Views on news flow

Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects *by Jim Richstad and Michael H. Anderson, Editors, Columbia University Press, New York, 1981, 473pp, $12.50 paperback.*

Twenty-three authorities examine issues on news collecting and dissemination and policy making in this comprehensive anthology. They represent varied viewpoints of developed and developing nations about the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

Editors and co-authors are Jim Richstad, Research Associate with the East-West Communication Institute, Honolulu, and Michael H. Anderson, Information consultant with Unicef at the United Nations. They stress developments on three issues: impact of international communication on cultural, economic, political, social and value systems; control over communication on sovereignty; and, communication researches in forming new structures, technology transfers, spectrum allocation, and news exchanges.

Y. V. Lakshmano Rao, Unesco staffer in Paris, believes world communication problems can be traced at all levels to information imbalance. Rao, former Secretary General of the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center, Singapore, contends, 'The concept of free flow of information has generally worked solely to the advantage of the industrially more advanced nations.'

Mustapha Masmoudi, Tunisia's permanent delegate to Unesco and leading Third World advocate for NWICO, cites the flagrant quantitative imbalance between North and South on information resources. He criticizes the marked media indifference in developed nations to problems, concerns and aspirations of developing countries.

Herbert I. Schiller, Professor of Communications at the University of California at San Diego, contends that the ideas of the free flow of communication exist only for the privileged international and intranational 'haves'. He contends the informational flow between nations is 'to a very great extent a one-way, unbalanced traffic.' He believes the Third World can help the flow imbalance by relying less heavily on western news agencies, developing their own news organizations, and cooperating in pools.

Professor Elie Abel of Stanford University argues for greater diversification in message flows and cooperative action by more and less industrialized nations. Abel, formerly of the National Broadcasting Company, notes philosophical, political issues generate strong passions and dogmatic assertions, but do not lend themselves to solution by consensus. Included are rights of access to countries and information sources within them, censorship, licensing of journalists, ethical codes, right of recertification, and demands for equitable access to the radio spectrum.

Jean d'Arcy, French President of the International Institute of Communications, London, and Video-Cites, Paris, makes an eloquent plea for recognition of the individual's right to communicate.

D. R. Mankekar, former Editor of *The Times of India* and former Chairman of the Coordinating Committee of News Agencies Pool for Non Aligned Countries, said a pool is the first step toward the NWICO.

Phil Harris, Coordinator of the Research and Information Service of Inter Press Service, argues for a structural change from vertical to horizontal communication systems in international news as a long-term way to end the cause of imbalances between South and North and the dependence of the former on the latter. By horizontal, he refers to journalist interaction in a dialectic process.

Leonard Sussman, Executive Director of Freedom House, New York City, once observed 'developing nations' complaints are real and pervasive and will not disappear if ignored.' He advocates further sensitizing of Americans to problems of developing nations in getting their news transmitted world wide and establishment of better links between the West and the Third World.

Rosemary Righter, correspondent for *The Sunday Times*, London, suggests the West concentrate on practical programmes for improvement of Third World access to information, a fundamental right. She describes bitterness of developing nations about cultural imperialism, the language barrier between North and South, and the belief that western governments control information flow of news agencies.

Dr John C. Merrill, Director of the Journalism School at Louisiana State University, rejects the argument that major changes are needed in practices guiding news collection and dissemination. He explains the basic conceptual differences between western and Third World journalists are not sufficiently stressed in international communication debates. As long as countries go their different ideological ways, he adds, these differences will be reflected in their journalistic philosophies and systems. Dr Merrill thinks it unrealistic to expect news to flow in a balanced way between and within individual nations because 'unevenness of flow is a basic characteristic of news – and not only of news flow, but of water flow, money flow, population flow and food flow.'

Gerald Long, Managing Director of Times Newspapers, London, and former Managing Director of Reuters, said, 'We are criticized for not doing those things that we have never set out to do, cannot do, cannot reasonably be asked to do.'

Richstad explains that Associated Press (AP) which provides services for an estimated one billion news consumers, receives only 1% of its revenues from subscribers in developing nations, so news content is designed for the western market of mass media and audiences. He notes the limited resources of news agencies for the immense task of covering the world.

Jeremy Tunstall, Sociologist at City University, London, says news organizations are relatively small and weak. He thinks economic rather than political pressures produce a bleak future for agencies as stable, global news endeavours.

Dr Wilbur Schramm, former Director of Communication Institute of the East-West Center and former Director of Communication Research at Stanford, reports on studies of international news coverage in Asian publications. He contends there is no shortage of wire news, and, if anything is wrong, it must be in the kind of coverage.

Dr George Gerbner, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, and George Marvanyi, Programme Director for Hungarian TV, report on a study of foreign news coverage of 60 dailies of nine capitalist, socialist and non-aligned nations. They determine that Soviet readers get more news about the US and western and eastern Europe than readers of those areas get about the Soviets. They observe that 'The regions of Africa, Australia and Oceania, and the Eastern

Socialist countries of China, Mongolia, and North Korea were barely visible in the world press of the 1970s.'

Richstad and Anderson are optimistic that the world is moving forward in promising policy directions and that the spirit of the 1980s and beyond can be one of pluralism, harmony and positive cooperation. They realistically note risks are great, but are worth the effort if they develop innovative ideas, patience and public diplomacy.

One chapter contains the 82 recommendations of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (that is, the MacBride Commission) and six appendices reprint the Declaration on Mass Media and Human Rights of the Council of Europe; Non-aligned Summit Statement on Communication Issues at Algiers; Statement by Participants in the Dag Hammarskjold Third World Journalism Seminary, New York City; the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Helsinki; Declaration of Unesco Intergovernmental Conference in Costa Rica; Mass Media Declaration of Unesco, Paris.

If people can read only one book with all the viewpoints presented forcefully on NWICO, this comprehensive, valuable reference work is it. The authors' statements encourage free and balanced debate about the free and balanced flow of information.

James W. Carty, Jr

National development perspectives

Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations *by Göran Hedebro. Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 50010, 1981, 142pp, $7.95.*

Dr Göran Hedebro recommends new national development perspectives and a social change 'process whereby the overall personalities of the peoples of the Third World are rehabilitated and strengthened after years of dehumanization.' He calls for media to help create a positive climate for mass participation in making and executing decisions.

'Large discrepancies exist between the theoretical aspects of research communication issues and their practical applications in development work', Hedebro contends. He laments the 'gap between decision makers and researchers' and suggests their need for dialogue and co-ordination. He observes much communication research in developing nations is based on irrelevant models from industrialized western nations.

Hedebro affirms researchers must study problems from the perspectives of 'the weakness groups', so that development can become a process of liberating the poor and powerless. He says that in developing nations, persons experience difficulty in gaining knowledge about conditions in their own country, because of travel impediments and lack of reading materials. He recommends mass media devote educational programming to stimulating interpersonal contact, so individuals can exchange ideas and information as teams solve problems.

The author believes capitalism has not improved Third World peoples materially and seeks an alternative approach not stressing economic growth as the main criterion for measuring social and individual progress. He prefers the objectives of equal distribution of resources and development of self-reliance and processes of group decision-making. He wants two-way communication between urban media and rural residents, who must formulate programmes based on their needs and understandings.

Hedebro outlines potential roles of the mass media in developing nations. Communicators can help create a sense of nation-ness in which the majority realizes its own importance, develops indigenous norms and values, raises aspirations, develops goals, and receives new ideas, products, and skills – such as literacy and mathematical abilities – for solving problems through teamwork.

Low cost radio transistors aid participatory democracy and coordination of mass campaigns through instructional radio in formal school systems and rural forum discussions following community groups reception of mass or open broadcasting. Hedebro explains that unfortunately the 'typical pattern in most developing nations is that only a small portion of the total radio content – often under 10% – is devoted to educational programmes. The areas covered are agriculture, health, women's home programmes, and literacy classes.'

He suggests changing the prevailing, international emphasis of communicators from a 'free flow' to a 'balanced flow' of information. Hedebro declares, 'Most Third World news is interpreted in the light of the industrialized world. Leaders who want to bring about fundamental changes in the political, social, and economic conditions in a country are labelled "extremists", "guerrillas", or the equivalent, while those who work for the system are characterized as "legitimate", or "pragmatically oriented".'

Hedebro foresees continued dependence of developing nations on developed ones, because the former will buy the technological hardware of the latter and adopt their systems of using it. Additionally, the big five international news agencies transmit most of the foreign news used by the 200 nations, and the West also dominates in sending TV programmes, movie films, and music. The US provides about 150,000 hours of TV programming overseas annually or triple the combined totals of the other top three sending nations of Great Britain, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

This interesting, well-written, valuable book describes past and present projects and perspectives, principles and practices of national development, and suggests ways to bring about helpful and healthy social change. Hedebro concludes, 'Although the risks for failure are great, without communication there is little hope for the acceptance of a new idea.'

James W. Carty, Jr

Russian spirituality

Molchanie: The Silence of God, *by Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Crossroad Publishing Co, New York, 1982, 100pp, $8.95.*

'Molchanie' in Russian means silence. It is the word the author uses to convey an experience of God which is granted to those who are prepared to go beyond the initial stages of discipleship.

The book consists of nine sections. The first section which is a short introduction in blank verse describes silence as a dark night. In the last section, which is again composed in blank verse, silence appears as 'golden with light exploding' to the soul which 'has become one with God.' The sections in between describe the development of the soul's relationship with the Divine, in the form of a journey into the silence of God.

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NOVA NEWS

We're

pleased

to announce,

"THE TELEVISION EXPLOSION"

will air nationally on PBS's NOVA series,

Sunday, February 14th, 1982, Valentine's Day, at 8 PM.

Please check your local listings to confirm both date and time of broadcast, as schedules vary from region to region. Also, many stations repeat the broadcast within the same week.

Many thanks to all of you who helped make this program possible.

Best wishes,

Thea

Thea Chalow
Producer

You probably influenced my views of television (and this program) more than anyone else I've talked with in the past 6 months.

Thank you for all your time.

U.S. Report on TV Violence Stirs Little Outcry

New York—A new report from the National Institute of Mental Health cites an "overwhelming" connection between TV violence and aggressive behavior in children. However, aside from the predictable reactions of criticism from the TV networks and applause from various TV watchdog groups, the report's harsh conclusions have failed to stir a public outcry. One reason, sources say, is that TV violence has lost its appeal as a popular issue.

Neither the American Medical Association nor the National PTA, both of which were once active in pressuring broadcasters and advertisers to reduce violent TV programming, is currently planning to press the issue anew. Says a spokesman for the AMA, "Four or five years ago this issue was of concern to us. Whether budgetary concerns and other issues facing the AMA make it possible today I don't know."

Reaction in Congress to the Government's report has also been muted. Neither the House nor Senate subcommittees on communications has any hearings planned. "Even if we wanted to hold hearings, I'm not sure we could cram them into our schedule," says David Aylward, chief counsel to the House subcommittee. Says a spokesman for the Senate Commerce committee, "I think, after many long years of hearings on that issue, that we can only hope broadcasters will exercise their good judgment." —*Sally Bedell*

Hollywood—CBS, the prime-time ratings leader, is adding seven series to its fall schedule: four half-hour comedies and three one-hour dramas.

The new programs are:

Gloria (Sundays, 8:30 P.M. [ET]). A comedy in which Sally Struthers re-creates her role as Archie's daughter.

Square Pegs (Mondays, 8). A series about high-school freshmen featuring Sarah Jessica Parker and Amy Linker.

Newhart (Mondays, 9:30). A comedy starring Bob Newhart as a writer who buys an old inn in Vermont.

Bring 'em Back Alive (Tuesdays, 8). An action/adventure series set in Malaysia dramatizing the exploits of Frank Buck, famous big-game hunter.

Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (Wednesdays, 8). A drama based on the 1950s musical film about seven brothers and the women they court.

Mama Malone (Wednesdays, 9:30). A comedy starring Lila Kaye as the host of a TV cooking show.

The Good Witch of Laurel Canyon (Wednesdays, 10). A comedy-drama about a husband and wife who are detectives; the wife is also a witch.

Viewers who tune in to "Goodbye Doesn't Mean Forever" this Friday (May 28) may find the half-hour situation comedy strongly reminiscent of the movie "The Goodbye Girl." They should. It was the first pilot for a TV series based on that film. Then there was another pilot. And another. There also were four executive producers, many scripts, countless meetings and at least a half-dozen network and studio executives involved in the project. It all goes to show the heavy, even leaden, thinking that goes into the creation

Continued on page A-7

TV GUIDE. Box 500. Radnor. Pa. 19088. (215) 293-8500.

A SPECIAL REPORT

ARE SOAPS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH? **THE EXPERTS SAY YES!**

HOW SOAPS ARE MADE: PART VIII

By PHYLLIS BEHAR

If you are a secret soap watcher, come out of the closet and smile! You are part of a fascinating human experiment. If you stayed home with the flu one week, then went back to work "hooked," not understanding how it happened to such a sensible person; if you've been a loyal soap fan for years but conceal your afternoon addiction from your friends; or if you are a performer who admits to being on a soap with a defensive smile — come and listen to what the social scientists are saying about you — and relax.

I've been playing Anna Craig on "One Life to Live" for four years. Now, Anna is a positive force in her community of Llanview . . . a kind, caring woman who often speaks the truths other characters fail to see or admit to. She has given a lot of love to a lot of family and friends. As an actress playing such a model of excellence, I've been given much viewer affection. It's been a warming and ego-stroking experience. However, I've also been troubled by the passion with which

the soap opera is viewed, both positively **and** negatively. Did fans who so loved their soaps lose a sense of reality by closely identifying the actor with his part? Were they viewing soap characters as role-models and changing their behavior patterns accordingly? And if they were, were the moral issues examined on soaps being true to the cultural norms or were they creating new standards of behavior? Finally, was soap opera deserving of the contempt often extended to it by primetime television people and the intellectual community at large?

WHAT'S BEING WRITTEN:

I began my own informal survey, conferring with college professors, researchers, social scientists and therapists and read their findings. What I discovered is that everyone is talking about the phenomenon of 55,000,000 viewers tuning in weekly to daytime dramas. But until now, very little conclusive evidence about the behavioral ramifications of such an upswing in popularity has been published.

Dr. Peter Corea, chairman of the Psychology department at Emerson College, commented on why so little had been published on the subject. "For many of those who belong to learned or academic groups and who are classified as erudite, the hardest part of this subject is to get them over the label "soap opera." But the very fact that soap operas have survived whatever scoffing, sarcasm or contempt which may originally have been present among the so-called intellectuals, should now make them at least stop and take notice that there is something **meaningful** going on which deserves better consideration."

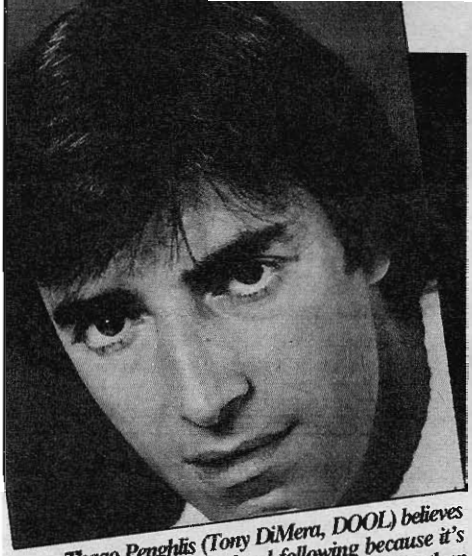
"I refuse to call them soap operas because people use that term as one of denigration to diminish the form!" announces Dean George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. He teaches a course called "Media and Society" and is editor of The Journal of Communication. Gerbner considers daytime drama a very important form of cultural activity. "Those who put it down do so because they feel it is less artistically complete, typically addressed to women and thus not to be taken as seriously as primetime. It is, in fact, much more realistic than primetime, deals in much more detailed documentation of health and family issues; and less with the power-oriented fantasies of nighttime television."

WHY DO PEOPLE WATCH?:

Mary Cassata, Associate Professor of Communications, State University of New York at Buffalo, is director of a comprehensive study on daytime TV called Project Daytime. She believes that "the soap opera audience appears to be different from the primetime audience: loyal, emotionally involved, and actively participating in the soap opera experience." Unlike the primetime audience, which watches **television**, the daytime audience watches **programs.**

Marlene Fine, who is a consultant with Communication Education Associates in Amherst, Massachusetts, writes that in terms of relationships, the soap opera community is, in a sense, a microcosm of the 'real world. Only a few characters are transients, and this **stability** may be a prime reason for audience involvement."

Phyllis Behar has appeared on "All My Children," "The Guiding Light" and currently, "One Life to Live." She is a frequent contributor to this magazine.



Thaao Penghlis (Tony DiMera, DOOL) believes soaps have such a loyal following because it's much easier to feel someone else's pain than to deal with your own.

"Days of Our Lives" Executive Producer Al Rabin agrees. He observes that while primetime shows continuously go through cycles of popularity . . . situation comedies, lawyer shows, cops and robbers, medical, Westerns . . . daytime never does. "I have a basic philosophy and that's what we try to do here all the time — share a feeling between the character and the audience. If the audience can feel the pain, joy, love and laughter as we all did in that scene (referring to a scene where Don remembers his past with Marlena), it's working. I've never seen a soap opera character lie to the audience."

The voiceover and flashback are soap techniques which allow the viewer to glimpse the thoughts and feelings of a character. "In real life we are lucky if we find one person with whom we can share total honesty," Rabin emphasizes, leaning back in his chair. "Here, on the soaps, the audience has twenty people every day who **never** lie to them about their feelings."

"One of the most pleasant aspects of the experience is that the viewer enjoys all the values of intimacy, the deepest of emotions, without psychological or moral cost or expense . . . as in all dramatic presentations the viewer can participate in every kind of experience, yet always remain the objective healthy observer," says Dr. Corea.

Horace Newcomb, professor at the University of Texas in Austin, reminds us of one of the most simple explanations for watching soaps. "Anthropologists tell us how important **stories** are to people in every inhabited region of the world . . . primarily because in escaping into them . . . they provide us with an ongoing discussion of the natural, the approved, the taken for granted."

Dr. Newcomb believes that the soap opera is the most appropriate form for telling stories on television. "We observe characters who are caught in the act. They must make sense of their lives, choose even when they do not have adequate reasons, move on in the face of adversity, and in the joy of having done well. Sometimes they are hurt by the sheer force of a world in which violence is common and affection is scarce. But in spite of the hurt, we go on, we help, we give, and we become better. The stories we share tell us why we should do this, and why it is worth it."

I have a friend who is a published writer, extremely bright, educated, and with a delightfully ironic sense of humor. She began to watch "One Life to Live" when I joined the cast, as a friendly gesture. She has been hooked ever since. She even has a tiny television she takes into her car if she has to be away from home during our viewing hour. She has been known to call me, very upset and outraged (and with very little of her ironic humor) when we

are pre-empted by a national catastrophe which she felt could have easily been covered later on in the schedule. I asked Nancy to analyze her four-year addiction.

"Why do I watch? Because during that time I am not responsible for solving the problems presented. It is a true escape — total. There's no carry over for me when it's off . . . it's just finished . . . but during the watching there's total removal from my life. It's cathartic. There's also a certain justice that operates in soaps that doesn't happen in life. The bad guys get caught. When Karen meddled so arrogantly with Jenny and Kat's babies, I thought it too much and that she and Marco deserved whatever happened to them. They had gone too far." Nancy did admit that though she was "finished" with the show once it was off, she sometimes wanted to comment on what she had just watched to a fellow viewer. None of her friends share her enthusiasm and she remains slightly embarrassed by her midday involvement.

This element of wanting to share one's soap is a powerful new concept in the minds of the social scientists. Dr. Kenneth Haun, psychology professor at Monmouth College in New Jersey, says that for years the academic community turned their noses up at soap courses. His was the first to be offered in the psychology department. "They made an assumption which did not turn out to be true — that soaps were isolating experiences; desocializing. The truth is that soaps get people together and have formed a subculture."

The newest phenomenon in soap watching turns out to be group participation. The ABC Social Research Unit has just completed a study of the college student daytime television audience. Eleven universities around the country were involved with a total of 1,836 students contacted. One of the most interesting findings was the fact that only 20% of the students who regularly watch soaps view them alone. 69% watch in groups; more than 10% watch in groups of seven or more people. There are many colleges that offer soap opera viewing rooms at the student union and soap watcher clubs have sprung up on many campuses.

