

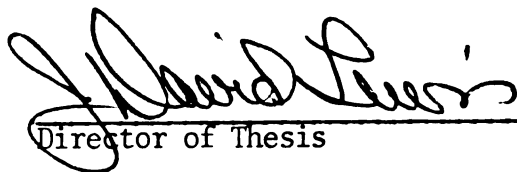
MASS MEDIA  
AND  
PUBLIC MORALITY

A PROBLEM--LAW--PRECEPT ANALYSES  
WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
SELF-REGULATION IN THE MASS MEDIA

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
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## ABSTRACT

### MASS MEDIA AND PUBLIC MORALITY

#### A PROBLEM--LAW--PRECEPT ANALYSES WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SELF-REGULATION IN THE MASS MEDIA

By

Father Joseph McHugh

Somewhat similar to a television script, this thesis is comprised of a series of segments--each connected, however, to an underlying theme, the theme itself being the necessary and conscious relationship of the media to social problems, natural law, human value and moral precept. The thesis proposes individual conclusions and recommendations in each of the five major topics discussed.

The topics are identified as follows:

1. "Morality and the Media" begins by defining and explaining morality as well as indicating the sources and norms for same and applying the latter to contemporary morality, seeking a possible correlation between media values and the pluralism of today's society.

2. "Human Behavior and Conscience" considers an essential psychological characteristic within us--that of tending to think very much like other people who influence our lives, for example those in the mass media, in advertising, and the people we associate with and relate to. Because of this, which can happen unconsciously, we sometimes discover that we are what we don't want to be, but not if we are conscious of the worth and dignity of the human person and realize



(a) the three qualities of the human act, namely knowledge, willingness and freedom, (b) the close link of conscience to human behavior and deliberation.

3. "The Subtlety of Advertising" examines the school of advertising as one that shows little or no reserve when it comes to pandering after the psychological, emotional and sexual drives of youth, in particular. The wrongness of playing upon man's anxieties, his dread of being a failure, his sensitivity, as well as the immorality of lying and injustice, are discussed.

4. "Pornography" reviews this present trend within our society by some media and the danger that it might become socially acceptable to the detriment of morals and society, through its exploitation of man's basest instincts and the promotion of a theory that freedom in everything (especially sex) is an unqualified good, thus ignoring the ethical precepts.

5. "The Television Generation" explores the overall impact of television (in particular) and raises the question Quo Vadis? for parents, teachers and those in media enterprises, who anxiously seek true values for the youth, as the 'new culture' of knowing through the eyes brings about changes affecting our personalities, our emotional lives, our reasoning processes and the very quality of our minds.

The main purpose of the analyses is to stimulate the layman, as well as those controlling the media, so that both can use guiding principles which have due regard for the common good of man within society.

By using standard definitions, basic moral principles and applying them to the problems explored, the discussion is contained within

the framework of morality and media. As the analyses proceeds empirically, there is a continuous essaying of the impact of media on contemporary morality indicating that the broader area of morality is everybody's business, since the civil order depends on the moral order.

Permeating the whole work, a cause and effect element is inferred, between the present acceptable standards of morality and values and what some of the media are propagating. The necessity of a public conscience is required, which will be reflected in the standards and values observed by all, and by the promotion of the natural virtues of truth, justice and honesty.

Overall, the thesis contends that the standards, values and behavior of the media can be matched and judged against recognized principles of morality, thereby giving a basis for a realibility test in measuring the morality of the media. Q. E. D.

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## CHAPTER I

### MORALITY AND THE MEDIA

#### A. THE PROBLEM

##### (1) Morality Defined and Explained

Morality is the quality of that which conforms to right ideals or principles of human conduct. It is the agreement or disagreement of a human act with the norms that regulate human conduct.<sup>1</sup> The act which is in agreement with those norms is morally good; the act which is in disagreement with them is morally bad. Some of the norms are: the relation of agreement or disagreement of the act to the rational nature of man considered in its entirety and with reference to its true happiness; the relationship of the act to God, the Last End of man; the dictates of right reason, which is the superior faculty and guide of the will; the dictates of conscience which points out duty with respect to good and evil.<sup>2</sup> An act is morally good when it is in harmony with the above-mentioned norms of morality.

Next, the different sources of the morality of an act have to be considered. There are three such sources. First, there's the object of the action or the primary end to which an action tends. For example, a television producer can have the creation of certain effects on his viewers as the immediate and primary end of his action. The

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<sup>1</sup>St. Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologica. I-II, qq. 18-20.

<sup>2</sup>John McHugh and Charles Callan. Moral Theology. Vol. I. (New York: Wagner, 1958). pp. 25-26.



second source is the circumstances. These latter are all those conditions, different from the object, that affect the morality of an act such as the time (of a program), place, manner, the quality or quantity of the performance, the purpose for which it was produced and/or aired. Chief among the circumstances is the purpose or the reason which induces the agent to act. Since it is the chief one, it is regarded as a separate source of morality. Together with the other circumstances, as well as with the primary end, the purpose is what determines the morality of an act. An act is said to be entirely good when all the elements--its object, circumstances and purpose--are in conformity with the standards of morality.<sup>3</sup>

It is evident from the preceding that man himself is very much a creator of moral norms. Religion can preach them, claim that they are the divine will and promise rewards and punishments, but moral codes are human constructions.<sup>4</sup> We have to depend largely on our minds, our hearts and each other in the formulation of our moral norms. Later the existence of the natural law as a criterion for our norms will be discussed. The moral man does not deny his nature nor the existence of the natural law. Within the content of the natural law are to be found absolute principles and absolute values, which each one can intelligently and freely use, as guidelines for his own morality, and as an independent agent in society.

"The absolute values of intelligence, freedom and sociality should be the basis of absolute moral principles," says an ethics teacher of senior college students. When faced with a moral problem

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Father Edward Stevens. Making Moral Decisions. (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1969). p. 4.

he says that he asks himself three questions: "What is the intelligent thing to do?" (Intelligence here is serving as a principle). "What solution will foster the freedom of the individuals involved?" (Freedom here is serving as a principle). "What solution will best promote the common good?" (Sociality here is serving as a moral principle).<sup>5</sup>

## (2) Contemporary Morality and the Media

It has been a theory for many years that the dignity of law would be enhanced with a reduction in crime and brutality through universal education. With people gaining more freedom, better and more jobs, better housing and transport, it was almost certain that this so-called democratic pluralism would produce an ever-broadening level of tolerance within an enlightened community. Also, the industrialized application of science was expected to produce a paradise on earth.

But none of these theories, nor their applications, have produced the expected paradise. Instead, disillusionment is widespread and a demand for a wider lessening in moral discipline is the appeal of many. People are seeking greater freedom and are formulating new modes for morality, aided and abetted by contemporary philosophies, which are also "the products of their age or have evolved to the present position through recent centuries, and seem equipped to solve contemporary problems with little reference to the teaching of Christ."<sup>6</sup>

The decline in morals is, in part, indicated by the growing

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 5

<sup>6</sup>Eamonn Dwyer. Christian Values in Modern Society. (London: C.T.S. 1967). p. 4

disregard for the family structure--an essential unit in the formation of a society. For example, one in every four marriages in the United States eventually ends in divorce; in the densely populated West coast communities the divorce rate runs as high as seventy per cent; the birth rate has declined to almost half of what it was sixty years ago.<sup>7</sup> Another example is the mounted attack against unborn babies and a suggestion from some politicians for the legal provision of a "death with dignity" for the aged and the unwanted. It looks like a national genocide. As Dr. Wilhelmsen put it, "It is the profound psychic malise, the deep ontological sickness of an entire established order getting uptight about babies, specifically unborn babies."<sup>8</sup>

Although people sense a greater freedom and independence than ever before in the history of man, it would appear that the impersonality of today's society is driving many to permissiveness which begets freedom in morals and discipline. It also demands an independence from everything that might curtail the basic desires of man's lower nature. But the discarding of moral principles and affluence for all "is not even enough to call forth the energies of mankind and this has become evident, above all, in the vehement protests of young people who identify our technological society with mere affluence as a goal and unhesitatingly turn the other way."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"The American Family." Time Magazine. (Dec. 28, 1970). p. 34.

<sup>8</sup>Frederick Wilhelmsen. Address given at St. Thomas University, Houston, April 10, 1970.

<sup>9</sup>Richard Givens. "Technology and Mankind's Future." America. (Oct. 10, 1970). p. 254. (He is a New York Attorney and Chairman of the Committee on Legislation of the Federal Bar Council).

Therapists today find a great deal of talk about sex, a great deal of sexual activity, but the curious thing is, how little anyone seems to be enjoying the emancipation. Thus, one paradox of sexual freedom, enlightenment has not solved our sexual problems. (Instead) internal anxiety and guilt have increased, and in some ways these impose a heavier burden upon the individual.<sup>10</sup>

Because man falsely assumed that involvement and identity with scientific progress would bring him the much overrated happiness, which this progress always promised, he has become defected, dissillusioned and more violent.

A possible explanation for the dissatisfaction, portrayed in so many different facets such as crime, rape, mayhem, murder, violence and in the decline of morals in general, can be found in the words of Pope John: "There's an innate need of human nature requiring that men have an opportunity to assume responsibility and to perfect themselves by their efforts."<sup>11</sup> It is precisely because man, as the technologist, has failed to perfect himself by seeking out the truth, and establishing those standards, attitudes and values that can best befit a true member of human society.

But where does one begin to seek the truth or to acquire the true standards of morality? Where does the creation of sound principles and of absolute values begin? The home is where it all commences and it is continued through the teacher in the classroom. The combination of the home and the school should be able to instill into the child

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<sup>10</sup>Rollo May. "Too Much Sex, Too Little Joy." Reader's Digest. May, 1971). pp. 68-69.

<sup>11</sup>Pope John XXIII. Mater and Magister. AAS 53-401. (Vatican: May 15, 1961).

the basics of absolute moral principles. This work of parents and teachers should be complemented by the channels of communication such as radio, press and television. The principles of any philosophic system, as well as values and virtue, will spread if radiated through the teachers of the young and through the channels of communication. Every parent, every teacher and every channel of communication which acts with responsibility is educating the young. Education is here intended to mean "the making of persons . . . persons in the full sense, which includes uniqueness and responsibility. Education for citizenship, for service, for industrial, commercial and political self-reliance, may have their place, but only if they contribute in the right proportion to the making of persons."<sup>12</sup>

This educational concept and its resultant effects is exemplified in the growth of a culture, which in itself is the act of developing by education, discipline and training. In essence, it is a meaningful progression in aesthetics through the home, the school and the channels of communication. To ensure its success, an intellectual approach is required which should gradually result in the advancement of an appropriate and commonly accepted civilization which is marked by such characteristics as good morals, a human sense of decency and a high regard for the common good, coupled with a love for everything that complements the basics of a given culture, such as tradition, history, patriotism, folklore, music and fine art.

But if either the school, home or channels of communication or indeed all three of them together, fail in their duty to educate the

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<sup>12</sup>Dwyer. Christian Values in Modern Society. p. 15.

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whole man or if there's a conflict between the moral values and virtues upheld by one as opposed to any of the others, the result will be detrimental to the one who is being taught. Take for example the teacher in the classroom who tells her pupils that violence is immoral, that it degrades the human person, that those who become interested in it can become habitually violent themselves. The teacher who has had to train hard to obtain her teaching diploma and who may be an expert in diffusing values and moral principles to her pupils, has only a few hours each day to instruct her pupils. Her pupils spend far more time watching television than they do in the classroom, assimilating values, other than the ones taught in the classroom and most likely from people who never had any discipline or training themselves in the art of teaching, but who are adept at obtaining audience involvement.

The audience involvement in the United States of America is phenomenal. I cite this country as an example for a number of reasons. It has the largest population in the civilized western world. It has made the most progress in the television world, both from the viewpoint of educational and commercial stations. It has the largest young viewing audience--now twenty-six million, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one.<sup>13</sup> Virtually every home in the country has at least one television set.

It is also a country noted for crime and violence.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation reports a sixteen per cent increase in crimes of violence for 1967 over the previous year. In New York City arrests for murder in the first six months of 1968 were forty per cent more than in the same months of 1967.

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<sup>13</sup>"What Young America Wants." *Life*. (Jan. 8. 1971).  
Quoted in Reader's Digest. (June, 1971). p. 85.

while the number of persons arrested for possession of dangerous weapons more than doubled."<sup>14</sup>

Assaults with a gun increased seventy-seven per cent in the four years from 1964 through 1967.<sup>15</sup> "Among the 214 million people (in England, Japan and West Germany) there are 135 gun murders a year, but among the 200 million people of the United States there are 6 thousand gun murders a year--about 48 times as many."<sup>16</sup> The widespread disorders of 1966 and more particularly of 1967 prompted the President to appoint a Commission on Civil Disorders on July 27, 1967. Some of the statistics from the Commission include 164 disorders in 128 cities, resulting in 83 deaths, 1,897 injuries and substantial damage to property. Significant damage resulted in Detroit (\$40 - 45 million), Newark (\$10.2 million) and Cincinnati (more than \$1 million).<sup>17</sup>

The next step is to take a look at some of the violence on the screen and ask ourselves as we do so, if there might be a significant connection between what occurs on the screen and what subsequently takes place on the streets. Professor Schramm, speaking of the mid-sixties, gives the following description of one week's output from five stations in an American city between the hours of four and nine (P.M.). He says.:

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<sup>14</sup>Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Violence: America in the Sixties. (New York: New American Library. 1968). pp. X-XI. (He's an eminent historian, was special advisor to President Kennedy and author of A Thousand Days).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid. p. 43.

<sup>17</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. (New York: Bantam Books. 1968). pp. 113-115.



In the hundred hours we are describing there were twelve murders, sixteen major gunfights, twenty-one persons shot (apparently not fatally), twenty-one other violent incidents with guns (ranging from shooting at but missing persons, to shooting-up a town), thirty-seven hand to hand fights (fifteen fist fights, fifteen incidents in which one person slugged another, an attempted murder with a pitch fork, two stranglings, etc.), one stabbing in the back with a butcher's knife, four attempted suicides--three successful, four people falling or pushed over cliffs, two cars running over cliffs, two attempts by cars to run over people on the sidewalk, etc."<sup>18</sup>

In 1954 the networks devoted over six and one-half per cent of their time to violent programs. In 1961 it had gone up to over fifty-six and one-half per cent. One network, A. B. C., provided in one evening forty-six incidents and eleven killings. Although the average number of violent encounters per hour had decreased between 1967 and the fall of 1968, from 8.5 per hour to 6.3 violent encounters on A. B. C., the percentage of all programming containing violence had actually increased from over eighty-eight per cent to almost ninety-one per cent.<sup>19</sup>

Violence became so prevalent in the late sixties that in 1968 a journalist made this comment, "I would say that America is part of an international culture of violence to which we have made distinctive contributions. The escalation in verbal and literacy violence, and the progress of the mass media in communicating violence, owe much to American know-how." The know-how continues through the mass media and one of the latest movies, The Light at the Edge of the World,

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<sup>18</sup>Nicholas Tucker. Understanding the Mass Media. (London: Cambridge University Press. 1968). p. 140. Quoting Schramm.

<sup>19</sup>Carolyn Sugg and Robert Sherman. Editors. Violence. (New Jersey: Paulist Press. 1970). p. 12. Quoting Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson of Washington Post.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. p. 16. Quoting C. Vann Woodward in The New York Times Magazine. (April 28, 1968).

according to one film critic, is one in which "Its makers have gambled on the public's appetite for the sight of blood and its appreciation of sadism and brutality. It is a succession of torture scenes, murders, wholesale slaughter of innocent men, women and children."<sup>21</sup>

Life magazine film critic, commenting on other recent movies, says:

These movies represent the first frail flowerings of the industry's latest bit of conventional wisdom, namely that we are in the mood for escapist entertainment and that the most widely desired form of that activity is the contemplation of criminal activity in all its variety. Yet the films are all without moral or artistic resonance. Part of the problem lies in the fact that we understand the criminal's mind all too well these days.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps the timing between over-emphasis of violence on the screen and its appearance on the streets of so many cities is purely coincidental. Perhaps violence on the screen has had little or no osmotic effect on its viewers, but pedagogically speaking at least, the screen has been used profusely to entertain vast audiences of every age, to scenes of violence, thus indicating that the substance of contemporary man's philosophy is founded on violence and that his intellectual cravings have not yet been satiated. If this hypothesis is not true, than at least we can confidently state that one of the values, held out most often and the solution to most domestic and community problems, is violence--if violence can be called a value.

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<sup>21</sup>Harvey Taylor. Detroit Free Press. (July 14, 1971). p. 14-C.

<sup>22</sup>Richard Schickel. Life. (July 9, 1971). p. 12.

### (3) Values

Value, in contemporary philosophy, is defined as that which is or makes something desirable, attractive, worthy of approval or admiration; that which inspires feelings, judgments or attitudes of esteem, condemnation; that which is useful in view of certain ends.<sup>23</sup> It cannot be classified as a good in itself and only enters in after the good (the criterion for good, in the broad sense, will be discussed later), is recognized. The implication, therefore, is: When I see the criminal on the screen act as he does because Mother did not love him or because she loved him too much, I can easily determine that his criminal acts are worthy of approval. Immediately I establish a value which becomes part of my hierarchy of values. Likewise, if the criminal is shot by a law enforcement officer, I can also approve or disapprove. Each time I'm evaluating, thus adding to my philosophy and scope of values.

Through a constant barrage of such episodes, a person can become convinced that violence is the only answer to disputes. Frederick Wertham says:

What children see on the screen is violence as an almost casual commonplace of daily living. Violence becomes the fundamental principle of society, the natural law of humanity. Killing is as common as taking a walk, a gun is more natural than an umbrella. It would seem that these violent shows lead children to expect, and in some cases crave, a kind of violence that they will not encounter in real life unless they stir it up themselves. With progress of civilization we have learned, slowly and painfully, that violence is not the best way to settle human differences. But we

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<sup>23</sup>Adolf Darlat. Editor General. Sacramentum Mundi. Vol. 6. (New York: Herder and Herder. 1968). p. 331.

seem to be using the marvelous technical media of movies and television to teach children that is the only way.<sup>24</sup>

We have only discussed violence so far, but there are other values being propounded such as: divorce as the solution to all marital problems; that sexual behavior is solely the concern of the consenting adults involved and that anything they decide is morally permissible provided nobody is hurt. The media, and especially television, in dramatizing these and other stories about corruption, abortions and the activities of certain elements within our society, are carrying into the sanctuary of our living room sets of values and giving the impression that all of them are now morally acceptable because "society" has accepted them.

The preceding examples indicate that we are living in an era of moral decline. The public show little or no outrage against the manner in which the values are demonstrated. Neither do they question the validity of what is put before them. Because they want to cater to the wishes of the public, some media can be accused of lowering their standards. As a result some of the media are responsible, at least in part, for the moral degradation of the present day, since a cause and effect element is contained in some of their presentations. What is sometimes cause becomes effect and vice versa. For example, a cause for permissiveness can be the propagation of a 'situation ethics' doctrine by a society which takes leads from some of the media. The lowering of standards by some of the media can have the effect of a creeping paralysis towards an era of continued moral declination.

Specificities covering various areas of media inappropriateness

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<sup>24</sup>Harry Skornia. Television and Society. (New York: McGraw-Hill. 1965). Quoting Frederick Wertham. p. 172.

will be dealt with in another section of this thesis. But suffice it to say here that no media should support the philosophy of those who are trying to tear down and destroy the culture on which a nation is built. Neither should they lend support to activists who have private axes to grind and their own revolutions to generate, nor to encourage those other frustrated people striking out blindly in an attempt to make shambles of an existing social, political and religious structure--if the structure is conducive to the common good, within these three planes. For example,

The media (local) coverage and rumors generated by disorder in other cities were specifically identified (by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders) in 1967 as prior incidents in four cases. The media coverage and rumors generated by the major riots in two cities were the only identifiable final incidents preceding five nearby disorders.<sup>25</sup>

The Commission also reported:

We have found a significant imbalance between what actually happened in our cities and what the newspaper, radio and television coverage of the riots told us happened. Despite the overall statistical picture, there were instances of gross flaws in presenting news of the riots. Some newspapers printed 'scare' headlines unsupported by the mild stories that followed. All media reported rumors that had no basis in fact. Some newsmen staged 'riot' events for the cameras.<sup>26</sup>

To either condone the riots or to create an atmosphere for further violence, the media acted immorally, because riots as such lead (generally) to loss of life, limb and property and are, therefore, contrary to right ideals and to the principles of human conduct. An act

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<sup>25</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.  
pp. 121-122.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid. pp. 363-364.

that disagrees with the norms that regulate human conduct is in itself morally bad.

However, to try to make necessary changes within a structure is good, if the means used are within the bounds of true morality. These changes can be brought about by the mass media. Such changes can be a return to the dream of social justice, to work for the abolition of racial prejudice and race riots, to demand an equal opportunity for all and, above all, a moral rearmament with sound principles as a basis. All of these can be accomplished through the building up of a consciousness, of a sense of responsibility among those in media enterprises, for the common good of society. Likewise and reciprocally, society must learn its moral obligations and cooperate with the media. One must help the other, just as the eye helps the body to see properly and the hand brings food to the mouth.

A diagnosis of what should be changed will come easily to those who adhere to the Television Code, which suggests that the broadcaster be thoroughly conversant with the educational and cultural needs and the desires of the community served. Even though these desires are not defined, it must be assumed that only what is morally good for society is inferred. Therefore, television managers and others with similar responsibility, are expected to complement the efforts of parents and teachers in their work of furthering the educational, cultural and moral growth of a people. Also, there should be, in the minds of those in charge of media enterprises, a clear distinction between right and wrong based on the principles of the natural law, as well as a knowledge of the statutes of the Communications Act and the Fairness Doctrine.

Those in the print medium will understand that they, too, in performing needed public service, are included in Schramm's remark, when he says that the responsibility of mass communicators is a higher horizon than can be reached through codes of conduct.<sup>27</sup> These horizons can be none other than to reach for ultimates in communicating to others morally acceptable values, discipline and respect for the dignity of the human person. All this should be done within the spectrum of the natural law--to investigate events, to speculate on human behavior, but above all to motivate fellow human beings. A former C. B. S. chairman said, "We recognize the plain fact of our power for good or evil, through the enormous force of our media."<sup>28</sup> Again to quote Schramm, "As propagator of public morals, the ethical telecaster has obligations to respect law and order in his programs. He will portray criminality as undesirable and unsympathetic. He will uphold the dignity of law."<sup>29</sup>

The upholding of the dignity of law, the propagating of the principles of the natural law, the opening up of man's freedom, the enrichment of his knowledge of himself, of society and of the world, are all part of the works of the channels of communications in the development of a culture. Pope Pius XII says,<sup>30</sup> "Nor can we be

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<sup>27</sup>Wilbur Schramm and William Rivers. Responsibility in Mass Communications. (New York: Harper and Row. 1969). Rev. Ed. p. 240.

<sup>28</sup>William Paley. "The Road to Responsibility." Problems and Controversies in Television and Radio. (Palo Alto, Cal.: Pacific Books, 1968). Harry Skornia and Jack Kitson, Eds. p. 39.

<sup>29</sup>Schramm and Rivers. p. 213.

<sup>30</sup>Pope Pius XII. Television Exhortations. AAS 46-18. (Vatican: Jan. 1, 1954).

indifferent to the good influence which television can exert on society in regard to culture, popular education, teaching in the schools and the very life of the nations, who, by means of it, will certainly be helped to know and understand each other better and to advance to cordial union and better mutual cooperation." Within this praiseworthy context I wish to place the other media as well.

#### (4) The Catharsis Theory

Lest the catharsis theory be used by some prognosticators of violence and an over-emphasis on sex, through the media, as a valid excuse for same, it is necessary to briefly refer to this theory. According to Doctor Greenberg of Michigan State University, "Television personnel view violence as a dramatic element in action programs; that television violence serves as a cathartic function among other things; that among network 'censors' social research on the effects of television violence 'is either not known or not considered of practical value' "<sup>31</sup> Jack Valenti (head of the Motion Picture Association) said, "There's a popular tendency today to depreciate the catharsis theory of drama dating back to Aristotle's Poetics. But I must tell you that I am personally convinced that disturbing emotions may be purged through the vicarious experiences of watching aggressive acts on the screen."<sup>32</sup>

For those with a perverted notion of catharsis, Harry Skornia<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Dr. Thomas Baldwin. "Television Called Myopic About Violence." Broadcasting. (June 7, 1971).

<sup>32</sup>Extract No. 24. Communications Center. (Dublin: Sept. 1969).

<sup>33</sup>Skornia. Television and Society. p. 177.



also has a warning:

Aristotle wrote of purification through pity and fear in Greek plays. But violence was not shown on the Greek stage. Freud wrote of relieving repressed emotions. But this was to be achieved through analysis and understanding, not by exposure to scenes of violence or, indeed, any mass or impersonal therapy. Most authorities do not believe that showing sex scenes purifies young viewers. Incitement is recognized as a triggering factor in various kinds of anti-social behavior; yet the nation has for years accepted the allegation of television leaders that scenes of violence on television do not incite to imitation, but, if anything, provide catharsis. A perverted concept of catharsis has joined that of the inevitability of the mass nature of television and radio in order to establish a profitable rather than a careful and responsible program tradition. The time has come to challenge this position.

The above comments were made some six years ago. Perhaps because the position has not been properly challenged, the youth are today reacting with outrage against the inequities, the impersonality, the compromise with ideals; and against the threat to the individual pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. "They have observed too much phoniness in conventional society and have a sense of outrage about it. It almost certainly started with television and its misleading commercials that brought disillusionment."<sup>34</sup> So it is possible to say that the root of the social problems of our time and the void between youth and adults lie in the area of values. The youth are saying, "We don't want what you want" as many of them seek values that are above and beyond the ones being presented to them, at the present time, by the channels of communication. "The cruelty, harshness and insensitivity

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<sup>34</sup>James De Giacomo and Edward Wakin. Sign Magazine. (Dec. 1970). p. 27. (The former is well-known for his work in Christian education and the latter a free-lance writer).

of contemporary events shape the everyday life of youth."<sup>35</sup>

The youth are in a whole new world and they are the first to be born into it. It is a world as yet in its infancy, strictly without a personality or a culture of which they can be sure, and certainly without values, which the youth would wish to emulate. The fence has yet to be built around this new world and its bulwark, which should be grounded on moral principles, which, in turn, should be based on the natural law, has yet to be discovered. The youth want nothing more than the adults do and all our cravings can be summed up in the follow-

<sup>36</sup>  
ing quote:

All of us want the most simple human decencies but, in our anguish, we are driven to extremes to find them. We reach blindly for whatever offers solace. We yearn more than ever for some kind of human touch and seem steadily unable to provide it. We are more free and more corrupt, more liberated and bound, than any others on the face of the earth. In the midst of it, adrift, the young more than ever seem beautiful but maimed, trying against all odds to salvage something from the mess. The problem is not merely that the 'system' is corrupt and brutal but that 'social reality' seems to have vanished altogether.

