclosed and also sends you best regards.

Kiki

4/4/74

Susie:

Dr. Gerbner thought you would be interested in  
the enclosed.

kiki

incl. W & Watergate

## Pastore keeps up pressure on violence as hearings open; networks say they're working hard on it, NIMH says it will need year or more to complete profile

"This idea of violence in television programs to get bigger ratings — I say it's a disgrace and a blot on the broadcasting industry." So Chairman John O. Pastore (D-R.I.) opened hearings late last week before Senate Communications Subcommittee on effects of televised violence and development of violence profile for gauging trends in action offerings of networks. "You don't have to be a scientist" to see that there is "imitative effect" of TV violence, senator declared.

Hearings are somewhat of paper chase. Conflicting studies and voluminous reports from social scientists and networks were being thrown about like so much confetti during two-and-half days of testimony.

Three commercial network officials provided committee with extensive lists of "quality" children's fare now on air and plans for beefing up expert consultation in other programming.

Preliminary report on development of violence profile shows five-year downward trend in amount of violence on children's programming, according to Dr. George Gerbner, dean of Annenberg School of Communications, Philadelphia, who has contract for creating profile. But levels of "crudest and most brutal" violence still are much higher than in adult shows. Study shows 78% of all male characters on TV are involved in violence. Characters that are non-white, lower or upper class or unmarried are more likely to be involved in violence. Heavy TV viewers "consistently overestimated" likelihood of their being involved in some kind of street violence. And, violence level by network breaks down with NBC programming having highest percentage of programs with violence, ABC second and CBS third. Latest trends show levels going up on ABC and NBC, down on CBS, study contends.

Workable, continuing TV violence profile is still "year or two away," according to National Institute of Mental Health spokesman. Presently, NIMH is funding 12 projects in study at yearly cost of half-million dollars. NIMH complains that it lacks funds to pursue future, follow-up work met sympathetic ears of Senator Pastore, who said he'll approach Health, Education and Welfare for more money on NIMH's behalf.

Leo S. Singer, president of Miracle White Co., manufacturer of laundry products, said advertisers bear as much blame as program producers for presence of violence on TV. He said concern over effects of TV violence caused him to take over advertising decisions from agency. Miracle White will spend \$3 million in TV this year, but nothing "on any television show which features violence." Pointing to claim that most Americans feel there is too much violence on TV, he noted seven of top 10 Nielsen-rated programs were of nonviolent nature (CBS-TV's *Maude*, *All in the Family*, *M\*A\*S\*H*, *Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour* and *The Waltons* and NBC-TV's *Wonderful World of Disney* and *Sanford and Son*).

Eli Rubinstein, psychiatry professor at State University at Stony Brook, New York, and vice chairman of 1972 surgeon general's TV violence report committee, charged that despite "encouraging comments" by network officials at time of report, "there has been no significant reduction of televised violence in network programming in the past two years."

Chairman Pastore tried to solicit similar response from his star witness, Dr. Gerbner. "I would like to approach the representatives of the networks when they come here," senator said, "to say to them, 'Look, this situation is better than it was. Now keep going and make it a little better.' And

**Official blessing.** In policy turnabout, American Association of Advertising Agencies is issuing statement today (April 8) recognizing that "comparative advertising is now a reality" and offering guidelines for its use. While departing from former policy of discouraging comparative advertising, new policy nevertheless emphasizes such advertising should be handled with "extreme caution" lest consumers be misled rather than "truthfully and fairly" informed. Guidelines highlights: Comparative ads should inform, never discredit, unfairly attack or degrade competition; should make comparisons only with significant properties of competition and stress only significant differences, on "feature-to-feature" basis. If competitive tests are used, they should be conducted by objective and preferably independent source, results should fully support all test-based claims and partial results should never be used. No testimonial should seem to represent more than one person's opinion unless it does in fact represent "a sample of the majority viewpoint."

if it's worse, 'Where have you been these last two years.' Now what do I say?" Dr. Gerbner could not say.

CBS/Broadcast Group President John A. Schneider claimed that network cut number of violent acts in programming by 25% during last season. As well, network-funded research shows CBS success in communicating pro-social messages in programs such as *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, and that research and *Fat Albert*-type shows will be expanded. Walter Schwartz, president of ABC-TV, and Alfred Schneider, vice president of ABC Inc., outlined "standards and controls" network exercises over prime-time and children's programming. ABC has adopted NAB children's code precluding it from airing spots with host or celebrity endorsements during Saturday morning hours and stated it will move forward with \$1 million program to develop "original research" in area of children's TV. "We stand on our record," Mr. Schwartz said. "We are making progress toward goals we set out to meet." NBC Chairman Julian Goodman cautioned committee against development of violence index that does not distinguish between types and context of violence "that can cover anything from gunshots to thunderstorms. A broad statistical approach that lumps all kinds of violence together is not very helpful to programmers," he said. "It seems generally accepted that excitement, confrontation and conflict are basic elements of drama in all media. As such, they are appropriate to storytelling on television, but we differentiate between violence that might be harmful to viewers and violence that is unlikely to lead to antisocial behavior."

Hearing adjourned after network presentations, then reopened for additional statement by Texas law student (and ascertainment consultant for ABC-affiliated KVUE[TV] Austin) Robert Thompson, who ended day on critical note. After saying networks' "litany" of quality programming did not excuse violence in other programming, he pointed out that ABC-TV, last Friday night, was scheduling 90-minute show titled *K is for Killing*. He suggested networks, responsible for 80% of all TV programming, get involved in ascertainment dialogue with public, instead of having that burden on licensees not in position to affect real change in system.

## Mobil claims First on oil advertising

Mobil Oil Co. has asked Federal Trade Commission to reject petition by six congressmen urging agency to require substantiation for corporate image or idea advertising related to energy matters (*Broadcasting*, Jan. 14). Mobil said petition would raise "grave First Amendment problems" and cited possible "chilling effect" on free idea exchange.