"Unlike 'The Brady Bunch,' where each episode has a resolution of a problem, soap viewers can care about the characters and sustain a more vibrant type of relationship."

Loneliness is another reason people are so loyal to soaps. In the early days of television it was expected that older citizens, housebound by illness or advanced age, found solace in the lives they shared on soaps. Similarly, the housebound mother of young children, unable to seek adult companionship during the day, watched soaps with gratitude and strong empathy. Now, the younger members of society are finding security from the reassuringly constant world of the soap opera. Ken Haun suggests that college students often "get the habit during their freshman year when they're homesick and lonely." Similarly, high school students between the ages of 13 and 16 are often suffering a communications breakdown with their parents and turn to the soaps for comfort and for examples of ways to cope.

There is still another group of soaps fans which is grateful for the ongoing nature of the characters and stories in soaps. They are the people who travel for a living: salespeople, sportsmen and women, business people away from

home offices, nightclub entertainers. I remember a wonderful party at the Stork Club that Sammy Davis, Jr., an avid soap fan, gave to the cast and crew of "One Life to Live" after one of his appearances on our show. Sammy was a warm, generous host who made us all feel his respect and affection that night. He invited a close friend, Liza Minnelli, to attend the party and she entertained us charmingly. She also talked about what the people of Llanview meant to her. She explained that while she was on the road, we served as the only constant in her life. We soap characters were her substitute family, her familiar old friends, and as such were an important support system which helped allay the loneliness of life on the road.

Teenage girls were particularly enthusiastic about Laura Spencer (played by Genie Francis, GH). Said one, "I liked Laura because she was only 18 but she got to live the life of a 28-year-old."

WHAT'S THE HARM? WHAT'S THE BENEFIT:

The question which became the most difficult to answer in a documented way was the one about behavioral effects on the viewer. But there is strong agreement among the experts I spoke to that soaps are **not** what the popular media writers have led many to believe in the past.

Dr. Alan Wurtzel, Director of News, Development and Social Research for ABC, is adamant in his belief that soaps do not have a profound effect on the way people behave. He thinks that both the positive and negative effects of television in general have been over-exaggerated. "Certainly it's hard to generalize, because the kinds of individuals and the ways in which they relate are variable. If they relate strongly, the impact is obviously stronger. But to make a judgment that the relationship between behavioral characteristics and television drama can be called causal is absolutely impossible." He does think that a great deal of specific helpful information is passed on to the viewer, covering such subjects as drugs, alcohol, child abuse, etc., which gives impetus to the viewer in need of help to look further. Wurtzel feels the press picks up on sensational issues such as increased sexual behavior on the soaps, but research proves that there are less causal relationships than expected.

Suzanne Pingree and Muriel Cantor have written a book, "The Soap Opera in America," stemming from their work at the University of Wisconsin. Pingree says there is not good evidence that soaps are affecting life decisions. Young viewers are sometimes laughing at the decisions characters make, judging their foolishness, discussing character weaknesses. Daytime, she feels, shows values that are complex,

Continued on Page 101

Top job

TV, it is widely assumed, must affect the values of its viewers, particularly the young ones. The following article is a report on what TV considers a great role model—that is, for males, white. It is a section of a preliminary report, by a team from the Annenberg School of Communications at The University of Pennsylvania, for the National Institute of Mental Health. The authors of the report are George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School, Michael Morgan and Nancy Signorielli, researchers at the school.

Television doctors

A typical viewer of prime-time television will see a large cast of dramatic characters in well-defined roles. The cast will include about 68 major and 272 minor speaking parts every week. Children who watch weekend daytime programs (which take up only 10 percent of their total viewing time) see 42 major and 98 minor dramatic characters each weekend. Their television exposure to roughly between 400 and 500 vivid characterizations each week can be seen as a compelling curriculum in human behavior.

Professionals play a disproportionately large role in the world of television. Health professionals (doctors and nurses) dominate the ranks of professionals, numbering almost five times their real-life proportions. They outnumber clerks, salespeople, lawyers or teachers. Only criminals or law enforcers are more numerous than health professionals in the world of TV, despite the paucity of sick characters.

The typical viewer sees about 12 doctors and six nurses each week on prime time alone, including three doctors and one nurse in major roles. By comparison, the same viewer will see only one scientist in a week's prime-time viewing, and a scientist will be cast in a major role once every two weeks. Visible as health professionals are in prime time, they are virtually absent from weekend daytime (children's) programs.

About nine out of 10 television doctors are male, white, and young or middle-aged. Nearly all nurses are female and young or middle-aged; nine out of 10 are white.

Doctors probably fare best of all occupations on television. Com-

pared with other professionals, they are relatively good, successful and peaceful. Less than 4 percent of television doctors (major characters) are evil, which is half the number found in other professions. Personality ratings show doctors a bit more fair, sociable and warm than most characters. Doctors are also rated smarter, more rational, stabler and fairer than nurses.

Two studies focusing specifically on "doctor shows" (prime-time series featuring medical professionals) illuminate the world of professional medicine on television. James McLaughlin, in "The Doctor Shows," found in 1975 that doctors "symbolize power, authority, and knowledge and possess the almost uncanny ability to dominate and control the lives of others." They are easily accessible to patients, command nurses (who never disobey their orders), advise each other, but rarely receive advice from patients or orders from superiors, and when they do, often disregard them. Yet they are seen as "ethical, kind, responsive to the requests of their patients, honest, and courageous." In 40 percent of medical cases, television doctors risk status or prestige to perform an unusual or dangerous treatment; in 13 percent the doctor disobeys a rule, convention, or advice, always succeeding, against odds, to treat or cure some disease or settle some crisis.

The typical male doctor confronts the typical female nurse and the usually female and younger patient from a position of daring and authority. "Female patients are twice as often bedridden as male patients. An image common (46 percent) of female patients is that of a bedridden woman with a strong man—husband, doctor, or romantic partner—at her bedside."

TV Authority Figure—Dr. Charley Michaels (Wayne Rogers) with a pregnant teenager on "House Calls."

Courtesy CBS

The work of the television doctor is one of individual and almost mystical power over not only the physical but also the emotional and social life of the patient. "If he just followed the rules," concluded McLaughlin, "or left private matters to the patients themselves, or did not risk life, limb, love, or money, things would not work out."

An unpublished M.A. thesis by Carin Irene Warner, "The World of Prime-Time Television Doctors," confirmed these findings in 1979 and also noted that 61 percent of the doctors' duties were performed during house calls or in the field. The television physician, Warner found, thrives on private relationships with patients, and wields absolute authority over auxiliary medical personnel, but is rarely shown at home or with a spouse or family of his own. Television doctors give advice and orders twice as frequently to female patients or to patients' wives as to male patients or to patients' husbands.

Conflicts arise when the young doctor confronts the more traditional and conservative stance of the senior physician or administrator, or the female doctor. The few female doctors on prime-time television are shown as more emotional and less professional than their male counterparts. Of all professionals, only nurses and women doctors appear to have any emotional problems of their own.

In Warner's sample of 45 male and 5 female doctors, only one was shown at home—a woman (the only one depicted as middle-aged), who lived with her cat. Coming home after a trying day at the hospital, she advised her pet: "Don't ever become a career cat." ■

("Commentary" continues on page 61)

TV & RADIO | JACK THOMAS

How does TV affect us? Good question

No one can hope to understand American culture without an understanding of television and its extraordinary impact on every one of us, even those who claim never to watch it.

Television is already more than 30 years old, and we know no more about its influence than we do about the size of the universe. For all the studies, the research, the questionnaires and the in-depth interviews, nobody can say for sure what television is doing to us, whether this standardized, homogenized, centrally produced monster is friend or foe.

By creating national symbols and heroes and villains, does television help integrate our fragmented society?

Or does it shape our tastes in such a way that it deprives us of exposure to alternative viewpoints, high culture and the freedom of doing and discovering things for ourselves?

You may not find the answers to those questions Sunday night, but you'll hear others just as perplexing in one of the most provocative Nova programs in weeks, "The Television Explosion" (Channel 2 at 8).

The only complaint about this show is that it's too short.

As a topic, television is as important as it is complex, and while Nova doesn't waste a minute of this hour, there is nevertheless not enough time to burrow into the black hole of television and find answers about crucial questions.

Television has not resulted in the demise of conversation in America, as was predicted one innocent afternoon 30 years ago while people gathered on Dorchester avenue in front of Pitnof's Furniture Store to witness their first television program.

That was the first revolution, though, television itself.

Now we are in the midst of a second revolution created by the technologies that are changing our lives all over again for the second time in two generations.

If the new terms confuse you, you are not alone. The technology is developing so rapidly – cable, disc, DBS, feevees, two-way interactive, STV, VTR, VHS, QUBE, microwave, scrambled subscription service, cassettes, direct broadcast satellite – that a viewer has a right to feel that he is being scrambled along with the signal.

The new technology is only beginning, though. A sociologist described it as the opening bars of a symphony that has yet to play itself out.

"The Television Explosion" will help you get a handle on how we got to where we are, what's happening today, and what's around the corner.

"The Television Explosion" will persuade you that TV, day by day, is making greater inroads into our thinking than we realize.

"If you ask yourself how you have a notion of what's going on," said sociologist Rose Goldsen of Cornell, "well, how many times have you been in an operating room when an operation is going on? How many times have you been in jail? How many times have you been able to share the intimate life of a policeman? Probably not very often, yet we all have clear images of what goes on in the life of a policeman or in an operating room or in a jail. Where do you get those images? For most of us, from watching dramas, mostly on television."

The problem is whether those perceptions are real, and, in either case, what effect they are having on us.

Based on a 14-year study by Prof. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania, the news is not good.

His studies show that television warps our sense of reality, that very old and very young people are under-represented on television compared with their real percentage in the population.

He found that the more a person watches television, the more likely he is to view elderly people in a negative light.

He found that most women on television are under 35, while most men are over 35, that as women age on television, they become less successful, while as men age on televison, they become more successful.

"The more a person watches television," said Dr. Gerbner, "the more he is likely to exaggerate the number of times police use violence in their work. And if two people are the same age, the same sex, have the same income and occupation, and if one watches more television, he is more likely to buy a watchdog or a weapon for protection because he considers the world meaner and more dangerous than the person who watches less television.

"So you get a sense of insecurity," he said, "that implies a dependence on authority, and – this is probably the most disturbing part – it imples that the more a person watches television, the more likely he is to be insecure, to (believe) the world

TV, Page 54

■ TV
Continued from Page 53

is shaped by violence, and he will be more likely to accept oppression, even welcome oppression if it comes in the name of security."

The greatest impact, yet to be measured, will come to bear on the generation of children born since the nation discovered it had more television sets than bathtubs.

By the time a child learns to read, he or she has been subjected to more than 30,000 stories – commercials, news, fiction and drama, said Dr. Gerbner, and they're all the same to a child, who becomes enveloped in an environment of storytelling.

"Television tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time," he said, "and whoever tells the stories in a culture can control the way in which children grow up, the way in which a society develops."

"The Television Explosion" won't revolutionize the way we watch television.

But it ought to make us think a little longer and a little harder about what it's doing to us.

N.Y. Times
Feb. 12, 1982

TV Weekend

Television Scrutinized; Comedy and Magic Shows

ANYONE who plans to spend any part of this weekend glued to the television screen ought to consider Sunday's "Nova" episode at 8 P.M. on Channel 13 must viewing. Titled "The Television Explosion," this hourlong documentary presents the potential dangers of new television technology in horrifying detail.

Beginning with a brief history of the medium, the show quickly moves past Felix the Cat, Dinah Shore and Kukla, Fran and Ollie. It's mostly devoted to today's world of television and the problems it faces. From George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications comes the none-too-heartening news that people who heavily view television think the world is a more violent place than it actually is.

"They live in a more mean and dangerous world, for all practical purposes, than their neighbors who watch less television," Mr. Gerbner says. These people also approve more heartily of men over 35 than of men under 35 — but have a lower opinion of post-35 women than of their gigglier television juniors.

Rose Goldsen, a Cornell sociologist, talks of how television has replaced mom, dad, teacher or grandma as the child's principal storyteller, even though television doesn't modulate its tone in response to the child's own reactions. She also points out that television, at first touted as a communal experience for the family, has become a very private and isolating influence.

The real nightmare is a segment about QUBE, a pioneering two-way cable system that has been operating in Columbus, Ohio, since 1977. QUBE subscribers have at-home buttons they can press to order merchandise, participate in surveys, even guess the next play in a football game. "Nova" visits one QUBE family that keeps its television on all day long. The mother parks her son in front of the set while she does her housework. Then the father comes home, and he and his son play video games. Later, friends visit, the hosts prepare popcorn, and everybody watches "Apocalypse Now." "We haven't gone *out* to a movie in over two years," the father proudly declares.

Les Brown, editor of Channels magazine and a former television reporter for The New York Times, ably describes the possible liabilities of such a system. What if a serious political poll were being conducted and the buttons were being pressed by 3-year-olds? (Indeed, the show finds one family whose little son answered "Yes" to an invitation to go review a new movie, which turned out to be R-rated.) And what if legislators were seriously influenced by plebiscites conducted in this yahoo spirit?

Furthermore, what if all the wonderful new cable services — home computer, burglar alarms, special movies and sporting events, mail-order services — meant a monthly bill of $75 or more?

"We may be divided into information haves and information have-nots," postulates Mr. Brown, speculating that some day there may even be a need for cable stamps akin to food stamps if cable usurps too many important functions. The key warning of the "Nova" show is that cable is proliferating, virtually unregulated, while the populace remains too confused by this new technology to raise questions. It's wonderful to think of getting 100 different channels at home, Mr. Brown says, "but they're like tines of a rake," he says, explaining: "They all meet at the handle. And the handle is the guy who owns the cable system."

"The Television Explosion" was written and produced by Thea Chalow.

•

This weekend's late-night newcomer is "Twilight Theater," a sporadically funny 90-minute revue featuring Steve Martin, with Roddy McDowall as host, to be shown tomorrow night on Channel 4 at 11:30. The premiere episode arrives with great fanfare and with portraits of all its guest stars on a gallery wall. They're all smoking pipes, even the women. The guests include Carl Reiner, Martin Mull, Candy Clark, Bill Murray and a kazoo orchestra that plays "Also Sprach Zarathustra."

Mr. Martin is featured in one skit about a radio call-in advice show, playing a husband who discovers, en route to work, that his wife hates him and is sleeping with everyone else in his car pool. In another segment, a Civil War saga is staged so that you, the viewer, play a Southern belle. The camera stands in for the belle, and Mr. Martin, as her long-lost boyfriend, gives the camera several big kisses squarely on its lens. After the sketch is over, Mr. Martin exchanges phone numbers with everyone but the camera, but then tells it, most insincerely, that he'd like to have lunch sometime.

Another sketch has Mr. Murray parodying a prison movie, making a ruckus in the mess hall by shouting: "You call this quiche? It's slop!" There are musical numbers by the yodeling Riders in the Sky and by the visually clever Devo. One particularly good bit is a home movie of children in the 1950's, supposedly sold to the network by "Elvis's second cousin, twice removed." A few unidentifiable tots are seen beside a school piano, and a narrator claims, to the tune of "Love Me Tender," that Glen Campbell and Carl Perkins are somewhere in the classroom.

"Doug Henning's World of Magic," Sunday night at 7 on Channel 4, is an entertaining special proving that Mr. Henning's tricks are as miraculous in close-up as they are on stage. Surrounded by a hokily good-humored cast — Bruce Jenner, Ann Jillian and a hair-raising little girl named Cherish Alexander, who is billed as world minimiss — Mr. Henning performs some marvelously illogical feats. He pours an ever-increasing supply of milk from a pitcher into three beakers. He makes the Los Angeles Rams cheerleaders materialize out of a small booth that doesn't appear to have a trap door. He saws a woman in half and does card and rope tricks. How does he do it? Mr. Henning isn't giving anything away.

Two notable aspects of the show are its costumes and its canaries. The costumes are unusually bright and flattering, and they're deserving of special praise. As for the canaries, a couple of tricks employ them, and they're obviously frisky, noisy little things. When Mr. Henning makes them disappear, they probably haven't gone far — just up his sleeve, maybe, or behind his collar, or into a pocket somehow.

Then why, when they vanish, do they stop tweeting?

Janet Maslin

Annenberg Researchers To Join Vienna Forum

By AMIE THORNTON

Television's contribution to viewer conceptions of reality will be the subject of an international conference in Vienna which Annenberg School members will attend this week.

Annenberg Dean George Gerbner, the originater of the project, will present a paper, as will Cultural Indicators project members and Annenberg professors Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signiorelli.

In addition, Nancy Rothschild, a Ph.D. candidate in communications who has written a paper relating to cultural indicators, will also present her work.

The conference, organized by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, which will begin Tuesday and last through Friday, will bring together researchers from Austria, Poland, Germany, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Hungary, England and the U.S. to discuss different aspects of their research on cultural indicators.

In addition to discussing improvements in methods of TV research, researchers will compare the effects of television under different programming systems. The cross-national study will help researchers discover which effects of television are inherent to the medium and which are the result of specific programming practices.

"We are delighted to have so much really stimulating, well prepared and critical attention focused on our work," he said.

While the main emphasis of the conference will be on television, researchers from countries in which other forms of mass media are more influential will present information on other cultural indicators.

Morgan, who became involved in the project as a master's degree candidate, emphasized the prevalence of television as an American cultural indicator. "TV is one of the most powerful influences in this society," he said.

It is the precise nature of this influence that Cultural Indicators research seeks to understand. Gerbner explained that elements of the American television system affect programming policies, which in turn determine the effect television viewing has on the public's conception of reality.

Because the primary purpose of American television is to sell goods — as opposed to the British system of selling actual programs — programming is often aimed at those who spend the most money. "Here, television is an arm of marketing," Gerbner said.

The result is that certain elements of reality are misrepresented on television. Acts of violence, for example, occur at an extremely high rate. "The more you watch television, the more you think the world is a mean and dangerous place to live," Gerbner said.

Morgan, who will present a paper on "Symbolic Victimization and Real World Fear", said his research has shown certain groups of people are systematically portrayed as the victims of this violence.

"I wanted to see whether the patterns of unequal victimization in television related to how susceptible those same groups were to the cultivation of fear," he said.

He found that for those often portrayed as victims on TV, high amounts of television viewing lead to the cultivation of real-world fear.

Signiorelli, whose paper is entitled "The Demography of the Television World," studied how the TV world population differs from actual U.S. census figures. She also found discrepancies. Men, especially of the middle class, were over-represented, while elderly people were severely under-represented.

"You tend to underestimate the number of old people because you hardly ever see them on television," Gerbner added.

While the specific effects of television differ from country to country, concern about it is universal, Gerbner said.

"The real question is," he said, "what does it mean to grow up with television?"

FEELING GOOD

News

BY FLORA DAVIS

LISTENING BETWEEN THE LINES

When you talk, you reveal things about yourself by the words you choose and the syntax of your sentences, according to Dr. Walter Weintraub, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore. For the past 15 years, Weintraub has been asking people to deliver 10-minute, off-the-cuff monologues about anything that comes into their minds while he tapes them. Later he analyzes their speech patterns.

In his book, *Verbal Behavior* (Springer Publishing Co., 1981), Weintraub reports that people who use explainer words such as *because* and *in order to* are generally rationalizers, while those who overuse words like *but* and *nevertheless* are apt to be impulsive or given to changing their minds. Someone who peppers her speech with qualifiers such as *kind of* and *what you might call* is probably indecisive or reluctant to commit herself. Passivity is indicated by impersonal expressions like *it has occurred to me* and *it seems to me*, which Weintraub says are common to people who don't like taking charge.

When Dr. Weintraub compared the speech patterns of men and women, he found that women use more expressions that indicate tentativeness. For instance, women are more inclined to see themselves as passive objects of a verb (as in "He likes me") rather than as doers or verb subjects ("I like him"). *Me* is more personal and sensitive and less "executive" than *I*, says Weintraub. Women also tend to modify their statements with retractors such as *but* or *however*, and they use more evaluator words like *good* and *bad*. In addition, women are more prone to those rationalizing explainers.