But the youth only see the structures of law, order, morality and religion crumbling before their eyes and would like to help in some concrete way to save society from moral degradation. "The drifting free is not a 'generation gap' but a huge gulf between the truth of one's own pain and possibilities and the world's empty forms."<sup>37</sup>

It can be reasonably asserted that the youth acting with outrage against today's values are indicating to us that the catharsis

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<sup>36</sup>Peter Martin. "Children of the Apocalypse." Saturday Review. (Sept. 19, 1970). p. 71.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid. p. 72.

theory is totally unrealistic. They are seeking simple human deficiencies and are rejecting the philosophies of those in the media and in advertising, who are attempting to develop in mankind values that are not in keeping with healthy attitudes of self-acceptance--which is what our youth, in particular, are striving for. For them, as well as for parents, teachers and all others with a responsibility to the community and to society as a whole, a brief summary of the natural law should be of help. The principles of this law should act as a reminder as to morally and socially acceptable conduct. There's another law, the Divine Law, which comes to us from God through the Bible and Church teaching. Let us consider the natural law, which, incidentally, can be seen and understood by any human being of average intelligence.

## B. THE NATURAL LAW

### (1) Laws in General

#### (a) Defined and explained

A law, in general, only applies to human beings. Now, law can be defined as a rule and measure of actions to be performed or omitted, made known, in some way, to the practical reason of man as related to his own good and the common good of all, by one who has authority over subjects and power to enforce the just laws he imposes.<sup>38</sup> This rather long definition can be broken up as follows:

- (a) A law directs a person's actions towards what is good for him him and society.
- (b) It has to be made known to man in some way or promulgated.
- (c) It comes from one who has care and authority over a community

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<sup>38</sup>St. Thomas. Summa Theologica. 1-11, q. 90, a. 4.

of persons.

(d) It can be enforced by the one who made it.

While this definition can be applied to all laws, both human and divine, it surely applies most clearly to God's laws. God, above every other ruler, is the one who has care and authority over all human beings since He is the Creator of all. He, more than anybody else, knows what's good and necessary for man to reach his final destiny. So He has indicated the laws we must obey to reach our goal.

Law, as we know it, does not apply to the universe or other living things. They come under what is called the eternal law, which includes the law governing the sun, moon, stars, the tides, the seasons and all plants and animals found on this earth. These creatures and things have no intelligence with which to know God's law. They obey it by a compulsion placed in their nature when created by God. They are there for man's use and benefit and, strictly speaking, they have no rights but we have obligations towards them. For example, a dog has no rights but we have a duty to treat him kindly.

(b) Revealing the law.

When it comes to what is necessary for man to know in order that he may reach his own destiny, God is bound by His own wisdom to reveal His laws to man. There are three ways in which God can make known man's obligations. First, God can speak to man and tell him certain things that he must do to be saved. For example, He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. These came directly from God and could not be known without a positive intervention by God. These are known as

Divine Positive Law.<sup>39</sup> Second, God can speak to man through other human beings to whom he has delegated some authority. Thus, fathers and mothers are delegated by God to guide their children towards Heaven and, therefore, to make rules and regulations for them. Our right-fully elected civil leaders are likewise delegated by God to direct the citizens of their country or state towards their temporal welfare and, therefore, to make just laws for them. Of course, Church authorities have the same privileges and obligations. Third, God can speak to man silently, simply by appealing to the dictates of his reason, intelligence and good conscience. This is called the natural law, which I will treat separately.

## (2) The Natural Law<sup>40</sup>

It is possible for man to see or to learn many of the laws of God, if he uses his powers of intelligence and observation. When we remember that man's soul is immortal, man is bound to give himself a chance to observe and to learn about the law of God inherent in nature. Man, therefore, by studying himself, his purpose in life, his relationship and his duties to other fellow beings, gradually gets to know the primary and fundamental principles or laws by which God expects him to live.

The basic truth to be learned in observing human nature is this: any part of a thing that was clearly given a necessary purpose by its maker, must be used for that purpose, if the whole thing is to attain

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid. q. 91, a. 4.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid. q. 93, a. 1 and q. 91, a. 1.

its end. Philosophically, this is St. Thomas' approach and he argues that this basic principle can be seen to underlie all the specific rulings of the natural law. For example, the faculties or the powers of man are clearly designed by God for necessary purposes and must not be diverted from those purposes to something else. If any one of these faculties, such as the thinking process or the inventive gift, is diverted from its Creator's design, then the whole man is turned in the wrong direction and away from his real eternal destiny. This is sometimes called "the inversion of the correct order of things." It's a diverting of the proper use of one's faculties towards an improper use. If only one person does it, the consequences may be minimal, but on the other hand, the consequences can have far-reaching effects, if other individuals or segments of society come under this one man's influence. This will be drawn out in greater detail when I later discuss film directors, program directors and print editors.

I will now deal, briefly, with the three chief powers created by God in man.

(a) The power of speech.

Obviously, the necessary purpose of the power of speech (a part of our nature) is to make possible inter-communication. Incidentally, the definition of man is that he is an intellectual animal. The gift of speech is meant to make man a more understandable individual; helps him understand the innermost feelings and thoughts of fellow human beings; obtains for him the confidence and trust of others; makes family and social life attractive--but only if the truth is spoken. This factor is basic in obtaining the advantages of our gift of speech. God is truth and he gave man this great facility to communicate. If

the truth is not spoken, then man is misusing his faculty of speech. The consequences are that he degrades himself and either loses the respect of others or drags down all those who care to accept all he says.

(b) The power of sex

When God created man, he also created woman and gave them the command to increase and multiply. He made opposite sexes attractive to one another. It is clear, therefore, that sex had one essential and necessary purpose, namely the propagation of the human race in a proper manner and not from promiscuous living, as some would wish us to believe. It's obvious that, if children are born, they have to be reared properly or else they continue to live like uncontrolled animals. Time and experience have proven that the best possible way to rear children is within the family unit, with both parents complementing each other's efforts in the formation of their young.<sup>41</sup>

When I speak of the family, I speak of the enduring state of matrimony. In such a circumstance the use of sex becomes good, virtuous and meritorious. Any deliberate indulgence in sex outside of marriage is contrary to the purpose God designed for sex and, therefore, seriously wrong. So, too, are all those seriously wrong and contravening the natural law, who, in the name of entertainment or art, propagate modes of living which would justify or condone promiscuity and 'uncontrolled love'. This is wrong simply because it is against the natural law. It is contrary to God's purpose for the creation of sex. It's part of the natural law to use sex only for its originally

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<sup>41</sup>Aristotle. Nichomachean Ethics. Bk. VIII, ch. 12, 1162 a. 16-28 and Summa Theologica III, Supplement, q. 41, a. 1. (St. Thomas died before he could complete the Summa and the supplement was added by his followers from others of his writings).

intended purpose. This law is not only natural, it is universal and unchangeable. Even the tribes of Africa, long before they heard there was even a God above, observed very strict discipline about premarital sex and the adulterer received punishment for his crime, by death.

(c) Life's purpose.

It's obvious that God gives life to every human being. He intends man to use that life for the purposes which he intended and to use every moment of it to earn his eternal happiness. To cut short one's life by suicide or to unjustly take away someone else's life is contrary to God's purpose in giving life. It is even contrary to this purpose to seriously mutilate oneself, to deprive oneself of any important bodily part or power that plays a major role in our existence unless, of course, a diseased part has to be removed to save the life of the whole body. Suicide, sterilization and murder are contrary to the natural law. Also drugs that can cause a permanent loss of one's faculties to think or reason, come under the same heading.

The natural law, then, is credited with making certain actions universally and unchangeably wrong. It may be asked why these laws are so fixed, rigid and non-flexible. The answer is: It's because they are so irrevocably attached to human nature and human nature never changes. God has given to humans a nature, which He will not change; and the accompanying laws, indicating to man how to fulfill the purposes of his creation, will never change either. Indeed, we can say God cannot change those laws He attached to the works of His creation.

Although the natural law is very clear to reason, it is far from accepted by all men. Many of the things forbidden by this law are said to be contrary to no law. It's because it's contrary to our



human inclinations and our passions to observe them. Pride and self-will also enter in as factors in making so many human beings act contrary to the natural law. Affluence, easy living and lack of self-control are other contributing factors. This has led some people to deny even the existence of God, irrespective of the fact that proofs of this are all around us. Little wonder that those latter, in particular, deny the existence of a natural law.

Even though God gave man an intellect and other faculties to discover for himself the natural law, he also gave this law to man through His spoken word by His Son. "Honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Furthermore, He established the Church and uses its officials to perpetuate and reiterate the natural law, as well as interpreting for mankind difficult aspects of the chief principles of the law. There are, at times, difficult decisions as to what principles to use in certain complex situations. Because Christ did not wish His followers to be in doubt, He gave His Church authority to tell them how the natural law applies when their minds are in doubt. Nevertheless, the Church has no authority to interpret against the natural law when it is clear to reason what the law demands in a particular case. She cannot change the natural law, no matter how difficult it is for people to observe it.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### (1) Incisive Roles

##### (a) The media themselves

The media have a tremendous democratic potential. They extend

the same culture and the same knowledge to all people. What concerns us the most is the type of knowledge and culture. How much of it is advantageous to the individual, the family and society? In other words, how much of it is for the common good? What trends in morality are they portraying? What doctrines are they disseminating? The guiding moral principles, which will be discussed later, will indicate what's good for the family and society.

For the present, we can continue with the democratic potential of the media. They do not consciously establish an elite, but make all events--sport, entertainment and culture--available to everybody. In the past, many events, such as Olympic Games or the Inauguration of a President, were the prerogative of only the higher classes.

Through the great advancement in technology and the conquering of space, man has come of age. This reveals God's confidence in man. Man has been liberated from most of the metaphysical and mysterious phenomena that haunted him in the past. It seems God has entrusted his vineyard to us more fully. But let not our new freedom pull us away from our Maker. Let us take stock of where we should be going and how our new freedom should be used. Let us also take a warning from the Gospel's unfaithful steward, who misused his new freedom. Our freedom is a privilege, but with every privilege comes a responsibility. The privilege of our freedom is there for all forms of society and for the mass media too. It's there for the responsible and irresponsible. It's there for clergymen, public figures, print editors, film directors and broadcasters.

Just think of the powerful influence of some media. For example, someone worked out recently that the average young American of today

will have spent a total of nine years looking at television by the time he reaches sixty-five. "In this television age, receivers are turned on from fifty to sixty hours a week in the homes of the young children. As a result, pre-schoolers soon become highly selective."<sup>42</sup> It is, perhaps, these figures that prompted media analyst McLuhan to say, "The drop-out situation in our schools has only begun. The young today grow up in an electrically configured world. The student today lives mythically and in depth. At school, however, he encounters a situation organized by means of classified information. The subjects are unrelated. The student can find no possible means of involvement for himself."<sup>43</sup>

With the rapid growth in technology, all forms of media, and especially television, are going to have an ever-growing effect on culture, education and Religions. The effect will be either good or bad, depending on (a) the moral standards of the various segments of the media and (b) what the public wish to accept. To benefit society, the media men will have to know their moral obligations and act accordingly. Also, the public, in conjunction with their Religious and political leaders, should learn what is best and demand only what is most conducive to harmonious living. If teachers in the classroom feel their authority is undermined, as television seems to make irrelevant, or maybe even outdated, much of what is taught in the classroom, perhaps their approach to teaching has to change. They must also know their

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<sup>42</sup>Edward Palmer. "Can Television Really Teach." American Education. Vol. 5, No. F. (August-September 1969). p. 3.

<sup>43</sup>Marshall McLuhan. Understanding Media. (New York: Signet Books, 1966). p. IX.

basic moral principles and help the child to distinguish between true and false doctrines. To come to grips with television and to help pupils understand its influence and exercise discrimination in its use, teachers of today must accept the need for media education.

(b) Churchmen

Many clergymen should come to realize their responsibility to the media and to their people and society through the media. Up to the present time, Churches and churchmen have failed to show interest in the media, especially in radio, television and cinematography. Whether it is through ignorance of the potential of these media or sheer neglect of duty is difficult to say. In my own Church, only one thousand clergymen are directly involved in broadcasting. I regard it as utterly disgraceful for some of our Church leaders to stand by idly. The mass media, and in particular television and radio, cannot be blamed if there are not enough religious programs on the air or if those administering media do not receive at least a moral support, not to mention spiritual guidance from the professionals in the field. We owe them an obligation in helping man overcome his educational, moral and social backwardness. I include myself when I say it's our bounden duty to use the media in bringing the message of truth, justice and love into the hidden valleys, out to the isolated islands, over inaccessible mountains and through political barriers to the open hearts in the lonely byways and within the teeming cities.

Many have shunned their responsibility towards the media. They forget that, through broadcasting, the Churches' message can be brought to so many more people. Up to now, the only medium concentrated on, was

and is the printed word. They almost solely rely on their spiritual magazines and periodicals--many of which are gradually going out of print because they are financially broke, either through lack of attractive presentation or bad journalism.

So many have yet to realize that broadcasting presents a unique opportunity for meeting people, a people of a new kind, and especially those who never go to Church but who are willing to listen when addressed in their own setting, namely sitting comfortably at home receiving the word of God in its various presentations. One has only to refer to a fifteen minute broadcast of religious hymns, done on Channel 6 in the city of Lansing, Michigan, and very frequently re-run. We can be sure that it's in the interest of advertising to get greater sale for the records, but doubtless the Christian message is received and accepted ungrudgingly by hundreds of thousands of viewers. It is obvious that the religious records are being bought and this indicates the peoples' interest in uplifting material.

I feel that Churches and churchmen of today ought to see broadcasting as a basic Christian vocation and to encourage young people to offer themselves for it and train either as technicians or on the production side. It is my conviction that Christians in these positions are on a most important frontier at the present time and this has nothing to do with gaining some advantage for one or another Religious denomination. No, it is a matter of believing that television and radio are extremely important media, doing basically good jobs in moving society in the right direction.

Some theologians speak rather critically and even negatively about the actual media of communication. This has become more and

more pronounced since the great advancement of television. Conservative theologians, in the past, spoke gloomily of the forthcoming evils introduced by television. This biased attitude is still prevalent, even in this country and in Europe, among men who write movingly and beautifully about communication as a concept. Communication, for them, is essentially what happens when person meets person, or when a person grasps the mind of an author in the printed word. Even a few of these thinking men have narrowed communication down to what we learn from God. But all of them see the modern world move so quickly and become so complex that the unique personal relation between one fellow being and another seems to deteriorate into a series of quick impersonal contacts, which means that modern technology and the fast pace of life is polarizing people more and more. One German Bishop spoke of the media as tyrants which hinder and diminish real conversation without leaving people time for reading or in-depth study. They make life hasty and superficial and, above all, in the name of communication, they make true communication a rare phenomenon. He struck his most vicious blow when he stated that he deplored the existence of the media for his ministry. At least one thing can be said in his favor, namely he spoke his mind and he spoke for many others in such positions of authority.

As well as being a guide to broadcasters, editors, producers and political leaders, I also intend this thesis for all such thinkers as the above-quoted Bishop. I hope to be able to prove that the mass media, and especially television, with its forthcoming Cassette age, can benefit mankind. McLuhan's 'global village' can yet be realized as nations, ethnic groups and individuals understand each other better.

The power to police public morality resides in the people, but they need leaders. None other than the spiritual leaders of all denominations have the greatest responsibility, aided and abetted by political leaders.

As long as some spiritual leaders make a constructive theological approach to the media almost impossible, it will be difficult to achieve our goal. Some of these, and one I have just quoted, make an outright condemnation of the media. Others, who like to be called Communication-Theologians, do not condemn the media directly. They simply do not like them and make only guarded and generalized remarks about them. They seem to be ignorant of the ultimate heights which can be attained by communications. They have never looked ahead to see the potential of the media for the educational and spiritual growth of humanity and so their evaluation of it is shallow and begets suspicion of their sincerity, even when they try to show the moral advantages of the mass media.

Why the shying away from the media by Church leaders in particular--some of whom refuse to even view a Religious program on television? I venture to suggest that these men criticize the media because they are fearful of a change in Church structures. Understanding the media should be the business of Church leaders, as well as politicians and so forth, but this certainly requires structural changes in the Church. For example, it demands new types of ministries, new language and new forms of worship. I was once asked to do a fifteen-minute program for Good Friday. I couldn't think of anything more appropriate than the Stations of the Cross. In our Church there are fourteen such stations, but because of the time element, I could use

only nine.

Although God is Himself immutable, which I stated earlier, that does not prevent Him from initiating change in history. He does, and it's not contrary to Faith to believe this. Yet to speak of change in the Church structure evokes profound uneasiness and irritation from older Church leaders.

To say the mass media are less able to establish communication than face-to-face conversation is simply not true because they establish their own type of communication, not only in a wider scope but in diverse and varied ways. To say that television is less penetrating than a book is not true either. One has only to watch a President Nixon television interview or, in the past, a de Gaulle speech. Audiences were manipulated into accepting the philosophies of such men, much more deeply than if a book by either had been read. This is apart from the millions reached through just one telecast.

In order to help society better, all spiritual leaders have an obligation to discover for themselves how and why they should get to understand the real meaning and influence of broadcasting. The executive director of the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches says:

The mass media of communication transmit much of the culture of a society including its religion. We discover not only who society's leaders are, but also what they--and we--find to be our deepest anxieties and fears and also our greatest hopes and dreams. Culture is mediated through both the content and style of these mass information links. From it children learn more about the realities of citizenship and politics than from all their school civic courses combined.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>William Fore. Image and Impact. (New York: Friendship Press, 1970). pp. 7-8.



Time magazine, in a cover story regarding religion and films, reads thus, "No other art can so powerfully exploit the dimensions of time and space. No other art has so many ways of involving a human being. It involves his eyes, ears, mind, heart, appetite all at once. It is drama, music, poetry, novel, painting at the same time. It is the whole of art in one art, and it demands the whole of man in every man."<sup>45</sup> It is precisely because the whole man is involved that spiritual leaders should consider it a grave obligation to get themselves involved in the mass media.

(c) Christians

Christians should be information specialists. They should know as much as possible about the law of God and what He expects from man. The whole Christian Church is founded on information concerning correcting, renewing and shedding light on the world. This does not mean a constant talking about God but, by their example, uprightness and moral convictions, talking of God in a secular way; and talking of God in such a manner through broadcasting is of great importance. For example, proclaiming the Christian faith over the radio or on a television program is a necessary challenge. It requires the ability to talk of God in terms of the world. Those with the ability are bound to use their talents and help them grow. To proclaim the Christian Faith one has to speak in an ordinary, secular manner and not as from a pulpit. Technical instruments are used instead of an altar or vestments. So the message has to adopt, at least to some extent, the technical

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<sup>45</sup>Time. (Sept. 20, 1963). p. 79.

form imposed by broadcasting and to express itself in a suitable way in accordance with the broadcasting techniques. The aim is not to evoke obedience but reflection. I believe that people will continue to listen to the message of salvation whether through a discussion, a play or a song. Let us remember that man, of his very nature, must worship a Supreme Being. To find consolation and relief, he must go outside himself and his own selfishness and many of those uneasy in Church are happy to hear the message at a comfortable distance--even sitting in a bar. These people are prepared to listen with interest and sympathy, if invited to share in factual considerations and information. As a general rule, man prefers things to be offered to him for his attention, not forced upon him. It is indeed a person's right to freedom not to accept the views presented to him unless he wishes. So, if the Christian Faith views are not forced on somebody, that person is far more open to fair, clear arguments. More than ever before we have to respect people's freedom because technology challenges us to do so.

Up to now, I have only referred to the direct message of the Christian Faith. Through this direct method vast numbers can be informed of their moral obligations and especially people in the mass media. Another method, the indirect, is to comment on affairs from the point of view of Christian morals, because Faith is not so much a theme as a way of life and thought. Faith is contagious and, I'm convinced, so are morals. Man, in general, seeks a way of life that is concrete, friendly, clear-cut and demanding courage.

(d) Comprehensive information

This is what modern life is based on. This information has

become indispensable, not just in the obvious sense of passing on news items, but in the deeper sense of describing and explaining its context and real significance. Through this kind of information, people can participate in events, decisions and discussions which are the concern of all. Through information, the individual grows into an awareness of his immensely increased human responsibility for mankind as a whole.

Let those people, with the ability to use the microphone, use it as often as possible and in various ways to inform man of his obligations, using basic moral principles as a guideline. It must be remembered that too few people know what the natural law is, but have an innate feeling that laws are there which govern and guide morality. Many people are even frustrated because they are unable to give a cogent reason why such and such a thing is morally wrong. They know it's wrong, they want to declare it's wrong because it's in direct violation of the natural law, but cannot logically defend their conviction. Here are three examples to explain what I mean:

- (1) Recently, I watched a movie in which an irreligious psychiatrist recommended to a frustrated female under his care that she relieve her tensions by indulging in certain forms of sexual conduct outside of and in direct violation of the sanctity of marriage.
- (2) Irreligious physicians sometimes recommend to a husband or wife that direct sterilization be submitted to as the only solution to acute problems they face in marriage.
- (3) People know that abortion and so-called mercy-killing or Euthanasia (putting the old and incurably ill out of their misery by painless murder) is wrong.

There are few people who have the knowledge or the courage to go on a broadcast discussion to refute any or all of the above examples

of a direct violation of the natural law. The reason is: the natural law requires a study of its principles and here again I blame spiritual leaders who could have used broadcasting much more beneficially in the past to enlighten the public, but did not.

It's imperative that the Christian take his rightful place in society and in communicating with others, either through a public broadcast or on a one-to-one basis, he must be able to uphold moral principles governing the natural law. He must not be led astray by idealists who want to infer that God is changing and, therefore, the natural law is changing.

I know that idealism can be the noblest of virtues, but it can also degenerate into the most intolerant of prejudices and even prejudices against God. Such is the so-called idealist, who wants to infer God is changing. To change is to move into a different course of action and this implies a fault in the original. For God, there's no change, no mutability. He's essentially immutable. If God changed, the inference would be that He is in the state of becoming perfect. That is why I can reject wholeheartedly the "Death of God" and "God does not write moral laws on tables of stone," theorists. In many cases such people make a universal theology out of their own unhappiness. Some such people have found their way into the media, either on a permanent basis or as an occasional visitor. Not so long ago, I watched an ex-priest during a half-hour interview on television, prove, at least to his own satisfaction, the non-existence of a God who makes laws which bring unhappiness to so many people. It made many viewers distraught and I was a witness of the fact, but the program had a happy ending. The interviewer stole the show as he brought his program to a

conclusion with the words, "Thank you, Sir, for joining us and God bless you."

Note: Most of the moral principles, which I have stated and intend to state are based on the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas; he was a close follower of Plato and Aristotle. Some of the interpretations of these principles and their applications are from the lectures of Dr. Patrick Walsh, Professor of Moral Theology at Kimmage Manor, Dublin, from whom I had a four-year course. He obtained his Doctorate in Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome.

## CHAPTER II

### HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND CONSCIENCE

#### A. THE PROBLEM

##### (1) In General

Without realizing it, we tend to think very much like other people in our culture. The news media, advertisers, national propaganda machines, the people we associate with, have all influenced us. What we see on film or television or read in print influences our abilities, our temperament, our likes and dislikes, our interest pattern, the use of leisure, the momentum to good or evil, our standards of living, our attitudes and beliefs. We have a set of values mostly formulated from the world around us and seeing its desirabilities--mostly wealth, comfort, sex--we are influenced. These influences are all part of what we are and what we have come to be.

There are times when we discover that we are what we don't want to be. We meet disappointments because we expected too much from a situation. Our standards, beliefs or convictions are, at times, grossly influenced in the wrong direction simply because we have allowed ourselves to be caught up in the current of public opinion or have been misled by the philosophy of some of our favorite screen stars or duped into buying an over-rated television-ad product.

It can be said that oftentimes peoples' freedom is lessened by moral forces. The behavior of individuals is dictated to them by

what they see on the screen or read in a magazine. They are either led to believe that this is the "in-thing" or because so many others are doing it, they have not the moral courage to resist--even though their conscience tells them the opposite. College students are under pressure from environment and the permissive society of today that pre-marital sex is alright. An unmarried girl, who becomes pregnant, can be easily led to accept an abortion as being the solution, because of the so-called moral attitudes being propounded at the present time--through the mass media.

Our youth of the present time are living their lives every day in a secular city that does not often uphold the true Christian ideas of love and friendship--James Bond, Hugh Hefner and Elizabeth Taylor present us with different ideas on what it means to love and to be friends.<sup>1</sup> It is true to say that, today more than ever before, it is possible for people to fail to realize that deep down the youth are basically good and lovable; that they matter and they count; that they are worthwhile and worthy of love; that they amount to something and are important; and that a conscience can be formed in them to follow sound moral principles.

## (2) False Values

We can examine the worth and dignity of the human person and what true friendship and love are, in contrast to what is on the screen. It is a fact that what appears is often dissimilar to what really makes a person valuable and likeable and how these qualities are to be

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<sup>1</sup>William Ballner. "Theology and Advertising." Religion Teacher's Journal. (Dec. 1964). p. 3.

attained. Instead of doing a critique on some recent films or some television situation comedies or any of the afternoon soap-operas, I'll just take two sample advertisements to indicate my point. These two have already come up for criticism because they hinder the Christian in his everyday life's attempt to see and feel his own goodness and lovableness, and in forming proper behavioral attitudes towards his fellow-man.

Commercial One: A little boy walks around very unhappily, a dark storm cloud hanging over his head; he tries to get into his buddies' clubhouse, but they throw him out--"Get lost, you're a drag," they say. Then he meets a kind man who solves his problems with a magical new cereal snack. Immediately after eating some, the dark storm cloud disappears, a brightly-shining sun now appears over his head; his buddies come out, lift him on their shoulders and carry him off to their clubhouse telling him, "We like you, you're happy now."