WHEN IS TV BAD MEDICINE?

If you couldn't care less about exercise or a balanced diet, and you take it for granted that modern medicine can cure what ails you, it's possible you've been watching too much television.

Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications in Philadelphia, recently studied the hidden health messages on television. He reported that during an average hour of TV drama, the characters eat, drink or talk about food nine times. They're more likely to have snacks than a regular meal and the drinks are usually alcohol. Yet despite such indulgences, the characters themselves are seldom alcoholic, overweight or unhealthy, and on the rare occasions when they are ill or injured, there's always a warm, caring doctor available to cure them.

The implied messages are clear: Health habits are unimportant, and doctors can work miracles. And the messages do get through, for Gerbner's study demonstrated that heavy TV viewers are more complacent about their health than light viewers of similar background. They aren't as concerned about diet or exercise and the more TV they watch, the more faith they have in the powers of medicine.

Those health messages may have other effects as well. Gerbner suggests that malpractice suits may be more common today partly because television gives people unrealistic ideas about what a doctor can do for them.

BABIES AND A BIOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE

If you have to listen to a baby crying, do you begin to feel tense? It's no small wonder, for recent research indicates that the sound actually affects you physiologically: You feel anxious and irritable, your heart begins to beat faster, your blood pressure rises and there are other signs of arousal as well.

Dr. Ann M. Frodi, a professor of developmental psychology at the University of Rochester in New York, suggests that there may be something about the sound of a baby wailing that triggers this kind of response in all humans. When she asked a group of men, women and children to listen to some tapes of crying infants, she found that all the volunteers responded the same way. So a baby's piercing cry may be evolution's way of motivating us to attend to his or her needs.

WOMEN'S BODIES: WHAT ARE THEY WORTH?

If you were in an accident and lost the use of an arm or leg, how much insurance compensation do you think you'd deserve? Whatever your answer, it will probably be lower than the amount a man would hope to get for a similar loss. Apparently women value their bodies less than men do, and according to one study, the difference shows up as early as third grade. When Sandra Vaughan, a doctoral student in psychology at Georgia State University in Atlanta, asked 320 third and sixth graders how much insurance compensation *they'd* want, the boys put an average value of $306 on various body parts; the girls averaged just $230.

Vaughan says such attitudes have consequences when men and women actually sue for injuries: Women are less likely than men to sue in the first place and less likely to request—or receive—relatively high awards. Part of the problem is prejudice—on the average, male dominated juries give men 13 percent more than they ask for and women 17 percent less—but Vaughan says women's feelings about their bodies are also responsible.

THE SOUND OF PASSION

Though sexual excitement generally robs us of speech, in the heat of passion people often make inarticulate sounds. And when sociologist Terry Ruefli of Daemen College in Amherst, New York, used a questionnaire to find out more about this, he discovered that women make more sounds than men. What's more, a man has a greater tendency to match his noise level to his partner's, eventually making as many or as few sounds as the woman. ■

From the April Mademoiselle

Many Thanks!

FLORA M. DAVIS

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U. Plans Washington Extension

Annenberg Schools Prepare Joint Program

By AMIE THORNTON

University administrators and Annenberg School trustees will review plans this weekend for opening an extension of the school's telecommunications policy-making program in Washington, D.C.

The joint effort between the school and the Annenberg School of the University of Southern California will be geared toward the study of communications policy-makers.

In addition to graduate degree work, the program will conduct its own research, accept grants for research projects, and offer both credit and non-credit courses.

Program organizers are negotiating a lease for space in a Washington office building to house the project.

Annenberg School Dean George Gerbner said Friday, "It is significant that it is going to be located in the world center for telecommunications policy making."

This weekend's conference will be held in Palm Springs, Calif. Both university presidents, the secretary of the Annenberg Corporation, members of an advisory committee, and the deans of the two Annenberg schools will attend.

Gerbner said this is the first such joint effort between the two schools, which share trustees.

"The purpose of the conference is to exchange ideas and share information about the Washington program," Gerbner said.

Plans for the program, which have been developing for 18 months, were drawn up by committees composed of faculty members from both Annenberg Schools.

Committee member and University professor Larry Gross said the committees met on two occasions, once in Philadelphia and once in Los Angeles, to plan components of the program.

Gross said the extension will tie in with the communications graduate program at the University. Comparing it to the undergraduate option of spending a year or a semester in London, he said master's degree candidates will have the opportunity to intern with different Washington agencies while participating in research seminars conducted through the project.

The trustees will meet immediately after the presentation of plans to make a final decision on whether to launch

(Continued on page 6)

—Annenberg Expansion—

(Continued from page 1)

the program. If approved, a program office should open in the fall and operations should begin in about one year, Gerbner said.

Gerbner explained that the project would represent the first academic organization studying telecommunications policy which would be part of a regular graduate program in communications.

He added that while the program will begin with an orientation toward graduate studies, it may be expanded later to encompass undergraduate work.

LETTERS

An Open Letter

This missive from a professor of communications was written as an open letter to readers of the "Gazette."

TO THE READERS:

It is both painful and tedious to prolong what seems to be a losing battle. But prolong it I must because the integrity of a University research project and of this magazine are at stake.

An article in the December, 1981, issue entitled "The Storytellers' Dilemma" made reference to a research project on television of which I am co-principal investigator. The article was written by two television scriptwriters and, I am sorry to say, University alumni. It was so wide of the mark that I wrote a letter to the editor which was published in the March, 1982, issue.

My letter attempted to correct some of the factual errors and mistaken interpretations contained in the article. I wrote that the scriptwriters' description of our work was so bizarre that "it is doubtful that they ever read a single one of our television violence reports, published annually for over a decade."

In the interest of brevity and equanimity, I made no mention of the most offensive part of the article, linking our research with Hollywood witchhunts and blacklists. And for the same reasons, I did not stress our disappointment over the peculiar editorial practice of the *Gazette* publishing an article by interested parties denigrating a Pennsylvania research project without bothering to obtain first-hand information about the project. In my letter, I only (and in retrospect all too trustingly) remarked that "When the *Gazette* publishes an article that purports to describe a well-known University project, it might not be too much to ask that a campus call be placed to check the facts."

I wrote that letter on January 5, expecting it to be published in the February issue. Instead, it was printed in the March issue, followed by a longer piece by the same two television scriptwriters. Neither they nor the editor responded to my plea for obtaining first-hand information about the project. In fact, the scriptwriters' letter continued to ignore the basic thrust and essence of our research, compounded the errors of the original article, introduced a series of irrelevancies and non-sequiturs, added new inventions, and escalated the original sniping into a hatchet job of some magnitude.

Among other things, they claimed to have attended a meeting of the Hollywood Caucus of Writers, Producers, and Directors at which I was the guest speaker. In line with their original innuendos about pressure groups, censorship, and witchhunts, they chose to interpret my comments at that meeting as indicating "a cavalier attitude toward 'freedom and creativity.' "

The truth is the opposite. The purpose of my talk in Hollywood was to indicate to the assembled writers, producers, and directors that research such as ours is their best defense against further restrictions (mostly by networks and sponsors) on their freedom and creativity.

The trade paper *Daily Variety*, not given to flattering academic researchers investigating the television industry, wrote the day after the meeting (January 20, 1978):

> The father of the tv violence profile and the Hollywood creative community may be working the same side of the street in the future, with the violence research used to achieve greater creative freedom and more diverse programming . . . .
>
> "In terms of getting more talent and more time and more variety, it requires creative freedom that this group of people can provide and if and when or as they proceed to that goal, our research, our indices, will reflect it," Gerbner said in an interview . . . .
>
> Speaking of the Caucus members, Gerbner said, "It will be useful for them to show the amount of uniformity versus diversity that's on the air" in attempting to reach their goal of providing richer programming product. "I offered to continue our dialogue," said the educator, "and to collaborate with them in helping to use our type of research in the interest of greater freedom . . . ."
>
> A spokesman for the Caucus, assessing the impact of the discussion with Gerbner, observed: "It's obvious that on the face of the presentation he gave, that what's involved is some far-reaching and long-reaching kinds of implications."

Sounds like a "cavalier attitude toward 'freedom and creativity' "? In fact, our strong support of creative freedom led to further research cooperation with Hollywood guilds.

Undaunted by the facts, however, the two scriptwriters charge on:

> Gerbner's impact, both in the press and in the TV community, has faded; he's been eclipsed by the more recent media stars of the Moral Majority and the Coalition for Better Television. This is unfortunate, since his research is not without interest. As it happens, we share some of his views about an overabundance of violence on the small screen . . . .

Let me, patient reader, drag you through that paragraph again.

Being a social scientist and neither a propagandist nor a writer with a vested interest, I do not worry about "impact" either in the press or in the tv community as

continued

LETTERS *continued*

much as I worry about reason, evidence, and the integrity of our work—especially in the University's own alumni magazine.

Being "eclipsed by the more recent media stars of the Moral Majority, etc." could be a good gag in a tv comedy of errors if it were not another sorry descent into the original and reprehensible linking of our work with bigotry and repression.

The patronizing note that our "research is not without interest" because the scriptwriters "share some . . . views about the overabundance of violence on the small screen" would do for faint praise were it not for their evident ignorance of what our views are.

The scriptwriters conclude their letter with a plaintive wish, "perhaps in vain," they hint darkly, 'that Gerbner will eventually recognize that people of good will may disagree with him, not because they're misinformed but because they simply think he's wrong . . . ."

People of good will should be more scrupulous with the facts and more judicious with their conclusions. Good will cannot assure good sense. We welcome disagreement of both fact and conclusion and have conducted lengthy debates on both in scholarly journals, debates from which we have learned a great deal. We are also accustomed to know-nothing attacks from those who believe their interests to be affected by our research. But we cannot accept reckless and simply nasty distortions of the ongoing work of our research team in the University's own magazine.

I have no illusion that the scripwriters can afford either to admit or to change anything, so this letter is not addressed to them. I did have some illusions that the editorial process might serve to safeguard the interests of readers and the University and help to bring about full and fair examination of University research attacked in the *Gazette* without giving the researchers an opportunity to convey the facts or respond in the same issue. Those illusions were shattered when the editor refused to consider reports of the actual research discussed in the *Gazette,* taking the position that he must be "neutral" in what he judged to be a squabble between a *Gazette* author and a University researcher. All other efforts to obtain some editorial satisfaction in the interest of our project, the *Gazette,* and its readers, also failed. Therefore, this letter is not really addressed to the editor, either.

This letter is addressed to the readers, alumni and members of the campus community, who still believe that their magazine should be an authoritative and well-authenticated critical organ of news and opinion serving the interests of alumni and the University. I ask them to suspend that belief until it becomes warranted again.

In the meantime, I can only hope that publication of this letter will go a small step toward restoring the *Gazette*'s tarnished editorial integrity.

GEORGE GERBNER
Philadelphia

EDITOR'S NOTE: In publishing "The Storytellers' Dilemma" (an excerpt from a book by two alumni who write for television), Dr. Gerbner's first letter, the authors' response to that letter, and, now, Dr. Gerbner's second letter, we believe we have acted responsibly, ethically, and professionally.

Satisfied

TO THE EDITOR:

March and another good issue.

Please tell D. S. B. Davis ["A Whale of Good Luck"] that it is not true that the horse proves "evolution . . . at a slow, steady rate." A ranking of equine precursors *in order of size* has often been cited as a ranking by stages of development. Sorry I cannot recall the authoritative source, but perhaps someone down there can do so.

The Schwartz/Sparer memos—very interesting reading. Possibly their voluble exchange suffered some from confusion re: racism, an attitude, and discrimination (which they discuss but never identify), acts based on the attitude. If you want to discern "institutional racism" look up the "policy" of the institution. Actually, you really need to ask the members and staff "what they think," which may be unreliable! So the tendency is to inspect "acts" and reason backward. Time might better be spent looking for expressions of racism than searching for the negative—non-racist'ness.

Enjoyed reading J. Biberman on R. Solomon ["The Professor of Desire"]. The clearest evidence of "love" for me was his disciplined restraint: "The first time I saw Kris, she fit a whole sequence of fantasies, *but there was nothing I could do about it because she was a student, and that's off limits."* And that's love, I submit: A task we undertake, at least daily, if it is to be sustained. I also believe that giving to another the power to hurt us is a condition precedent to love. And aren't children both the best expression of love and its greatest occasion?

And thanks for a new and much better impression of Mike Wallace.

NELSON F. HINE, *'42 W*
Schenectady, N.Y.

Mike Wallace's Fitness

TO THE EDITOR:

"Gazetcetera" in your March, 1982, issue comments on the flap over Mike Wallace's fitness as an Ivy Day speaker in consideration of his ethnic slurs. His numerous demonstrations of dishonesty in reporting make him an even more reprehensible guest on our campus.

The *60 Minutes* program, on which he is a featured star, is very entertaining and many of its "disclosures" have enabled it to achieve a high rating in TV watching. However, there have been instances where the program content has been steered to arrive at a preconceived conclusion, and Wallace has been responsible in several of these.

Probably the most recent example was the January 23, 1982, program entitled "The Uncounted Enemy—A Vietnam Deception." This purported to present evidence that General William C. Westmoreland launched a conspiracy in 1967 to conceal intelligence estimates from President Johnson and the American people that the enemy had twice as many men as had previously been reported. The interview with the General was rigged to support the premise that Wallace and the *60 Minutes* editors wished to present. At a subsequent press conference, General Westmoreland furnished ample testimony and credible witnesses to prove that the program had been a "preposterous hoax," but, of course, it did not have the advantage of *60 Minutes'* clout in prime viewing time.

Another example of Wallace's speciousness in reporting was in his endeavor to smear the F.B.I. in his profile of Jean Seberg. Evidence was distorted and tapes were doctored to attempt to document the case he wished to present.

I am a long-time supporter of my University as a member of the Committee of 1,000 and will continue to be. However, I am ashamed that we would provide a forum for a journalist of Wallace's character.

M. F. SLOAN, JR., *'33 CE, '34 GCE*
Sarasota, Fla.

Mike Wallace replies: Mr. Sloan, Jr.'s undocumented allegations come almost verbatim from the pages of something called *Accuracy in Media,* published by Reed Irvine, who has been peddling this material and calling for my resignation or firing from CBS News for some months.

Following the instant broadcast (which, incidentally, was not a "Sixty Minutes" piece but a "CBS Reports"), two unlikely bedfellows, the New York *Times* editorial page and William F. Buckley, wrote favorably about it. Mr. Buckley called for a Congressional investigation into its findings.

Such a documentary film undertaking is hardly the work of one journalist, but a collaborative effort involving the reporting, research, and production efforts of many individuals, carefully vetted by their superiors before it is aired. Obviously, those superiors at CBS News were satisfied as to its accuracy before giving it an hour and a half of air time on a Saturday night in January.

A Proud Cousin

TO THE EDITOR:

Congratulations to those responsible for the Award of Merit given to Paul F. Miller, Jr. [February *Gazette*]. Along with all "the brothers and the sisters and the aunts," may I, too, bask in the reflected glory by adding myself as a *cousin*? He was born to my cousin while I was in college, so I am proud to claim him as my "first cousin once removed." And now, 50 years later, I shall return to the campus for my half-century Class Reunion this spring.

BETTY THOMPSON BLACKBURN, *'32 Ed*
Philadelphia

Five More Men

TO THE EDITOR:

I must reply to President Hackney re: the part of women in Penn's Affirmative Action Program [February Letters].

The president claims there is no need to mention women specifically in Affirmative Action for Penn. This brings to mind the legal arguments that have successfully worked against women seeking protection under the Fourteenth Amendment because we are not a "suspect" class.

continued on page 8

The Washington Post
WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 1982
No. 151

Report Links TV Violence To Aggression

By Cristine Russell
Washington Post Staff Writer

Violence on television can lead to aggressive behavior by children and teen-agers who watch the programs, according to a government review of the last decade of research on this long-debated topic.

"Television and Behavior," a new report from the Department of Health and Human Services, concludes that the "consensus" among scientists is that there is a "causal relationship" between televised violence and aggression.

It says that the "great majority" of studies in the laboratory and the field during the 1970s support this conclusion, although a minority of researchers still disagree.

The report, which was prepared by the National Institute of Mental Health, supports the preliminary findings of a controversial 1972 Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee study on televised violence. The earlier suggestions of a link between violence and aggression have been "significantly strengthened" since then, the report contends.

"After 10 more years of research, the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teen-agers who watch the programs," says the carefully worded update report.

Calling television a "violent form of entertainment," the new report found that the percentage of programs containing violence has remained essentially the same during the past decade and that during this period "there also has been more violence on children's weekend programs than on prime time television."

The report cautions that "not all children become aggressive, of course," emphasizing that the various studies compare large groups rather than individual cases. But the latest research has expanded to sug-

An 'Overwhelming' Violence-TV Tie

By ROBERT REINHOLD

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 5 — A Federal analysis of a decade's research on the behavioral effects of television viewing has concluded that there is now "overwhelming" scientific evidence that "excessive" violence on television leads directly to aggression and violent behavior among children and teen-agers.

"The consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teen-agers who watch the programs," the report says. It adds with emphasis: "In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured."

The question now, it said, is no longer whether the link exists but what explains it.

The report, prepared by the National Institute of Mental Health, was meant to update the 1972 Surgeon General's report on the subject. That report was tentative, concluding that while there was some evidence linking television viewing to short-term aggression, it was unclear whether it had any long-run consequences. The new report says that such hesitancy is no longer warranted, calling television "a formidable educator whose effects are both pervasive and cumulative."

Dissent From Industry

The report drew immediate dissent from the broadcasting industry. Shaun Sheehan, a spokesman for the National Association of Broadcasters, said that the industry, recognizing the problem, had already moved to screen violence out of new children's programs. However, he said that many older programs high in violence, such as Bugs Bunny and Tom and Jerry cartoons and Three Stooges comedies were still widely shown as reruns with the proliferation of cable television.

He did not refer to the effect of such shows as "Kojak," "Hill Street Blues" and "Starsky and Hutch," which feature many scenes of violence and which have had a wide following.

In New York, the National Broadcasting Company said its staff had found a number of "inaccurate statements" in the Government report and predicted that independent social scientists would challenge it. The network cited a study by NBC, mentioned in the report, that reached opposite conclusions.

The Federal report, which focused on entertainment programming rather than news, was based not on new research but on about 2,500 studies and publications since 1970. So far only a 93-page summary, lacking scientific detail, has been issued.

Noting that the level of violence shown on television had fluctuated over the years, the Federal analysis nevertheless concluded that "television remains a violent form of entertainment."

Although it said that the link between television and violence was "obvious," the report conceded elsewhere that the link had not been proved conclusively by any single study. Rather it said there was a "convergence" of findings from many studies, "the great majority of which demonstrate a positive relationship between televised violence and later aggressive behavior."

As an example, it cited a five-year study of 732 children that found that conflict with parents, fighting and delinquency were all correlated with the total amount of television viewing.

Two other studies followed 3- and 4-year-olds for a year and correlated their behavior at day-care centers with home television viewing. The studies found a strong association between heavy viewing of violent programs and "unwarranted" aggression during play.

Increases in Aggression

Also cited were studies showing an increase in verbal and physical aggression among children after television was introduced into their communities.

In contrast the report cited what it called a "technically sophisticated" study by NBC in which measurements of aggression among panels of elementary and high-school students were taken six times over three years. The results showed some short-term effect of television viewing on aggression but no lasting influence.

The Federal report dismissed this finding, saying that a decade's accumulated evidence to the contrary was "overwhelming."

The report cited four theories to explain the purported violence link:

¶Observational learning. The theory is that violent behavior is acquired from television much the way that cognitive and social skills are learned from siblings, parents and friends.

¶Attitude change. Studies show that children who watch televison heavily are more suspicious and distrustful and tend to think there is more violence in the world than do others. One study found an increase in unruliness among black youngsters after viewing "Roots," the televised version of the book celebrating the resistance of slaves in America.

¶Arousal process. This theory examines physiological arousal resulting from witnessing violent episodes.

¶Justificatioion processes. This holds that persons who are already aggressive find justification for their behavior by watching favorite television characters.