Commercial Two: A teen-age boy is unhappy because he can't get a date. The announcer talks to him and asks him if he has brushed his teeth, used the right hair tonic, taken a bath with the right soap and so forth. He nods "yes" to each question. For a moment both are puzzled. Suddenly however, the announcer has the answer--he is wearing wrinkled slacks. Quickly he gets a new pair, puts them on and the right girl instantly appears to him.<sup>2</sup>

In the first ad, the young boy is apparently "no-good" to his friends. He's not wanted because he seems dull, downcast and downhearted. However, the product changes him into a likeable, wonderful guy and it makes him accepted and successful with his friends. It's not what he did as much as what the product did. In the second ad, the teen-ager is essentially okay, but there is a glaring flaw that is removed by the product. In both of these cases the change is very sudden and automatic. Instantaneously the person has made it in society. At

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 4.



last he has the one thing necessary in our materialistic age to be acceptable. The product is responsible for success, happiness and prosperity--for all that one needs in this world.

Emphasis on kindness is replaced by coveteousness; personality is replaced by egotism; the spirit of giving is replaced by selfishness; the joy of giving is replaced by sourness until one has gotten the desired object; the sacrifice of having to do without is replaced by happiness to be found only in material gain; the delight of true friendship is replaced by the need for unnecessary things of life; instead of showing a fulfillment in what we have, the new doctrine is: "Thou shalt covet, thou shalt acquire, thou shalt be great."

These two ads and hundreds of others carrying an identical theme--whether it's something that will get him to "kiss you again" or whatever--are familiar to the average television viewer or radio listener or magazine reader. All too often, however, we just watch or listen or read, without thinking any further about the commercial--that is, without considering some of the underlying assumptions or the philosophies of life contained for our youth in these commercials. I'm not talking here about deceptive ads--that will come in a later chapter. I'm talking about the implicit and hidden messages behind the words and pictures. These messages are picked up by our interested youth who are seeking a meaning in life, now building their own beliefs and attitudes and want to do so, without the aid of their parents. They must necessarily find a basis for their beliefs and a foundation for their behavior elsewhere.

If we look again at the ads and ask ourselves about the ideas they contain or the philosophies on which many of them are based, we

may be surprised at what we find and we also may begin to wonder whether many of these ideas and attitudes agree with what we might call "Christian" ideas about people. It seems that, from a "Christian" standpoint, many of the "facts" that commercials seem to offer us for acceptance are not facts at all. For example, everybody just doesn't smile all the time because they have used certain products. It takes more than that to create a genuine and lasting smile.

Take a happy time of the year, namely Christmas, when there's a great spirit of joy and happiness abroad, when gifts are offered to all our friends, when children open up the toys advertised on the screen and in magazines. But there is the rub. So many of them are disenchanted at what they get and they will admit that they thought it was so much more promising because of the pitch in the ad. Youth will tell you that they, too, have been disappointed. Why? Because the whole emphasis is on material things and what they can do to boost one's ego.

Too many commercials emphasize the material, external things or objects that are really "extras" to the person. They are outward, added ingredients that can be bought and sold. So many of these products that are advertised we will never need, but Madison Avenue creates needs within us for them. The "facts" which are propagated as to why we need these superfluities and why they are offered to us for acceptance are not facts at all--as I've already stated. Madison Avenue wants to tell us that we are not likeable and won't be liked unless we procure certain products and have material possessions so that others will approve of us.

The emphasis on materialism with its inequality, its impersonality,

its opposition to ideals that really count, its propounding of "facts" without a basis in human life and human dignity, its very threat to the individual pursuit of life, liberty and happiness--because it has as its goal for everybody to purchase the "extras"--is having far-reaching repercussions on the behavior of our youth. They see a world of materialistic interests all around them. They see the affluence, the mad rush to get rich, the crazy world of advertising. They themselves are for the most part idealists.

Teen-agers worship honesty. They condemn hypocrisy wherever they see it. They reject the phony through their commandments, which center around "doing your own thing." A high-school student might say it this way: What has seemed to Pop to be a social and an economic necessity has come to be considered virtue. Politeness, ambition and discipline--which in many respects means dishonesty, game-playing and self-suppression as a way of life--become desirable qualities. He believes he has a stake in them. At the point we're dealing with him, he has to believe in them--he has little else.

The young have observed too much phoniness in conventional society and have a sense of outrage about it. Some of this outrage certainly started around the television set when the very young were misled by commercials. All those times Mommy and Dad responded to childhood demands to buy this or that toy were followed by disappointments. What glittered on the screen was a disappointment in the living room. The young buyer/listener learned to beware. Video boy and girl developed an experientially based grudge against lying.<sup>3</sup>

We should think of the common good. Those in public life, as well as those in the mass media and advertising, should become

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<sup>3</sup>James Giacomo and Edw. Wakin. "We Don't Want What You Want." The Sign. (Dec. 1970). p. 26/

cognizant of their obligations as their philosophies and behavior can and do have far-reaching effects on the members of society. Our youth today need leadership more than ever before, but a great deal can be done in making them better citizens, if parents and the mass media take up the challenge.

Parents and teen-agers are often arguing about what people should be doing when they should be arguing about true values, real beliefs and what's really important. Adults usually tend to concentrate on the actions of the young, but the root cause lies in the area of values. I know it is important to know what people do, but to understand them, their values must be considered; that is, what they consider worthy and unworthy, fulfilling and degrading, what they reject and what they uphold. Let it be remembered that the youth of today are a part of a world-wide revolution in values. Until recently, traditional values were relatively unchallenged and were accepted by most of the adults as well as most of the young.

When there is a revolution in values, when some people in society are questioning and even rejecting the basic premises of evaluation by which others think and judge and act, then there's a potential for polarization, for non-communication, and a basis for re-evaluation of our own behavior and that propagated by the media. To say the media can continue dishing out their philosophies of life and living, to the detriment of society, is wrong. To allow them to continue to do so rejects the presence of human conscience or definite standards for human behavior.

Teen-agers are ready to discuss their mode of values. On the conscious level they are saying, "Judge us by what we are, not by how

we look." Nobody can argue with such an attitude. Doubtless they are trying to be somebody. They are conscientiously seeking a code of behavior, a rationale for their ideal moral standards, but unfortunately the air of permissiveness abroad sponsored by adults and some elements of the media makes uneasy hunting ground for our youth.

The negative aspect of much teen-age unrest is that the young mistake rebellion for conviction and commitment. Really they want to be genuine. They seek fulfillment in a world that they wish to improve. The adults must come to realize this. The honesty of the youth is not phony. So, when adults encounter some of the apparent contradiction in the behavior of the young, they should not label it as phoniness. The young are rejecting the familiar adult game of "let's pretend" and they are setting out to free themselves of conventional restraints. Unfortunately, the boundaries between freedom and license become very weak and oftentimes the wrong type of freedom prevails. But I'm sure that gradually the dictates of reason, through proper dialogue with parents and the proper attitudes demonstrated by the media will help to form right consciences.

### (3) News Media

#### (a) Psychology of news

True to one of our basic needs, the mass media pamper us with everyday happenings from every corner of our universe. It began with the printing machine. Books began to appear, then periodicals and next newspapers. Man learned to read and became more and more acquainted with the world and the happenings therein. His knowledge grew. Next came the telegraph, and now men learned of events more quickly. The

news became hotter with the advent of radio and television. The stage has been reached when it's possible to know what's happening in any part of the world, almost at the moment of the occurrence. Modern man's opportunity to know and to respond has been increased a thousand fold over pre-electric and pre-print man. Listening to statesmen, churchmen, lecturers, has increased enormously man's spectrum of opinions.

Man has always been interested in what's happening all around him. Few there are, who ever had their thirst for news satiated. It was once said: "What holds attention, determines attention," and, to me, this is particularly true of news broadcasts. We are at the mercy of three national networks for our daily news. We switch on to any one of them and immediately there is determined for the audience what it's allowed to know about the world, as the news editors try to determine where is the best place for news and how to center the attention of the audience.

When we switch on our set, we can be fairly sure now that the Vietnam war, the Middle East crisis and disregard for law and order will all somehow show up. The networks have become very popular for news, especially in the United States.

Today, more Americans get news from television than from newspapers. Television competition has contributed to the foundering of more than one big city newspaper. To say that the newspaper industry is sick is an over-simplification. In 1900 there were fifteen English-language daily newspapers of general circulation in the city (New York).<sup>4</sup>

A basic reason, perhaps, is that the public want quick service and

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<sup>4</sup>Robin Turkel. Breakthrough. (Glen Rock, N. J.: Paulist Press, 1968). pp. 8, 20, 24.

action. The networks provide this by having their camera-men and reporters where the action is. Also television news is ubiquitous, instant and requires no training to receive.

It can be said that television news, in particular, by impressing almost a single view of the world upon the mind of a mass public, has homogenized us. By reaching people in vast numbers with powerful effect through psychologically based news, they show us a world that we all seem to share, even though individuals remain as varied as a ghetto child in New York or a Vice President playing golf. The character of knowledge, at least generally speaking, is narrower on television, but then it's mostly the more exciting items with the most arousal elements in them that appear on the screen. To expect them has become a habit and we are teased into waiting for them lest we miss something important.

(b) Effect on behavior

Basically our emotions and sentiments are along the following lines and are fulfilled by the news media.

(1) Economic.--Some people want to see who's making the profit, how the stock market is going, the state of employment, the rate of the cost of living or of what use the new budget will be. This should dispose man to a greater devotion to duty and to work. But the question is--does it?

(2) Aesthetic.--Some are pleased to see a portrayal of what's good and beautiful in contrast to those who want to tear down the establishment and destroy. Their hopes are raised and they are encouraged to continue nurturing harmony among men.

(3) Theoretical.--Those who are interested in science and technology are overjoyed at its progress as they witness man conquering space. It instills into them a greater desire for truth and objectivity.

(4) Social.--Those with the desire for the progress of the common good are given a feeling of well-being and satisfaction when they witness everything that's good for man, namely progress in science, devotion to God, devotion to duty, and progress in industry.

But all too frequently the true philosophies of life and the real message is glossed over. The rationale for human behavior is often misconstrued. Sometimes this happens in either the straight news broadcast or in an editorial and in a discussion about a relevant news item. For example, the information about Northern Ireland invariably centers around the problem between Protestants and Catholics, whereas it is basically a social problem involving employment, housing and voting. Also Pope Paul has stated that, "Television discussions have made our problems more difficult. It complicates any dialogue between the Church and its members. There is no way for us to reach all our members who have listened to hostile arguments against our position. There is no such thing as a world-wide, equal-time provision for our rebuttal."<sup>5</sup>

All too often we see violence and the condoning of violence. This, according to Paul VI, is having far-reaching repercussions to the extent that children, in particular, are being "dragged into the pitfalls of eroticism and violence or led along the perilous paths of

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<sup>5</sup>Irving Levine. "Paul VI Grapples With Television." TV Guide. (Oct. 31, 1970). p. 6.



incertitude, anxiety and anguish. It is not asking too much that all right-thinking persons should unite at last to sound a cry of alarm and to put an end to enterprises that deserve to be called corrupting."<sup>6</sup>

Further examples of how the media can entirely misrepresent the contents of an ecclesiastical document came when most commentators took the view that the United States Bishops' pastoral letter conceded more to conscience in the matter of birth control than did the Pope himself. These commentators failed to understand that, though the individual conscience may be blameless because of sincere error, the objective moral law remains. Also, during the Middle East crisis, Richard Nixon did not watch television. According to Time Magazine, "He scanned only the morning papers but did not dwell on them."<sup>7</sup> He relied on his own men on the crisis itself and stated, "I did not want the hot words of television. Anyone watching television would have thought that war was declared eight times. Just so the man here does not think so."<sup>8</sup>

We know that if a show has sensory appeal it's going to have an audience and it must also be a work of art. But to leave out the origins, details, values and meanings of events is to neglect a duty to society and is thereby incurring a blame by default as well as getting involved in the problem of human behavior, without the concomitant responsibility. This responsibility lies in diagnosing the reasons for misbehavior and even offering an alternate solution. Of course, I understand that we have to be careful when judging news productions. Although better

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 7

<sup>7</sup>"I Did Not Want the Hot Words of Television." Time. (Oct. 5, 1970). p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. p. 12

communication, with the aid of film-clips, slides, recordings and photos, does not necessarily give better understanding, we have to agree that information can become useful when organized and rationalized.

I don't want the news, especially television news, to become boring and without variety. It was Reuben Frank who said that news records change as seen by the outsider, in behalf of the other outsiders, and news is change which is interesting.<sup>9</sup> It can also be said that some items only become important and interesting after enough people think so. To always expect good news is unrealistic, although this seems to be the case in Russia.

It goes on hour after interminable hour every day. Frankly, it can be a drag to hear the voice of Yuri Tokin introduce a hero of Socialist labor: because he's a devoted party man; a steady worker, and for thirty minutes Mr. Muscovite can get the inside dope of what kind of life the hero lives.<sup>10</sup>

The behavior and attitudes propounded by the media can be for good or evil. To condone violence or immorality is wrong. To try, always, to be sensational is possible. To steer a middle course pleases very few. But findings such as "Elements of the news media failed to portray accurately the scale and character of the violence that occurred last summer (1970). The overall effect was, we believe, the exaggeration of both mood and event,"<sup>11</sup> indicate what I mean.

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<sup>9</sup>Reuben Frank is the President of N. B. C. News and longtime producer of the evening news made famous by Huntley-Brinkley.

<sup>10</sup>James Jackson. "Soviet Television Presents Red-Style Good News." The State Journal. (Lansing, Mich.: Jan. 24, 1971). p. B-3.

<sup>11</sup>Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Summary Report. "The News Media and the Riots." p. 20.

Speaking of television, Robin Day says that,

Because it depends on pictures, it's not only a powerful means of communication but a crude one which tends to strike at the emotions rather than the intellect. It concentrates on action rather than thought, on happenings rather than issues, on shock rather than explanation, on personalities rather than ideas.<sup>12</sup>

In defense of television, I feel compelled to quote Eric Sevareid.

We can't use invective and epithets, can't even dream of impugning the patriotism of leading citizens, can't reduce every complicated issue to yes or no. We can't come down on this side or that of each disputed public issue because we're trying to explain far more than advocate. Nobody in this business expects for a moment that the full truth of anything will be contained in any one account or commentary, but that through free reporting and discussion, the truth will emerge. The central point about the free press is not that it be fair, though it must try to be.<sup>13</sup>

## B. THE PRECEPT

### (1) Morality and the human act

A human act is one properly called so, if it's proper to man as man. Now man differs from irrational animals in that he's master of his actions. Wherefore those actions alone are properly called human of which man is the master. Now man is master of his actions through his reason and will, whence too, free will is defined as the faculty of will and reason. Therefore, those actions are properly called human which proceed from a deliberate will.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Robin Day. "Troubled Reflections of a Television Journalist." Reader's Digest. (Nov. 1970). p. 131.

<sup>13</sup>Eric Sevareid. "Voice of Reason." Time. (Nov. 2, 1970). p. 20. (It was in reply to the proposal of the Vice President that television news commentators be publicly examined on their "underlying philosophy" by a panel of Government officials).

<sup>14</sup>Thomas Aquinas, Summa. 1-11, q. 1, a. 1.

Man's actions taken collectively are called behavior or conduct. Behavior, although most often applied to animals, is also applied to humans, whereas conduct has a very strict meaning and applicable to humans only. Conduct consists of acts which a man performs on condition he is the master--he consciously controls and deliberately wills in such a way that he can be held responsible for them. These human acts constitute human conduct and form the subject matter of ethics. Man is the only creature in the world who can think, but if his thoughts simply run along by association, without his conscious direction and control, such thoughts or acts resulting therefrom are only acts of man and not human acts.

A human act should have three qualities:

(a) Knowledge.--Conduct springs from a motive and is directed towards an end. It is the intellect that proposes the motive or the good to the will which then tends towards that end (with the continued help of the intellect). The intellect is needed to propose the end, to pass judgment on the fitness of the means to the end and to devise a course of conduct that will successfully lead to the end.<sup>15</sup>

(b) Willingness.--To have a human act, it is not sufficient that it be guided by knowledge. It must also be willed, which means it's not forced on a person by an outside agent nor arises spontaneously from within. For Aristotle, the definition ran thus: The voluntary (willingness) would seem to be that of which the moving principle is in the agent himself, he being aware of the particular circumstances

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<sup>15</sup> Austin Fagothey. "The Human Act." Right and Reason. p. 93.

of the agent.<sup>16</sup>

(c) Freedom.--This is the ability, when all requisites for acting are present, of either acting or not acting, of doing this or that.<sup>17</sup> A free act supposes the choice of acting or not acting.

Human conduct, then, is the result of a complex psychological process. There's an interplay of intellect and will. A particular good is proposed to the will by the intellect. The good must always be there and I want to emphasize this. If somebody, for example, wants to make a film or produce a show, he sees the good in it--the creativity, the art, the money--but it need not be morally good, to be good, for a particular producer or director or script-writer.

For a man to act, he must first be attracted by some good. When the intellect knows something as good, there arises in the will a liking for it. If it is seen as not only good in itself but also good for the agent, the liking becomes a desire or wish which leads to intention or tending towards the good. This is a signal to the intellect to deliberate on the proposition and, in turn, signals the will to choose or not to choose. This is called consent. Again the intellect comes into play and points out to the will the necessity of putting the decision into execution. It is to be noted that each act of the will is preceded by an act of the intellect, the most important of which is deliberation.<sup>18</sup>

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Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. Bk. III, Ch. 1, No. 22.

Fagothey. "The Human Act." p. 94.

Thomas Aquinas. Theological Summa. 1-11, qq. 8 and 13.

## (2) Conscience

Closely linked with human behavior and deliberation to act is conscience. Conscience is man's moral faculty. With its attending knowledge of values and freedom, it is each person's own source of moral good. We can speak of an individual's conscience, or the conscience of a group, of an organization or of a television-radio network. Generally for the latter, the continuity acceptance board is its conscience. This conscience is portrayed and manifested in its attitude towards morals and society by what it allows to be aired. Its good conscience is manifested by its firmness and delicacy in setting ethical standards conducive to the common good of man.

In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not make for himself but which he has to obey. It stands almost for a person's "double," a "self" somehow alongside himself. Or perhaps better, a man's "innermost center" where he senses good or evil.<sup>19</sup> In general then, conscience is a person's (or persons within a group) sense of right and wrong as well as an awareness of responsibility. It is there when a person realizes that he is answerable for what he does. So it's not something that one does in an absent-minded or a sleepy mood.<sup>20</sup> But it should have all of the following three

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<sup>19</sup>Vatican II Documents. The Church in the Modern World, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>I forgot all about the car next to me in the garage. It was brand new but its fender crumpled. I felt miserable, but this kind of misery is not conscience. What I did was not morally wrong. Conscience is neither guilt, worry, dissatisfaction nor restlessness--although these can follow on a bad conscience. But conscience is not just a feeling.

characteristics:

(a) A sense of what ought to be.--This is a kind of knowledge one gets only gradually. It's the formation of personal convictions, a gleanings of principles from different sources--basic religious education; the moral principles of others, from listening to them or reading their writings. Not that one can definitely pick out and pigeon-hole many principles at once, but values are obtained and a philosophy of life is gradually built up. Although it can be said that conscience is not just a feeling, still it does not mean that all feelings are absent. Take the following examples--the dim sense of uneasiness one has in preparing to tell somebody off; the subtle glow of expectation one feels on discovering how love for another can at last be proved. Feelings like these help each of us identify that (almost hidden) reaching for value that grows in the innermost recesses of our hearts. In everything we do in life there is that part of us indicating how things ought to be.

(b) A sense of responsibility here and now.--This is what theologians call "moral consciousness." They indicate that the comprehensive concept of conscience is built on the double foundation of the practical intellect seeking truth here and now and the natural yearning of the will and heart of man for true good.<sup>21</sup> Even though, in man, the soul, intellect and will are really distinct, they cannot really thrive without each other. They are so united that they form an integral part of man's nature and so it follows that conscience is

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<sup>21</sup>Edwin Kaiser. "The Moral Faculty of Conscience." General Moral Theology. (Maryland: Newman Press, 1963). p. 135.

a kind of spiritual instinct for self-preservation of the whole man within a world of the true and the good. This puts the added burden on the mind to seek out true values and become devoted to them.

The sense of responsibility for here and now is conscience telling me the do's and don'ts of the present moment. But my own principles and my own inclinations built into my own personal identity will help to determine what I decide on. Actually I bring to each situation the total disposition to good or evil, which has been growing quietly within my heart. Be it noted here that one is not always doing the right thing or always taking the right course of action by following one's conscience. One could be completely wrong or even guilty in following a misguided or misinformed conscience. This is sometimes called an erroneous conscience.<sup>22</sup> But if the error is simply due to human limitations, then we have to absolutely agree that the error is inculpable. Newman once said, "I have always contended that obedience even to an erring (inculpable) conscience was the way to gain light."<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, if error derives from a deliberately fixed and perverted attitude of mind, conscience as faculty, will in some way protest against this very attitude.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid. p. 154. "Conscience itself as faculty or power cannot be erroneous but its decisions may be in error. If the error is in no wise due to the guilt of free-will, the person cannot be guilty in following his conscience. An inculpably erroneous dictate of conscience obliges the same as a correct conscience."

<sup>23</sup>John Henry Newman. Apologia Pro Vita Sua. Part VI, (New York: Dutton and Co., 1938). p. 212.



The verdict of conscience, erroneous and culpable, as one element in the entire mental activity is always bound up with a warning proceeding from conscience as faculty or power, demanding that one immediately probe into the error or dam up its evil source; this implies an altering of the whole false attitude of mind.<sup>24</sup>

(c) A looking back in judgment.--As well as feeling a sense of what ought to be and the determination of one's own responsibility in individual cases, conscience is also the judgment a person makes of his own deeds and actions once he has done them. It's a sort of an assessment of the rationale for our action and I want to emphasize this is, again, a matter of knowledge and not merely of feeling. But it has to be admitted that feelings accompany the knowledge--the feelings of uneasiness and restlessness, sadness and depression at recognizing guilt or the quiet joy and satisfaction that can come only from an upright conscience. However, feelings can be deceptive and we should not use them as absolute signs or to pass absolute judgment on our behavior.

### C. THE PROPOSAL

#### (1) Learn and develop our moral responsibilities

All moral responses are learned, and psychological research tends towards this assumption. There's a capacity for right moral judgment in every newborn infant just as there is for speech or interpreting sight and sound. Whether this capacity will be developed or not depends entirely on upbringing and the acquiring or non-acquiring of moral standards.

The society to which we belong teaches us outlooks and it, in

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid. p. 155.

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turn, is taught by that which influences it most, whether that be the Church, a cultural revolution or the mass media. It can be safely said that, because we are in the age of television (being part of the electronic age), this medium has a predominant effect upon our lives. Those in charge of the medium and who operate it must come to realize what a mighty weapon they wield in determining human behavior, human beliefs and human attitudes. Likewise, the public must discover for themselves, if not with the aid of good journalism and informative programs, the psychological effect of television alone on human behavior.

(2) The case for right behavior is compelling

Generally men act in one certain way with respect to values, such as sanctity of life, the question of honor, the meaning of sex, piety towards God. These values must be upheld by the people in the mass media. To propagate opposite values is to act contrary to the "law written in men's hearts." For there is a sense, a capacity, a predisposition in us to be educated in the way of refined human response; that is, how to act in situations which involve the moral or social order of which God is the author.

(3) A properly educated conscience is imperative

The conscience that is operative in individuals is an educated one, and one that is carefully formed over a long period. Like any intellectual faculty, conscience acquires a consistency through repeated acts. It learns, grows and makes progress.. It must do so by being presented with right values and not the ones that beget permissiveness through provocative and untruthful advertising, the wrong

emphasis on sex, the degradation of the human person in song, story and screen.

Through self-awareness with respect to right and wrong-doing, the conscience becomes educated gradually and through the presentation of everyday occurrences for each one's judgment on them. To help in making the judgment, we are aware of a moral consensus which dictates our mode of behavior, not only for our own well-being but for that of mankind.

(4) Act for the common good

When we speak of acting out of motives dictated by a well-formed conscience, we must be necessarily performing for the common good. A person with such a conscience rejoices in good, does good under the impulse of the most intimate love for it, not just for his own benefit but for society as a whole. Anything, therefore, that would offend mankind or drag it down, in the moral or physical order, is hateful to such an individual. For the Christian or the Jew the inspired word of God, as contained in Scripture, is an important norm in determining what one's behavior should be. Some may say the burden of having to follow one's conscience is too heavy. But many people know that the keeping of the law makes one feel free--freedom from the worry of conscience. These are the people who can do most for the common good.

But we must be careful here and watch out for the trap, namely one of the principal forces of motivation in the conduct of the morally immature is the importance attached to custom, the concern for the opinion of others and the opinions of those around us. There is something else involved, namely the recognition of values. So custom taken

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in itself is not moral and just following custom might do little for the common good. Custom can dispose to morality. We should follow custom, if we are morally convinced it is based on sound moral principles. If it is not thus based, we should have the courage of our convictions and avoid following it. On the other hand, the power of morally correct custom and public opinion make up a good motive for acting, to the benefit of the common good.

#### (5) Motive of honor--noblesse oblige

For many men the most effective motive is preservation of their good name and reputation. This can be good and deserving of development, depending on the reasons one may have in striving for it. To safeguard one's own honor is a most noble and praiseworthy virtue. Because it is a virtue, we are expected to grow in it, nurture it and cherish it. Sense of honor is, above all, an important prerequisite for effective work for the good of the community. For a broadcasting station to have this quality in its truest sense, and this includes all the personnel within the group, is highly commendable and even necessary. Each social motive must ultimately be founded in the well being and love of others.

The spirit of responsibility for our fellowmen should be the fundamental motive influencing all our conduct, because it must be understood that, in effect, all our activity has a repercussion on others. There should be present a sense of vocation or a calling to a particular profession. What I mean can be summed up in the words of a famous photographer,

War was my story and I want to see it through (even though

he was risking the edge of the sword, because he knew that's where the best pictures were) but I often wondered if I was capitalizing on other men's grief, but I concluded that what I was doing would penetrate the hearts of those at home who are simply too indifferent. And I felt I was free to act on that condition.<sup>25</sup>

Learning and inquiring proceeds throughout life and I think it was Aristotle who once said that men, by nature, desire to know. Indeed we can say they have a right to knowledge. This is necessary and useful for the progress of contemporary society and for achieving closer links among men.

The prompt publication of affairs and events provides every individual with a fuller and continuous acquaintance with them; and thus all can contribute more effectively to the common good and more readily promote and advance the well-being of all civil society. Innate in human society is the right to be informed regarding things which are of interest to men either as individuals or as members of society.<sup>26</sup>

The proper exercise of this right demands that the news: be truthful and within the bounds of justice and charity; complete, comprehensive and within a context which gives it meaning and significance; have a broad spectrum taking in the various grades, denominations, and segments of society; should be in a position to define true goals and obtain a respectable response from the public through adherence to the laws of morality, fairness doctrine, justice and charity. In short, the manner in which the news is communicated must be "proper and decent."<sup>27</sup> "This means that both in the search for

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<sup>25</sup>Larry Burrows. "The Edge of the Sword." Newsweek. (Feb. 22, 1971). p. 55. (Burrows is now among the thirty reporters and photographers who have died in South East Asia).

<sup>26</sup>Vatican Council II. "Decree on Media of Social Communication." (Vatican: Dec. 4, 1963). AAS 56-145.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

news and in reporting it, there must be full respect for the laws of morality and for the legitimate rights and dignity of the individual."<sup>28</sup>

"There's a difference between 'another riot broke out on the campus' and 'students are continuing their protest another day'." These are the words of Solon Gray, a television newscaster.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes, he says, that difference makes all the difference. A word like "riot" states specifically what happened and the why is as important as what. It's because he feels a responsibility to the public and to the individual. He says, "If I fanned the flames of those emotions that create dissension, I would not be living up to my responsibility to the community. It's a sad fact about this business that one of the quickest ways to improve your ratings is to start sensationalizing events. It's not my way."<sup>30</sup>

Lest I infer that only journalists have an obligation to project good behavior in their stories and news gatherings, a word has to be said about entertainment programs and their reliance on love or the level of comforts depicted for happiness or the freeing of sex from all restraints. The pursuit of excellence has become fashionable. In the words of a philosopher:

In modern society no man can pursue excellence undeterred and uninfluenced by the image-building, taste-setting, attention-diverting system of communication that reaches out to him wherever he might be. Teachers have access to their students' minds for only a few hours of a lifetime, but the media

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Solon Gray. Newsweek. (Jan. 11, 1971). p. DT4. (He's newscaster at six and eleven on WXYZ-TV, Detroit, Michigan).

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. p. DT4.



reaches them always and forever; and the values and standards cannot long stand inviolate if they are at odds with those that prevail in the market place.<sup>31</sup>

There's still a lot of creative talent available from our universities with Television-Radio courses. Their graduates should try to make a break-through with programs of a calibre worthy of their calling and flood the market with programs "that will transform the public consciousness so that it becomes capable of responding only to what is good."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Harry Ashmore. "Cause, Effect and Cure." Mass Communication, Study of Democratic Institutions. (New York: Osborn, 1966). p. 38.

<sup>32</sup>Richard Lichtman. "Discussion." Ibid. p. 24.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE SUBTLETY OF ADVERTISING

#### A. THE PROBLEM

##### (1) Sex appeal

Madison Avenue certainly deserves special recognition among the ranks of the omnipotents over sexual behavior. Consecrating almost every imaginable commodity with ingeniously varied, but always erotic enticement, the advertising agencies bombard the babes of consumerland with a never-ending barrage of sexual stimuli that invariably elicits the well-trained response at the cash register. I hesitate to explore the obvious and I'm sure that anyone with a modicum of alertness must be well aware of the impact that the advertising industry has made on American sexual behavior.<sup>1</sup>

The advertising man feels little hesitation when it comes to pandering after the psychological, emotional and sexual drives of youth, in particular. Add film directors, paperback writers and magazine editors to the advertiser and one finds sex is their basic game all the time in selling their products. But the game is a mean one and love, as it should be known, is fouled up, betrayed and indeed made into a laughing stock.

Advertising sees man as an id. The freudian sell is rudimentary to the industry. All ad men know that people don't buy products, they buy satisfaction. They purchase the promise of beauty. They buy oral gratification. It

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard Suran. "The Native and Import of the Sexual Revolution." Listening. (Autumn, 1966). pp. 189-190.

titillates and arouses sexual response and is full of soft-core pornography.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the ads are carefully planned to appeal to the prurient leanings of our human nature.

## (2) Human weaknesses

What is the morality of playing upon our hidden weaknesses and failures--such as our anxieties, our dread of falling behind the Joneses, our sensitivity? The youth, in particular, suffer from a barrage of ads, aimed at boosting their egos if they buy. The doctrine seems to be, "Thou shalt be great if you covet and buy and use." They vie with one another to see who has the latest in perfume, after-shave lotion or the latest in dress.

Some advertising agencies keep a staff of psychologists who seek to isolate the frailties of our make-up and then suggest how messages may be beamed to play upon them. The role of the scientists in co-operating in some of these projects certainly deserve some examination, if not criticism. Even some psychologists, who conduct motivational studies for commercial clients, are uneasy in their work. They know they are selling human behavior down the proverbial drain. They are revealing, as it were, the secrets of their clients.<sup>3</sup>

Designers and packagers for supermarkets are very adept at

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William Fore. Image and Impact. (New York: Friendship Press. 1970). pp. 60-61.

Vance Packard. Discovery in Advertising. (Glen Rock, N. J.: Paulist Press, 1969). p. 119. (He tells of the psychologist, whom he met, upset because after discovering from clients that they use automobiles to discharge their aggressive feelings, the psychologist turned his finding over to a certain client and let him worry about the morality of using such an insight to merchandise cars.)

putting the housewife into a "buying trance." The compulsive buyer has little chance of survival. There are so many things the housewife will never need, but somehow they find their way into the home, cluttering up the shelves and many are never fully used. The advertiser has played a substantial role in making the American the world's greatest consumer, as well as being the most self-indulgent, the most pleasure-minded, most materialistic, the most passive and the most conforming.

Radio, television and newspapers are paid high prices to carry the ads, for example: New Ultra-brite gives your mouth sex-appeal! Right Guard--don't leave your family defenseless! Colgate--the mouthwash for lovers! And the carnival goes on with the professional voice or the attractive picture or both echoing everything we could be and do and have . . . everything we need, everything we are. The mould is there. We feel, we are convinced, we are hollered at, until we get into it and become the image being propounded by the advertiser. We are restless until the task is accomplished and then we want more, because there is always more ahead of us. The gibberish never ceases and the would-be consumer is never at rest until he has the gadget, the perfume or what-have-you safely in his possession. It's the name of the game.

Ad men don't base their campaigns on air--they link their products to basic human needs and feelings . . . love, adventure, success, hope, security by using the right deodorants, or mouthwash, or driving the right car. Products become more than just things--they become means of finding attractiveness, sexual identity, friends, power, freedom from fears of what "they" will think of us or from being ignored, forgotten or alone.

Young and old are caught in the milieu of the ad men. They know everyone's psychological, emotional and social needs and they tell us very bluntly and with precision how our needs can be fulfilled. Likewise, they tell us that success can only be found and happiness can only be discovered, if we follow their "gospel." They have conned us into believing that they have all the answers. More than parents, teachers or preachers, they speak with a conviction and a belief in their product that few of us can even hope to emulate. Their catch-phrases are sung by the children and the grown-ups. Their presentations, both audio and visually, are superb. They are so adept at their job that we are left floundering as to how we can beat them at their game.

Few realize that the self-identity they give us is a shallow one doing little for the real identity of the human person. This self-identity encompasses different, yet very important, dimensions of the person: body self-image--"How tall or how small I am!"; sex self-image--"Am I appealing to girls/boys?"; intellectual self-image--"Do my parents and teachers think I'm stupid?"; social self-image--"Am I accepted or am I another Charlie Brown?"; religious self-image--"Is my experience of God real? Personal?"<sup>4</sup>

A person's process of answering these basic needs during late teens and adolescence gradually forms his personal identity and basis for values. Each one has to become aware of how advertising affects his identity-forming process. If one's anxiety about life's corporal needs is lessened rather than increased, or if advertising reveals a

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Ibid. p. 10. Rich Payne and Robert Heyer.

true path to be followed in identity formation or if one wants to become a full person instead of trying to make people like oneself--then the ad man is helping us in the right direction.

We criticize Madison Avenue not only for condoning, but encouraging, half-truths and exaggerations. It can be said that the overwhelming aim of advertising is to make a profit, whereas serving the public becomes a secondary consideration. Yes, a lot of advertising can be considered mean to the opposition, extravagant and unfair to society. How often have we seen the outstanding qualities of a half-dozen different soaps, each claiming to wash whiter than the other? Someone has to be wrong, they can't all be the perfect out-dazzlers. Several different companies, producing the same product, advertise that theirs is smoother, longer-lasting, cheaper, better, stays fresh longer. What do they all think of the consumer? Or does the consumer really swallow the pitches concocted by some of the best brains available--undoubtedly some of the most creative brains in the country are engaged in advertising?

### (3) The consumer

Apparently, it must be true that the consumer is accepting what's advertised and if it's not advertised, people are of the opinion it's not worth buying. Sociologists, semanticists and critics of the arts have been interpreting advertisements for decades as ritual readings of our social creeds and dogmas. They can only judge on what is bought and only what is advertised is bought, but a label is placed on society, obtained through its buying habits. The social creeds and dogmas being preached by deodorant ads, beer ads, airline

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ads and car ads, are that we are a pleasure-loving, comfort-oriented and an uneasy people. The ads reveal this kind of involvement engaged in by society. They are a visible sign of the standard of living and of our beliefs and something historians will note down as a guide to future generations--either to avoid or to follow.

An ad for a watch runs like this: "Not all women are worth this watch. Not all women could have waited so long or with such patience. Now that you are there, that's why this watch is there." How can anybody equate the value of a watch to a human relationship? Which is of more value--a gift in itself or the act of giving? How can one measure the value of the act of giving on the part of another person by the monetary value of the gift? Do persons identify themselves by the things they own or possess? To the advertiser the value of the watch, the selling of it, no matter to whom, is what counts. Ulterior motives, such as signs of affection, do not enter in. Very often the danger to members of society or to children is not considered.

Recently, in Washington, a Senate consumer sub-committee was shown a toy stove, with an oven that could heat to 600 degrees; a stuffed rabbit, whose ears came off their sharp spikes with ease; a doll, whose hair ribbon stayed on with a straight pin; and a rattle held on with spikes. So, in spite of the great strides taken by American manufacturers, toys can still be dangerous.

William Vance, writing from Washington, admits that, during 1970, the Federal Government took sides with the consumer, by walking into the public market-place and showing a "New urgency to wave the banner of the buyer in the face of big business." Vance said

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that from soft drinks to anti-freeze, from toys to tires, Federal agencies ordered manufacturers to tell it and sell it with as much concern for the public interest as for corporate profit. What really triggered the Government's concern was the growing public resentment towards "deceptive salesmanship and shoddy workmanship," said Vance. He cited separate actions by the F.T.C., which brought charges of deceptive advertising against Coca-Cola for claims about the nutritional value of its Hi-C drink, and against Standard Oil for claiming that its Chevron F-310 gasoline was non-polluting.<sup>5</sup>

Madison Avenue, using the media to the fullest--backed by keen salesmanship, insidious labelling and packaging ploys--is virtually robbing the public in the department store, drugstore and gas station. The public, no doubt, are being duped and hoodwinked out of full value for their money by deceptive selling. An alert United States Senator, with consumer interests at heart, says that "Today's most serious form of theft, accounting for more dollars lost each year than robbery, larceny, auto-thefts and forgery combined, is deceptive selling."<sup>6</sup> Sidney Margolius, the dean of American consumer writers, asserts that "Never in the thirty years I have been reporting on consumer problems has the public been so widely and steadily exploited as today."<sup>7</sup> And Ralph Nader, the nation's most renowned champion of consumer rights, states that, "Nowadays consumers are being manipulated and defrauded, not just by marginal, fly-by-

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<sup>5</sup>William Vance. Detroit Free Press. (Jan. 3, 1971). p. 14A.

<sup>6</sup>"You're Being Robbed." Time. (Nov. 23, 1970). p. 107.  
(Quoting Senator Warren Magnuson.)

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

night hucksters, but by America's blue chip business firms."<sup>8</sup>

In her book, The Supermarket, Jennifer Cross, sees the consumer as "a victim of high powered advertising and finance, a pawn of Madison Avenue and Wall Street, and the giant supermarket, food, drug and cosmetic industries." She "bemoans and laments the big advertising budgets of the food giants, mentioning the one hundred and fifty-four million dollars spent by General Foods and the sixty-five million by Standard Brands" (in one year's advertising) and arguing that "Such sums are wasteful of the consumer's dollar."<sup>9</sup> She has been criticized by the pundits of advertising, with the suggestion that much consumer advertising is informational, telling of new products or new uses. I ask how much of the truth is enshrined in the telling and is the information divulged, complete and total and unabridged?

#### (4) Politics

It is a fact that television has become a dominant factor in politics. At each election time, especially over the past decade, hundreds of politicians lay their hopes, promises, anxieties and fears at the lens of the television cameras. They adroitly handle the medium and its users to try to sway opinion--with the public unaware of how it's done. I doubt if the viewing public realize that a political candidate is sold like a tube of tooth paste or a box of detergent, it is so expertly done.

The history of the use of television commercials began in

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Wall Street Journal. Book Review. (Oct. 19, 1970). p. 12.

1948 with Harry Truman, but did not really flower until 1960 and showed itself in true Madison Avenue fashion in 1968. The spot commercial then became the primary weapon. This weapon was not so much to explain the candidates primary stand or what he was going to do about the country's ills, but to pound his name into the peoples' consciousness. "This is the same theory in advertising in which identification is the goal. The shopper buys a product not so much for properties he likes but because the name is familiar."<sup>10</sup>

In the months immediately preceding last week's elections, the nation's politicians and pundits almost uniformly accepted the proposition that television merchandising was the high road to the nation's voters' affections. Reinforced by The Selling of the President 1968, which argued that Presidents, like tooth paste, could be sold on television, this conviction prompted more than half the contenders for Senate and gubernatorial office this year to retain out-of-state television consultants. It also swelled television campaign budgets to an estimated fifty million, setting a new record for off-year elections.<sup>11</sup>

The actual overall figure spent was in the region of three hundred fifty million dollars, or as a columnist so curtly put it " . . . as much as Congress appropriated this year for education of the handicapped."<sup>12</sup> So it is almost impossible for somebody, no matter how respected he is, to make any impact without ad money, as was made clear in the case of astronaut, John Glenn. He had not the kind of money necessary to advertise in an effective manner. If one does not fall into the hands (per money) of the political image-maker, one

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<sup>10</sup>B. Peterson. "Television's Role in Politics." Detroit Free Press. (Oct. 22, 1970).

<sup>11</sup>"The Media." Newsweek. (Nov. 16, 1970). p. 77.

<sup>12</sup>"The Image Game." Time. (Sept. 21, 1970). p. 43.

has little chance of survival on election day. But what I am truly against are the techniques used by political image-makers which often distort. They use slices of life that belie real life, truncated conversations and theatrically made-up facial expressions.

## B. THE PRECEPT

There are three factors involved in false advertising and advertising advocating false values:

### (1) Wrongness in lying

By definition, lying is a false statement uttered with intent to deceive.<sup>13</sup> According to St. Thomas it contains three things: the falsity of statement; the will to tell the falsity; the intention to deceive.<sup>14</sup> Of these three, the first provides only the material for a lie, for it's not a lie to say what is actually false while thinking it true. But the real essence of a lie consists in the will to say what is not in conformity with one's mind.

Lying, as defined and explained above, is intrinsically wrong and, therefore, forbidden by the natural law. Again to quote St. Thomas, "As words are naturally signs of intellectual acts, it is unnatural and undue for anyone to signify by words something that is not in his mind."<sup>15</sup> "Lying is in itself evil and to be shunned, while truthfulness is good and worthy of praise."<sup>16</sup> Speech, we can say, has been given to man by nature and hence by God himself, to communicate

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<sup>13</sup>St. Augustine. Contra Mendacium (Against Lying). Ch. 12.

<sup>14</sup>St. Thomas. Summa Theologica. 11-11, q. 110, a. 1.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. a. 3.

<sup>16</sup>Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. Bk. IV, Ch. 7, 1127, a. 28.

thought. This is its essential and primary end, without which speech would not be speech.

By speech here I intend any communication of a message to another, whether it's verbally, made by gesture or sign or whatever. To communicate, therefore, as thought what is not thought, to say what one knows to be untrue, is to abuse the ability to communicate by destroying its essential and primary end. It is to use it contrary to the evident intention of nature's author in giving us this power.

Human society is built on mutual trust and faith among men. It requires constant communication between men. Communication implies trust, sincerity, and uprightness. If these are lacking, then man will lose many of his friends. If the abuse becomes widespread, then society will suffer. This is why lying is forbidden by the natural law.

## (2) Justice<sup>17</sup>

Justice, as a virtue, enables man to will for himself what belongs to himself and to will for others what belongs to them. By definition, it is a moral attitude of the will which seeks to give to every being that which belongs to him and, more especially, to every person or community of persons. It is, therefore, that which establishes between the members of society the right order regarding the goods of the individual and the community. It includes an

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<sup>17</sup>St. Thomas. Summa Theologica. 11-11, qq. 58-59, 61-62.  
 Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. Bk. V (All on Justice).  
 Plato. Republic. (All of Bk. I and first part of Bk. II are on Justice).

attitude of openness towards value and disregards every other claim on the will of the person. It is entirely prepared to fulfill all the demands of value of one's own person seeking values and of other persons demanding values.

Of course, when I speak of values, I am referring to true values. A prerequisite for justice is to know what true values are. Within each of us there is a desire for top value or, at least, the best obtainable. But most often and because we lack the technical competence or knowledge of a product, we have to depend on what the promotion pitch says. If the promises made are fulfilled, then justice is obtained and my right has been granted, because the value I demanded was there. This is called commutative justice.<sup>18</sup>

This commutative justice gives the individual the private right of contract, according to the principle of equality of give and take. For example, if I'm motivated to buy an article because it is tagged with certain values which I demand, then I have a right to these values if I do buy. If the values are absent, at least to a noticeable degree, or to the extent that I have been deceived, the

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<sup>18</sup>Justice is usually divided into: (a) Commutative. It exists between equals, that is between man and man, or between two independent states, or between man and the state (considered apart from politics). This kind of justice is the basis of contracts and of a person's right to his property and goods. (b) Distributive. It's the relationship of a community to its members. It requires a fair and proper distribution of public benefits and obligations among the members of a community. It differs from commutative justice in that it exists between public officials and the ordinary members of the public, where each of the latter gets a proportionate share of the goods available. (c) Legal. It requires each man in the community to contribute his proper share towards the common good. Basically it shows itself in law-abiding conduct, yet goes beyond the requirements of the written law.



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principles of commutative justice are violated through fraud or theft. By these same principles, there's an obligation on the guilty party to make restitution.

Inherent in all of us, and even in children, is a built-in feeling for justice. We know and feel hurt when we are cheated. It's because justice is derivative of the natural law. We have an inalienable right to food, clothing, shelter, liberty, education, property, companionship and all that goes to make life worth living. To deprive somebody of any one of these is to be unjust. To make it unnecessarily difficult for man to obtain these, or to use his need for them as a means of unjust gain for oneself, is also unjust.

### (3) True happiness

True happiness is not the kind guaranteed by Madison Avenue, if certain cosmetics or products are procured. This kind of happiness, with its concomitant false values, almost invariably disregard the spiritual dignity of man. Instead, they make the assumption that merely material or biological standards rule human life and morality. The result is the presence of an age of confusion, unrest, unhappiness and discord. Flattering the proud and the selfish by their standard of values and philosophy of life, the ad men project for their audience, a life of unreality and boredom.. I maintain that the dignity of the human person is truly at stake.

Happiness is not a passing feeling or emotion, such as joy or gladness, but is a lasting state or condition. One may be happy though suffering a temporary grief and likewise a generally unhappy person may have his moments of joy. Only intellectual persons are

strictly capable of happiness. They, alone, can reflect on their state of contentment and consciously appreciate the satisfaction they enjoy. "Happiness is a subjective condition entailing the existence of desire in oneself, the consciousness of the existence of the desire, the actual satisfaction of the desire and the consciousness that this desire is being satisfied."<sup>19</sup>

The American tradition is built on a philosophy of life which can be traced back through, at least, four thousand years of western civilization. The Founding Fathers held that certain truths are self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights and among these is the pursuit of happiness. So happiness is a self-evident right which means it's beyond argument and not to admit it, is to be illogical.

Of course, the pursuit of this happiness was meant to be within the bounds of the moral law. If then, values, that are surreptitiously false and oriented against true moral standards, are propagated as the real ones--and this, I maintain, is a basic case against the ad man--then a basic human right is being infringed upon. Indeed the Bill of Rights contained in the first ten amendments of the Constitution of the United States is being contravened.

Fulton Sheen argues that there's a conflict between ideal and achievement, between what we ought to be and what we are, between our longing and our having. Society, he says, can be saved only if man is saved from his unbearable conflicts. Men have put their hope in

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<sup>19</sup>Austin Fagothey. "Happiness." Right and Reason. 2nd Ed. (St. Louis: Mosby, 1953). p. 45.

material things and earthly advancement but there is little left except shattered dreams and dulled emotions for many, as well as broken homes, a rebellious youth and an era of permissivism. Instead of finding happiness in his pursuits, man is left with a heavy burden of worry and anxiety about the future.<sup>20</sup>

But happiness can still be obtained if man tries to fulfill the purpose of his creation. It is in this that happiness consists. Again, according to Sheen:

Every man knows, from his own unfilled hunger that he was built with a capacity for three things of which he never has enough. He wants life--not for the next few minutes but for always, and with no aging or disease to threaten it. He also wants to grasp truth--not with a forced choice between the truths of mathematics or geography, but he wants all truth.

He also wants love--not with a time limit, not mixed with satiety or disillusionment, but love that will be an abiding ecstasy. But these three are not to be found in this life in their completion.<sup>21</sup>

However, since there's a possibility of finding them or of having them, even with only certain degrees of perfection, man should continue the search. The mass media have an obligation to help him. So also have the ad men, who are one of our chief concerns here.

"When enough men have found the true way to happiness, they will find one another in brotherhood. Social peace will then ensue."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Fulton Sheen. "Introduction." Way to Happiness. (New York: Fawcett Publications. 1954). p. VI. (He's recognized by people of all faiths as one of the great preachers of the twentieth century).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. p. VI.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. p. VII.

### C. THE PROPOSAL

(1) The public should insist on the implementation of the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters' Code, especially in regard to the following recommendations as contained in the said code:<sup>23</sup>

(a) Ads should contain no claims intended to disparage competitors, competing products, or other industries, professions or institutions.

(b) Television broadcasters should exercise the utmost care and discrimination with regard to advertising material, including content, placement and presentation, near or adjacent to programs designed for children.

(c) A television broadcaster should, in recognition of his responsibility to the public, refuse the facilities of his station to an advertiser where he has good reason to doubt the integrity of the advertiser, the truth of the advertising representations. He should also refuse if the products, services or use of advertising scripts could be objectionable to a substantial and responsible segment of the community.

Note: This prompts number two.

(2) Curtail the pandering to sex in ads. At a national network stockholders' meeting in California the strident voice of a young female said, "You use our bodies to sell products! You blackmail us

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<sup>23</sup>First Report National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters. (Washington: Nov. 1953). pp. 5-8.

with the fear of being unloved if we do not buy." The young lady, speaking on behalf of women's liberation, continued with a criticism of television's distortion and downgrading of women through its commercials and its general programming.

More attacks like this should help to make Madison Avenue and producers more aware of a change of attitude towards the use and abuse of sex. Women should form groups and demand for their sex a rightful place in society and not as helpless or sexy handmaidens. "Women are shown exclusively as sex objects and reproducers, not as whole people," declares a member of the National Organization of Women. It can be said that ads are creating psychological effects and something positive has to be done about them. Otherwise, sexuality and individuality will be confused.

(3) Selectivity in toys for children. Not everything advertised is good and the consumer should check on every item put on the market for children. I maintain that the advertiser has a serious obligation also. Likewise those who get paid to advertise out of due deference to the community within which they operate. For example, a chemistry set can be a very attractive toy as well as being educational, but I think it should be stated that it's not meant for anybody under twelve. No child should be allowed to buy drug-store chemicals as replacements. This should be done by an adult for two reasons: so that the correct chemicals are obtained; and so that the druggist sees an adult accepting responsibility.

It goes without saying that toys, such as B-B guns, bows and arrows, darts, call for a strict parental supervision. A toy that's safe for a ten-year-old can be death for a five-year-old. Also it is recommended that time should be taken to seek out the value of toys, what advantage they are to the children and having acquired them to teach the youngsters how to use the toy safely and watch them until they can do so.

The more observant parents become and the more they "proceed with caution" in checking the defects and dangers of toys, the more careful will the advertisers be. The father who, last Christmas, was conned into buying an "easily assembled" toy, spent the day trying to follow the maze of instructions whilst his three-year-old had to be content with the carton for a plaything. I hope he and others have learned from the experience.

(4) Pressure FCC and FTC in regard to the following:

(a) The Television Code Review Board and the Radio Code Board have adopted a strengthened provision that urges advertising to offer products or services on their positive merits.<sup>25</sup>

(b) The toy guidelines limit the use of fantasy techniques in ads and advertisers are advised against the presentation of overly realistic toy guns and overly dramatic treatment of toy weapons and related war toys.<sup>26</sup>

(c) I suggest a curtailment of fantasy techniques in ads

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<sup>25</sup>NAB. "Issues Faced by Both Codes." Challenge of Self-Regulation. p. 7.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid. "Television Code Actions." p. 10.

directed towards the youth who are conned into buying clothing and cosmetics which promise to make them more "self-sufficient," more independent and belonging to a permissive society. The manner in which some ads are presented does nothing more than indicate that how one behaves does not matter as long as you have the "Right Guard" or "Close-up." The immoral implications is something that the public should look into and, if necessary, demand better taste in the ads. These ads reveal the kind of involvement our present society is caught up in and also are an indication of our standards of living.

We too often unconsciously believe the ad men, who promise us all kinds of happiness, freedom and success. We listen to them over and over again repeating the same thing ad nauseam. But we turn a deaf ear to those who want to explain to us the value and dignity of human life, the need for virtue and self-sacrifice and that personal identity is not found in the possession of superfluities, but in an honest effort to be kind, good and self-sacrificing.