The report spoke of television in awesome terms, calling it a "beguiling" instrument that has become "a major socializing agent of American children." It suggested that it had the potential — so far largely unrealized — of doing much good, such as in promoting health and nutrition, aiding education and improving family relations.

The report, prepared under the direction of David Pearl of the mental health institute, is titled "Television and Behavior: 10 Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties." Only Volume 1, the summary, is available, for $5, from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Photo by James Caulfield

Calumet City, Ind.

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headache and not know why.

Continued on page 8

In a nation hooked on TV, some have kicked the habit

By Steven Morris

ON THE 12TH floor of Fields' State Street store, Fred Derby is spending a lot of time doing something he rarely allows himself to do at home—staring at a television screen.

Derby, 38, manager of visual communications for the company's Chicago division, is reviewing the monthly company news program he runs for the division's 15,000 employees.

As he stares at the screen, scenes of people and places flash vividly on and off. This show for employees is very popular, partly because some of its techniques "follow the examples of programs that are the worst kinds of TV," he says. "We pattern it after 'That's Incredible,' 'Real People,' programs that I dislike the most."

Even though he makes his living through the medium, Derby is one of a number of Chicagoans

Tribune photo by John Austad

As far as Jan Dawson's 5-year-old son is concerned, a "broken" TV set sits in his mother's cleaning closet.

who are rejecting television to some degree as a source of entertainment or information, not all for the same reasons. Some TV abstainers are motivated by the desire to use their time wisely. Some say they would watch it more if its offerings were better. Some just hate it outright.

Derby, 38, has worked in television 10 years.

"We try to look as much like commercial TV as possible. We use music and special effects and a lot of fast-changing shots to keep people's interest. This is what people have become used to watching in their homes.

"UNLIKE COMMERCIAL shows, though, we don't use sex and violence. Obviously, commercial TV finds that kind of stuff successful. It catches attention and holds it for a certain time. People want to

Continued on page 2

CHICAGO TRIBUNE - 5/23/82

Home electronics

Some have escaped the nation's addiction to TV

Continued from page 1

see that, whether they admit it or not, whether they know it or not. But I think using it on television, exploiting weaknesses to achieve your ends, is pretty cheap and vulgar—disgusting.

"Since becoming a professional, I've stopped being a regular viewer. I watch the news, and occasionally "That's Incredible" and "Real People" for techniques."

Raymond and Joyce Silvertrust don't have a television set at all, but not because they are unimpressed with the programming.

"If I had one in my home, I'd watch it too much," says Silvertrust, a lawyer. "I realize that I don't have a lot of discipline when it comes to TV.

"When I was a child, I would watch anything—'Captain Video,' 'The Cisco Kid'—and when my grandmother came over, Arthur Godfrey and Ted Mack. In college I didn't watch much, but that's because I had a lot of activities."

The Silvertrusts' parents have offered to give them television sets, but Silvertrust has been adamant.

"Somebody with admirable self-control might be able to turn on the news and then, when it's over, turn the set off and put it back in the attic," he says. "But I don't think that's what we would do. TV is hard to use properly because it's so easy to use."

WHEN PEOPLE learn that the Silvertrusts don't have a TV set, those people become "intimidated, threatened," he says.

"People think you're a huge snob. In their hearts they know TV is garbage. I have to explain that I'm not a snob, that I just realize my own weakness. There are

There is another sentiment—less vehement—among TV's occasional viewers. It is that if there were more to watch, they would watch it.

a lot of things I'd rather do—read a book, go bike riding, fix up the house—my wife plays the viola, and I play the cello—rather than watch somebody else do something."

After Clarence White received his master's degree in business administration in 1972 and went to work for a bank, he also became more interested in art. Visitors to his apartment will see no television set.

"I have a small black and white set I bought about 12 years ago, but I keep it in a closet. In school I had watched Channel 11 sporadically, but later, what with reading about art and general reading, I withdrew from TV altogether. I may have taken the set down a couple of times during the Watergate hearings. Not only do I think the programming is abominable, I also don't like the way televisions *look*—their design."

A television survey company once asked him to keep a diary of his viewing.

"When she called me back I told her I just had blank pages because I hadn't turned my set on during that week. I gave her a lecture on how bad I thought television was."

RESEARCHERS SAY that Americans each watch an average of 30 hours of television a week, but young children and senior citizens watch more. The average 12-year-old in the U.S. watches television six hours a day, by one estimate, but you can't prove it by Geoffrey Dawson, 5, who lives in Morgan Park. Geoffrey hasn't watched any television at home since September when he blew up his mother's portable by sticking paper clips through an opening in the back.

His mother got the set fixed in January, but she's not telling Geoffrey.

"I keep the set in a closet and watch it rarely," says Jan Dawson, "only when he's in school or after he goes to sleep. This means I can't watch some of the few things I want to see. I wanted to watch the show about Golda Meir, but it came on at 7 o'clock, and he doesn't go to sleep until 7:30. I like golf, but I can't watch tournaments because they come on in the middle of the day on weekends."

Dawson, whose late husband was "very anti-TV," did not own a set from 1966 to 1978, and didn't miss it.

"The guy who sold me this house also sold me his portable TV. After Geoffrey broke the set, I told him I would get it fixed if he would clean his room. He didn't clean his room and never mentioned the set again.

"INSTEAD OF watching TV, he gets into things like coloring, playing with little cars, building things with blocks, more constructive things.

"I'm not so much afraid that he would badger me to watch a lot of TV as I am that I might use it as a babysitter. I don't want to wake up some early Saturday morning and say to him, 'Why don't you watch TV?'.

"Of course, there are times when he may be annoying me, asking a million questions or messing things up, but that's better than sitting there zapped out like kids get when they're watching TV."

Some psychologists have experimented with ways to help children and adults cut their viewing time.

"Children think TV represents the world and may tend to imitate the TV characters," says Patricia Rooney-Rebeck, a psychotherapist intern at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center. "But if they're doing other things as well as watching TV, the negative influences of excessive television watching—maybe including increased aggressiveness and lowered communication skills—will not be as strong."

As a graduate student at De Paul University, Rooney-Rebeck supervised a program in a California school last summer in which children and their families kept track of the time the children watched television, and the families rewarded the children—with outings and other treats—for participating in non-TV activities, such as playing outdoors or reading.

"THE POINT is to get children to spend more time doing other things," says Rooney-Rebeck. "We found that those children decreased their television-watching. I hope the Chicago school board will let me try the program in a city school next fall."

At least one researcher says that the medium can be both a blessing and a curse. For 15 years, Dr. George Gerbner, a professor and dean of the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, has been using computerized surveys to study the effects of television.

"Too many articles denouncing television are written from an upper-middle-class point of view" says Gerbner. "Television can be a tremendously enriching resource. The problem is that people who are the heaviest viewers, who tend to be people who do not read a lot and do not have a lot of other activities, get from television unrealistic ideas about the real world."

Studying the differences between "heavy" [over 4 hours a day] and "moderate" [2-4 hours a day] viewers [he couldn't find enough nonviewers to make a valid study], he has found that heavy viewing tends to create a "mainstream" of opinion in which people tend to be more conservative than liberal, to favor spending money than saving it, to have a negative opinion of old people, and to believe that violence often determines people's fate and the outcome of problems and that this violence is perpetrated mainly by white men in the prime of life.

Gerbner has suggested that all of these opinions are mesages that the sponsors of television *want* to convey.

The excessive violence in prime time and in children's programming, he says, while it may cause some individuals to act aggressively toward others and to instill a pervasive sense of danger, has the overriding purpose to "reinforce and preserve the existing social order" in which sponsors will sell their products.

Worse than causing occasional violence, TV may cause the people to *expect* violence or to show "passivity in the face of injustice," he writes. Television's seductive and intrusive presence, he says, teaches not only how to be an aggressor—but also how to be a victim.

There is another sentiment—less vehement—among TV's occasional viewers. It is that if there were more to watch, they would watch it.

"It's not as if I don't follow the TV guides and stuff," says Frank Chadwell, who works for a Loop investment firm.

"But over the last five years or so, the programming has been so bad that I've developed an aversion to commercial TV. Now, about the only television I watch is on Channel 11. I like movies but can't take the commercials. I subscribed to a pay TV service, but the movies became repetitive." Chadwell's attitude has changed much from when he was a child.

"Where I grew up—in a town of 2,000 people near Louisville, Ky.—people live on television. They eat dinner, go to bed and wake up with the TV on. That's the only way they know what's going on, how they maintain their hold on the real world. A lot of them don't have a lot of contact with the outside world.

"When I was a kid I watched a lot, up until the time I started driving when I was 16," Chadwell says. "Then I developed a social life."

TV VIEW

TONY SCHWARTZ

66 Jan 82

Do the Networks Need Violence?

"Television did have an effect on me right from the beginning. In first grade, I was a member of a four-kid gang that went around imitating TV Westerns. We'd disrupt class to play out scenes, picking up chairs and hitting people over the head with them — except, unlike on TV, the chairs didn't break, the kids did. Finally, the teacher called my parents in and said, 'Obviously, he's being influenced by these TV shows, and if he's to continue in this class, you've got to agree not to let him watch television anymore.' So, from first to second grade there was a dark period during which I didn't watch TV at all. And I calmed down and the gang broke up."

What's notable about this memory is that it was recounted, in the course of a Playboy interview this month, by Brandon Tartikoff, president of NBC. For it is top-ranking network executives who have long permitted the level of violent programming to remain so high, despite inexorably mounting evidence that violence on television begets violence in real life.

Two weeks ago, the Federal government released the most compelling proof yet. A National Institute of Mental Health study, surveying 10 years of independent scientific research, concluded that there is now "overwhelming evidence of a causal relationship between violence on television and later aggressive behavior." The report also cited other potential effects of substantial exposure to televised violence, including mistrust, fear, alienation, paranoia and a distorted view of reality.

But while Mr. Tartikoff is surprisingly candid about how televised violence influenced his childhood behavior, NBC has not made substantially more effort than either ABC or CBS to reduce the level of violence on its programs — even those aimed at children. According to Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of

Continued on Page 31

New York Times Sunday 5-23-82

TV VIEW

The Networks And Violence

Continued from Page 1

Communications and one of the leading researchers in the area, the level of violence on all of network television has remained relatively constant throughout the past decade — an average of five or six acts of violence per hour in prime time, and an astonishing 26 to 28 per hour on Saturday-morning children's cartoon shows.

• • •

The notion that televised violence leads to aggressive behavior was first publicly voiced in Congressional hearings held by Senator Estes Kefauver in 1954. Similar conclusions were reached by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in 1969; by the Surgeon General, in his "Report on TV and Social Behavior" in 1972; and by Dr. William Belson of the London School of Economics, in a major study commissioned by CBS and completed in 1978. In 1977, the American Medical Association called on broadcasters to reduce televised violence, citing it as a "threat to the social health of the country." The new NIMH report is different only in that it takes into account more evidence — some 2,500 studies on television and behavior during the past decade — and states its conclusions about televised violence more forcefully than any previous inquiry.

Historically, the networks have reacted to evidence linking television and violence by denying, disparaging or otherwise attempting to discredit it. Indeed, network executives find themselves today in much the same position that tobacco-industry executives did 15 years ago. As evidence mounted that smoking increased the likelihood of cancer, heart disease and other serious maladies, tobacco spokesman were reduced to disputing small scientific points in an effort to divert attention from the larger emerging truth. So, too, the networks regularly attack the methodology of studies linking television viewing and violent behavior, question the biases of individual researchers and insist that there is no single piece of evidence that unequivocally makes the case against televised violence.

Such has been the networks' reaction to the new NIMH study. NBC was the first to attack the Government findings, Mr. Tartikoff's childhood memories notwithstanding. In an unsigned statement, the network cited a number of unspecified "inaccurate statements" in the report and noted that its own study, due for publication this fall, had turned up no link between televised violence and later aggression. (Even that study, however, found that televised violence did have a short-term effect on viewer behavior.) ABC and CBS have since mounted similar attacks on the credibility of the NIMH study.

In truth, network executives are well aware that television has a remarkable capacity to influence behavior. As any candid network executive will acknowledge, television exists first to sell its advertisers' products and only secondarily to provide entertainment and information. That television teaches is self-evident. A child parked in front of a television watches a commercial for corn flakes over and over and eventually begins to ask for that brand. Most researchers agree that young children don't make clear distinctions between commercials and programs. It is not surprising, therefore, that when a child repeatedly watches characters on shows beat each other up, his inclination is to imitate — just as Mr. Tartikoff says he once did.

The problem is not that the average network executive is interested in inciting violence. Rather it is that he works in a system where the quest for profit nearly always comes first. If a show works — meaning that it attracts a large audience — all other considerations become secondary. The fact that a show is unusually thoughtful or intelligent gives it no special status at the networks. "Lou Grant" and "Taxi," two of the most highly regarded shows in recent seasons, were canceled this spring after experiencing modest declines in the ratings. Nor were they singled out. Highly violent shows, such as ABC's "Strike Force" and "Today's F.B.I.," were also canceled because they did poorly in the ratings. Neither the quality level nor the violence level had anything to do with those decisions. It's commercial success that counts.

• • •

Network executives who are trained and rewarded only for success in a narrow commercial range have little impetus to concern themselves with the more complex effects of the programs they put on. But while a social conscience may not be necessary for an executive in the asphalt business, its absence among television executives is cause for serious concern.

To an executive with a broader vision, the evidence that televised violence *may have* insidious effects on young viewers should be reason enough to reduce it. Nor is there much to be gained by quibbling about what constitutes a violent act. As Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart once said about pornography, "I know it when I see it." Violence has a place in drama; it's unnecessary violence that does not. That includes gratuitous violence — the sort designed merely to arouse a reaction, rather than to legitimately advance a story; glorified violence, where inflicting pain and suffering is depicted as acceptable, rather than tragic at best and sadistic at worst; and excessive violence, in which the level depicted is all out of proportion to the reality of ordinary experience.

Not even the most single-minded network executive has suggested that such violence has a positive effect on view-

ers. The only plausible explanation for the continuing exploitation of violence at the networks is that it attracts viewers. But clear evidence also exists that violence is not critical even to ratings success. Among this season's 10 top-rated series, for example, only one featured any significant amount of violence. The two highest-rated series were "Dallas" and "60 Minutes" and seven of the eight others were situation comedies. The exception was "The Dukes of Hazzard," and there the violence consists mostly of car crashes rather than physical confrontations.

It is among the middle-rated and generally least admired television shows that violence is most epidemic. That makes curious sense, for violence is generally the last refuge of the unimaginative. Writing a grisly shoot-out scene is plainly easier than creating drama out of subtle, textured relationships between people, or evoking laughs simply by being funny.

Television is a powerful teacher, and its effects can cut both ways. Just as it now serves, in its less inspired moments, to encourage aggression and violence among young viewers, so it could be used, with equal power, to communicate values such as generosity, sharing and caring. What that requires is a few television executives who are willing to stop nitpicking about the evidence linking television to violence and concentrate on fashioning programs that rely on other dramatic devices. And since Mr. Tartikoff has already acknowledged the effect of televised violence on his own childhood behavior, perhaps he ought to set the pace, at NBC, by translating his experience into action.

VOL. 74, I

Christian Science Monitor, 6/16/1982

Can children learn creativity by watching TV?

Experts who warned of violence also see ways parents can help

By Robert M. Press
Staff correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Atlanta

What is happening to children who sit in front of the family television for some 26 hours a week – the national average for children ages 2 to 11?

Do they become more aggressive after seeing violent programs? Do the many hours of viewing slow their learning or speed it up? How does it affect the way they (and adults) view others and society?

A new round of debate on these questions has been stirred by a recent report by the National Institute of Mental Health on television's impact on behavior. Most attention so far has centered on the report's statement that evidence is "overwhelming" that televised violence causes aggression in children.

Experts in television research interviewed by the Monitor indicated they agreed with these findings.

But besides probing the question of television violence, a largely ignored portion of the report explores how television affects children's imagination, creativity, learning, and emotions, and how television can make or break stereotypes.

The study calls upon parents to help their children become more critical viewers of television, and help them separate fantasy from reality.

For example, the report cites research showing that watching violent programs and cartoons is tied not only to aggressive behavior among children but to less imaginative play. But television can "enhance" a child's imaginative play if an adult watches with the child and helps interpret what is happening.

Parents should recognize that "television is not just entertainment or innocuous use of time," says Eli A. Rubinstein, a research professor at the University of North Carolina's school of journalism and one of the consultants for the report.

"Television has a profound effect on the way our children learn," says George Gerbner, another consultant on the report and Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

These and other researchers interviewed called for changes in TV programming to

★ Please turn to Page 15

From page 1

Can children learn to be creative by watching television?

make television a better educational tool, placing more emphasis on society's best traits and less on negative ones.

They want to see women in less stereotyped roles, to have more working-class and elderly people portrayed, less alcohol used, and less violence, in what they call a truer reflection of American life today.

But TV network officials said in interviews that television's main role is "entertainment."

"Television is not supposed to be a true reflection of society," says Gene Mater, senior vice-president of CBS Broadcast Group. The main aim of television is not education, but "entertainment," he said.

"I'll go home after a day and riding the [commuter] railroad and I'll have a snack and say to my wife: 'I'm going in to [to watch TV],' and I want to laugh. I'm not there to be informed, to be instructed," said Mr. Mater.

Avoiding negative stereotypes is a good goal, but "it gets complicated," said J. Ronald Milavsky, vice-president of news and social research for NBC.

What some viewers may see as a stereotype sometimes reflects what is actually happening in society, and therefore is appropriate to include in the program, he says.

Recasting the role of television the way some social researchers would have it "can't be done," said Mr. Milavsky.

As for the report's finding that television violence is clearly linked to aggression in child viewers — something all three networks dispute — ABC's director of community relations, Jane Paley, contends such studies are not "conclusive." Violence among child viewers is "due to the people in their life — not the television in their life," she said, but did not supply any study tosupport her statement.

Findings from the report, along with comments from some of the researchers, include the following:

TV AND AGGRESSION

The lightening rod of the National Institute of Mental Health's (NIMH) report is the finding that ties televised violence to aggression among children. Even cartoons were found to be aggression-inducing among young viewers.

"The research question [on the link between TV and aggression in children] has moved from asking whether or not there is an effect to seeking explanations for the effect," the report states.

"Hundreds of studies" find that televised violence causes aggression among children, while only a few studies find otherwise, says Dean Gerbner.

One study supporting the TV-aggression link was funded by CBS. It found that teenage boys in London, according to the boys' accounts, were more likely to engage in "serious violence" after exposure to television violence.

CBS disputes the finding, saying the research methods used were not sound. But Dean Gerbner, who has done many studies on TV and violence says that the researcher was a teacher of methodology and that the study was not faulty. (About 90 percent of all research on television's effects on viewers has been conducted since 1972, when a surgeon general's report found "fairly substantial experimental evidence" that TV violence caused short-term aggression in some child viewers. The new report summarizes that research.)

NBC is preparing to publish the results of a large-scale study it sponsored which found no link between television violence and children over the three-year time period studied. Researchers monitored violent television shows and the behavior of a group of elementary students which viewed them.

Parents can help their children understand between fact and fantasy and the implications of what they see.

Professor Rubinstein finds no fault in the methods used in the NBC study but says: "Not finding a positive result is not a denial [that there may be a result]," that is, a link between televised violence and aggression. NBC's Milavsky agrees but says "This is not just an ordinary study. It's not just a matter of not having an effect.'

CBS's Mater criticizes the new NIMH summarizing report for a "remarkable degree of unfairness."

"They present the verdict 'guilty,' and sometime later give you the evidence," said Mater. Volume 2 of the NIMH report, which will include details of the reports upon which Volume 1 is based, will not be ready for release until later this year. Dean Gerbner says none of the reports the summary volume is based on are new. But Mater says some of the reports are not readily available.

TV AND LEARNING

A somewhat less clear link is shown by the report between achievement and television viewing habits at various ages.

"Among young students up to about the eighth grade, those who watch television about an hour or two a day get higher scores on reading than those who watch less television" — but after the eighth grade "reading scores begin to decline commensurate with increases of television-viewing times," the report states.

In one study of students, heavy television viewers began reading more than light viewers. The heavy viewers read mostly stories about families, love, teen-agers, and television and movie stars, while the light viewers preferred more science fiction, mysteries, and nonfiction.

Gerbner says the report shows heavy television watching may slow down a bright child but help others develop intellectual skills.

Children and adults learn poor eating habits from seeing so much snack and junk food eaten on television, according to the report. And "alcohol consumption is common; it is condoned and is presented as a part of the social milieu." One study estimates a child daily views at least 3,000 episodes of drinking a year.

TV subjects rarely use seat belts when they drive, something one ABC official thinks should be corrected.

TV AND THE FAMILY

Except for cartoons on Saturday, there are few daily or weekly childrens' programs. Peggy Charren, president of Action for Children's Television, in Newton, Mass. is suing the Federal Communications Commission to try to get it to require more children's programs.

"We wouldn't put up with a public library that has only comic books, but we're putting up with that on TV," she says.

An ABC official notes that the network periodically runs children's specials. Meanwhile, ACT charges that children usually watching programs made for adults.

What parents can do, according to the NIMH report, is help their children understand between fact and fantasy and the implications of what they see.

They can limit viewing time; encourage viewing of some programs and discourage others; watch with the children, interpreting when necessary ; discuss the programs with their children.

One teacher, the report says, sat with some preschoolers guving guiding comments such as "That boy is in trouble. He is playing hookey and that is bad" — helping the children understand the implications of what they had seen.

(The report is entitled, "Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties. Vol. 1: Summary Report." Single copies may be ordered at no charge while supplies last from the National Institute of Mental Health, Room 11-A21, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20857; or at $5 each from the US Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Highlights of NIMH report say it's what a child watches on TV

Atlanta

TV and aggression:

"Children learn from watching television and what they learn depends on what they watch.

"If [children] look at violent or aggressive programs, they tend to become more aggressive and disobedient. But if they look at prosocial programs, they will more likely become more generous, friendly, self-controlled.

"Children who watch a lot of violence on television may come to accept violence as normal behavior.

"Children in preschool who often watched cartoons with a great deal of violence were the most aggressive.

"If children see a television character rewarded for aggressive behavior, they will probably imitate that behavior . . . The persistence of the behavior, however, seems to be related to the children's own reinforcement, in other words, if the children themselves are rewarded or punished."

'Two years after television was introduced to [a Canadian town], its children's verbal fluency scores on standarized tests decreased significantly. . . .'

TV and education:

"Two years after television was introduced to [a Canadian town], its children's verbal fluency scores on standarized tests decreased significantly. . . .

"Television may replace activities, such as reading, that are known to stimulate imagination and word knowledge.

"After they watched Sesame Street with special inserts of nonwhite children, a group of 3-to-5-year-old children preferred to play with nonwhite children. Children who had not seen the inserts did not show these preferences."

TV and society:

"People who are heavy viewers of television are more apt to think the world is violent than are light viewers. They also trust other people less and believe that the world is a mean and scary place.

"Television has become a major socializing agent of American children.

"There are more men than women on entertainment television, and the men on the average are older. The men are mostly strong and manly, the women usually passive and feminine."

TV and the family

"Family gatherings by the fireplace or at the dinner table now seem to have given way to gatherings in front of the television set.

"Parents do not exert much control over television viewing in most families.

"Parents, teachers and older brothers and sisters are probably most important in determining television programming effects on children.

"There are indications of rising parental concern."

— R.M.P.

By Daniel S. Brody

Parents should teach children to become 'critical' viewers, study says

Network officials reply to the report

Atlanta

On TV and aggression:

"The evidence [linking TV violence and aggression among child viewers] is not overwhelming." — NBC

"Ultimately violence on TV may give a thief . . . a new mousetrap, but I don't believe it will stimulate a noncriminal, nonviolent person to action." — ABC

"There are five or six other good studies [showing televised violence does not cause aggression among children]." — CBS

On children's programs:

"Are we supposed to be the third parent in the household?" — CBS

"We have as much on as the audience will support." — NBC

On TV, sterotypes, and society:

"We're in an entertainment media in which fantasy has a role . . . In the end, television is a very democratic process. The shows people like survive and the ones they don't go off the air." — ABC

"We've been concerned about these same issues for a long time." — NBC

"There's a great tendency to feel we [the networks] can do more than we feel we can." — CBS

— R.M.P.

Announcing a Program and Positions in Communications Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.

The Annenberg Schools of Communications (University of Pennsylvania and University of Southern California) are extending their programs through a facility in Washington, D.C. The new program will concentrate on teaching and research in communications policy and related areas.

Faculty will be members or affiliates of the existing faculties and degree candidates will be regular students of the existing graduate programs of one of the two Annenberg Schools.

The extended program, complementing the resources of other Washington-area universities, will:

- **offer graduate credit work in communications policy, including internships for degree candidates;**
- **present professional development opportunities for persons employed in communications regulation, management, and other policy-related activities;**
- **offer faculty from the U.S. and other countries academic development opportunities in a world center of communications policy activity;**
- **conduct research in communications policy, broadly conceived.**

A joint committee of the two Schools is conducting a search for staff including the head of the program, a director of professional studies, and other positions still to be designated. The allocation of responsibilities to these positions is still somewhat flexible, depending on the combination of skills of the persons filling the positions.

In general, the head of the program, who reports to the two Annenberg School deans, will provide principal leadership for the program; help design, supervise and teach courses; work closely with other administrators and faculty in developing program activities, actively participate in research, and report on the execution of program activities. The head of the program should be a senior scholar with substantial academic and professional experience in communications policy studies.

The director of professional studies (tentative title) will work with representatives from government and business in designing workshops, institutes, and other activities for professional development. Advanced academic qualifications and professional experience in communications policy roles are required.

Send expressions of interest, curriculum vitae, publications list, and names (but not letters) of referees as soon as possible but not later than August 10th to:

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

or

Peter Clarke, Dean
The Annenberg School of Communications
University of Southern California
University Park
Los Angeles, CA 90007

The University of Pennsylvania and the University of Southern California are Equal Opportunity Employers. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply.

Annenberg opens Washington school

Courses will begin in fall of 1983 at third Annenberg School of Communications; degrees will not be granted; instead school will focus on research, study

Amid an assemblage of important members of the government, the communications industry and education, a new program for the study of telecommunications was inaugurated last Thursday in Washington.

It is to be an extension of the two existing Annenberg Schools of Communications, one at the University of Pennsylvania and the other at the University of Southern California. And its purpose, as the deans of those schools and various participants at the inauguration said, was to help ease what was described as a serious shortage of those in the U.S. who are versed in the disciplines involved in making telecommunications policy.

The inauguration of the program, which will begin offering courses in the fall of 1983, helped serve as an opportunity for honoring the founder of the Annenberg Schools—Walter Annenberg, president of Triangle Publications Inc. and former ambassador to Great Britain.

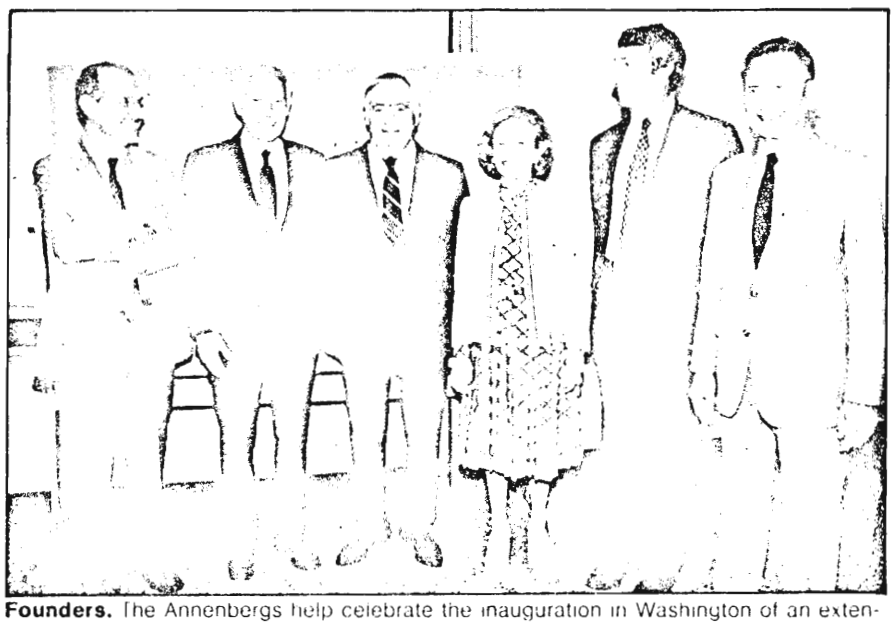
George Gerbner, dean of the Pennsylvania school, said the program would not be "a degree-granting center" but that he hopes it will become "a magnet" for research and study projects. Its work will focus on training and research projects and seminars aimed at improving understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural consequences of new communications technologies and policies, and at developing professionals in those areas. The Washington-based program will be more than national in scope; it will address significant international telecommunications issues and assist Third World countries in developing communications capabilities.

Charles Z. Wick, director of the International Communication Agency, said the program would help deal with what he said is "a paucity of knowledgeable people in the esoteric field" of telecommunications. "People in government are not knowledgeable in those vital areas," he said. And Dr. Joseph V. Charyk, president and chief executive officer of Communications Satellite Corp., said the program would help develop an understanding of the interrelationship of the technical, economic and social disciplines required for a mastery of telecommunications policy.

Others at the inauguration included members and staff of the FCC, State and Commerce Department officials, presidents of other universities and colleges in the Washington area, and members of the communications bar. The international community was also represented, by Hamdy Kandil, director of UNESCO's Division of Free Flow of Information and Communications Policies.

FCC Chairman Mark S. Fowler, who spoke at lunch following the inauguration program, said the program "will provide a great research tool," and expressed his delight that "the private sector has committed itself to see to it that the work of scholarship goes on, in Washington, where decisions are made." Then, addressing himself to Annenberg, at a table near the dais, Fowler said, "Your generosity in funding the first school, and then the second is legendary. Your other grants add luster." And he expressed the thanks of those in the room.

In response, Annenberg, a multimillionaire, said, "Whatever I'm doing, I feel obligated to do." □



Founders. The Annenbergs help celebrate the inauguration in Washington of an extension of the schools of communications they founded at the Universities of Pennsylvania and Southern California. Shown above, at the Capitol Hill Hyatt Regency hotel, where the program was discussed with members of government, industry and academia, are (l-r): Peter Clarke, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications of USC; James Zumberge, president of USC; Walter and Lenore Annenberg; Sheldon Hackney, president of the University of Pennsylvania, and George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg school at that university.

Study To Probe T.V. Religion

Annenberg Receives $165,000 Grant

Daily Pennsylvanian 9/30/1982

By LEE SCHALOP

The Annenberg School of Communications has received a $165,000 research grant to study the effects of religious television programs on viewers.

The school will conduct the study, sponsored by the Communication Commission of the National Council of Churches and the National Religious Broadcasters, along with the Gallup Organization to aid in understanding the impact of religious television on the lives of the people who watch it.

Annenberg School Dean George Gerbner said Tuesday the study is important because it is "the first major study of religion on television and its impact on viewers."

Gerbner, who is one of four Annenberg faculty members on the research staff, said the study will seek to answer "a number of important questions."

A primary objective will be to assess the effect of "religious programming on the social orientation of viewers," he said.

The study will also seek to define the effect of the nationally syndicated religious broadcasts known as the "electronic church." The study will seek to determine if the electronic church is taking away from or enlarging local churches' followings, he added.

Michael Morgan, an Annenberg research specialist who will participate in the study, said this week that the study will consist of two parts.

The first is a "message system" analysis, which involves careful viewing of approximately 120 hours of religious programming by a staff of highly trained "coders."

They apply an advanced coding system developed by Annenberg staff to determine fundamental recurring themes and identify theologies, ideologies and perspectives the programs offer.

The second part is called a "cultivation analysis." In this process, poll takers conduct a survey and gather information from local viewers.

The data, which will be processed by Arbitron Inc., is then combined with the data from the message system analysis in an attempt to draw conclusions.

Morgan said Annenberg received the grant because it is the school most qualified to conduct the research.

"We have the most experience for studying the effect of television," he said. "More important, we have been developing the theoretical paradigms for understanding the effects of the media on contemporary society."

Study to trace effects of electronic church circuit

By Linda Loyd
Inquirer Staff Writer

Is the "electronic church" converting people, or harming them? Are TV ministries cutting into attendance of local churches? Do as many viewers tune to religious broadcasts as the TV evangelists claim? What is the effect of religious television programs on the lives of viewers?

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J., this week announced a two-year, $170,000 study to try to answer these questions.

The study, financed by a broad coalition of religious organizations ranging from the U.S. Catholic Conference to the Rev. Jerry Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour," will try to "assess the meaning of religion in a television age, and the role of religious programming in the life of television viewers," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School.

"The idea is a natural," said Gerbner, who said the Annenberg School has been studying cultural trends in the content of television programming for 14 years.

The project, believed to be the first of its kind, was initiated by the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference and National Religious Broadcasters to define and understand the effect of the nationally syndicated religious broadcasts known as the electronic church.

"The reason we embarked on this in the first place," said William Fore, head of communications for the National Council of Churches, "is we began to realize there simply was almost no solid information about the actual effects of the electronic church broadcasts."

The project came about "as a result of a conference held two years ago in cooperation with the U.S. Catholic Conference and National Religious Broadcasters on the electronic church," said Fore in a telephone interview from his New York office. "Speaker after speaker gave us their opinion, and then we had people challenging them from the audience. No one really knew the answers to most of the questions being asked."

So a proposal was made at that conference for a research project. It took the next two years to secure the $170,000 in funding.

"Every major research organization in the country" was asked if it were interested in the project, Fore said. From 18 initial replies, eight major research groups submitted bids.

The Annenberg School research group, coordinators of the study, is analyzing samples of local and nationally syndicated religious programs and survey viewers in the South and Northeast regions of the country, and Gallup is preparing to administer a national audience survey. They have already begun their work. Their final report is due by the beginning of 1984.

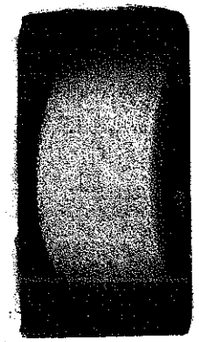
Explaining the project further, Gerbner said: "One of the big questions is, 'What is the relationship of television viewing to the way in which people see themselves as religious or non-religious?' And, 'What role does television-viewing play in the religious orientations of people?'

"Finally, we are interested in general social values. What [are] their general attitudes toward people, toward society, towards social policy? Does viewing religious programming make any difference?"

The Penn researchers already have studied television's relationship to people's health habits, occupational choices, educational goals and political orientations. "We find that those who watch television a substantial amount of time look at reality different from those who watch television less," Gerbner said.

To Fore, an unusual aspect of the project is the "enormous diversity" of religious groups that have donated to it.

"We have everything from Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertston [popular TV evangelists] to the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church Foundation," he said. "This is about the broadest coalition of religious groups that I know of anywhere in the country."



PHILADELPHIA, Thursday, September 30, 1982

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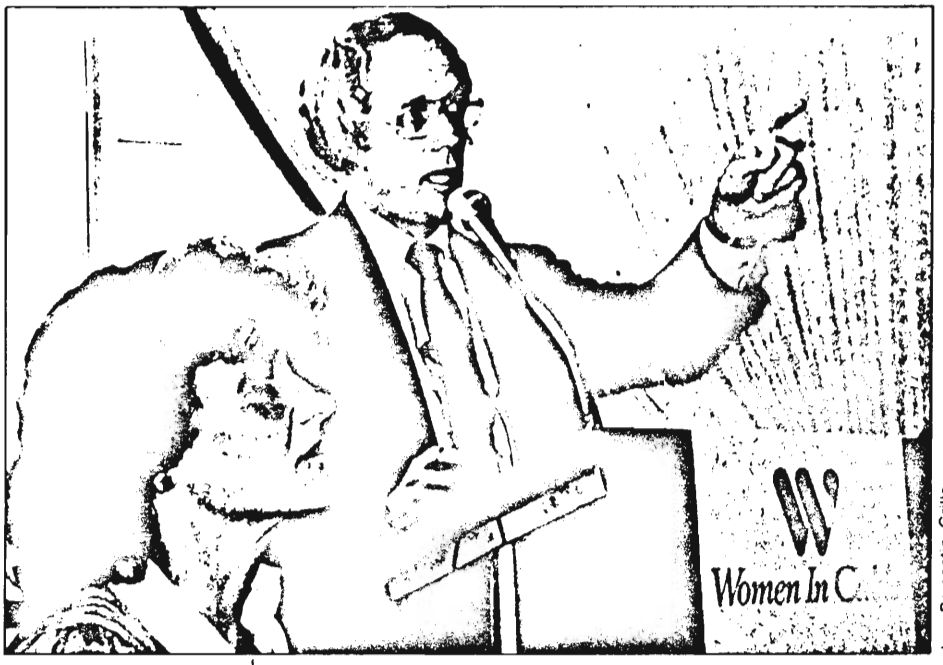


Jean Bergantini Grillo

Kay Koplovitz listens as Trygve Myhren addresses an assembly of people attending the Women In Cable conference.

'Cable in Context'

Industry executives, academicians use Women In Cable arena to debate merits of cable

NEW YORK—"All fantasies bring their consequences."

The author of those words, Dr. Carolyn Marvin, assistant professor, Annenberg School of Communications, was attempting to put "Cable in Context," the stated goal of the two-day Women In Cable convention held Sept. 30 through Oct. 1 at the University of Pennsylvania. Academicians and cable industry leaders assembled not to praise cable, but to put its growth, changes and controversies into an appropriate setting for educated debate.

The crux of the discussions, as defined by Lucille Larkin, executive director of Women In Cable, was to "focus on the responsibilities of cable programming to the consumer, society and the bottom line." By juxtaposing key speeches by five industry chief executives (each of whom gave corporate support to the event with $5,000 grants) with reactions from Annenberg and Wharton School faculty, Larkin hoped the gathering would generate "hard-core analysis and share some real information between two professional groups."

The keynote address by Gustave Hauser, head of Warner Amex Cable Communications, set the tone for the entire event. Dr. Marvin, Dean George Gerbner and a host of other executives and academicians acknowledged cable's healthy arrival as a technological dream come true but also suggested that the medium needs to take a long look at what it has wrought.

Women In Cable went to five cable companies—Warner Amex Cable Communications, Jerrold Division of General Instrument, Showtime Entertainment, United Video and American Television and Communications—asking for both money and top management. In their speeches, each chief executive underscored, in his own way, that cable was a viable form of entertainment and information. Each, however, also chose to highlight some significant concerns.

Hauser's keynote address highlighted four crucial points: Satellite program networks were economically viable; newly franchised metropolitan systems are equally viable; networks and systems can compete very successfully against MDS, DBS, STV or any other new delivery service on the horizon; interactive cable—through careful self-regulation—poses no threat to individual privacy. Hauser warned, however, that by making the franchising process and certain must-carry rules so highly politicized, cable threatened to become not a business but an ongoing civic pot-boiler.

Mike Weinblatt, Showtime's president, said cable can "neither simplistically lead or meekly reflect society. In fact, we are society—you out there, all of us here." Cable's challenge, he said, was to market and program "at the highest professional level."

Dr. George Gerbner of the Annenberg School insisted that cable must be politicized "for better or worse" if it was to respond fully to consumer needs. As for diversity, Gerbner dismissed variety "as not always sought by the general group. Rather, one group maximizes its favorite choices while others just select out" what they prefer not to watch. Most important, the dean criticized the QUBE-type of instant polling as "dangerous" and "the instrument of dictatorships." By carefully manipulating audience voting response, Gerbner explained, instant interactive response could "create crisis and provoke response."

Dr. Marvin warned about the dangers of technology promises to provide "social dreams in action," with utopia available "to anyone with the right equipment." Both beliefs, she said, are part of the "technological fairy tale."

Marvin's comments stirred continued discussion throughout the conference. The academicians warned that cable programming must be socially valuable and less concerned with profit-making if cable is ever to realize its full promise. Weinblatt, in a point-counterpoint session with Dr. Gerbner, acknowledged "we are all fallible . . . but we do strive to be moral business executives."