#### (5) A word for the advertiser

Beyond doubt advertising is necessary so that the consumer can become acquainted with what's on the market. The broader the selection, the greater should be the opportunity for all of us to better ourselves in so many different ways--economically, socially and even spiritually. Besides, media could not continue to operate without the support of the producers. It is the producers' money that gives us such a wide range of television and radio stations and also plays a major part in keeping our printing presses turning. They want to tell us about their products and they pay well in doing so.



Two great statesmen made the following couple of statements about advertising. "The general raising of the standards of modern civilization among all groups of people during the past half century would have been impossible without the spreading of the knowledge of higher standards by means of advertising."<sup>27</sup> "Advertising nourishes the consuming power of men. It sets up before a man the goal of a better home, better clothing, better food for himself and his family. It spurs individual exertion and greater production."<sup>28</sup>

It's interesting to know who's paying for what we view on television, but if the same company keeps jumping in three or four times during a short program, like the weather, then viewers get turned off. I also think that there's no need to break the news so many times to give us an overdose of ads. There will have to be some reserve shown on the ad men, and the companies they work for, will suffer. Presently, I know that some viewers have a remote control to switch off the sound when the ads appear on the television set. Did they use this switch for the forty-three minutes of commercials during the recent showing of Ben Hur? I guess so.

Nicholas Johnson of the FCC is convinced that the best things on television are those things that come closest to reality--real-life people in real-life settings. He says, "What's going on in the lives of everyone, from grade-school children to the folks in our

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<sup>27</sup>David Ogilvy. Confessions of an Advertising Man. (New York: Atheneum). p. 150. (Quoting President Roosevelt).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. p. 150. (Quoting Sir Winston Churchill).

senior-citizen centers, is what's most important about America today." Such programs, he maintains, help people "turn on themselves rather than turning on to products, that give them useful information rather than destructive information."<sup>29</sup> But he bemoans the fact that even when programs of a high calibre get a high rating and suddenly disappear from television, "It's because agencies complained it was more difficult for them to sell products. The advertisers complain that the plays (real-life situations) 'make our commercials look fraudulent.' "<sup>30</sup>

Johnson intimates that the nation is being driven to ruin because the people are being kept ignorant as to the issues and information they simply must have, if they are to survive as individuals and society.<sup>31</sup> What can be done? It's a matter of getting back to the FCC policy which says,

In fulfilling his obligations, the broadcaster should consider the tastes, needs and desires of the public he's licensed to serve and exercise conscientious efforts, not only to ascertain them by a diligent, positive and continuing effort in good faith, but also to carry them out as well as he reasonably can.<sup>32</sup>

He cannot ignore the public interest, which his application for a license should thus define and his operations thereafter reasonably

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<sup>29</sup>Nicholas Johnson. "FCC's Outspoken Rebel." Detroit Free Press. (June 27, 1971). pp. 1-B and 4-B.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. (Johnson quoting from Eric Barnow's History of Broadcasting in America. pp. 1-B and 4-B.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid. p. 4-B.

<sup>32</sup>Communications Act. (1934) As amended.

observe.<sup>33</sup>

We are all aware of the fact that commercial television has a great power in this country, and indeed throughout the world. It is they who determine what we will know and what we will be ignorant of; it is they who influence our moral values and our aesthetic taste; it is they who help to set our national priorities with regard to wars and domestic standards--the problem is that so many let profit dominate everything and television executives so often forget that they constitute, for so many Americans, their primary informational source (school, Church, psychiatrist, government official, friend) and that carries a responsibility to do more than run old movies and junky commercials.<sup>34</sup>

People need more information about important controversial issues. Probably the greatest room for improvement is in educational, advice and food-for-thought programs. The public arrange their time and leisure, home and work to watch television. They expect to get something in return. They expect information and values that they can emulate. Television and radio can and should serve society by informing the public and helping it decide the issues facing it. Because of their studious nature and aptitude for hard work, most Americans must, acutely and automatically, feel the need to spend time usefully, even watching television. If the broadcasters do not give them programs of real import, their uneasiness with the hours

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<sup>33</sup>Frank Kahn. "1960 Programming Policy." Documents of American Broadcasting. pp.219-220.

<sup>34</sup>Nicholas Johnson. Detroit Free Press. p. 4-B.

they spend watching television will increase. It is in the interest of television, as a vital medium, to encourage and promote the broadcast of programs presenting valid social issues, with significant controversial and challenging concepts.<sup>35</sup>

Broadcasters are running a profit-making enterprise and there's nothing wrong with that, if done within the bounds of justice, good taste and not merely for furthering the selfish or private interest of individuals or groups. A broadcasting station is licensed to serve the public and the first emphasis should be on service to the community. The people are entitled to this and not what a station or network can get out of them. In a sense, a station that becomes the spokesman on the air for the community it serves, in their cultural tastes, political and social interests and their problems, is the ideal one. If a station performs its duty in furnishing well-rounded programs, the rights of the community have been achieved.<sup>36</sup>

The evidence set forth in the Blue Book warrants the conclusion that some stations, during many portions of a broadcast, have engaged in Ad specials which are incompatible with their public responsibilities and which threaten the good name of broadcasting itself. The public interest clearly requires that the amount of time devoted to ad matter should bear a reasonable relationship to the time devoted to a program.<sup>37</sup> The Communications Act says the licensee is,

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<sup>35</sup>NAB Television Code. "Advancement of Education and Culture." Code No. 7.

<sup>36</sup>3rd Annual Report. FRS Docket No. 4900. Great Lakes Broadcasting Company. pp. 32-38.

<sup>37</sup>Kahn. Documents of American Broadcasting. pp. 125-196.

in effect, a trustee and imposes the non-delegable duty to serve the public interest in the community he has chosen to represent as a broadcaster. The dominant element in the field is the general body of the listening public. Their interests and that of the broadcaster should be mutual, for without the one the other could not exist. The latter should make a reasonable attempt to meet the needs and interests of his audience on an equitable basis. Half truths and false statements cannot and should not be knowingly made.<sup>38</sup>

The Radio Broadcasters' Creed, as contained in NAB Code, is to observe the properties and customs of civilized society; respect the rights and sensitivities of all people; honor the sanctity of marriage and the home; protect and uphold the dignity and brotherhood of all men. In the Code, the program standards for news, public issues and community responsibility are: the news source should be selected with professional care; the reporting should be factual and objective; good taste should prevail in the selection and handling of news.

Broadcasters should be diligent in their supervision of content, format and presentation of news broadcasts; in the coverage of news itself and public events. The broadcaster has the right to exercise his judgment consonant with the accepted standards of ethical journalism and especially the requirements of decency and decorum. A broadcaster and his staff occupy a position of responsibility in the community and should conscientiously endeavor to be acquainted with its needs and characteristics in order to serve the

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid. 18 U.S. C. 1464 and FCC vs. WOKO, Inc., 329 U.S., 223 (1946).

welfare of the citizens. In the general norm, the Code asks the broadcaster that, because of the intimacy and confidence placed in radio, he should be vigilant in protecting the audience from deceptive program tactics. If a special sound effect is used to introduce the news, that characteristic sound should not be used in any other program.

Today, our society needs first a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning, and second, a way of reaching as many listeners as possible by the currents of information, thought and feeling which radio news can supply. So the reporter out on beat must be careful and competent. He must estimate correctly which sources are most authoritative. He must prefer first-hand information to hearsay. He must know what questions to ask, what things to observe and which items to report. Fact and opinion must be identified and modern conditions require greater effort than ever to make the distinction between these two.<sup>39</sup>

For example, a contemporary station, which aims basically at the eighteen to twenty-four age group, is automatically getting to the parents of the youth. Because such a station relates so much to the youth, their news programs should be realistic reporting of the events and forces that militate against the attainment of social goals as well as those which work for them. The theme of reporting should clarify the ideals towards which our youth should strive. To advocate violence or praise it would be wrong. If violence or

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid. "Requirements for a Free and Responsible Press." p. 344.

disruption have to be reported, it should be done fairly and objectively. Stories related to college life, items of particular interest to students and parents of students should be foremost. Knowing that students want snappy and concise information, a news program lasting not more than five minutes would suffice.

In general, the motto should be to disseminate items and ideas concerning the vital public issues of the day in order to develop an informed public opinion conducive to a democratic society. It is the right of the listeners to be informed. Unquestionably the standard of public interest, convenience and necessity, as applied to radio, must be interpreted in the light of what it is capable of doing to the public and to society.<sup>40</sup>

It is generally accepted that three-fourths of the people in the United States switch on radios for news and I guess they go to the station that fulfills their need for information the best. It is, therefore, imperative for a contemporary station to have news related to youth, but talking down to them should be avoided lest it loses the adults, who listen also to see what music and news is getting to their youth. A happy medium should be the policy.

Finally, here are some remarks on editorials. The viewers have a right to them since the primary and ultimate concern of broadcasting is with tastes, interests and holding the attention of the audience. In keeping with NAB rules, a station should keep its audience reminded of the responsibilities which the citizen has towards society.<sup>41</sup> It's the common good that is at stake. But the audience

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid. A.P. vs. United States, 326 U.S., 1, 20.

<sup>41</sup>NAB Code No. 1. "General Program Standards."

is composed of individuals, each of whom views television as an individual and each is affected, at least to some degree, by his visions of society. They should be influenced towards a behavior and a way of thinking that will enhance the common good, knowing that human conduct is the result of a complex psychological process.

There's an interplay of man's intellect and will and, if the good is proposed frequently enough, then a keen desire for it in the agent will be created. Values of a high calibre, if presented correctly, will become personal convictions and a sense of one's responsibility to one's fellow-man should eventually ensue. A free society is an informed one and the responsible expression of opinion, as well as the accurate presentation of facts contributes to public understanding of vital issues.

It is good to analyze or editorialize on the mistakes of others and see how they went wrong--at international, national and local levels--and perhaps indicate the weaknesses in their standards of true values. From there we should be able to solve our own personal and social shortcomings. It's good to look at life as it really is and the workings of human nature; for example, to philosophize on the problem of suffering and other vicissitudes of life. Problems concerning the home, the schools, the Churches, the State, the F.C.C. and so forth should receive attempted solutions. Also what concerns social reform and anything that will help us understand ourselves or to plot a better course for the future, should be dealt with. The goal of a station should be to become involved, to an unprecedented degree, in everything that goes on because it wants to pervade the lives of its audience and help them become aware of



everything that surrounds their living a true and full life.

## CHAPTER IV

### PORNOGRAPHY

#### A. THE PROBLEM

##### (1) The young

In a fashionable Los Angeles suburb two teenage boys were invited by an adult male to his home, where the youths were served alcoholic beverages and were supplied with lewd magazines. Acts of sexual perversion followed. Again in Arizona, the boy who shot and killed patrons in a beauty salon in 1966, admitted that he was incited to commit murder by exposure to obscene literature. Where did the magazines originate? Who knows! But they are so easy to come by in any city or town or even village on a news-stand or in a book-store, in almost any part of the civilized world. Even at this moment it is possible for tens of thousands of vulnerable adolescents to be reading a pornographic book or magazine. For the most part, I'm sure, they are normal people, but extremely curious about sex.

Young adolescents are one of the prime targets of the pornographers. Raymond Gauer, National Executive Secretary of the Citizens for Decent Literature, in an interview declared, "I can't imagine a young person leading a normal sex life after being addicted to pornography. To resist the temptation to read pornography is almost impossible because of young people's natural curiosity about

sex."<sup>1</sup> Psychologically this is true and the trouble is that human nature does not change. Neither will the sale of pornographic material to adolescents, in particular, change its present flow. The peddlers will continue to push forward while there is a demand for their goods and products. They know the demand is there and there is scarcely a law in sight that they cannot easily side-step, although a small fraction of them have been brought before the courts.

It is a profoundly depressing thought to realize that pornography may become socially acceptable, and more depressing still to think of what effect it must surely have on our youth. If the fibre of a nation is its youth and if morals are the bulwark on which the greatness of a nation is built, then I fear greatly for the nation that allows the corruption of its youth. When one reads the accounts of the fall of great civilizations of the past, the thought occurs that surely the people must have been aware of the decline of their society and, if they were, why didn't they do something about it? But the hard reality is that, as civilizations crumbled, people failed to realize what was happening until it was too late.

## (2) Society

We have to admit that man is not alone in the world, but lives in company with others like himself. Many living beings thrive in groups, clusters, or colonies. But society is considered to be uniquely human and, therefore, must consist in something more than

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Louise Shanahan. "Sideglances: Opinion and Comment."  
Liguorian. (July, 1968). p. 28.

mere togetherness. Man abhors solitude and craves companionship. He spontaneously seeks others, not just to be with them, but to enjoy their company. God has given him the gift of language to communicate with his fellows, to discuss projects of common interest. It can be said that, unless man were to live a social life, the faculty of speech would hardly be given to him for any other purpose. Through this gift of speech, man, with the help of his fellow humans, can grow intellectually and morally.

We know that society is made up of individuals. These individuals must be united in a stable and enduring manner. They must work together for the attainment of an end which, in general, is the common good of all. This common good is what they hope to gain by their co-operative effort. Their binding together as members of a group and, in this case, society, becomes stronger as their co-operation increases. The opposite is also true. Whatever disunites the members has an adverse effect on society in general.

If pornography upsets some members of society--and I hold it does because it sets out to nurture, stimulate and exploit the basest human instincts by stripping man of his human dignity and exposes him to situations of animal depravity--then society as such is the loser. The more members affected, the greater the wound on society. The wound is greatly aggravated if irreparable harm is caused to the youth or adolescents and becomes cancerous when the young are the victims.

### (3) Unrestricted in Denmark?

On June 9, 1967, the Parliament in Denmark approved, by 139

votes to 13, a bill that removed all restrictions on the publication or sale of pornographic literature. Two years later all remaining restrictions on the sale of pornographic pictures and films were removed--for adults. Thus Denmark became the first country in the western world to legalize the production and sale of hard-core pornography of all kinds. But it is noteworthy, and perhaps because the Minister of Justice is a theologian, that the law is quite explicit. No hard-core pornography may be sold under any circumstance to persons under sixteen. Unsolicited pornography may not be mailed to anyone, nor may it be exported to countries where it is illegal. In order to protect the freedom of persons who do not wish to be exposed to pornography, the law further requires that all pornographic displays be partly covered. It is prohibited to deliver offensive material to homes. Obscene behavior continues to be punishable and can lead to, up to four years imprisonment.

Adolph Schalk recently visited Denmark and he has a number of remarks to make about pornography in that country:

(a) The Danish boat, with about five hundred passengers aboard, had not a single filthy picture displayed. From the ferry all the way into Copenhagen, nowhere did he see a single pornographic shop, girlie show or display. The comment from the family he stayed with was, that they would not give a cent for pornographic thrash. In the downtown area, the fun at Tivoli Amusement Park, he said, was good and clean.

(b) He found a pornographic district tucked away in a dingy slum area, which was the only concentrated pornographic area (he was told) within the one million population. The private clubs are out of

sight. Even those have no lurid posters, no neon lights. A club, with a sign carrying "live Show," was completely empty of customers and he was informed by a German journalist that it was almost impossible to find girls for these enterprises.<sup>2</sup>

(c) Comments from the Luthern and Catholics indicated that sex bores most people, that the law has protected the youth and there is a puritanical trend, especially among the girls. A Luthern pastor, whose parish includes a pornographic district, said that pornography judged from the Gospel is a great sin. Also, preacher John Facius and his assistant, Johnny Noer of the Apostolic Church, both about thirty-six, agreed that the country had surrendered to a bunch of gangsters. The former used phrases like "satanic worship" and "lusts of the flesh ends with death" and "the time has come when Christianity has to speak openly about love, God's love."<sup>3</sup>

Lest people try to use Denmark as an example for the full and free use of pornographic material in their own country, we have to take into consideration the following. It's a small country, 17,000 square miles (half of Indiana) with a controllable population of four and a half million. The people themselves are a smug, contented, middle-class nation. They are basically a religious people, brought up on true Jansenistic style. Emphasis on sex in the past has been at a minimum and even Dr. Hertoft, attached to a psychiatric hospital in the suburb of Copenhagen complained about the lack

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<sup>2</sup>Adolph Schalk. "Pornography: Not so Rotten in Denmark." U.S. Catholic Jubilee. (Feb. 1971). pp. 31-38.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 38.

of sex education in his country. But perhaps it is because sex, up to a couple of years ago, was not brought to the fore and so people had not separated it from the rest of life.

But in this country, with a population of 250 million (25 million, eighteen to twenty-one years of age), so many people are devising ways and means of sex educating the youth. Perhaps too often the wrong approach is used. In Denmark, the youth apparently have realized that permissiveness can become a new form of slavery, with the budding forth of an over-emphasis on sex. They have come to realize how boring it can be and follow the philosophy of the famous English author, Graham Greene, who says, "There is nothing as monotonous as nudity."

Again, Denmark has the advantage over this country in the formation of its population because it's a single country with a basic culture common to all of its inhabitants unlike the United States, which has become the melting pot for diverse and varied ethnic groups. Dr. Hertoft says, "Over-emphasis on sex fosters its isolation and this, for us, is not necessarily dangerous, but could be a threat in other countries."<sup>4</sup> In the final analysis, the people of Denmark are a middle class people and, since a pornographic magazine can cost three dollars, or a night at a club (live show) as much as thirty-plus dollars, they have better ways of spending their money. In affluent America, the cash would be no problem, as will be seen in the next section.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 37.

(4) Permissiveness grows in the United States

(a) Printed material

Pornography is now one of America's most profitable businesses, with an annual turnover of two and a half billion dollars in books, magazines, photographs and films according to Look Magazine.<sup>5</sup> The same source says that the Obscenity Commission discovered about 880 "exploitation" theatres that accounted for seventy million at the box office in 1970. As the flood of pornography sweeps across the States and other areas, people are asking: Is anything obscene anymore? United States critic, Irving Kristol and a British equivalent, David Holbrook, both suggest that censorship is preferable to the degradation of the young and even the mature adult by a steady assault of filth.<sup>6</sup>

Probably the largest pornographic growth area is in the mail order business. Reams and reams of this material is shuttled through the post. Last year the Post Office in Washington received 232,000 letters complaining about unsolicited obscene material they had received by mail. Along Times Square and Forty-Second Street, shops, sometimes no bigger than a telephone booth, supply pornography for all tastes. They are stacked with books and magazines for lesbians, homosexuals and sex deviates of all sorts. Male and female full-length nude posters dominate shop windows.

In face of competition from naked actors on Broadway and

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<sup>5</sup>Gerald Astor. "No Recession in the Skin Trade." Look. (June 29, 1971). p. 25.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 33.



increasing permissiveness in ordinary films, the pornographic cinemas have to go a step further to hold customers and their bill-boards become increasingly more lewd.

Forty-Second Street in New York, that was once the grandest lady of the theatre, is now a center for pornography, perversion and prostitution, and the worst bargain on the street represents a pillar of the neighborhood's economy--pornographic magazines of sexually explicit pictures for three dollars and up.<sup>7</sup>

The author goes on to say that these high-priced peep-shows, adult movies and strip-joints are fed by a clientele that includes hustlers, briefcase-carrying businessmen and tourists, and that the street is riding a sex boom strong enough to pay the rent on some of the city's most expensive real estate.

In the office of a New York police lieutenant hangs a wall map of the city, studded with colored pins of the sort that military commanders once used to chart the encampments of an army on the march.<sup>8</sup> Apparently, the pins are becoming more numerous, indicating the onward march of the pornographic trade. Unfortunately the same can be said about its progress in almost every state of the Union, as commercialized prurience has turned into a nationwide industry. Anatomical poses that used to keep a magazine tucked carefully away under the counter are now displayed openly on the shelves. Policemen, who used to crack down on at least the grosser bits of pornography, now find their way blocked by awkward court detours and vague interpretations of laws that were not precise to begin with,

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<sup>7</sup>"American Scene." Time. (Oct. 19, 1970). p. 21.

<sup>8</sup>"Pornography Goes Public." Newsweek. (Dec. 21, 1970). p. 26.

and most noteworthy of all, Americans who used to rise up in puritanical wrath (against pornographic displays) are now taking the pornographic boom with considerable nonchalance.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps the most remarkable innovation of the smut boom is the appearance of what has been generally regarded as hard-core pornography in down-town movie theatres. One of the chief instigators of these is Alex de Renzy, whose philosophy is summed up in his own words. "There were certain things that everyone accepted you did not do and we did them. And it blew everybody's mind. We just kept nicking away, and finally there were no more rules. Now we can do whatever we want."<sup>10</sup>

(b) The movies

John Neary, in *Life*, writes, "Across the country a torrent of sexuality stirs up a growing concern as pornography goes public and car-borne movie goers jam a San Francisco drive-in to see the high-budget sex films."<sup>11</sup> Backed by opportunistic businessmen and sometimes by money from organized crime, these financiers keep a watchful eye on the shifting tastes of their customers.

According to the 1970 report of the NCOMP (National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures), movies hit rock bottom in offensiveness and public disgust. The report says that there was not a single X-rated (prohibiting youngsters under seventeen years of age from attending) movie among the top ten. The agency reviewed a

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. p. 27.

<sup>11</sup>John Neary. "Pornography Goes Public." Life. (Aug. 28, 1970), p. 18.

total of 332 movies and only 32 were rated A-1 (suitable for family entertainment). Although this latter figure was six more than the 1969 figure, there was a higher number of objectionable films, especially in the C (Condemned) category, where an all time high of 59 were listed, compared to 40 a year before. The newsletter noted a substantial decrease in the numbers of movies suitable for adolescents--23 in 1970, compared to 47 in 1969. Although 37 were considered superior motion picture fare, few were suitable for children. So there's a basis for moral concern among many about the direction that current film-making has taken and this is not simply a question of a quantitative comparison with the past, but the degree of offensiveness in the objectionable fare, the report concluded.<sup>12</sup>

Jack Valenti, who is presently head of the Motion Picture Association of America, says that sex films and "sexploitation" on the metropolitan markets are the prices America pays for democratic society, and that the recent prevalence of "nudie" films is a result of the new permissiveness in our society at large. He says we are permitting things today that we never permitted before. His concern for youth and children is shown by his praise for the film rating system, which he claims is a device to help protect children from the ruthlessness of sex exploiters. He probably regrets the disappearance of the great Hollywood empire that ruled American

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<sup>12</sup>NCOMP Film Newsletter. (Jan. 15, 1971).

tastes for over half a century.<sup>13</sup>

But out of the ruins are coming more fearful tastes and a philosophy of life that nurtures, for the most part, all that is ungainly and unbecoming in human behavior. A movie critic says that today's movies are being shaped by a nexus of forces that no one clearly understands.<sup>14</sup> They pander to a young audience and 62 per cent of today's movie goers are between twelve and thirty. Most people, though, look at those movies, with their themes of dissent, alienation, their anything goes sexuality, as the false idols of a decadent time. Their young directors would seem to question the prevailing values of American life and the standards of true morality as "the new films focus on Times Square and Queens Boulevard, in the basements, bowling alleys and backyards of 'Middle America.'"<sup>15</sup>

James Nicholson, President of American International Pictures, said recently that "The motion picture industry is in the middle of a permissive sex phase never imagined three years ago, and if producers and exhibitors pursue this pornographic trend further, there will be disastrous results."<sup>16</sup> The President of the United States has this to say,

Smut should not be simply contained at its present level;

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>"The New Movie." *Newsweek*. (Dec. 7, 1970). p. 62.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. p. 62.

<sup>16</sup>Joseph Bell. "Danger: Smut." Good Housekeeping. (April, 1971). p. 182.

it should be outlawed in every State in the Union. I am well aware of the importance of protecting freedom of expression. But pornography is to freedom of expression what anarchy is to liberty. As free men willingly restrain a measure of their freedom to prevent anarchy, so must we draw the line against pornography to protect freedom of expression. My concern is as much a moral as a legal issue. Don't you think that a President should set a moral tone for a Nation?"<sup>17</sup>

In so many present-day movies the impression given is that when the script-writer comes to a dead-end, the only logical thing to do is to toss in a nude scene. It does not seem to matter what the "hero" that is presently emerging does. For this so-called hero is most often outside of society, alienated from the mainstream of true American values and searching for an identity. He does not necessarily have to triumph--survival is sufficient. The philosophy is summed up in the words of a young actor-director who says: "I want to make movies about a guy who is outside society, who is flawed and a loner, the kind of guy who appears to be a hero but isn't. The flawed hero is the movie I'm living with."<sup>18</sup>

The new trend is to promote the notion that freedom from all authority is an unqualified good; that disobeying, in toto, the moral code of conduct is a way of telling the older generation that they are a crowd of prudes and are corrupt in many other ways, anyhow. So with grass, bikes, music and nudity, the present-day young directors consider themselves "doing their thing." But "doing one's thing," for me, is first of all to be obedient to lawful authority and this

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid. p. 186.

<sup>18</sup>"Movies." Newsweek. (Dec. 7, 1970).p. 71.

should begin at home. Movies have in them the power to create this philosophy of life, which is essential to living decently and in a peaceful and trusting society. Hopefully Jack Nicholson, an up and coming director, will do just that. He sees the problem of moral decay and wants to attack the values abroad today and make movies that will not pander to the "mindlessness of the drug culture nor the self-aggrandizement of the hip culture," as he himself says.<sup>19</sup>

So values in general have been attacked in most modern movies. In McCall's magazine we read that it has become popular (on the screen) to discount every virtue our grandfathers stood for. Thus, the article states: "It's good-bye to kindness, generosity, honor, love, truthfulness and many other qualities--in their place a pantheon dedicated to the nasty, the harsh, the unfeeling and the dishonest element in ourselves has been erected."<sup>20</sup> Truly many characters in last year's (1970) leading movies seem to be devoid of any of those qualities that make one a true human being. Gone are the needs for objective morality. Indeed it can be said that gone is the standard of morality itself, and with these the natural virtues of uprightness, truth, honesty and justice. For example, Easy Rider suggests that the Spirit of America is corrupt; Alice's Restaurant treats the death of one family, the possibility (and final rejection) of another kind of family; They Shoot Horses Don't They insists on the meaninglessness of human life, the wise necessity of death and the

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<sup>19</sup>"The New Hero." Newsweek. (Dec. 7, 1970). p. 70.

<sup>20</sup>"Sight and Sound." McCall's. (Oct. 1970). p. 16.

rejection of love, which is portrayed as an illusion.