Trygve Myhren, chairman of ATC, brought the two-day session to close with a luncheon address and slide show. Paying homage to the business school environment in which the convention met, Myhren's key message was "cable will survive because it's a better buy than any of the competition."

Myhren noted that ATC has launched several systems using STV, MDS and SMATV technology. Myhren dismissed low-power and DBS because "from a technological standpoint, they just don't work." As for the others, however, Myhren presented charts and graphs which substantiated his point that cable was more profitable in the long run.

Among Myhren's claims: Cable is better because it's already in place, has a large current source for acquiring exclusive programming, has two-way capability that others can't match and can create localized programming that is technologically not feasible for much of the competition.

Dollar value, however, was his strongest argument. Using figures for comparative capital expenditures based on ATC involvement in cable, MDS, DBS and STV, Myhren labled cable's total capital cost per subscriber (non-addressable) at $549. With addressability, that figure rises to $694. Yet for DBS, the cost per subscriber mounts to $860. MDS rated $120. Myhren, noting that ATC's average investment per subscriber was only $270 in 1982, added: "Cable is not vastly disadvantaged against the new alternatives. And ATC is, itself, in an extremely competitive position."

Most compelling, in terms of value, were Myhren's figures on operating costs. Cable was "low," at $129 per sub, with DBS at $136 and STV at $167. Myhren ended his presentation with two points also underscored throughout the conference: Cable will make it (and make it profitably) but only without some internal improvement. "Let's face it," he concluded, "We have crummy customer service. Let's do that better."

— *Jean Bergantini Grillo*

USA Today 10/19/82

TV

NEWS, PROGRAMMING AND PERSONALITIES

TV INSIDER

Young adults desert the Big Three networks

Everybody's heard about the erosion of the networks' audience shares in prime time; now there's a report from an ad agency that pinpoints the channel-switchers.

According to *Broadcasting Magazine*, a demographic analysis by Doyle Dane Bernbach shows that the drop in network viewing by young adults was more drastic than the average decline for all age groups. Between the '80-'81 season and the '81-'82 season, says the study, ABC, CBS and NBC collectively lost 6 percent of their audience.

But in the same period, 9 percent of adults, 18 to 34, deserted the networks. Looking at the larger 18-to-49-year-old age group, Doyle Dane Bernbach found an 8 percent desertion rate. In the 25-to-54 age group, there was a 7 percent fall off in network viewing.

If Doyle Dane Bernbach is right, the figures confirm the claims of "alternative" television marketers that they're stealing prime-time's main audience — young people with fat pocketbooks and long shopping lists. They're the adventurers in the marketplace.

With alternative technologies from cable TV to direct broadcast satellites multiplying viewers' choices, expect those network shares to continue dropping.

Cable TV will bring us more of the same

While more television sounds like better television to lots of folks, plenty of others argue just the opposite. Take professor George Gerbner, dean of Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

Gerbner and his graduate students document gratuitous violence, ethnic stereotyping and sex and age discrimination in prime time. He's turning his attention to cable TV.

"Cable television," Gerbner says, "is likely to be just another stall in the same, old supermarket, depending on the same sources of supply for its programs."

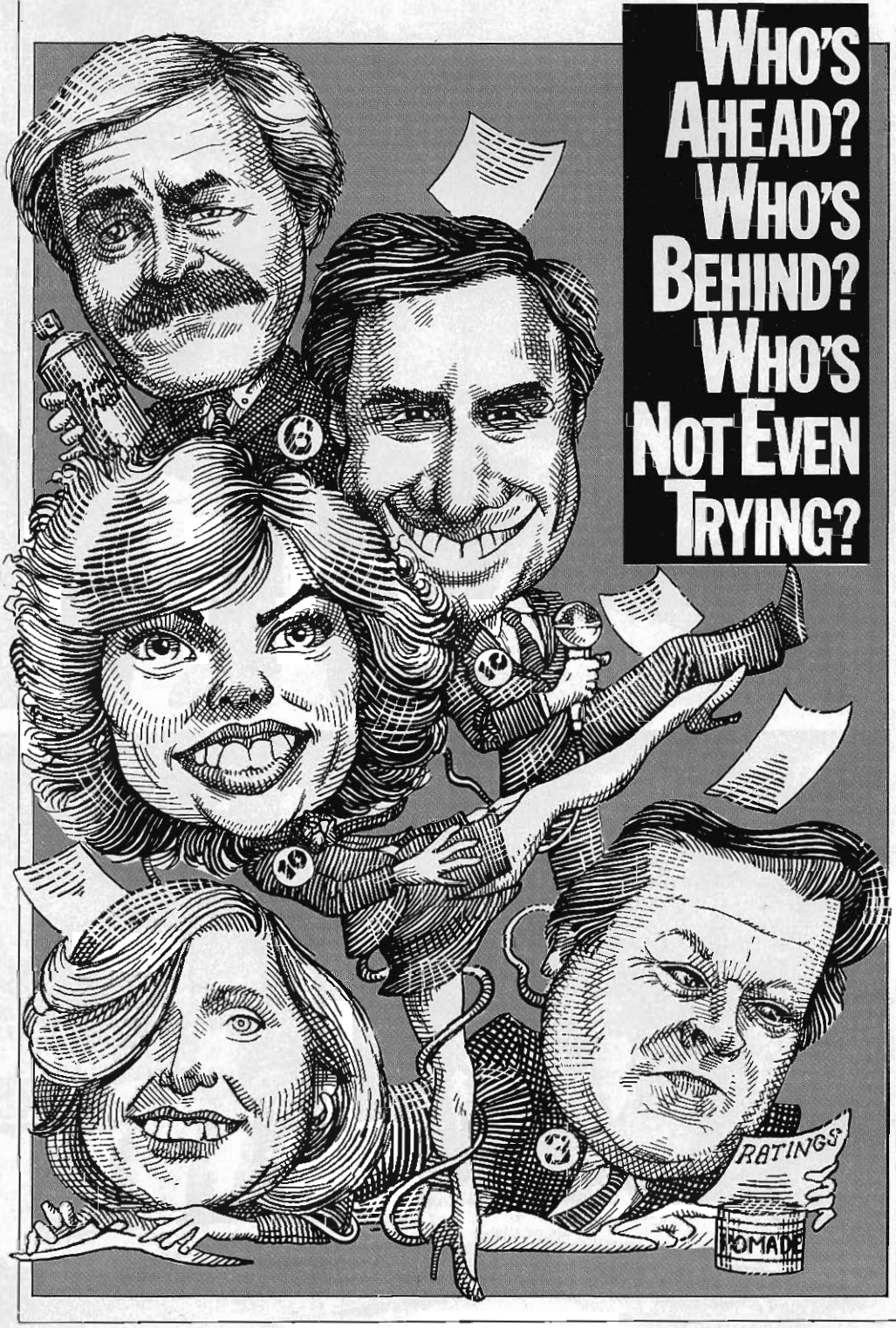
Television's two dimensions not enough

Camelot played HBO. And *Sophisticated Ladies* is about [illegible] a one-night live stand for subscription TV outlets in [illegible] likely that [illegible] best property [illegible]

Philadelphia
DECEMBER 1982

By Carol Saline

The experts and the viewers rate Philadelphia's TV-news teams.



WHO'S AHEAD? WHO'S BEHIND? WHO'S NOT EVEN TRYING?

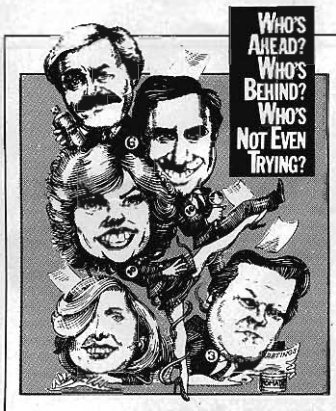
Welcome to the wonderful world of the pink flamingo.

NBC has its peacock and PBS its Big Bird, but WCAU has a pink flamingo—the bird that may well be the best symbol of television news. The plastic flamingo stands on its skinny green legs by the desk of station manager Jay Feldman. It was given to him years ago when he was a novice in TV news. With the bird came the admonition, "Never forget that your viewers are more likely to have a pink flamingo on their front lawns than a Mercedes in their driveways."

It's no accident they call television Mass Media. And no secret that sitcoms, game shows and soaps cater to the taste of the mass audience. But the newsroom was *supposed* to be different, a sacred territory ruled by a loftier set of values. Back in the days when Ed Murrow and Fred Friendly held sway at the networks, news came under the heading "public affairs." Its purpose was to educate, inform and help viewers make meaning out of the complex events that determine the quality and direction of their lives. Not until news became a major money-maker did anyone dare look upon it as entertainment.

Has success spoiled the evening news? You bet. The executives who run television news may *talk* about journalism, but they *worry* about ratings. The really big race isn't to capture the story but to score in the rating game, because the bigger the audience share, the more a station can charge for advertising. A 30-second commercial on the No. 1 rated Channel 6 news carries a $4,500 price tag. TV is, after all, a business. On the local level especially, profit, status—and sometimes even a franchise—ride on which news team wins the highest public approval. That's why the pink flamingo now nests in the newsroom, creating a very real

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GERALD KOLPAN
TAPE TRANSCRIPTIONS COURTESY OF THE VIDEO COMPANY, 410 S. 2ND ST.

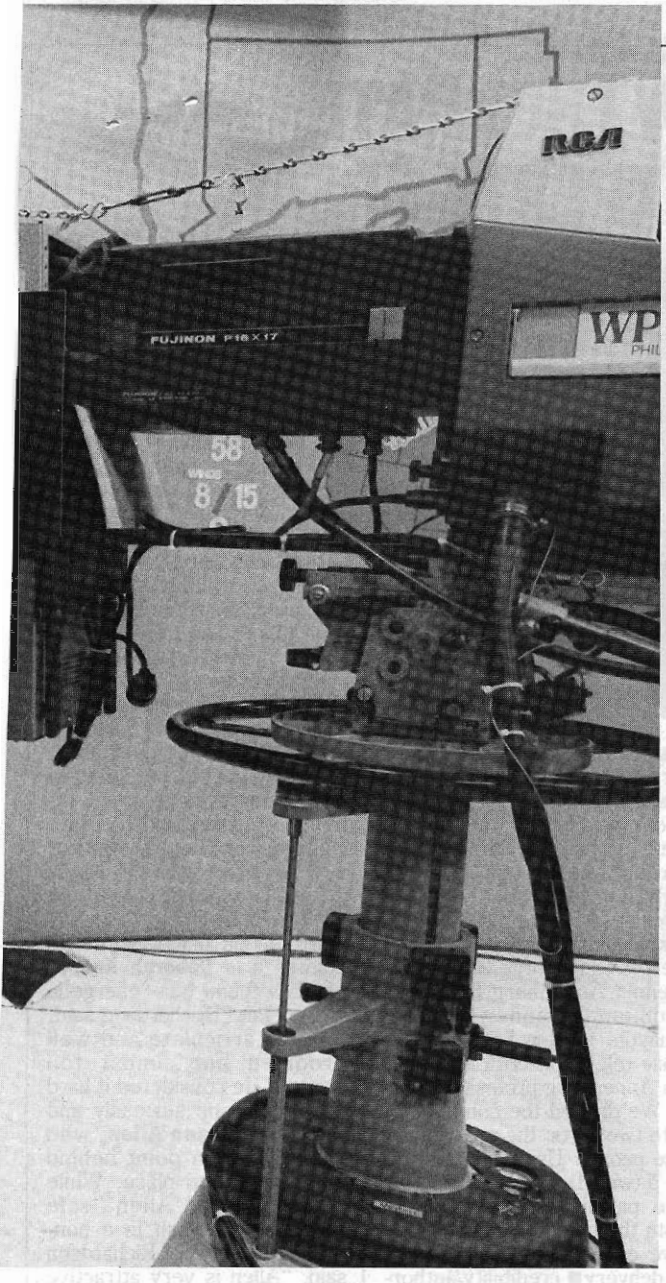


conflict between the business executive's desire to attract viewers by giving the public what he thinks it wants and the journalist's desire to give people what they ought to know.

Not that the masses are complaining. A survey conducted for *TV Guide* by Princeton's Opinion Research Corporation found that 60% of those sampled felt there was just about the right amount of local news on television, and 62% had a fair amount of confidence in the accuracy of local newscasts. The satisfaction pervaded just about everything: 65% found the news presented in a straightforward manner, while only 11% found it dull and 31% found too much emphasis on violence. As for the happy-talk format that sandwiches cheerful repartee between the fire and robbery reports, the audience loved that, too. Fifty percent approved of the light touch; 32% said it didn't matter one way or the other; and 15% disapproved. There were, of course, some brickbats tossed. Blacks and young people tended to find that local news "gives too much attention to unimportant stories." And folks with high salaries and higher education didn't like the sensational slant in the presentation of local news. But these are minority views. Overall, the survey seems to be saying to local news, "We like you just the way you are."

So what's the problem? Simply this: In the same survey, more than half the people named television as the one source they rely on to keep up with the news. Some 30% said they read newspapers, too, while just 2% turned to magazines for information. That means a majority of the public gets its perception of the world from a broadcast—often only 22 minutes long—that is consciously designed to present the news in as pleasing and entertaining a manner as possible. Substance becomes the slave

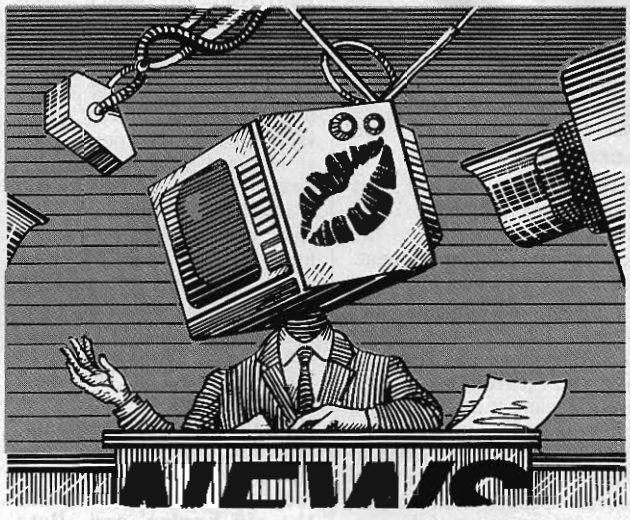
continued on page 128



Three views of the news: *(top)* Jim Gardner and Don Tollefson share yet another laugh with Jimbo O'Brien; *(left)* the Channel 3 team with new player Howard Eskin *(standing)*; Deborah, Larry and the Channel 10 gang *(above).*

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MALCOLM BERMAN

HOW THEY RATE: THE VIEWERS SPEAK



The experts have testified. But the only opinion that really counts in television is the public's. To find out what the viewers think of their news programs, *Philadelphia Magazine* commissioned RSVP Interviewing Services to conduct a telephone survey of a random sampling of 300 viewers. The sample included 150 men and 150 women over age 18 throughout the eight-county Delaware Valley. The people spoke. Their favorite anchor was the one the experts also picked: Jim Gardner. And the news program people said they trusted the most was the same one selected best all-around news by our panel: Channel 6. We also asked the sample what was the single attribute they considered most important for a TV anchor, and nearly half chose believability. It seems we don't want just any Chicken Little coming into our living room to report the sky is falling in.

The following are the survey questions and the percentage breakdown of the viewers' votes.

■ **Of the three local 11 p.m. TV-news programs, which one do you *trust* the most?**

CHANNEL 3	11%
CHANNEL 6	**65%**
CHANNEL 10	24%

■ **Which one of the following news anchors do you think does the *best* all-around job?**

LARRY KANE	23%
DEBORAH KNAPP	10%
JIM GARDNER	**59%**
DIANE ALLEN	4%
STAN BOHRMAN	5%

■ **Which of the following do you think is the most important quality for a TV anchor?**

Appearance	11%
On-Air Delivery	24%
Authority	9%
Believability	**43%**
Likability	13%

HOW THEY RATE: THE EXPERTS SPEAK

continued from page 126

of style. Make it slick and glitzy with graphics that will grab and hold the audience. Keep the pace fast and the tone upbeat. Hire talent with star quality.

For years the eggheads, devotees of *The New York Times* and professional media critics have denigrated television news, labeling it as little more than a picture and headline service. The potshots have increased as local news coverage has expanded from the half-hour bedtime report of the '60s to the two and a half hours of daily reporting of today. More doesn't necessarily mean better. Even some of the people in the business have been frank about what the "expanded" local news has meant. As Dan Rather puts it, "It's more time but not more news. . . . It's entertainment of a sort and too much chatter masquerading as news."

The snipers continue to strafe the newsrooms, while the majority of viewers shows little inclination to revolt. So how does the Philadelphia TV-news product rate? In an effort to find out, *Philadelphia Magazine* put together a panel of national and local experts to evaluate the news on the three major channels and the people who present it. For comparison, we commissioned a viewers' poll to see how much the "experts" and "masses" differ in their opinions. See sidebars, pages 127 &129, for the results.

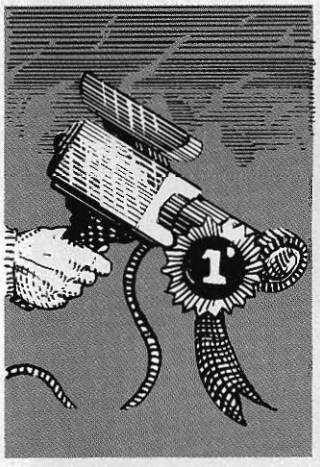
The academics on our panel found plenty wrong with news on television. "News is the most highly scripted scenario on the air," says Dr. George Gerbner, dean of Penn's Annenberg School of Communications. "It's fiction by selection. They select the facts that fit the standard fantasy view of the world held by the television viewer. The news itself must be cast, and the presentation must have drama. Consequently, the spotlight focuses on what is more salable rather than what is more sali-

continued on page 130

Ray White has packed a passel of television experience into his 40-odd years. He's been an anchorman and news director at WTOP in Washington. He produced *Wall Street Week* for PBS and spent a year at Harvard as a Nieman Fellow. He was editor of the *Washington Journalism Review*, which he left this year to form his own cable-TV company. His media criticism has appeared in a number of newspapers and national magazines. We brought him to Philadelphia and had him watch the local news. "I watched all the tapes," he told us. "Frankly, the guy who came across as the most believable, real, warm and credible was the old Eagles' end, Pete Retzlaff, who appeared in a commercial for United Way. Philly is a nice town. It really deserves better from its TV news."

Of course we deserve the best. But are we getting it? To find out, *Philadelphia Magazine* assembled a panel of experts to judge the level of local television news and to rate the individual anchors, sportscasters and weathermen. We considered starting with the 5 o'clock news for evaluation but decided it was cruel and unusual punishment to ask anybody to screen more than an hour and a half of local news at one sitting. Instead, we randomly selected an 11 p.m. Monday-night newscast. We then provided the panelists with tapes of Channels 3, 6 and 10. Because Channel 3 co-anchor Stan Bohrman was on special assignment on October 4th, the night we taped, we provided each panelist with an additional tape of Bohrman and the Eyewitness News Team.

For our ratings, we sought a cross section of local specialists and national critics to rate the news teams on everything—from the quality of their journalism to the quality of their voices and appearances. Besides White the panelists are Dr. David Rubin, chairman of the department of journalism and mass communication at New York University; Marvin Kitman, nationally syndicated television critic and columnist; Stuart D. Bykofsky, the *Philadelphia Daily News* tele-



vision critic; Dr. Warren Richardson, chairman of the communication-arts department at Villanova and president of the Speech Communication Association of Pennsylvania; Joyce Mantyla, vice president and fashion-merchandising director of Gimbels; Dean George Gerbner of Penn's Annenberg School of Communications; Robert Shayon, former *Saturday Review* television critic and now an Annenberg professor.

We divided the competition into two parts: the product and the people. Using a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1, worst and 5, best) the panelists were asked to rate the on-air personalities in five categories: ■ appearance ■ delivery ■ credibility/authority ■ likability ■ content.