Someone may say these are only movies and people watch for the sake of entertainment. But when normal subjects like love and marriage, life and death are treated seriously in a derogatory fashion, then the whole foundation of a society with its morals and its culture is being undermined. Bob and Carol, Ted and Alice can perhaps be faulted more than some of the others. It exalts the experience of love without much thought to its consequences. It glorified people in their thirties, who are bringing up children of their own, with the husbands talking sneakily of how to pick up a woman and the women playing at the game of adultery. Joyce C. Oates, in her article "Love on Film" asks, "Love itself is being questioned and it has always been in the Western world, romantic, emotionally adolescent, idealistic, committed to the cult of youth and youthfulness--is it now about to enter a new phase, a final convulsion of the spirit?"<sup>21</sup>

(c) The theatre

"Must smut smother the stage?" asks David Merrick, who, for fifteen years, has been a Broadway producer with forty hits to his credit.<sup>22</sup> He says that not only nudity has stunned the audience, but scenes so thunderingly crude and vulgar, that audiences were stunned with disbelief. I suppose it can be said that the hush of expectancy

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<sup>21</sup>Joyce Oates. "Love on Film." Ibid. p. 138.

<sup>22</sup>David Merrick. "Must Smut Smother the Stage." Reader's Digest. (Mar. 1970). p. 103.

one was accustomed to experience, awaiting the raising of the curtain as the lights go down, has become a hush of shock for many. They can hardly believe that what was meant to illuminate life has become a pallid substitute for the imagination, style and wit that was once the proud boast of the theatre. Instead, nudity and explicit sexual acts drowse people into a horror and a stupor that demeans human life.

Hard-core pornography is nothing new, but rarely in modern history has this kind of material paraded as legitimate theatre, says Merrick, as stages full of zombies mime sexual acts without reference to love or affection or joy. The influence of all this on live audiences is perhaps debatable, but the fact is that the theatre which, from the days of Shakespeare, was regarded as wide in its influence on culture, on language and on society in general. An evening at the theatre was looked forward to with relish and became a gathering place for those who appreciated liberal education, enjoyed hearing their spoken language enunciated with professional perfection and watched the unfolding of intricate plots. Theatre did affect the texture of society, influenced morals and even the political attitudes of a nation.

They probably still affect morals, or at least they have become a part of the present-day decadence in morals. Not since the days of the Roman Empire, when officers and nobility were entertained by hired actors performing scenes of sodomy, rape and incest, has the theatre gone so low as it is presently. "The pursuit of happiness through sex is our principal theme," says Ken Tynan, the



originator of Oh Calcutta, who wants to justify the use of so-called artistic means to produce erotic pleasure.<sup>23</sup> But is there an explanation? Merrick says that pornography moves into a vacuum. Apparently over the past few years there has been a paucity of good playwrights. Those with the gift are running to the security of the movies and television.

(5) The Magna Charta for pornography

This is what Charles Keating calls the report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. I have already referred to the result partly based on the argument that legalizing it caused no great alarm in Denmark, but as I pointed out--there's scarcely any basis for analogy between the controllability in a small country like Denmark and this vast land of America. Commenting on the report, Representative J. Hunt of New Jersey noted angrily that the clear intent of Congress, in creating the Commission, was to find a way to control pornography and not condone it. The President's denunciation is quite clear and in part this is what he says,

I have evaluated the report and categorically reject its morally bankrupt conclusions and major recommendations. So long as I am in the White House, there will be no relaxation of the national effort to control and eliminate smut from our national life.<sup>24</sup>

The United States Senate, which set up the Commission three years ago, passed (by sixty to five) a resolution rejecting the Commission's study and its call for repeal of laws restricting sale of

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid. p. 104

<sup>24</sup>Bell. "Danger: Smut." Good Housekeeping. p. 182.

pornographic materials to consenting adults. Also the House Postal Operations Sub-committee hurriedly set up hearings in which it assembled a half-dozen professional critics of the studies conducted by the Commission. While these activities continue, pornography continues to grow. For example, one pornographic newspaper in New York, which started on a meager investment of 175 dollars two years ago, now has a circulation of over a hundred thousand. From scratch, in two years about two hundred pornographic book stores in California do an annual business of twenty million dollars.<sup>25</sup> The safeguards are down and it's ironic that the greatest growth took place during the inquiry. Doubtless the smut peddlers sensed they had only a short time to "live," so they acted quickly, incisively and ruthlessly to make a fast buck while the going was good, convinced (I believe) that the findings of the Commission would surely originate laws against them. Unhappily, however, even the legal protections that guarded the public before have now become fogged and ultimately ignored to such an extent that one can ask the question--is nothing obscene anymore?

This is the question asked by Marya Mannes, who gives the reply:

In a majority of new films, naked sex scenes are staples, and in many of them, as in the theatre, elements of sado-masochism are present; as for the print, anyone--child or adult--can buy at any big city newstand not only the slick publications offering male and female bodies in lavish display, but a growing number of underground papers, equally lavish with four-letter words, paid

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid. (For both examples).



personal solicitations for every category of sexual partnership, group or single, devices for increased sexual prowess and articles on new 'cultural' developments.<sup>26</sup>

She continues in her article to say that we have now reached a state in our society when anything goes, where all is permitted and where no limits are placed on the appetites of the individual, on the gratification of his desires and fantasies. She says that not making a law against pornography is one thing but to accept the widespread and growing abuse of the gift of free speech by commercial interests and cultural arbiters who use it--in the name of art and truth--to debase and vulgarize sex, language and those basic instincts towards worth and beauty, is another thing.

The other thing that she talks about is the use of perversion to arouse response by a sensual awareness which bludgeons sensibility and obliterates taste. To knock out sensibility is to undermine a civilized human being and get him to the point where he cannot distinguish between honest lust and calculated lewdness, between naked truth and simple exhibitionism, between obscenity as an intrinsic element in one individual's speech or as a substitute for language. An apt clipping in the Manchester Guardian of a few years ago, concerning pornography, reads:

The imagination cannot be made a private preserve of the arts and entertainment industry, exempt from moral scrutiny, because moral consequences--of the most crudely moral kind--do follow from imaginative acts. We all know introspectively that to play, in fantasy, in the imagination,

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<sup>26</sup>Marya Mannes. "Is Anything Obscene Anymore?" McCall's. (Sept. 1969). pp. 64 and 150.

with our own tendencies to violence and perversity, is to make those tendencies more inflamed, more sensitive, more active.<sup>27</sup>

The lack of sensibility that we have been talking about seems to have affected most of the Pornographic Commission and even some of those interviewed--many of whom I'm sure did not want to admit being affected against their better judgment by today's portrayal of lewdness. Charles Keating, a member of the Commission and a lawyer, who in the prosecution of numerous obscenity cases has proved himself friend of the court, indicates in an article<sup>28</sup> that incompetence and bias among some of the members are indicated in his four-point summary:

(a) The Commission conducted meaningless sex experiments of questionable ethical nature in that fourteen tests were conducted to determine individuals' sexual response to various types of erotic material. He says that the obvious--human beings are aroused by erotic material--was not necessary and asked why the Commission failed to investigate adequately the relationship between obscenity and crime.

(b) The Commission held no meaningful public hearings and by and large reported only scientific "facts" that supported its preconceived notions. He says that, due to public pressure, public hearings were held only in two cities, namely Washington and Los Angeles, during the waning days, with not enough time left for concerned citizens to testify. The Commission reported that only two

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<sup>27</sup>Literary Critic. Manchester Guardian. Quoted by Marya Mannes. Ibid. p. 150.

<sup>28</sup>Charles Keating. "Report That Shocked the Nation." Reader's Digest. (Jan. 1971). pp. 37-41.

per cent of the United States' public viewed pornography as a serious national problem and their conclusion that a "majority of American adults believe that they should be allowed to read or see any sexual material they wish," to me is a very biased conclusion, considering their questionnaire included "war," racial conflict," and "law and order." In contrast, a 1969 Harris Poll showed 76 per cent of Americans want pornography outlawed and a Gallup Poll found that 85 per cent favor tougher anti-smut laws.<sup>29</sup>

(c) The commission unduly rushed into its final report, although it took two years, at a cost of two million dollars with twenty-two staff members, plus some eighty-two scientific contractors, to provide seventy reports to four panels drawn from eighteen Commissioners. But not all the reports met the deadline to be used as a basis for panel reports, and the full Commission, which depended on the four panels' reports, went ahead making decisions before these panels were able to submit their final reports.

(d) Although proving cause-and-effect relationships in sociological matters is difficult, yet, says Keating, "Why, since the current flood of erotica began in early 1960's, have sex crimes multiplied?" He cites a reported rape increase of 116 per cent; arrests for rape went up 56.6 per cent; and arrests for prostitution and commercialized vice shot up 60 per cent. For Keating, these figures at least appear to reflect some "significant" relationship between crime and pornography. These figures perhaps could

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid. p. 39.

not have been considered by the Commission unless they also considered (and which they did not) a report from 365 men, including prisoners, college students and clerical seminarians, which concluded with "The data clearly suggests that exposure to considerable pornography at early ages (under 14) plays a role in the development of sexually deviant life style."<sup>30</sup>

Overall it can be seen that the findings are clearly questionable and the Commission blatantly failed to realize the manner in which pornography crushes the fragile quality of life. Reducing sex to its animalistic level, completely absent from that love and commitment that raise it to the beautiful human action it can be, is to brutalize society and the individuals within it. Who are being brutalized? Very often those already under the lash and the young. Take for example the study of the stripper by James Skipper and Charles McCaghy, both sociologists at the University of Cleveland. They interviewed seventy-five of these ladies and made the following conclusion:

Almost all were first-born, who apparently received little affection from their parents, especially from the father, who generally was absent from the home by the time the girls were rapidly developing into objects of sexual attraction. Because they reached puberty at an early age, they used and displayed their bodies as a means of gaining attention and recognition, which was lacking at home.<sup>31</sup>

The brutalizing on a much wider plane continues as children turn against parents and go to where they can find the enjoyment

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid. p. 40.

<sup>31</sup>Michael Maidenbergl. "Science Eyes Stripper." Detroit Free Press. (Oct. 3, 1970). p. 12-B.

without restraint in a society opened up by every variety of pornographic material and where women are reduced to objects of arousal without any relationship to love. "To deny the need for control is literally to deny one's senses." argues Keating, "because we are at a time when the spread of pornography has reached epidemic proportions in our country and when the moral fiber of our nation seems to be rapidly unravelling."<sup>32</sup> If there's one thing our permissive society does not need, it's the abandonment of what little restraint we have left. Any concerned parent can see that pornography has a corroding effect on society, on public morality, on respect for human worth, on attitudes towards family and the meaning of love. Little wonder that Evangelist Billy Graham called the Commission report "one of the worst and most diabolical ever made by a Presidential Commission."

## B. THE PRECEPT

### (1) A case for ethics

As a science, ethics discovers, explains and demonstrates the rules of right conduct.<sup>33</sup> Generally speaking, it is directed at enabling a person to act and live rightly and indicates rules and modes for our every act. As an art, it applies rules to the conduct of an individual man and results in the good life actually

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<sup>32</sup>Charles Keating. "Declaration of Moral Bankruptcy." U. S. News and World Report. (Oct. 12, 1970). p. 64.

<sup>33</sup>Austin Fagothey. Right and Reason. p. 25.



lived; a good life is indeed a work of art.<sup>34</sup> By definition, it is the practical science of the rightness or wrongness of human conduct as known by natural reason.<sup>35</sup>

The conclusions reached by our natural reason emanate both from our conscience and our experience. To begin with, one has to have a definite view of the universe and of man as a human being before one can deduce sound moral principles. Ethics develops within us a facility to realize the implications of these moral principles and points out their application to the various spheres of human conduct. So really ethics begin for us once we start considering or speculating on the Good Life. This was the Greek theory and their idea of ethics came from their word for custom--any custom involving the idea of right and wrong (morals). Following natural reason one gets a feeling for what ought or ought not to be.

Because it involves feeling, it is difficult at times to apply it or argue on its behalf. Take, for example, the recent survey carried out by the Pornographic Commission. People were hesitant to answer some of the questions in the interviews and others just could not admit that pornographic material affected them because, I guess, they had no moral principles to guide them in their assessments. Individual tastes and feelings differ and generally people do not want to indicate their shortcomings. So the result was, to say the least, confusing. Man's constant quest for good was

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. p. 28.

overlooked. The studies were not done on an ethical basis. Human beings act for an end. For Aristotle, end is that for the sake of which a thing is done and his definition for good is that at which all things aim.<sup>36</sup> An end would not be sought unless it were good for the seeker. No activity is possible except for the attainment of some end, for the sake of some good.

St. Thomas puts it this way: An agent does not move except out of intention for an end. For if the agent were not determinate to some particular effect, it would not do one thing rather than another. Consequently, in order that it produce a determinate effect, it must of necessity be determined to some certain one, which has the nature of an end.<sup>37</sup>

Now an ethical question arises: If all things seek an end which is good, how can human conduct go wrong? When we speak of good in a being, it only means that every being, by the very fact that it is a being, has some goodness about it and is good for something.<sup>38</sup> But from the fact that every being is good for something, it does not follow that every being is good for everything. What is good for one thing may not be good for another and what is good for a thing under these circumstances or from this aspect may not be good for the same thing under different conditions or from another standpoint. Judging human conduct from an ethical viewpoint, it is often seen as being on a warped line. An example

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<sup>36</sup>Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. Bk. 1, Ch. 1, 1094, a. 3.

<sup>37</sup>St. Thomas. Summa Theologica. 1-11, q. 1, a. 2.

<sup>38</sup>Austin Fagothey. Right and Reason. p. 33.

should clarify what I mean. The peddler sells a piece of pornographic material to a youth. The act of selling is but the act of human conduct, is non-ethical and can also be immoral. It's immoral if the content becomes an occasion of sin for the youth and an occasion of sin is one where the average person would normally succumb to the enticement of what's portrayed.

Because not every being is good for everything, it is up to man's judgment to determine what things are good for him. Human judgments are open to error and, therefore, he may mistake the apparent good for the true good. Unless a thing appears to be good we could not seek it at all for it could make no appeal to our appetites. Pornography, for example, can appear good to us, but generally speaking (and perhaps for the greater percentage of mankind), it is a lesser good, making the attainment of some greater good impossible. Therefore it cannot be classified as the true good--which must always be the moral good. The lesser good is the satisfaction and enjoyment it gives without considering whether it will be beneficial to the whole being or not. It delights us now and may be harmless, but offers us no guarantee that it may not hurt us eventually and make us unfit for the greater good.

We should seek the greater good because it contributes towards the perfection of our being as a whole. This is the kind of good that essentially befits man and makes him a better person in society and a benefit to society too. This is man at his best--upright, honorable, noble and righteous. We recognize the good man by his good conduct.

Lest we forget the ultimate end, let me say that all human

conduct is for a last end and highest good. We should try to make the last end our first desire. Some philosophers deny the existence of a last end and opportunists live haphazardly without bothering about a last end, but such conduct is irrational.<sup>39</sup> In the last analysis, human conduct derives its moral goodness from the last end. A man is morally good if he tends towards his last end and conduct is good if it leads man to his last end.

## (2) The state and its obligations

Let us consider first the meaning of state.

### (a) The state

According to Plato, the state arose out of the needs of mankind; no one is self-sufficing, all of us have many wants. He says we have many wants and many persons are needed to supply them and when partners and helpers are gathered together in one habitation, this body of inhabitants is termed a state.<sup>40</sup>

Aristotle derived the state from the family. In the first place, he says there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other, namely male and female, that the race may continue; and of natural ruler and subject, that both may be preserved. If earlier forms of society are natural, so is the state for it is the end for them. It is characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust and the like, and the

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid. p. 42.

<sup>40</sup>Plato. Republic. Bk. II, No. 369.

association of living beings, who have their senses, makes a family and a state. Man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, is the worst of all.<sup>41</sup>

It can be seen from the above that the family is demanded by the natural law and the state is a natural outgrowth of the family and becomes necessary for human living to enable the various families to live together. In short, the state is there for the common good of all. Since man is not thoroughly upright in nature but inclined to both good and evil, some institution, like the state, had to come into being. This institution was intended to implement the principles of the natural law which always existed. The presence of a law, such as the natural law, implied restrictions on the freedom and independence of the individual person. Likewise, there are restrictions on the state. Its right to do what it pleases is restricted by the natural law, by the natural right of mankind and by the existence of other states.

The state is for man and it's made up of individual members. The building blocks of the state are the members, the individual human beings of whom the state is composed, says Fagothey.<sup>42</sup> He also says man, being utterly dependent on his equals for every kind of service and abounding in needs and wants--both physical and intellectual, that only his fellow man can supply--during his earthly life, becomes a part of a larger whole whose common temporal good is greater than the individual temporal good of each member

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<sup>41</sup>Aristotle. Politics. Bk. I, Ch.2, 1252, a. 24 to 1253, a.39.

<sup>42</sup>Fagothey. P. 393.

taken separately. In this case the common good takes precedence over private comfort and security.<sup>43</sup>

This common good refers to both spiritual and temporal well-being. The state, bound by the natural law, should, therefore, provide a favorable environment in which individuals and families can properly fulfill their functions in both spheres. Syllogistically, the argument that the state is bound by the natural law is as follows: If the family is demanded by the natural law and if the state is a natural outgrowth of the family, then the state is demanded by the natural law. But the two suppositions have already been proved from the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Therefore: (1) The state is demanded by natural law. (2) If demanded by natural law, it also comes under the natural law.

(b) Obligations of the state

(1) To promote man's temporal welfare and also show an interest in man's last end.--Both of these requirements are fulfilled by providing the earthly conditions in which man may be free to work out his ultimate destiny.

(2) Positively assist private initiative for the common good.--This gives a proper balance between the claims of the individual and the state. It implies only the amount of interference necessary. It not only protects but positively promotes all enterprises undertaken for the common good. It carefully respects the rights of the individual and of the family, does not try to usurp their duties and helps them rather by offering opportunities than by regimenting their

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid. p. 392.

behavior.<sup>44</sup>

(3) Not to hesitate in correcting abuses by legislation, if necessary, when it becomes apparent that private influences cannot cope with them.--The abuses can be against the state itself, against justice, or against morals--the breaking down of which might jeopardize the whole structure of a people.

(4) If the natural law needs to be supplemented by a positive law, then the state should legislate.--For example, in every community there are some with defective or perverted moral education. Against such individuals society must be protected by a code of laws drawn up by the more responsible members of society and expressly stating what right reason demands in accordance with the natural law. It is not sufficient that these demands be merely explained by political and spiritual leaders, but they must be enforced with authority and even sometimes penalties, such as fines and imprisonment. The reason for this is that the natural law is there and it would be sufficient were it not for our weak human nature. Besides there are those who disbelieve in a hereafter and they see no positive sanctions for violating the natural law and often deny its existence. But such people cannot be allowed to destroy society and hence society, through the state, has to have protection in a just criminal code.

(5) To protect right of free speech.--Free speech can either be the repetition of what one has heard or the manifestation of one's own thoughts. By natural law man has the right to say what he thinks, but by the same token he has no right to say things that are untrue, or harmful to the public or injurious to another person. The state

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. pp. 406-407.

has the right to limit freedom of speech, including that of the media. The media is, in actual fact, an extension of the right of free speech, arising out of its obligation to protect its citizens from evils, which could be a proximate danger to the family and/or society. Among these are organized violent protests of any kind, libel, and the subject which concerns us here, namely obscenity.

True freedom of speech or an unrestricted right of free speech pre-supposes a high standard of morals being practised within a community of people. If a decline in these morals is obvious and society is in danger of an upheaval, then the root cause of the problem must be sought and brought under control. If an era of permissiveness is being propagated through the wide-spread sale of pornographic material and a major exposure to it is being aided by certain media, then the state has a right and obligation to legislate against these media. Of course the state has the added obligation of discovering the sources of supply and blocking them.

There are those who will argue that, from the moral aspect, it's not so easy to find authorities who openly say that individual acts can violate any objective norms of morality. Therefore, this is used as a tacit permission by many members of the public to go ahead and do as they please. Their motto is "Thou shalt not kill, ordinarily" or "Thou shalt not commit adultery, ordinarily." This is situation ethics at its worst, which, in effect, declares that everything and anything is right or wrong according to the situation.

In following such a theory and propounding it, the mass media is going beyond the bounds of free speech. To declare, even by



inference, that there are no absolutes in moral principles is to say that only the individual and his concrete acts matter, and denies the existence or even the concept of what society should be. Society does exist and is necessary (formerly proved), of which each of us is a part. As members of this society we have to abide by the abstract principles as contained in the laws promulgated for the good of society.

Freedom to create in all fields of life has become broader and broader and this freedom should be precious to all of us, writes Ralph Graves. He continues with the following remarks:

The freedom to reject is important too; vulgarity and freedom are not synonymous; obscenity and freedom are not synonymous; freedom gives us the opportunity to do and be many things, but we should make an effort to draw the line-- not in censorship but in disgust. <sup>45</sup>

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### (1) General

We have dealt with the composition of a state and its obligations to society inherent in its very nature, assuming of course that the composition is authentic. It has a right and a duty to make laws and regulations following ethical standards to protect the common good. Concerning our present subject, which is pornography, let's see what the Government and courts have done up to now, and can do, to protect citizens from its influence.

Postal obscenity statutes have been in existence since 1865, but these old laws had no guidelines until court decisions

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<sup>45</sup>Ralph Graves. "Editor's Note." Life. (July 4, 1970). p. 1

made specific ones. At the present time the pornographic mailer must buy a list of people from the Government who have officially objected to receiving pornographic material in the mail, and then the mailer must purge these names from his list. This objection is sometimes made before any piece is received--just as a preventative. This presumably not only stops the first piece from coming through the mail, but also protects the citizen from another device used in getting around the Anti-Pandering Law, which is the use of multiple names and mailing addresses by a single smut peddler. The new Anti-Pandering Law requires pornographers to print "sexually oriented ads" on the outside of the mailing envelopes.

The Anti-Pandering statute, I mentioned above, became law in 1967. Under it, any American resident can go to his local post office and file a prohibitory order against a specific mailer solely on the citizen's judgment that the material is "erotically arousing or sexually provocative." Through 1970, more than 500,000 such orders have been processed.<sup>46</sup> The prohibitory order is sent to the offending mailer and, if he sends another piece to the citizen signing the order, the mailer is subject to Federal injunction. If he violates the injunction, he can be prosecuted for civil or criminal contempt. The law has produced results. Almost nine-tenths of the complainants received no further mailings and recently the number of complainants have fallen off sharply. Although obscenity is undefined in the Anti-Pandering law, the United States Supreme Court in the past over-ruled a lower court decision in California and found

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<sup>46</sup>Bell. "Danger: Smut." p. 178.

the law constitutional so long as the material mailed offers something for sale and virtually all of it does.

The Goldwater Amendment to the Postal Reorganization Act, which became law on February 1, 1971, takes the protection of the public one step further. Under this new statute, a head of the family can prevent the first piece of pornographic mail from coming into the home by filling out a form, stating that neither he nor any member of his family--each of whom must be named--want to receive "sexually oriented ads" from any source. In this case a definition has been given for "sexually oriented" namely "any advertisement that depicts in actual or simulated form or explicitly describes in a predominantly sexual context human genitalia, any act of natural or unnatural intercourse, any act of sadism or masochism or any other subject directly related to the foregoing."<sup>47</sup> Thirty days after this form is filled, any mailer sending the signer such material faces stiff criminal and civil sanctions.

The United States Supreme Court is the ultimate arbiter in matters of pornography. Up to now it can be said that in reversing many decisions in obscene cases, they have gone against the moral judgment of the vast majority of the public, because they have taken the line of least resistance in handing down pro-obscenity rulings. The statement by Judge Chauncey M. Depuy of the 39th Judicial District should be taken seriously by every judge in the land. He said, "It is the habit of the purveyors of this filth continuously to demand scientific evidence proving it is harmful to children or some

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid. p. 178.

important faction of adults. My reply has been that the harm from this filth is obvious and my argument is based on the most commonly accepted principle of learning."

The magazine industry may as well fold up in the trade publications field and elsewhere, if the printed word does not succeed in transmitting both information and points of view. Man tends to become that which he admires and he is led to admire that which is frequently presented to him. To reach the conclusions sought by the pornographers, we have to discard every known principle of education. Anyone wishing to employ common sense will have to admit that pursuit of either reading or visual education, whether in the classroom or in the movie theatre, is a means not only of entertainment but of instruction and of imperceptibly forming points of view.<sup>48</sup>

Surely a line on public indecency can and must be drawn. Mayor Lindsay, of New York, says that district attorneys have no clear, legal definition under which they can act against dirty shows and they just don't know what to call pornography within the framework of existing court decisions.<sup>49</sup> But the solution to the problem is through the law. Prohibiting public displays of sexual acts, whether on paper, screen or stage, can hardly be construed as an attack on the freedom of speech or expression.

We have already discussed Ethics, where we saw that we should seek the greater good because it contributes towards the perfection of our being and it also, of its very essence, makes us better in society. We also saw that the state is intended for the common good, which applies to both spiritual and temporal well-being by providing a favorable environment to individuals and families and

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<sup>48</sup>Louise Shanahan. Liguorian. p. 104. (July, 1968).

<sup>49</sup>Merrick. Reader's Digest. (Mar. 1970). p. 104.

to supplement the natural law, if that is necessary. If the state does not act of its own volition, then the citizens can and should have complaints filed with respect to their rights--here it is a question of upholding moral principles on an ethical basis. United organized effort on the part of individuals must take the place of unorganized mutterings of discontent and disgust, and even, at times, public apathy. The Church, to which parents look for guidance, must come forth with positive statements and policies regarding pornographic literature, films and plays. Letters to Congressmen and Senators can have a great influence on the changing or amending of laws.

Charles Keating puts his recommendations this way:

(a) Action against obscenity at the community level should continue vigorously. We should insist that pornographers be arrested, prosecuted and jailed.

(b) Congress should enact a law that would prevent the United States Supreme Court from overturning an obscenity conviction simply because it does not agree with a determination of a lower court. It is a long-established principle that the Supreme Court's role is to review law; it is not a fact-finding Court. This would free juries of local citizens to make the final determination as to whether a book, magazine or movie is obscene.<sup>50</sup>

Dr. Walter Judd, a Congregationalist missionary, recently holding service at the White House, said that, in the 4,000 years since Moses was handed the Ten Commandments, no sounder foundation for a stable society has evolved and is relevant to the turmoil, ferment, anxiety, conflict and uncertainty experienced by all levels of society. He referred to the "deep questioning" going on in the

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<sup>50</sup>Keating. Reader's Digest. (Jan. 1971). p. 41.

country today, not only in values of life but of the basic institutions--the political, economic, educational, social and religious institutions. Rhetorically, he asked the question, "Is our Judeo-Christian faith and heritage or body of ethics relevant to us, or suited or adequate for such times as these?" He answers by saying that never was there a more urgent need in America's history than now to take our bearings afresh.<sup>51</sup>

Paul VI, speaking on a wider plane described the current situation facing Christianity as probably the fulfillment of Christ's warning, " . . . and because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold." He said that in many countries an oppressive legalism and a peaceful atheism, though radical in thought and custom, attempt to smother Christian thoughts and the institutions inspired by it.<sup>52</sup> He also said that nowadays the newspapers and magazines, the cinema, radio and television are having a deciding influence for good and evil in our daily lives. Particularly with our youth, he said, this influence can seriously affect their morals and their religious beliefs.

I have cited Dr. Judd and Pope Paul to reiterate the need, especially by Churches and churchmen, to be strong in their demands for laws against pornographic material, lest those who wallow in this filth may become filthy themselves--this is intuitive knowledge. It was this intuition that inspired the United States Congress to create a Commission on Obscenity and Pornography for the purpose of

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<sup>51</sup>The Catholic Weekly. (Sept. 25, 1970). p. 4.

<sup>52</sup>The Lamp. "What Christians are Doing." (Mar. 1971). p. 24.

determining legal and constitutional means to protect the country from what the Congress recognized as a threat. Unfortunately, what was intended to provide legislators with a blueprint for coping with a problem, has become a magna charta for the pornographers to flood the country with literature, movies and staging with every variety of filth and perversion.

If lust is an evil, if debauchment of the body is an evil, if prostitution is an evil, if the presence on city streets of lewd bookshops and pornographic movies is a kind of pollution--if these propositions are so, and I maintain, in fact, they are, and that society is being damaged--then society has the right and power to legislate against such evils. Pornography then can be and should be proscribed by law and one may ask to what extent? My answer is that, if the alternative to censorship is out-and-out pornography, I'm afraid I'd have to side with the former without being afraid of being called a prude, a square or a puritan. Anyhow, who would suffer by an absolute ban on obvious filth or would anyone suffer by being deprived of a diet of filth? On the contrary, we'd have a better society with a sense of decency prevailing and those who are being brutalized by a fixation of obscene, perverse images would advance from their degrading and lonely world to a mature sexuality.

Finally, James A. Michener, a distinguished American author, says that he's not opposed to censorship when it comes to circulating obscene material to juveniles because, as he says, "It is wrong and terribly dangerous to put into the hands of young people--who are in the process of establishing guidelines for their behavior--books and pictures, which would pervert or prevent the development





of satisfactory habits."<sup>53</sup> He doubts that the courts are capable of censoring and quotes Justice Hugo Black who says,

My belief is that this Court (Supreme) is about the most inappropriate supreme board of censors that can be found. So far as I know, Judges possess no special expertise providing exceptional competency to set standards and to supervise the private morals of the nation.<sup>54</sup>

But Michener has a three-point program to control the spread of pornography:

(a) The Supreme Court should refuse to review individual works to determine whether or not they are pornographic.

(b) Congress should pass a law empowering the highest Courts of the fifty states, or subsidiary courts nominated by the states, to serve as courts of last appeal as to whether a work is pornographic. The United States Supreme Court would continue, of course, to review the legal proceedings of such courts to ensure protection under the law, but it would no longer be allowed to go behind the lower court's findings of facts.

(c) Each state would thus return to the principle enunciated in the Roth case of "applying contemporary community standards" in judging pornography. Trials would be by a jury of citizens, who would be presumed to know what the standards of their community were. If they turned in illegal verdicts, a higher state court would redress the balance.<sup>55</sup>

In conclusion, let me refer to Arlan Specter, the hard-working District Attorney in Philadelphia, who is convinced that an arrest based on a proper warrant, a trial which observes the fine points of law, a District Attorney well-prepared to present the case, a fair judge and an intelligent jury, can combine to convict the smut peddlers. He says, "I intend to keep fighting these cases. While adults may decide for themselves what to read, the Supreme

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<sup>53</sup>James Michener. "The Weapons We Need to Fight Pornography." Reader's Digest. (Dec. 1968). p. 126.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid. p. 129.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. p. 129.

Court says that juveniles require protection during their tender years. We have followed up on that new ruling by bringing prosecutions.<sup>56</sup>

A document entitled "Statement Concerning Moral Questions," by the English and Welsh Catholic Bishops, has this to say:

There is a danger for those who content themselves to take the civil law as their only rule of conduct and to believe that what is not illegal is, therefore, not wrong. When the law is relaxed or becomes more permissive, a moral vacuum forms in the lives of those who have mistakenly taken the civil law as a guide to life. It is the duty of Christians to fill this vacuum, by their example, and if they hold that, in any particular case, the common good would be served by legislation, they have the right and may have the duty, to work for this by argument and persuasion.<sup>57</sup>

For our consideration at this point, the most important part of the above is the emphasis on the duty of Christians to fill the (moral) vacuum by their good example. This is particularly imperative to parents, who have the added obligation, not only to themselves, but to prevent the young from becoming perverted. They were forewarned by Walter Ong in 1967, when he said, "Individuals are going to have to stiffen their moral principles. They're going to live under a great deal of pressure."<sup>58</sup> So Christians are advised to continue the struggle and not allow moral principles to become so assimilated into secular standards as to have them vanish completely.

To help parents, not only to train their children by example

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid. p. 130.

<sup>57</sup>The Catholic Weekly. (Jan. 15, 1971). p. 4.

<sup>58</sup>Walter Ong. Newsweek. (Nov. 13, 1967). Quoted by Louise Shanahan in Liguorian (July 1968). pp. 30-31.

but also to teach them, I wish to give them the following guidelines:

(2) Movies

(a) Ratings of Motion Picture Association of America

The letters G, GP, R and X are symbols that began on November 1, 1968, when movie makers and theatre owners publicly coded their films for the first time, with the intention of providing adults with a guide to movies that are suitable or unsuitable for children. (G means anyone can go. GP means anyone can go, but there's a slight doubt about the theme or an occasional naughty word. R means children must be accompanied by an adult. X means forbidden to anyone under seventeen). Parents can use these ratings but should remember that they have nothing to do with what movies can be made or with what adults can see. Neither are they capable of exercising control over the artists or the pornographers and never indicate the quality of production, directing or acting.

Look Magazine advises parents to keep a movie review filing system, as there is often a large gap between a review and the appearance of the film at a local theatre. What's needed, says the author, is "a reference that is visible and available the day the kids are going to the movies."<sup>59</sup> But after that, the ticket-seller or the manager has to be assessed in their application of the ratings. The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures and the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches have protested the open-admission policy. In a joint statement, they have

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<sup>59</sup>Gene Shalit. "The Rating Game." Look. (Nov. 3, 1970). p. 87.

warned that the rating system is in jeopardy.<sup>60</sup> Also, Walter Reade, who is President of an organization that operates eighty theatres across the country, says that "The X classification has inspired the production and release of trash, the likes of which was undreamed of five years ago, and without the ratings the films would never have been shown in the kinds of theatres that now accept this salacious stuff. Exhibitors all over the country hide behind the implied shield of the X rating."<sup>61</sup>

But parents must keep an eye on the rating system--at least until a better system is found and theatre owners must watch their audiences and not allow children or under-seventeens to forbidden movies. Neither should they permit, in all consciousness, a trailer for an R or X movie to be shown with a G or GP movie. Undoubtedly a better system has to be found because the present complaint is that most of the talent is with the R and X rated films and are often recognized immediately by the children in a trailer from one such movie, shown before a G or GP presentation. It frightens one to think of a Joe Namath (great quarter-back) trailer shown before a family-oriented movie.

Something better than the ratings has to be found. According to Hollis Alpert, the film critic, there's substantial ground for the complaints of many parents that some of the films they see with their children cause them acute embarrassment. "Trying to inculcate in their children certain standards of conduct and behavior,

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid. p. 87

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. p. 88.

they find these flouted in many of the new movies, where behavior contrary to these standards is often implicitly approved," she says. She is often asked for advice on which movies are best for young people and she applies a personal yardstick--an "embarrassment scale," to the ratings supplied by the Motion Picture Association of America. She simply applies a scale that runs between one and ten that measures the amount of vulgarity, violence, tastelessness, nudity and other material that might potentially embarrass the parent.<sup>62</sup>

For example, a movie full of nauseatingly graphic violence and rape and an endless session of sexual bouts goes all the way up to ten in the embarrassment scale. A steady flow of obscene language gets a nine. Displays of nudity, when clearly for explicit erotic effect automatically places a picture over five on the scale. It is unlikely that anything three or under would be found offensive, but maturity and sophistication are advised for four or five rated films and no children should see a six rated or over.

(b) Norms for a good movie.

Harold Gardiner, S.J. says it is possible to show that "Any mature judgment of the artistic worth of a film inevitably involves the viewer in a moral context, and that this moral context is frequently not an occasion of moral jeopardy, but an opportunity for a deepening of moral convictions and even of spiritual insight and growth." He goes on to point out that art is constantly reminding us of "what we really are," on condition that the

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<sup>62</sup>Hollis Alpert. "How to Avoid Embarrassment at the Movies." Women's Day. (June, 1970). p. 88.

material deals with human action and not the action of human beings.<sup>63</sup> Although the distinction is a subtle one, it's very necessary for this thesis, to recall again the willed act, which we treated earlier.

The human act, by definition, is one of which man is master, one that is consciously controlled and deliberately willed, so that the agent is held responsible for it.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, the act of man is one which a man happens to perform, but he's not the master of it, for he has not consciously controlled it, has not deliberately willed it, and for it, he's not held responsible.<sup>65</sup> Films that deal with human action or with human interest themes have a great potential for drama and can teach us a lesson about what we really are.

But Gardiner complains that often a novelist or a film writer or director will deal with what could be human actions in such a way that they turn out to be mere acts of human beings. He cites a treatment of slum life that should have underlined the basic fact of human responsibility and it turns out, instead, to be a treatment that reduces the human element of free will down to its lowest possible grade. These are his words, "It is society, circumstances, environment, what you will, that has put the here in

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<sup>63</sup>Harold Gardiner, S. J. and Moira Walsh. Tenets for Movie Viewers. (New York: American Press. 1962). p. 2.

<sup>64</sup>St. Thomas. Summa Theologica. 1-11, q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.



such a state that it is not really he who acts, but forces outside him that have brought about this situation."<sup>66</sup>

So we can say that, if a film is immoral, it's because it offers an inhuman portrayal of human beings. It does not have to be immoral, even though it may deal with murder or greed or dope or sex. It can still be a work of art, if it reflects the actions of human beings who use, at least to some extent their intellect and free-will. Human conduct is the result of a complex psychological process where there's an interplay of man's two specific faculties, intellect and will. Man is the only creature in the world who can think, but if his thoughts simply run along by association without his conscious direction and control, such thoughts are only the acts of man. Perhaps here's the explanation for some of the "in-human acting" in sex-oriented films, as some female movie actors admit that a deliberate mental effort has to be made to leave "one's conscience outside," the shooting location.

"Art, including film art, is by its very nature, a constant voice deep in our hearts to remind us that we have not here a lasting city."<sup>67</sup> But we are in an era of affluence, technological progress and above all materialism. This latter makes man forget his real and ultimate destiny. Rather comfort, wealth and pleasure are becoming his ultimate goal. The real is being substituted by the unreal--which appears to be more glamorous, more akin to man's lower

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<sup>66</sup>Gardiner. Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid. p. 20.



nature which involves a lesser effort in obtaining. Gardiner says, "Materialism undercuts the dignity of man because it robs him of the significance he ought to have as he exercises moral, ethical, and we should add, spiritual and religious choice."<sup>68</sup>

To follow popular customs, fashions and modes of living, as well as trends in pleasure and enjoyment without considering their true meaning and implications, is to act inhumanly. The glorification of wealth, fine clothes and immoral behavior (crime, sex, violence) must leave a scar on the minds of youth, in particular, unless they are forewarned by their parents as to the real meaning and implications of a happy life. Otherwise the disappointment later on, when they discover the vicissitudes of life for themselves, may be too great to overcome. The result will be a total disregard for all that is sacred and holy in living.

Daniel J. Borstin writes the warning this way,

In the height of our power in this age of the Graphic Revolution, we are threatened by a new and particularly American menace. It is a menace of unreality. The threat of nothingness is the danger of replacing American dreams by American illusions, of replacing the ideals by the images, the aspirations by the mold. We risk being the first people in history to have been able to make their illusions so vivid, so persuasive, so 'realistic' that they can live in them. Yet we dare not become disillusioned, because our illusions are the very house in which we live; they are our news, our heroes, our adventure, our very existence.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>69</sup>Daniel J. Borstin. The Image. (New York: Atheneum, 1962). p. 240. (This book has the same theory as the pioneering book, The Image Industries by F. Lynch, S.J. (Sheed, 1959).

Making "illusions" to the "house in which we live" is what has to be guarded against. Not that all of us, periodically, don't join the world of unreality and illusions, and put ourselves side by side with a great hero or do a little castle-building-in-the-air. But we know we cannot live like an angel or a disembodied spirit. Man's nature is such that he cannot live this way. We are intended to govern our conduct by our intellect and our reason. These are our ruling faculties, exerting conscious control over the rest. The two parts of man--his animal nature and intellectual--are to be kept in harmony, the lower serving the higher. The lower faculties must receive what they need but also need to be kept in their place. If reason is dethroned, the life of a mere animal takes the place of that of a rational animal and the man becomes a beast in conduct.

To go a step further in the world of reality, we must consider the relations between man's inner-self, his lower nature and man's surroundings. They must all harmonize, if man is to fit himself into the proper and total scheme of creation, and occupy the place destined for him by his very nature. According to the moralist, Fagothey, there are three essential relations, namely (a) man as a created being, regarding God; (b) man as a social being, regarding his fellow man; (c) man as a possessive being, regarding the goods of the earth.<sup>70</sup> In other words, the relation to God comes first, man second, to the goods of this world, third.

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<sup>70</sup>Fagothey. "Norms of Morality." Right and Reason. pp. 136-137.

"In our times there is need of vigilance and effort that the cinema may be no longer a school of corruption but may become a precious instrument for right education and a higher standard of morality," wrote Pius XI, and that was eighteen years ago.<sup>71</sup> He also stated that the public have a right to demand that the film industry produce works of art, which are in full accord with sound moral principles and which could get a showing in movie houses without causing undue embarrassment to the general public. In our own time, the Vatican Council asks for "encouragement and assurance by every effective means of the production and showing of films which have value for decent entertainment or for human culture and art, especially when they are designed for young people."<sup>72</sup>

Pius XII, speaking to an international union of cinema owners, laid down the requirements for the "Ideal Film." "Such a film," he said, "must always be concerned with truth, beauty and goodness. These are the constant and age-old aspirations of mankind," but he did not hesitate to discuss the legitimate role that a portrayal of evil could have. He said that human life would not be understood if the faults, which result in conflicts, were not made known to us.<sup>73</sup> In knowing the evils--pride, unbounded ambition, infidelity, injustice and depravity--which surround us, we

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<sup>71</sup>Pius XI. The Apostolate of the Cinema. S.C. Rel. Instruction II. (May, 1953). (Private).

<sup>72</sup>Decree on Media of Social Communication. Vatican II Council. AAS 56-145. (Vatican: Dec. 4, 1963).

<sup>73</sup>Pius XII. Allocution to Cinema Industry. (Vatican: Oct. 28, 1955). AAS 47-816.

should be led to seek from philosophy and religion an explanation and a cure. Nevertheless, I reiterate that parents have to gradually introduce their offspring to the portrayal of these evils through ideal films and ones suitable to their cultural growth.

In order to substantiate the preceding, allow me to refer to the philosophy of the Legion of Decency, founded nearly forty years ago, to try to cope with the admittedly deplorable condition of movie morals at the time. Its philosophy was this:

In order that shows may be able to achieve their proper purpose, it is essential that the minds and inclinations of the spectators be rightly trained and educated, so that they may not only understand the form proper to each of the arts, but especially that they may be guided in this matter by a right conscience. Thus, they will be enabled to weigh and pass mature judgment on the various items which the film puts before them and not, as often happens, be lured and swept away by their power and attractiveness.

If there is lacking this mental training and formation, enlightened by Christian teaching, then neither reasonable pleasures, which everyone readily admits are necessary for all who are involved in the business and troubles of life, nor the progress of mental development, can be kept safe.<sup>74</sup>

Although putting the main responsibility with the parents, I do not hesitate to say that parents alone will not suffice in protecting our youth from the stronghold of pornography in films. Parents need the co-operation of theatre owners, film critics, film directors and community groups, especially in our present day, when there's an obvious lack of understanding between adults and

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<sup>74</sup>Moir Walsh. "Forming Mature Moviegoers." Tenets for Movie Viewers. pp. 48-49.

adolescents. Louise Shanahan says that

The trend towards vulgarity is reversible only if every adult accepts the responsibility of organizing in his community to destroy pornography. Unfortunately, most adults view this problem as "the other fellow's", with the consequent result that pornography has a grip on youth.<sup>75</sup>

### (3) Literature

Earlier on in this treatise, I condemned outright obscenity and sex, as it is displayed in a large number of books and magazines today. This I did without reservation because I was explicitly referring to those that pander only to our lower nature. On the other hand, I do agree that we must realize that human activity and a knowledge of the traits in our human nature are part of the drawing out and unfolding of each one's individual characteristics. These characteristics must be protected and helped to grow along morally accepted lines.

Because this growth should begin at an early age, and literature plays a big part in its development, parents have a major role to play and likewise television and radio programmers for children. The material necessary for the child's cultural growth should be carefully selected and, if I use the word protected, I don't mean a ban on every book of literature that carries obscene words. "Only the theologically aware, culturally knowledgeable Judeo-Christian man can be a force strong enough to generate anew--as life goes on, as culture goes on, as civilization goes on--the

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<sup>75</sup>Louise Shanahan. "Pornography is Everybody's Business." Liguorian. (July, 1968).

Christ life, so that it continues to pour like a mighty river through the history of man."<sup>76</sup>

An understanding, an appreciation and a love of literature is essential for teachers, media people and as many parents as possible. Literature is important for a cultural growth in knowledge, in the appreciation of various aspects of life, as depicted by the proper use of legitimate words. The appreciation is not easy to come by. But to get a full appreciation of the world we live in and to be able to face the hidden aspects about reality, we must find the reality in the works of literature. Comic-books or cartoons, or plays and films full of sentimentality will not be of much help in our efforts to discover and be able to face reality. Neither will the works of lewdness for lewdness' sake provide the answer.

The warning against making "illusions" about the "house in which we live" was given about films and I want to reiterate that warning for literature. A cultural growth embodies a facility in drawing good out of evil. The evil we have to know about entails man's inhumanity to man--prostitution, drugs, crime, dishonesty, the brutalizing of our youth, and the misuse of person by person. In good literature these can be portrayed in an acceptable fashion, even to the young, who, with proper guidance as to what they should read, can discover an answer to the struggle within the innermost

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<sup>76</sup>Irving Susmann and Cornelia Susmann. The Way of the Pilgrim Reader. (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate. 1966). Quote if from preface by Ann Freemantle. p. 14.

parts of man's being.

The good literature I allude to is that which, with a legitimate use of words, sees life steadily and sees it whole. I do agree that some such literature may be too graphic in the portrayal of man's basic and lower instincts and that, for the adult, he has his conscience to contend with and the dictates of his reason. He can perhaps solve his musings by asking himself the question, why does he want to read this or that piece of literature or of what moral benefit can it be to his child? The Bible, Dante, Shakespeare are all rich in words and scenes that would be offensive to a public audience.

Perhaps a criterion we can use for judging good literature can be found in the words of the famous French philosopher, de Chardin, who once wrote, "To know more about others, to know about their woes, especially to know more about those different from ourselves, is to be more, to be larger, more generous person."<sup>77</sup> Part of our education should be humanistic knowledge, which is knowing our culture, our literature and knowing the difference between true literature and that written to make money out of vice. To be able to make the distinction is the basis of any judgment on any work of art or literature. To accomplish this, one has to undergo the discipline of learning to read. Reading should be a pleasure, but pleasure here does not mean the seeking out of titillating scenes or words. The most intense pleasure of all can be found in intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid. p. 11. Quoting Teilhard de Chardin.

My suggestions for all those dealing with children, and especially parents, are as follows: Select morally acceptable literature for the child to the age of ten; then gradually introduce the child to literature necessary for his cultural development and growth, even though they may be partly obscene, but be mindful that no storms are raised in the young mind; create an atmosphere and attitudes which will help the child become a competent reader and a discernor of books suitable for his moral, cultural and spiritual growth. These general rules can be applied until such time as there's no danger of the child losing his sense of balance, which would be indicated by obsessive hate, unnatural curiosity or attraction to evil or evil characters. In other words, by watching the growth of the young personality, parents and others have a criterion for judging what is helpful for, or doing a disservice to, the child's cultural growth.

We should remind ourselves that we can only read a certain number of books in a lifetime and it's better to read ones that will enrich our minds forever. To grow in maturity as a reader is the thing and maturity here means

. . . to see the relatedness of all man puts on record about himself, his fellowmen and women, mankind, the world; man's total history on his way to or from God, to and from darkness; and the light that is always there, even when the darkness perceives it not. To read subjectively (after objective standards have been established) in the sense of knowing the vocabulary and at the same time recognizing, with a sense of identity, the relatedness of all things, is to be immunized.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid. pp. 70-71.



Probably the basic questions we can ask in judging a piece of literature, or indeed any work of art, can be: How does the author present his work? Is there artistry in the narration? Does the author evoke human beings, real people, complicated and having more than one side to their natures? Does the human theme relate to a larger concept? The ultimate answer is probably that of a certain literary critic, who says,

For the young, literature is much more now than a mere subject of study. It is nothing less than a form of personal salvation. Today's young people need, as yesterday's, arbiters of taste, explicators of meaning, guardians of the imagination. They need, in other words, guidance.<sup>79</sup>

The final words against pornography are very fittingly left to two New York psychiatrists. The first is Charles Socarides, who says, "Pornography should be censored because it is a violation of the human being. Morality, conscience, ethics and standards are the 'traffic regulators' of society." The second, Natalie Shainess, has concluded, "Pornography and alienation go hand in hand. Already, as we witness various fragmentations within our society, we see concern for others, and understanding and tolerance of differences, disappearing. Pornography furthers this trend."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid. p. 82. Quoting Douglas Davis, "The Literary Critic." The National Observer. (Oct. 25, 1965).

<sup>80</sup>Bell. Good Housekeeping. (April, 1971). p. 154.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TELEVISION GENERATION

#### A. THE PROBLEM

##### (1) Introduction

We are, at present, living through the greatest turning point in communication's history since the invention of printing. The young are being reared on television, whilst the older were reared on the print medium. It is part of the reason for the much ado about the generation gap. Admittedly, there's a major one present just as there was when the printing machine was invented. It, too, caused a gap between young and old, as the former began to realize that his growth in knowledge would take him well ahead of Dad. The rapid growth in technology has opened up new vistas and given new hopes for a greater freedom and independence to the younger generation today. They belong to a new age with a new culture in the making. Programmers should make themselves fully aware of the generation phenomenon and act accordingly for the good of society.

##### (2) The new age

What is it but the electronic age which makes available, through television, instantaneous communication. This age is

bringing about as big a change in human affairs, in the twentieth century, as the invention of printing did in the fifteenth. TV Guide says that:

We are all hurrying into the fantastic new epoch of the electronic age which has been foreshadowed by television. History is profoundly affected by changes in the means of communication and that the electronic age will have penetrating effects not just on the structure and processes of society but on the very reflexes of individual perception. Already television, by its collectiveness and simultaneity, has fostered an intense desire for self-expression and visibility and has spread the habit of instant reaction and stimulated the hope of instant results.<sup>1</sup>

"Overnight a new box appears in the home," writes one authority, "and, thereafter, all leisure time is organized around it." Some say the youth are not television watchers, but I'm sure that sales of commodities advertised for the youth on television prove otherwise. Why has cinema-going in the United States dropped from eighty million per week in 1947 to fifteen million per week at the present time? The family with television tends to stay home more and, although television viewing may be killing conversation among members of a family, there's more physical togetherness. Still, communication is very important in our lives and through an understanding of television and its effects on us we can become better communicators. The pace of everyday living asks for increased and better communications.

No one knows for certain what changes the coming of the electronic age will bring about in human life, but some are already

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<sup>1</sup>Neil Hickey. "The Great Challenge." TV Guide. (Feb. 20, 1971). p. 36.

obvious: (a) People are already reorganizing their leisure time in order to watch television. (b) They have dropped other activities, such as indoor games and movies, for television viewing. (c) Because they are exposed to a wider range of ideas, their outlook is broadened and also their overall concern for and interest in their fellow-man. (d) Apart from these, there are others, which many thinkers hold, that the coming of television will make at the deepest levels of our personalities.

The changes affecting our personalities will also affect our emotional lives, our reasoning processes, the very quality of our minds. According to Richard Woods,

Modern men are to grow more lonely and to feel more alienated. Critics claim that the mass media (television included) have depersonalized community contact by globalizing it. In this era of instant communication we find it difficult to enter into personal dialogue. Every culture is generally invisible to those who live in it. We are generally unaware of how culture controls our behavior. Culture hides effectively many of its transforming elements from its participants.<sup>2</sup>

A media critic says,

A few programmers decide the style and content of our communication. Basically our dramatic programs are built on a laissez-faire morality and a rather uncouth, mindless exposure of shocking material. In those terms, television is not worth living anymore. I don't mind television dramatizing important social and personal problems, but when it refuses to examine the cultural and ethical implications of these problems, it develops a disastrous moral environment for its audience.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Richard Woods. "Introduction." The Media Maze. (Dayton: Pflaum. 1969). p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Bill Donnelly. "Television's Insidious Environment." National Catholic Register. (Oct. 25, 1970). p. 7.