And now, the envelopes please. For best anchor, by a country mile, the critics awarded Action News's **Jim Gardner** 150 out of a possible 200 points. Even Professor Shayon (who found all the anchors more or less plastic and interchangeable) gave Gardner the edge because, "He appears more serious and mature, and I suspect he writes some of his own stuff." In fact, Gardner is acknowledged as a fine newswriter as well as reader and writes a significant part of the Channel 6 News.

Warren Richardson, our specialist on speech and delivery, called Gardner "impressive in demeanor, good looks and articulateness. He has an excellent conversational style that's friendly but serious."

Our expert on appearance, Joyce Mantyla, described Gardner as "well groomed, attractive, mature and credible. He's good and knows it but not in an arrogant way. We know it, too, because he makes the viewer a believer."

In second place, with 126 points, was **Deborah Knapp**. Mantyla found her "energetic and stylish." Richardson said, "She is articulate and well groomed but almost too pretty." He considered it hard to take Knapp seriously and preferred **Diane Allen,** who came in just a point behind Knapp, in third place. While Mantyla found Allen "safe rather than stylish in a non-threatening way," Richardson said, "Allen is very attractive and gives me the sense she is a no-nonsense person and what she says can be depended upon."

In fourth and fifth places were

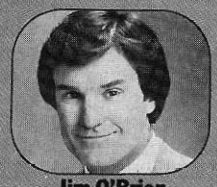
THE OVERALL VERDICT

This chart represents an overall evaluation of each show. The eight panelists were asked to use a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1, worst and 5, best). The highest score possible was 160 points. Here's how the judges voted:

	Content	Reporting	Set	Graphics	Total
Channel 6—ABC	30	26	25	31	112
Channel 10—CBS	27	25	25	29	106
Channel 3—NBC	21	22	17	22	82

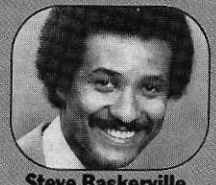
Panelists were given the following guidelines:
- **Content:** Mix and selection of stories.
- **Reporting:** Quality and depth of information; reporter's skill and style.
- **Set:** Does it enhance or detract from show?
- **Graphics:** Quality and use of charts, Chiron and other electronic dazzlers.

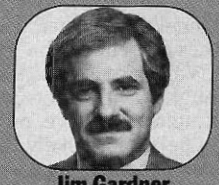

Diane Allen


Jim O'Brien

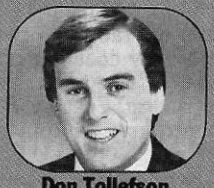

Deborah Knapp

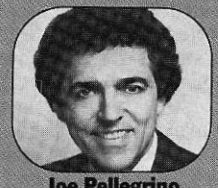

Herb Clarke

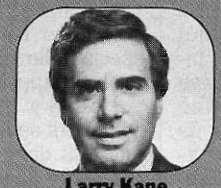

Steve Baskerville

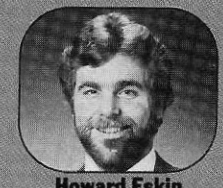

Jim Gardner


Stan Bohrman


Don Tollefson


Joe Pellegrino


Larry Kane


Howard Eskin

RATING THE TV-NEWS TEAMS

Each of the eight panelists received a sheet like this to rate the on-air personalities on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1, worst and 5, best). The highest possible score was 200. Here's how the judges voted:

	Appearance	Delivery	Credibility/ Authority	Likability	Content	Total
ANCHORS						
Jim Gardner	33	33	31	29	24	150
Larry Kane	29	27	22	21	20	119
Deborah Knapp	33	28	19	27	19	126
Diane Allen	29	28	25	25	18	125
Stan Bohrman	24	27	27	22	17	117
WEATHERMEN						
Jim O'Brien	25	19	19	17	19	99
Herb Clarke	24	30	28	30	24	136
Steve Baskerville	26	23	21	25	20	115
SPORTSCASTERS						
Joe Pellegrino	26	28	27	29	22	132
Howard Eskin	25	21	24	25	19	114
Don Tollefson	31	30	28	29	25	143

Panelists were given the following guidelines:
- **Appearance:** How the person looks—dress, hairstyle, makeup, etc.
- **Delivery:** Voice quality, diction, speech pattern.
- **Credibility/Authority:** Does the person command respect and trust? Does he seem experienced? Do you believe the information he presents?
- **Likability:** Style, warmth, personality.
- **Content:** The quality and clarity of news and features.

Larry Kane and **Stan Bohrman,** with 119 and 117 points, respectively. Panelist Ray White felt that Kane had great eye contact with the camera, and although his performance was technically good, it was rather mechanical. Mantyla agreed. "He seems a bit stuffy at times and is not always spontaneous." The comments on Bohrman ranged from "good voice quality and articulation" to "acceptable, like white bread . . . not exciting, not a lot of personality."

There's no question that the cult of personality dominates the selection of news anchors. But unless you find it thrilling to be recognized in restaurants and supermarkets, the job is much less glamorous than many people imagine. Anchors work 10- to 12-hour days, and lately there is a push to get them out of the studio and into the field, where they must do at least some reporting, or look foolish.

Bill Yeager, Channel 3's news director, says research confirms that people respect an anchor who can do fieldwork. That's why Channel 10 had Deborah Knapp reporting live from Monaco on the funeral of Princess Grace, and at Channel 3 Stan Bohrman periodically does the kind of series he cut his teeth on as an investigative reporter.

In the sports department, the critics proclaimed Channel 6's **Don Tollefson** the winner with 143 points. Considered by a number of the judges to personify the all-American jock, Tollefson seems most appreciated for his straightforward and knowledgeable accounts of who did what on the field, and who said what in the locker room. **Joe Pellegrino** of Channel 10 amassed 132 points to capture second place, with compliments like "competent," "sincere" and "warm." Channel 3's newcomer **Howard Eskin** dragged at third with 114 points. He has the least experience on camera, and the critics thought it showed. They felt he knew his sports but called his delivery "amateurish" and said it "lacked authority."

The big surprise in the weather picture was a storm of bad reviews for **Jimbo O'Brien** of Channel 6. His one-of-a-kind kookiness, so popular with many local viewers, repelled the panel. O'Brien came in third with only 99 points, behind Channel 10's **Herb Clarke,** who captured 136 points. Channel 3's **Steve Baskerville,** the new kid on the weather block, took second place with 115 points. Speech specialist Richardson found O'Brien's delivery "insulting to an adult, mature audience. His rate is too fast, and he chews his words." Panelist White called O'Brien "on the edge of silly. He's too glib and talks too fast." By contrast, all of the panelists liked avuncular Herb Clarke. "If nothing else, he has more experience with the weather because he's older," said White. And Richardson added, "He comes across like the expert from the *Farmer's Almanac.* I like his low-key, amiable delivery." Fashion expert Mantyla thought Baskerville was "well dressed and personable" and that his charm was not exploited to best advantage delivering the highs and lows on the temperature chart.

When it came to evaluating the news programs on content, reporting, set and graphics, our panel of experts tended largely to agree with the Arbitron and the Nielsen ratings. The fast-paced **Channel 6 Action News** format was preferred in every category but still racked up only 112 out of

continued from page 128

ent." Gerbner, a nationally recognized authority on the effects of television on viewers, worries that television news reinforces a world based on appearance. "News *should* be analytical, not merely visual. I can see the picture. Tell me what it means."

Indeed the first commandment in this visual medium is thou shalt show pictures. But too often the picture is flashed on the screen merely to create a change from the anchor's face and adds little to the viewer's understanding. "Too much emphasis on meaningless pictures and no emphasis on analysis and commentary," barks Robert Shayon, a Peabody Award-winning television producer, director, critic and professor of communications at Annenberg. "What is the function of a journalist?" he asks. "To report and illuminate the news so the viewer or reader can understand the issues. And then to add to these facts some meaningful context. What I miss in news broadcasting is thought or reflection about what has happened. They handle the news as entertainment. My God, I remember when the news didn't need to have music."

Nowhere is the show-biz mentality greater than in the selection of anchors. The same *TV Guide* poll that found people satisfied with local news also validated the belief that the largest factor in determining what station viewers watch is the news anchors. That preference is no surprise to the execs who do the hiring. As Aaron Sheldon, director of communications for CBS TV stations recently observed, "Personalities are what get you into a home, because basically all news is the same." Perhaps that is what justifies paying a likable and bright fellow like Jim Gardner $325,000 a year to sit in front of a camera five nights a week and tell us what happened that day. Or giving his able competitor Larry Kane

continued on page 192

a possible 160 points. Close behind, in second place, came **Channel 10's Live at 11** with 106 points. Panelist White thought that Channel 10 was actually a bit superior. "The best of an adequate lot," he called it. Panelist Richardson praised 10 for "its imaginative, interesting set." **Channel 3 Eyewitness News** limped in third with 82 points. Nobody specifically criticized the station, but nobody singled it out for compliments either.

While our panel's numerical ratings represent a fair judgment based on a single viewing, they don't completely reflect each station's total news-gathering effort. Indeed, all three stations have specialties designed to woo viewers. Channel 3 touts its award-winning investigative I-Team and its regular 5 p.m. Team reports—a single news story attacked from several angles by a team of reporters. Channel 3 is also the only station with a separate New Jersey bureau and anchor. But even the news director Bill Yeager concedes, "We have an inordinate amount of technical problems, and sometimes our production lacks sparkle." His aim is "to produce the kind of news that will have the viewer say at least once during the broadcast, 'Golly, I didn't know that.' "

Channel 6 is king of the story count. On any given night 6 is likely to air anywhere from five to ten more stories than its competitors. "There's no formula here," insists Alan Nesbitt, 6's news director. "We do have an upbeat energy and pace, and we believe we can deliver the same information in 30 seconds that takes the other stations 50 seconds to do."

Channel 6 is ubiquitous. Its mobile vans cover the Delaware Valley communities so thoroughly that even when other stations arrive on the scene, people are likely to report that Action News was there first.

Channel 10 prides itself on consumer reporting, on the special follow-up stories Deborah Knapp does to update yesterday's interesting news and on its seven-man close-up unit that daily files reports on the story beneath the headline. The phrase most repeated here is "the human side of the news." Station manager Jay Feldman favors sharp editing and stories "that help people survive and cope better." He says, "We're trying to drive the less significant trivia off the air and bring on more things of lasting value. It may take people a while to recognize what we're doing, but we're here for the long haul."

Right now 10 is aggressively attempting to bite off a chunk of Channel 6's market share and is spending a bundle to do it. The station's huge lobby in its headquarters overlooking City Avenue has been remodeled into an airy, high-tech newsroom. Its 100-person news staff is the same size as 6's (3 has about 80 people), and its consumer-news orientation is considerably heavier than 6's.

News directors at all three stations say they are more active in enterprise reporting than ever before—digging for news instead of getting their stories from the morning papers and wire services. In a more perfect world, this kind of interpretative reporting and improved content might be reflected in the ratings. But for now, it simply doesn't matter as much as the magic that mesmerizes at Channel 6—a combination of casting and continuity. Gardner, O'Brien and Tollefson work together as smoothly as the fingers of a hand, and they've been practicing for a long time. They were there when little Susie got her braces, when she graduated high school and went off to college, and they'll probably still be gently joshing each other on the screen when she flashes her engagement ring. The regular viewers know these people well by now and like them. They're family. In the musical-chair world of television news, that kind of personal staying power means a great deal. Just ask Channel 10 what happened when John Facenda retired. ■■

...AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR EXPERTS

To put some words together with their numerical ratings of the TV-news teams, we asked our panelists to choose one adjective that best described each of the newscasters they saw on the tapes. Here's what the experts wrote:

	MANTYLA	RUBIN	BYKOFSKY	RICHARDSON	KITMAN	WHITE
ANCHORS						
Jim Gardner	Smooth pro	Cincinnati Kid	Sincere	Knowledgeable man-about-town	Selleckish	Superficial
Larry Kane	Stilted	Smug	Square	Nice guy	Nobody home	Mechanical
Deborah Knapp	Energetic	25-watter	Warm	Desirable	Wholesome	Gorgeous
Diane Allen	Pleasant	Savitch-clone	Frumpy	Competent	Cool	Adequate
Stan Bohrman	Suburban	Kiwanian	Granite	Authoritative	Brutal	Pompous
WEATHERMEN						
Jim O'Brien	Outrageous!	Snake	Dopey	Childish	Wiseacre	Glib
Herb Clarke	Folksy	Grandpa	Avuncular	My uncle from the country	Avuncular	Folksy
Steve Baskerville	Nice-guy charm	Earnest	Eager	Sharp	Brotherly	Loose
SPORTSCASTERS						
Joe Pellegrino	Likable	Second-guesser	Casual	South Philly	Sportswise	Smooth
Howard Eskin	Neophyte	Floundering	Merry	Hairdresser	Hairy	Callow
Don Tollefson	Guy next door	Ivy League	Boy scout	Personable, intelligent jock	Aggressively young	Bland

Life According to TV

by Harry F. Waters

After years of research, a leading social scientist finds that a growing number of us believe we are what we see.

You people sit there, night after night. You're beginning to believe this illusion we're spinning here. You're beginning to think the tube is reality and your own lives are unreal. This is mass madness!

—Anchorman Howard Beale in the film "Network"

If you can write a nation's stories, you needn't worry about who makes its laws. Today television tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time.

—George Gerbner, Ph.D.

The late Paddy Chayefsky, who created Howard Beale, would have loved George Gerbner. In "Network," Chayefsky marshaled a scathing, fictional assault on the values and methods of the people who control the world's most potent communications instrument. In real life, Gerbner, perhaps the nation's foremost authority on the social impact of television, is quietly using the disciplines of behavioral research to construct an equally devastating indictment of the medium's images and messages. More than any spokesman for a pressure group, Gerbner has become the man that television watches. From his cramped, book-lined office at the University of Pennsylvania springs a steady flow of studies that are raising executive blood pressures at the networks' sleek Manhattan command posts.

George Gerbner's work is uniquely important because it transports the scientific examination of television far beyond familiar children-and-violence arguments. Rather than simply studying the link between violence on the tube and crime in the streets, Gerbner is exploring wider and deeper terrain. He has turned his lens on TV's hidden victims—women, the elderly, blacks, blue-collar workers and other groups—to document the ways in which video-entertainment portrayals subliminally condition how we perceive ourselves and how we view those around us. Gerbner's subjects are not merely the impressionable young; they include all the rest of us. And it is his ominous conclusion that heavy watchers of the prime-time mirror are receiving a grossly distorted picture of the real world that they tend to accept more readily than reality itself.

The 63-year-old Gerbner, who is dean of Penn's Annenberg School of Communications, employs a methodology that meshes scholarly observation with mundane legwork. Over the past 15 years, he and a tireless trio of assistants (Larry Gross, Nancy Signorielli and Michael Morgan) videotaped and exhaustively analyzed 1,600 prime-time programs involving more than 15,000 characters. They then drew up multiple-choice questionnaires that offered correct answers about the world at large along with answers that reflected what Gerbner perceived to be the misrepresentations and biases of the world according to TV. Finally, these questions were posed to large samples of citizens from all socioeconomic strata. In every survey, the Annenberg team discovered that heavy viewers of television (those watching more than four hours a day), who account for more than 30 percent of the population, almost invariably chose the TV-influenced answers, while light viewers (less than two hours a day), selected the answers corresponding more closely to actual life. Some of the dimensions of television's reality warp:

■ **Sex:** Male prime-time characters outnumber females by 3 to 1 and, with a few star-turn exceptions, women are portrayed as weak, passive satellites to powerful, effective men. TV's male population also plays a vast variety of roles, while females generally get typecast as either lovers or mothers. Less than 20 percent of TV's married women with children work outside the home—as compared with more than 50 percent in real life. The tube's distorted depictions of women, concludes Gerbner, reinforce stereotypical attitudes and increase sexism. In one Annenberg survey, heavy viewers were far more likely than light ones to agree with

In television land, women are greatly outnumbered and most often cast as lovers and mothers. Many viewers think that few women in America hold jobs.

'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers': The brothers are there, but where are the brides?

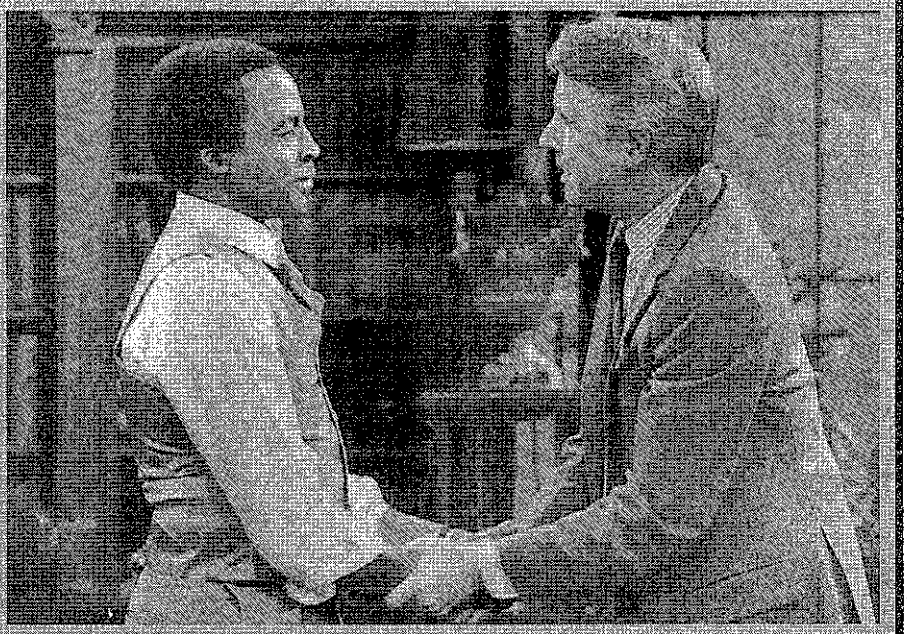
the proposition: "Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country to men."

■ **Age:** People over 65, too, are grossly underrepresented on television. Correspondingly, heavy-viewing Annenberg respondents believe that the elderly are a vanishing breed, that they make up a smaller proportion of the population today than they did 20 years ago. In fact, they form the nation's most rapidly expanding age group. Heavy viewers also believe that old people are less healthy today than they were two decades ago, when quite the opposite is true. As with women, the portrayals of old people transmit negative impressions. In general, they are cast as silly, stubborn, sexually inactive and eccentric. "They're often shown as feeble grandparents bearing cookies," says Gerbner. "You never see the power that real old people often have. The best and possibly only time to learn about growing old with decency and grace is in youth. And young people are the most susceptible to TV's messages."

■ **Race:** The problem with the medium's treatment of blacks is more one of image than of visibility. Though a tiny percentage of black characters come across as "unrealistically romanticized," reports Gerbner, the overwhelming majority of them are employed in subservient, supporting roles—such as the white hero's comic sidekick. "When a black child looks at prime time," he says, "most of the people he sees doing interesting and important things are white." That imbalance, he goes on, tends to teach young blacks to accept minority status as naturally inevitable and even deserved. To assess the impact of such portrayals on the general audience, the Annenberg survey forms included questions like "Should white people have the right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods?" and "Should there be laws against marriages between blacks and whites?" The more that viewers watched, the more they answered "Yes" to each question.

■ **Work:** Heavy viewers greatly overestimated the proportion of Americans employed as physicians, lawyers, athletes and entertainers, all of whom inhabit prime-time in hordes. A mere 6 to 10 percent of television characters hold blue-collar or service jobs vs. about 60 percent in the real work force. Gerbner sees two dangers in TV's skewed division of labor. On the one hand, the tube so overrepresents and glamorizes the elite occupations that it sets up unrealistic expectations among those who must deal with them in actuality. At the same time, TV largely neglects portraying the occupations that most youngsters will have to enter. "You almost never see the farmer, the factory worker or the small businessman," he notes. "Thus not only do lawyers and other professionals find they cannot measure up to the image TV projects of them, but children's occupational aspirations are channeled in unrealistic directions." The Gerbner team feels this emphasis on high-powered jobs poses problems for adolescent girls, who are also presented with views of women as homebodies. The two conflicting views, Gerbner says, add to the frustration over choices they have to make as adults.

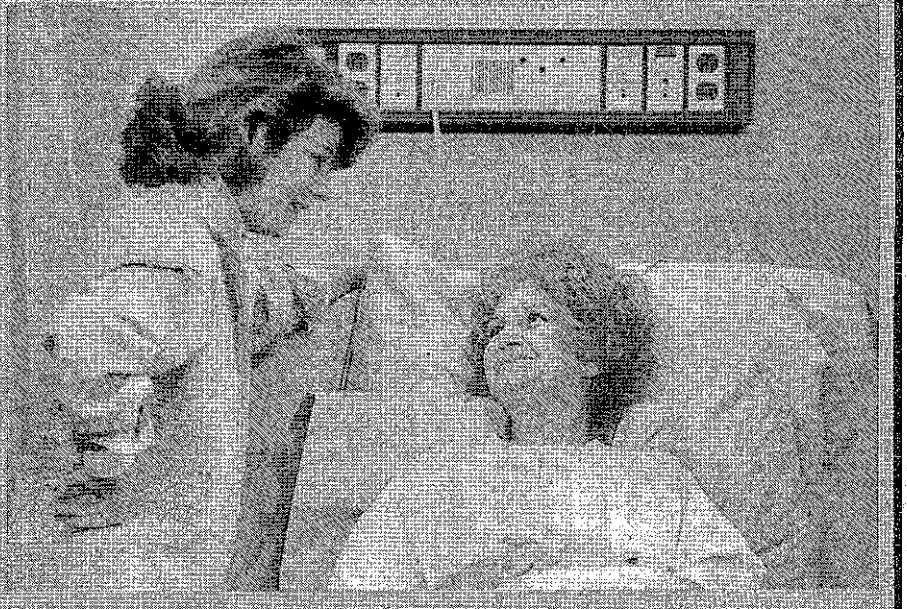
Blacks on TV usually appear in supporting roles to whites. This tends to teach minorities to accept an inferior status as inevitable and even deserved.



'Benson': He may no longer be a butler, but he's still a comic sidekick

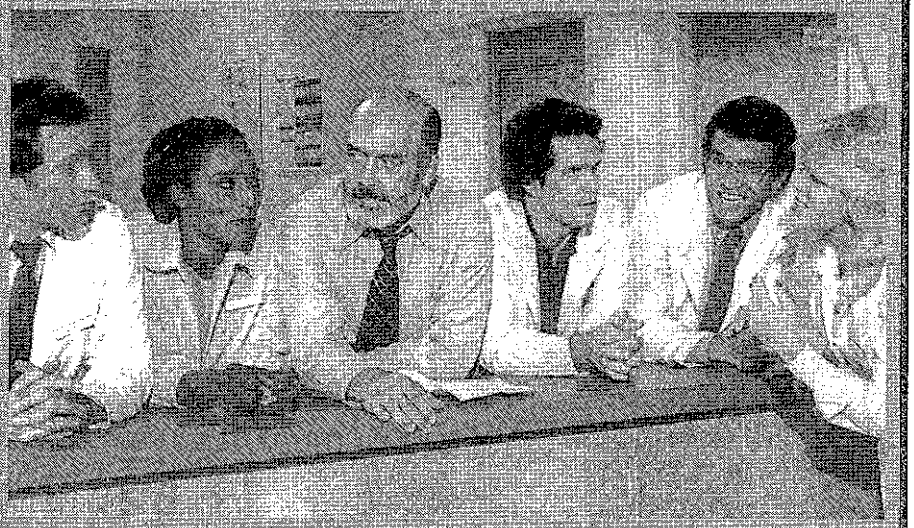
■ **Health:** Although video characters exist almost entirely on junk food and quaff alcohol 15 times more often than water, they manage to remain slim, healthy and beautiful. Frequent TV watchers, the Annenberg investigators found, eat more, drink more,

The elderly are underrepresented and generally portrayed as sick, silly or helpless. In truth, the older population is larger and healthier than ever.



'It Takes Two': Viewers rarely see the power that old people often have

Prime time is inhabited by a disproportionate number of doctors and lawyers. Viewers are not satisfied with the less glamorous occupations in life.



'Trapper John': Can you keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen M.D.'s?

exercise less and possess an almost mystical faith in the curative powers of medical science. Concludes Gerbner: "Television may well be the single most pervasive source of health information. And its overidealized images of medical people, coupled with its complacency about unhealthy life-styles, leaves both patients and doctors vulnerable to disappointment, frustration and even litigation."

■ **Crime:** On the small screen, crime rages about 10 times more often than in real life. But while other researchers concentrate on the propensity of TV mayhem to incite aggression, the Annenberg team has studied the hidden side of its imprint: fear of victimization. On television, 55 percent of prime-time characters are involved in violent confrontations once a week; in reality, the figure is less than 1 percent. In all demographic groups in every class of neighborhood, heavy viewers overestimated the statistical chance of violence in their own lives and harbored an exaggerated mistrust of strangers—creating what Gerbner calls a "mean-world syndrome." Forty-six percent of heavy viewers who live in cities rated their fear of crime "very serious" as opposed to 26 percent for light viewers. Such paranoia is especially acute among TV entertainment's most common victims: women, the elderly, nonwhites, foreigners and lower-class citizens.

Video violence, proposes Gerbner, is primarily responsible for imparting lessons in social power: it demonstrates who can do what to whom and get away with it. "Television is saying that those at the bottom of the power scale cannot get away with the same things that a white, middle-class American male can," he says. "It potentially conditions people to think of themselves as victims."

TV has 10 times more violence than life. Viewers exaggerate the odds of being victimized.

'Hart to Hart': The victim is often a woman

At a quick glance, Gerbner's findings seem to contain a cause-and-effect, chicken-or-the-egg question. Does television make heavy viewers view the world the way they do or do heavy viewers come from the poorer, less experienced segment of the populace that regards the world that way to begin with? In other words, does the tube create or simply confirm the unenlightened attitudes of its most loyal audience? Gerbner, however, was savvy enough to construct a methodology largely immune to such criticism. His samples of heavy viewers cut across all ages, incomes, education levels and ethnic backgrounds—and every category displayed the same tube-induced misconceptions of the world outside.

Needless to say, the networks accept all this as enthusiastically as they would a list of news-coverage complaints from the Ayatollah Khomeini. Even so, their responses tend to be tinged with a singular respect for Gerbner's personal and professional credentials. The man is no ivory-tower recluse. During World War II, the Budapest-born Gerbner parachuted into the mountains of Yugoslavia to join the partisans fighting the Germans. After the war, he hunted down and personally arrested scores of high Nazi officials. Nor is Gerbner some videophobic vigilante. A Ph.D. in communications, he readily acknowledges TV's beneficial effects, noting that it has abolished parochialism, reduced isolation and loneliness and provided the poorest members of society with cheap, plug-in exposure to experiences they otherwise would not have. Funding for his research is supplied by such prestigious bodies as the National Institute of Mental Health, the surgeon general's office and the American Medical Association, and he is called to testify before congressional committees nearly as often as David Stockman.

Mass Entertainment: When challenging Gerbner, network officials focus less on his findings and methods than on what they regard as his own misconceptions of their industry's function. "He's looking at television from the perspective of a social scientist rather than considering what is mass entertainment," says Alfred Schneider, vice president of standards and practices at ABC. "We strive to balance TV's social effects with what will capture an audience's interests. If you showed strong men being victimized as much as women or the elderly, what would comprise the dramatic conflict? If you did a show truly representative of society's total reality, and nobody watched because it wasn't interesting, what have you achieved?"

CBS senior vice president Gene Mater also believes that Gerbner is implicitly asking for the theoretically impossible. "TV is

unique in its problems," says Mater. "Everyone wants a piece of the action. Everyone feels that their racial or ethnic group is underrepresented or should be portrayed as they would like the world to perceive them. No popular entertainment form, including this one, can or should be an accurate reflection of society."

On that point, at least, Gerbner is first to agree; he hardly expects television entertainment to serve as a mirror image of absolute truth. But what fascinates him about this communications medium is its marked difference from all others. In other media, customers carefully choose what they want to hear or read: a movie, a magazine, a best seller. In television, notes Gerbner, viewers rarely tune in for a particular program. Instead, most just habitually turn on the set—and watch by the clock rather than for a specific show. "Television viewing fulfills the criteria of a ritual," he says. "It is the only medium that can bring to people things they otherwise would not select." With such unique power, believes Gerbner, comes unique responsibility: "No other medium reaches into every home or has a comparable, cradle-to-grave influence over what a society learns about itself."

Match: In Gerbner's view, virtually all of TV's distortions of reality can be attributed to its obsession with demographics. The viewers that prime-time sponsors most want to reach are white, middle-class, female and between 18 and 49—in short, the audience that purchases most of the consumer products advertised on the tube. Accordingly, notes Gerbner, the demographic portrait of TV's fictional characters largely matches that of its prime commercial targets and largely ignores everyone else. "Television," he concludes, "reproduces a world for its own best customers."

Among TV's more candid executives, that theory draws considerable support. Yet by pointing a finger at the power of demographics, Gerbner appears to contradict one of his major findings. If female viewers are so dear to the hearts of sponsors, why are female characters cast in such unflattering light? "In a basically male-oriented power structure," replies Gerbner, "you can't alienate the male viewer. But you can get away with offending women because most women are pretty well brainwashed to accept it." The Annenberg dean has an equally tidy explanation for another curious fact. Since the corporate world provides network television with all of its financial support, one would expect businessmen on TV to be portrayed primarily as good guys. Quite the contrary. As any fan of "Dallas," "Dynasty" or "Falcon Crest" well knows, the image of the company man is usually that of a mendacious, dirty-dealing rapscallion. Why would TV snap at the hand that feeds it? "Credibility is the way to ratings," proposes Gerbner. "This country has a populist tradition of bias against anything big, including big business. So to retain credibility, TV entertainment shows businessmen in relatively derogatory ways."

In the medium's Hollywood-based creative community, the gospel of Gerbner finds some passionate adherents. Rarely have TV's best and brightest talents viewed their industry with so much frustration and anger. The most sweeping indictment emanates from David Rintels, a two-time Emmy-winning writer and former president of the Writers Guild of America, West. "Gerbner is absolutely correct and it is the people who run the networks who are to blame," says Rintels. "The networks get bombarded with thoughtful, reality-oriented scripts. They simply won't do them. They slam the door on them. They believe that the only way to get ratings is to feed

Bernard Gotfryd—Newsweek

Gerbner: Charting TV's reality warp

viewers what conforms to their biases or what has limited resemblance to reality. From 8 to 11 o'clock each night, television is one long lie."

Innovative thinkers such as Norman Lear, whose work has been practically driven off the tube, don't fault the networks so much as the climate in which they operate. Says Lear: "All of this country's institutions have become totally fixated on short-term bottom-line thinking. Everyone grabs for what might succeed today and the hell with tomorrow. Television just catches more of the heat because it's more visible." Perhaps the most perceptive assessment of Gerbner's conclusions is offered by one who has worked both sides of the industry street. Deanne Barkley, a former NBC vice president who now helps run an independent production house, reports that the negative depictions of women on TV have made it "nerve-racking" to function as a woman within TV. "No one takes responsibility for

the social impact of their shows," says Barkley. "But then how do you decide where it all begins? Do the networks give viewers what they want? Or are the networks conditioning them to think that way?"

Gerbner himself has no simple answer to that conundrum. Neither a McLuhanesque shaman nor a Naderesque crusader, he hesitates to suggest solutions until pressed. Then out pops a pair of provocative notions. Commercial television will never democratize its treatments of daily life, he believes, until it finds a way to broaden its financial base. Coincidentally, Federal Communications Commission chairman Mark Fowler seems to have arrived at much the same conclusion. In exchange for lifting such government restrictions on TV as the fairness doctrine and the equal-time rule, Fowler would impose a modest levy on station owners, called a spectrum-use fee. Funds from the fees would be set aside to finance programs aimed at specialized tastes rather than the mass appetite. Gerbner enthusiastically endorses that proposal: "Let the ratings system dominate most of prime time but not every hour of every day. Let some programs carry advisories that warn: 'This is not for all of you. This is for nonwhites, or for religious people or for the aged and the handicapped. Turn it off unless you'd like to eavesdrop.' That would be a very refreshing thing."

Role: In addition, Gerbner would like to see viewers given an active role in steering the overall direction of television instead of being obliged to passively accept whatever the networks offer. In Britain, he points out, political candidates debate the problems of TV as routinely as the issue of crime. In this country, proposes Gerbner, "every political campaign should put television on the public agenda. Candidates talk about schools, they talk about jobs, they talk about social welfare. They're going to have to start discussing this all-pervasive force."

There are no outright villains in this docudrama. Even Gerbner recognizes that network potentates don't set out to proselytize a point of view; they are simply businessmen selling a mass-market product. At the same time, their 90 million nightly customers deserve to know the side effects of the ingredients. By the time the typical American child reaches the age of reason, calculates Gerbner, he or she will have absorbed more than 30,000 electronic "stories." These stories, he suggests, have replaced the socializing role of the preindustrial church: they create a "cultural mythology" that establishes the norms of approved behavior and belief. And all Gerbner's research indicates that this new mythological world, with its warped picture of a sizable portion of society, may soon become the one most of us think we live in.

Who else is telling us that? Howard Beale and his eloquent alarms have faded into off-network reruns. At the very least, it is comforting to know that a real-life Beale is very much with us . . . and *really* watching.

HARRY F. WATERS

Broadcasting, Dec 13, 1982

NBC, TIO respond to 'Newsweek' article on Annenberg's Gerbner

Professor's theory is that TV distorts reality for viewers; network and association disagree and write letters to magazine

A long and complimentary article in the Dec. 6 *Newsweek* on Dr. George Gerbner and his theories about how television distorts the outlook and attitudes of viewers was beginning to attract uncomplimentary responses last week.

Both NBC and the Television Information Office sent off replies. The nub of their letters: that social scientists, as well as broadcast researchers, have seriously questioned,

if not denied, the validity of Gerbner's theories.

Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, has reached the "ominous conclusion," in *Newsweek*'s words, "that heavy watchers of the prime time mirror are receiving a grossly distorted picture of the real world that they tend to accept more readily than reality itself." For example, in Gerbner's opinion, heavy viewers get such a dose of TV violence that they become more fearful of crime than reality justifies—and much more fearful of it than light viewers are.

Bill Rubens, research vice president of NBC, wrote *Newsweek* that its article was "long on praise but short on dealing with the many questions about the validity of [Gerbner's] work. There are many social scientists who think that Gerbner's research does *not* support his specific contentions about television's influences."

Rubens said that, "for example, Professor Paul Hirsch of the University of Chicago has reanalyzed Gerbner's data and found. . . that the relationship between watching a lot of television and being fearful of crime in the real world does not hold up when any two background characteristics of a person are controlled in analysis." On Gerbner's crucial contention, Hirsch found that it is not television which makes people afraid, but, for example, being elderly and poor.

The TIO's Bert R. Briller, manager of creative services, also cited Hirsch's work, and quoted him as accusing Gerbner of being "unusually selective and arbitrary" in choosing data that supports his thesis and rejecting whatever doesn't.

Briller also quoted Professor T.G. Krattenmaker of Georgetown University and Professor L.A. Powe Sr. of the University of Texas as saying that Gerbner's theories "rest on intuitive judgments rather than empirical data" and that restricting TV's content based on Gerbner's hypothesis "would represent nothing other than regulation by intuitive hunch."

Briller summed up: "Methinks Gerbner would impose his view on the rest of us and is presenting subjective criticism as objective research." □

LETTERS

Ted's Decision

Senator Kennedy's announcement that he will not seek the presidency in 1984 (NATIONAL AFFAIRS, Dec. 13) is a severe blow to millions of us who have set our highest hopes on the possibility of his candidacy. No other candidate can fill the void left by a man of such vision, compassion and dedication to his country.

MONICA FRIEDLANDER
Berkeley, Calif.

For one as anti-Kennedy as I have been for so long, your article was both persuasive and humanizing. It was gratifying to see this side of Ted Kennedy portrayed, rather than the worn-out image of a power-hungry, papa-driven politician. Maybe he is at his best with those who count most in the world—his family.

WESLEY A. BAKI
Colorado Springs, Colo.

A father's decision, my eye. Since when do politicians let family stand in the way once they've become hooked on the power trip? If Ted Kennedy could erase a few of his liabilities and be convinced he had a good chance of winning, the presidential race would take precedence over everything else. It was purely a loser's decision, and a wise one. He has finally accepted the fact that he would last about as long in a national election as a paper shirt in a bear fight.

MARK ANTHONY
Lubbock, Texas

Man of Heart

It's a shame that a portrait of Mohandas K. Gandhi (SPECIAL REPORT, Dec. 13) didn't make the cover of your magazine. Instead of depicting an artificial heart, you could have adorned your cover with the creation of a real human heart—the peaceful face of a man who radiated compassion and warmth. In this technological age, Gandhi's political and economic theories are as applicable for furthering human progress as any scientific invention.

JASON G. MURRAY
Westbrook, Maine

Asian-Americans

Congratulations on your intelligent and perceptive profile of Asian-Americans (NATIONAL AFFAIRS, Dec. 6). By depicting us neither as a "model minority" nor as inscrutable foreigners, you've reinforced the fact that we are a proud people who have helped build and become America.

WAYMAN WONG
San Leandro, Calif.

The number of Japanese-Americans consigned to "relocation" camps was far greater than you reported—close to 120,000, ranging from infants to the elderly and including native-born U.S. citizens as well as naturalized citizens and aliens, apparently on the racist assumption that anyone of Japanese ancestry would automatically be more loyal to Japan than to America. It is important that we remember the true magnitude of this outrage—especially now that, as your article notes, anti-Japanese sentiment is once more on the rise.

ERIC B. LIPPS
Boylston, Mass.

As a reader and teacher of Asian-American literature, I object to your association of writer Frank Chin with so-called "dualistic identity." He neither subscribes to any marginal-man theory nor suggests divided loyalties; his is a vision of integrity and rootedness born out of generations of expressly American history and experience.

SUZI WONG
Los Angeles, Calif.

Discovering America

The U.N. General Assembly missed the boat in the debate about who discovered America (NATIONAL AFFAIRS, Dec. 13). Long before Saint Brendan, Leif Ericson or Christopher Columbus arrived, what was later to be called America had already been discovered by people who since Columbus's time have been known as Indians.

MARCAN HETTEBERG
Southfield, Mich.

Congressional Remarks

I notice that NEWSWEEK has repeated an old canard about the relationship between the Jewish community and Sen. Ernest Hollings. It is true that, during a debate on the school-prayer issue, Senator Hollings referred in a jocular fashion to Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, who had just appeared on the floor to join the debate, as "the senator from B'nai B'rith" (NATIONAL AFFAIRS, Dec. 13). Earlier in the debate there had been mention of the varying religions of other members of the Senate, including Hollings's own, and it was evident to those who know Senator Hollings that there was no religious prejudice attached to his remark. However, news reports at the time did not include the context of the debate. This is an important issue to Senator Hollings personally; he has already generated considerable financial and intellectual support from the Jewish community in his campaign for the presidency, and this is a source of pride to him.

MYER FELDMAN
Washington, D.C.

TV's Influence

There are many social scientists who think George Gerbner's research (TELEVISION, Dec. 6) does not support his specific contentions about television's influence. For instance, Paul Hirsch of the University of Chicago has found that it is not television that makes people afraid, but, for example, being elderly and poor. Such people are more fearful and also happen to watch more television than most others. Hirsch also found that the very lightest viewers were just as fearful as the very heaviest, which indicates not only that the relationship reported by Gerbner is spurious, but that it didn't exist in the first place. Another study, by Profs. Anthony Doob and Glenn Macdonald, has suggested that it is not TV violence but living in high-crime neighborhoods that causes fear of crime. Your article suggests that the television networks are not critical of the Gerbner methodology. This is simply untrue; researchers at the networks have followed his work closely since the early '70s and have consistently found that there was less there than meets the eye, for both methodological and theoretical reasons.

WILLIAM RUBENS
Vice President, Research
RON MILAVSKY
Vice President, News and Research
NBC
New York, N.Y.

Letters to the Editor, with the writer's name and address and daytime telephone number, should be sent to: **Letters Editor, Newsweek, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.** Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.