(3) Mass man

The emotional changes engendered by television are frightening for some. Sociologists and social scientists are generally agreed that the behavior of individuals normally follows the expectations of their peers. Thus, it can be said that one's role in society is being deciphered from the behavioral attitudes exemplified through and in the means of communication of his or her society. "Sociologists and anthropologists will tell us that style and fashion become intricate parts of our lives. They affect our psychology and our actions. Television, like fashions, imposes behavior upon us even if we are not aware of it."<sup>4</sup>

The French intellectual, Teilhard de Chardin, believes the effect of the modern means of communication is a new and necessary stage in the evolution of mankind to its fullest potential. He wants to thank the prodigious event represented by the discovery of the electro-magnetic waves as each individual finds himself, henceforth, (actively and passively) simultaneously present, over land and sea in every corner of the earth. Marshall McLuhan's theory is that television is having the most profound and far-reaching effects on us and on our society. Generally speaking, he maintains that it is destroying our entire political, educational, social and institutional life and that it will dissolve the entire fabric of society. However, he strikes a cord of optimism when he theorizes that we can control the harmful effects and even eliminate

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

them, if we try to understand the overall workings of the media on us.

A newspaper staff writer asks the question, "Are all the same television programs making all United States the same?" He proceeds to answer as follows:

The electronic media are doing an excellent job of flattening this country into a sameness that is at once gratifying and horrifying. In every corner of the nation the entertainers are the same, the advertising is the same, the product names are the same. Prime-time television pours out the same problems and the same solutions in drama and comedy, coast to coast, night after night.

Remote communities are no longer remote because television brings the same words and the same views to cities as well as to far-away towns. The differences among Americans now, I submit to you, loom larger because they are set off by a stunning backdrop of sameness, created for us by the world's greatest communication system. Now the job is making the sameness worth while. Perhaps that is what the social revolution is about.<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Fulton Sheen, speaking of the new man as the mass-man, indicates that he's one who no longer prizes his individual personality, but seeks to be submerged in the collectivity of the crowd and can be recognized by certain traits. Among the traits listed are: He's without originality of judgment and has no new principle or solution; he hates tranquility, meditation or silence; he seeks dispersion in order that the excitement of the moment may dispel consideration of the problem of life; he seeks to be influenced rather than influence, is sensitive to propaganda and to the excitations of publicity.

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<sup>5</sup>Charlie Hanna. Detroit Free Press. (Oct. 31, 1970). p. 5A.

The litany continues: He believes that every instinct should be satisfied, regardless of whether or not its exercise is in accordance with right reason; his beliefs of right and wrong are very fickle with the result that he maintains positions which are nothing but a succession of contradictions; he has no sense of gratitude towards the past and no sense of responsibility to the future; he identifies money and pleasure and frantically seeks one to obtain the other; being completely standardized, he hates superiority in others; religion he dislikes, the reason being that by denying it he thinks he could then go on living as he does without remorse of conscience.<sup>6</sup>

The creation of the mass-man has been undoubtedly influenced by television and, in turn, some television personalities and programs are influenced by the mass-man. One falls victim to the unwitting control of the other and this invisibility of interplay between cultural influences can be very damaging to society.

Some of the stories being told in the general environment of television become the environment of the living room. For example, within the space of a few days we were exposed to the "dramatic" discussion of vasectomy on two television series and in another, abortion was the solution to the troubled mind of a girl living with her boyfriend.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Fulton Sheen. "The Mass-Man." Way to Happiness. (New York: Fawcett. 1957). pp. 153-155. (Bishop Sheen has written many books and in the past was a well-known television talk and discussion personality. He was always noted for his rich understanding of human nature and his clarity and richness of mind).

<sup>7</sup>Bill Donnelly. "Television's Insidious Environment." National Catholic Register. (Oct. 25, 1970). p. 7

Like Marshall McLuhan, Teilhard de Chardin and others, Margaret Mead, the contemporary American Sociologist, is conscious of the change being brought about in society through modern technology. She writes

We are on the verge of a tremendous change in the nature of man, a change as far reaching as the great changes of the past, when man's precursors learned to use tools, to speak, to plant seeds, to build cities and to write. Perhaps an even greater change.<sup>8</sup>

Hopefully the changes will be for the betterment of man, but unless all of us become aware of the effects the media, and in particular television, can create within us, we will become emotional, sensuous and sensationalists. Marshall McLuhan says, "My entire concern is to overcome the determinism that results from the determination of people to ignore what is going on. Far from regarding technological change as inevitable, I insist that, if we understand its components, we can turn it off at any time we choose."<sup>9</sup> He claims that the sensations evoked by the new electronic environment are effecting a revolution in consciousness, without the intervention of consciousness.

Editor Raymond Rosenthal interprets McLuhan as theorizing that people watching television seem as inert bundles of sensational, perhaps even of emotional receptivity, but with no direct consciousness would spoil the picture of sheer sensation by introducing

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<sup>8</sup>Margaret Mead. "A Working Paper for Man and Nature." Natural History. Vol. 78. No. 4. (April 9, 1969). p. 22

<sup>9</sup>New York Times Magazine. (Jan. 29, 1967). Quoted in "Current Biography." McLuhan, Pro and Con. (New York: Pelican. 1969). p. 19.



extraneous elements, such as thought, interpretation, rational response.<sup>10</sup> McLuhan himself says, "Once we have surrendered our senses and nervous system to the private manipulations of those who would try to benefit from taking a lease on our eyes and ears and nerves, we don't really have any rights left."<sup>11</sup> That's why McLuhan insists on a self-informed consciousness of the effect of the media on each of us.

Richard Woods, whom I quoted before, says,

The media extend a sense, limb or function into time and space. They simultaneously "anesthetize" the extended part and resensitize the previously deadened part, thus unconsciously altering the balance of sensory perception. This psychological adjustment of awareness, when considered from a social point of view, transforms cultures equally imperceptibly, for our social senses are anesthetized much as our individual senses. Not that the senses are physically but psychically anesthetized. We need a new study of perception and a new theory of knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

#### (4) The new culture

Having spoken, in general, about the change in adults, I now fall back on Caleb Gattegno's book, Towards a Visual Culture,<sup>13</sup> especially in its relation to children. Man has to prepare for the

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<sup>10</sup>Raymond Rosenthal. "Introduction." McLuhan, Pro and Con. (Baltimore: Penguin Books. 1969). p. 12. (Rosenthal taught at Long Island University and City College, New York).

<sup>11</sup>Marshall McLuhan. "Challenge and Collapse." Understanding Media. (New York: McGraw-Hill. 1964). 2nd Ed. p. 73.

<sup>12</sup>Woods. "The Day of Man." The Media Maze. pp. 107-108.

<sup>13</sup>Caleb Gattegno. Towards a Visual Culture. (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey. 1969). pp. 1-8. (The author was introduced to television late in life, acquiring his own set in 1966 and began to constantly and consciously view at every given opportunity).

"new culture" or "knowing through the eyes," as the author calls it, because so much will be available to him at the speed of light. This is particularly important in areas where there are educational television stations and the latest Washington report indicates that presently, in the United States, four out of every five persons are within viewing range of such a station. If people can be made aware of this phenomenon, as well as programmers and technicians, perhaps educational television viewing can be increased and the commercial stations will necessarily need better scripted programs and less soap-opera fare. I want to emphasize that we must learn to "see." There are people who look without seeing. The human mind has a tremendous capacity to adapt and we know people can train themselves to "see."<sup>14</sup> Apparently, children are already with it. Having plenty of time in hand and because many programs are aimed at their level, not least of which is Sesame Street, they are training themselves to see and thereby learn. Their very presence before the screen is an education and a discipline in itself. They train themselves to see and their learning is enhanced as they remain constant, watching the unfolding of a learning process on their screen.

This is, for them, more vivid and less time consuming than drab book learning. Besides, this new learning experience is more easily retained and recalled. So the television of the future could

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid. Gattegno discussed with others his observations and realized his television viewing reaped a better harvest of ideas and perceptions. When made aware of these, others admitted they had not noticed them before. p. 2.

largely be on an educational television basis. For the first time in the history of education, the time spent on watching television can be equated to the amount of knowledge acquired with the maximum amount of enjoyment.<sup>15</sup> Strictly speaking, it does not require remembering, nor is it a cramming of facts, concepts and skills, but a facility to be able to recall to memory by association or by a positive act of the will, the knowledge acquired through the God-given visual powers, a knowledge which has fertilized the mind.

I mentioned enjoyment above. It must be correct to say it's begotten by the entertainment value of the programs. By definition, entertainment is the mobilization of the curiosity of the viewers and generates in them genuine feelings of awe and respect for what lies beyond their ordinary, everyday life. The children are entertained during the learning process and they know it and miss it when they reach the classroom. But Gattegno has, at least, a part solution for that too, by recommending to the teacher of the "new culture child" the following:

- (a) Respect the child's rules of participation.
- (b) Keep the discussion linked with the senses, the emotions and the masteries achieved.
- (c) Leave him a chance to expand on his own, thus refer to the unknown.
- (d) Link the class subject with at least some of the child's experiences of the past and present.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Report of the Activities of the Telemation Laboratory. University of Wisconsin (of which television is a part), says that students feel the presentation of information is more rapid, in more detail, easier to recall and with clearer concepts. (Madison: Feb. 1961-May 1962). p. 5.

<sup>16</sup>Gattegno. "Television and Education" Towards a Visual Culture. p. 37.

"The medium is the message," says McLuhan, but Gattegno says that the three contributing factors to the viewing of the future will be: "The instrument; what the viewers bring with them; and what's on the tube."<sup>17</sup> He continues with the prognosis that "To talk of the medium will be to talk of man as the Perceiver, the Responder, the Expander, the Processor of Messages."<sup>18</sup> He also says that one not only learns more through sight than through language but more quickly and with broader comprehension. If we watch more closely, we learn more and this I have discovered for myself, especially when one is asked to do a critique on a program. I'm quite certain that a deliberate watchfulness results in better comprehension and, overall, a more complete message.

We must get ready now and prepare for the day when everybody who wishes, will have in his home the canned and accumulated knowledge to date. The new culture is about to pervade us, and if we are not prepared for it, we'll be left groping in the past, still using a lot of words to express ourselves, and our old habits of thought will make us ancients in the eyes of our youth. To be with it, we'll need to develop first, a strong and vivid photographic memory and I'm not sure how that will be accomplished, but I want to find out, and second, a facility to quickly scan and code images from the screen to the brain. Coupled with these, we need a facility of relating what is already known to the new knowledge now coming at the speed of light, to place the adult on a par, at

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. p. 15.

least, with the younger generation. If experience counts for anything, and I know it does, the older generation, having acquired the new culture, will again be in a position to be emulated by the youth.

There is little evidence that television improves tastes or broadens interests, but I believe it has its effects. For example, Dr. Hilde Himmelweit reported to the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting that all the evidence so far provided by certain researches suggested that values were acquired, that a view of life was picked up, by children watching television.<sup>19</sup> This is my conviction, too. Some attitudes and beliefs must filter through to the young minds and although long term effects cannot yet be established, I have two reasons for being convinced that television does definitely leave its impression.

(a) Companies pay big money in advertising on television and that includes the Saturday morning children programs. If these companies were not getting their money's worth, they'd have quit long ago.

(b) The dialogue between Doctor Stanton, head of C. B. S. network and Congressman Hale Boggs of the United States Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence:

Boggs: "How much does it cost to buy one minute of time when you broadcast a football game on Sunday afternoon?"

Stanton: "Depends on the game--say fifty or sixty thousand dollars."

Boggs: "Well now, would an advertiser pay sixty thousand

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Wittich and Schuller. "Learning and Communication." pp. 39-70. "The Basic Communication Process." pp. 13-30. "The Research Basis for Educational Communications." pp. 31-38. Audio-Visual Materials. (New York: Harper and Row. 1967). 4th Ed.

dollars if he did not think he was having an impact?"

Stanton: "Not at all."

Boggs: "How much did the supporters of President Nixon spend at C. B. S. in the last campaign?"

Stanton: "I have no idea."

Boggs: "Would you say it was a substantial sum of money?"

Stanton: "I would."

Boggs: "Why do you think they spent that money?"

Stanton: "Because it's an effective medium to reach people."

Boggs: "Well now, why is television effective in reaching people in commercial advertising and in political campaigns and is not effective when it shows sadism, masochism, murder, mayhem and rape?"

Stanton: "I didn't say it wasn't."<sup>20</sup>

There is no doubt that violence on screen can lead to violence off screen, at least to this extent, that it can trigger off latent violence in emotionally unstable people and even suggest techniques of violence. This is Haselden's tenet in his book, Morality of the Mass Media.

The normal viewer is not affected--at least we hope not--in any sudden or dramatic fashion. But he's subjected to, what somebody recently labeled as the "drip-effect" of television, through which he comes to accept the standards and values shown on the screen by a gradual process. How can it be otherwise? How can a child,

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<sup>20</sup>Robert K. Baker and Dr. Sanda Ball. Violence and the Media. Vol. 9A. (Washington: Library of Congress. 1969). pp. 338-339. (A staff report on the causes and prevention of violence).

youth, or even an adult spend hours watching television without being affected by it? The viewer may say to himself, "I don't accept this," or "I don't accept that theory," but the fashions, the speech, the manner of acting, the interests of screen personalities (that is, what they like to wear or eat or smoke) do wear off on the viewer. There is no conscious conversion and that's why so many people, when asked about the effects of television say that they are not affected, but there is an ever-present process of erosion, namely a gradual deepening of the need of, the orientation of leisure towards viewing and of the human cravings.

This process of erosive gnawing into our very being is not necessarily wrong or immoral. But it is occurring almost all the time. It's a sort of an urge to do something that's pleasing and we go ahead with it. We look forward to our favorite programs, our favorite stars, our favorite sport. We build our work and leisure time around these as much as possible. Who can deny that the constant portrayal of devotion to duty, as in Medical Center or Hawaii-Five-O, does not have a bearing on the lives of regular viewers of these programs? Emulation is part of our being. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. People with an urge for violence and an innate desire to act tough, must find inspiration in programs where violence is over-stressed.

So, by a flick of a switch, the viewer can bring his favorite personalities into the home. These are experts in their subjects and in the art of communicating them. They are people who have come to the top in a highly competitive system. So their influence, their ideas and beliefs, which are explicitly presented,

must be at least unconsciously absorbed by at least some of the viewers.

One of the greatest effects of television is the sense of involvement and concern for humanity. The news programs bring us into instant contact with suffering mankind in every corner of the globe. Granted, the effects on individuals vary, but generally speaking, we are, through television, becoming more and more involved in the lives of others as never before. We see the successes and failures and our own difficulties seem trivial, when we compare them to those of others. We are less insular and more broadminded.

Think of the concern aroused for the fighting men in Vietnam as we view the bursting of shells and the fallen bodies or the worldwide concern for the children of Biafra, the victims of the floods in East Pakistan, and the people of the Peruvian earthquake. The feeling engendered for the Biafran children, mainly through television, evoked such sympathy, especially from children of the United States, that they often referred to them as "their little brothers and sisters in Biafra." So, every man can be our neighbor. To become involved in other people on a broad scale, starts with procuring a television set. This is particularly true of the television child. McLuhan intimated that the television child expects involvement and doesn't want a specialist job in the future. What he does want is a role and a deep commitment in society. In other words, he seeks fulfillment and not employment. He sees all of life happening at once and in its totality--birth, life, death, rebirth, suffering, affluence, violence and sex. He



sees it celebrated in nature, in technology, in medical accomplishments and in scientific feats. Progress and change are all around him. His opportunities are vast and multitudinous. He does not wish to lose out on any one of them. He does not want to be caught in one particular field. He knows that what his Dad learned, to become a first-class engineer in his day, is now almost completely obsolete. He feels that the great surgeons of the future will be the ones able to do heart transplants. To be a successful law officer or crime detective, he must be a Mannix.

To ask him to choose life is hardly necessary. He knows how much it has to offer. To ask him to consider life--he's already an accomplished philosopher. He's watching life and considering it at every waking moment. The world of the "now" generation is all around him. This world comes to him from the Madison Avenue gimmicks, the sophisticated catch phrase, the colors, the sights and the sounds. Because life is so extraordinary, each of us, and especially the child of this present age, has special hopes and dreams.

## B. THE CODE

### (1) History

The first American radio law, enacted ten years before the advent of broadcasting, was limited to the use of radio as a life-saving device at sea. This was called The Wireless Ship Act of 1910. It demanded an apparatus, on all ocean-going steamers carrying fifty or more persons, capable of transmitting and receiving

messages over a distance of one hundred miles, night and day.<sup>21</sup> The next law was the Radio Act of 1912, which made it illegal to operate a radio station without a license from the Secretary of Commerce.<sup>22</sup>

Broadcasting in the United States began in 1920, when station KDKA, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, reported some election results to a widely dispersed audience and by 1923 some 576 stations were licensed for broadcasting.<sup>23</sup> As the number of stations increased, confusion was brought about as some switched their frequencies and changed their power at will, thus cutting into the broadcasts of other stations. After two irreconcilable bills were passed in 1926, a compromise bill was passed and signed by the President on February 23, 1927. Thus the Radio Act of 1927 was made law. It established "public interest, convenience and necessity" as the discretionary licensing standard and became the basis of current broadcast regulation.<sup>24</sup>

Fearful that criticism would bring about more laws like the Radio Act of 1927, radio broadcasters spent a year putting a code of conduct together and in 1929 the first Radio Code was approved by the broadcasters. It had two sections: a Code of Ethics and Standards of Commercial Practice. The first included some

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<sup>21</sup>Public Law 262. 61st Congress (June 24, 1910). Documents of American Broadcasting. p. 6.

<sup>22</sup>Public Law 264. 62nd Congress (Aug. 13, 1912). Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>23</sup>Kahn. Documents of American Broadcasting. p. 17.

<sup>24</sup>Public Law 632. 69th Congress. (Feb. 23, 1927). Ibid. p. 35.

general standards contained in general statements about responsibility and the second was a more practical listing of time standards and other operational procedures. Thus the code reflected the posture of broadcasting to its public and the need for some internal policies.<sup>25</sup>

In 1933, the Government placed the radio industry under the National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA) and this gave the code the status of law and applicability to all radio stations, when the President attached his signature to it. Apparently some politicians desired a stronger control and they sought more specific measures for self-regulation in broadcasting which brought about the Communications Act of 1934.<sup>26</sup> In his address, the President recommended that Congress create a new agency to be known as the Federal Communications Commission. This agency was to be vested with authority over communication services which relied on wires, cables or radio as a medium of transmission.<sup>27</sup>

Broadcasters became increasingly worried about government control and they also realized that the NRA of 1933 was being neglected. Besides, they got a hint of other eventualities from author Herring, who had this to say:

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<sup>25</sup>Bruce Linton. "An Historical Perspective." Self-Regulation in Broadcasting. (University of Kansas. 1967). p. 12. (He's Chairman of Radio-Television-Film at the University of Kansas).

<sup>26</sup>Public Law 416. 73rd. Congress. 2nd. Session (Feb. 26, 1934). Documents of American Broadcasting. p. 54.

<sup>27</sup>S. Doc. 144, 73rd Congress, 2nd. Session. (Feb. 26, 1934).

Commercial broadcasters must see that, under the existing system, the responsibility for satisfactory standards of commercial programs is theirs, and that this responsibility could not be placed upon the regulatory commission without the expansion of its powers in a manner wholly objectionable to themselves and which would threaten the freedom of initiative which is the chief merit of the present system.<sup>28</sup>

Broadcasters adopted a new code.

This was the ten-point code of 1935. It was a bit more prescriptive in nature than the 1929 one and the hint of enforcement of the old one was now gone.<sup>29</sup> The new one was little referred to until 1939, when the FCC held hearings relating to network operations and then a new system of self-regulation on a voluntary basis was recommended. But not until 1945 was another attempt at a code made. This one was merely a guide for the manager in his pursuit of public interest and there were some general statements relating to children's programs, education and religion, but with no provisions for enforcement.<sup>30</sup>

In March, 1946 the Blue Book<sup>31</sup> appeared, which laid down the FCC's programming policy and became a forceful instrument for program regulation, in the public interest, almost immediately. Shortly thereafter, the NAB Code Committee produced a very strict code draft, with general standards for all kinds of programs and

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<sup>28</sup>Justin Miller. "What About NAB Standards of Practice." NAB. (Spring 1946).

<sup>29</sup>Linton. "An Historical Perspective." p. 13

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>31</sup>Kahn. Documents of American Broadcasting. pp. 125-206.

more detailed prohibitions in advertising (in content and time) which later, due to some opposition from members, had to become more prescriptive, as "should" replaced "shall."<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile television began its growth and in 1951, Chairman Coy of the FCC warned the broadcasters to clean up television and he reminded them of their necessity to provide self-regulation which meant an individual responsibility rather than the code.<sup>33</sup>

(2) NAB Television Code.

Broadcasters took the responsibility upon themselves, in 1951, to draw up a television code. It emerged as a remarkable document--a combination of positive idealism and negative admonishments.<sup>34</sup> The preamble to the Code stated:

Television is seen and heard in every type of American home. These homes include children and adults of all ages, embrace all races and all varieties of religious faith and reach those of every educational background. It's the responsibility of television to bear constantly in mind that the audience is primarily a home audience and consequently that television's relationships to the viewers is that between guest and host.<sup>35</sup>

The preamble also stated that television should be used by American business to bring the best programs, regardless of kind, into American homes, maintaining the highest standards of respect for the home. This is indicated by good programming,

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<sup>32</sup>Linton. Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>35</sup>NAB Television Code. 12th Edition. Preamble. (Oct. 1967).  
(Amended June 20, 1968).

showing community responsibility with regard to cultural and educational advancement. The public is asked to demand what's best suited for the viewers and, above all, parents are urged to indicate the best programs to their children.

Apparently the Code has done a lot to remind broadcasters of their special vocation. According to Linton, "There's much evidence that, in the last decade, there has been a tremendous growth of professional spirit in broadcasting." and he thanks the Code.<sup>36</sup> Yet in the Carnegie report, we read:

For the salient fact about the American television system is not that it is of low quality but undeveloped. What commercial television cannot do because of its need to reach mass audiences, non-commercial television cannot do because it lacks the money, facilities and personnel. All television provides news, entertainment and instruction; all television teaches about places, people, animals, politics, crime, science. Yet the differences are clear.<sup>37</sup>

In the opinion of Roscoe Barrow, a law Professor, the denial of application for renewal should have a salutary effect in improving the service of marginal broadcasters.<sup>38</sup> He also maintains "The holding of hearings in communities to ascertain whether the needs have been served and requiring the broadcaster to state the

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<sup>36</sup>Linton. "An Historical Perspective." p.17.

<sup>37</sup>Carnegie Quarterly. "Television for All Tastes." Problems and Controversies in Television and Radio. Edited by Harry Skornia and William Kitson. (Palo Alto, California: Pacific Books. 1968). pp. 495-496. (The Carnegie Commission, composed of 18 United States scholars and citizens, spent a year doing a comprehensive study of the values of ETV and its problems. Their report appeared at the end of 1967).

<sup>38</sup>Roscoe Barrow. "Broadcasting in the Interest of Free Society." Ibid. p. 467.

measures taken to ascertain and fulfill those needs, should increase the effort at the 'grass-roots' level to provide service in the public interest."<sup>39</sup> He also believes that Congress should grant greater authority to the FCC, especially with regard to the networks.

He does agree that the code of good practice has exercised a substantial influence on programming and good programs, but he thinks that enlightened broadcasters should encourage all components of broadcasting to provide programming which meets the tastes, needs and desires of all significant publics within the community served, as provided by law.<sup>40</sup> He recommends this because "The Networks Affiliates Committees have not attempted to exercise control over the programming provided by the networks."<sup>41</sup>

Judge Lee Loevinger sees two difficulties (in the application of the Code) when the FCC seeks information about a station, from a station's proposed or past programming. First, there are no standards whatever as to the quantitative proportions that are desirable, or even permissible, among the categories (ranging from "opportunity for local expression," through children's, religious, educational and news programming to entertainment programming) of program classification. Second, the classification

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid. p. 463.

<sup>41</sup>Interim Report of the Office of Network Study. FCC  
Docket No. 12782.

of programs by descriptive category gives no information at all about the most important aspects of programming, which is quality. Entertainment--which is by far the largest category for most stations--covers everything from rock and roll and Western to opera and Shakespeare.<sup>42</sup>

But I feel the Code is very important to broadcasters. Medical men have their code and lawyers have theirs because they realize that, to work together for the good of society, they need abiding standards by which they can judge their conduct and achievements. Franklin Jones, whose words have become a preamble to many codes of ethics, says,

The ideals of men best project themselves into reality when crystallized in written documents. In every line of human activity, a united written expression of that which is best for the common good becomes a strong force of progress. The mere expression clarifies the general sentiment.<sup>43</sup>

Doubtless there are many honorable men in broadcasting who appreciate the principles of the Code and they realize that commercial blindness withholds stronger regulations and even a stricter implementation of the existing code. Kyle Haselden is of the same opinion. He writes:

I suspect that it is futile to urge commercial television to regulate itself as long as it remains commercial and has no competition. The NAB is composed, no doubt, of many

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<sup>42</sup>Lee Loevinger. "Broadcasting and the Journalistic Function." Problems and Controversies in Television and Radio. pp. 330-331.

<sup>43</sup>Franklin Jones. Codes of Ethics, a Handbook. (New York: Free Press. 1924). p. 1.



honorable men and without such self-regulation, radio and television broadcasting would be much worse than it is. But it would be asking too much of human nature to expect the men most deeply involved in a highly lucrative enterprise to revolutionize in the public interest.<sup>44</sup>

Although the Code explicitly states that programs on television should show "decency and decorum in production" and "propriety in advertising,"<sup>45</sup> I doubt if some broadcasters adhere to the spirit of this message. Contained in it is a vast, though perhaps a hidden implication, that true values of uprightness, honesty, justice and truth are the responsibility of the American businesses who utilize television and all others who participate in this wonderful medium of communication. If true values are not constantly put before the audiences, especially child audiences, then television is failing in its duty to the society and culture of our day. One may ask, what is the basis for true values?

Well, a thing has value if it has some good in it. But then there are degrees of goodness. There is the useful good, which becomes desirable because it leads to something more desirable. This, for example, is an instrument or a tool. There is the pleasant good--a something which is very attractive to us, because it gives us satisfaction and enjoyment, but yet no guarantee that it may not hurt us in the long run. Lastly, there's the befitting good. It's a good we seek because it contributes towards the

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<sup>44</sup>Kyle Haselden. Morality and the Mass Media. (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1968). pp. 131-132. (He's a Baptist minister and editor of an ecumenical journal).

<sup>45</sup>NAB Television Code. Preamble.

perfection of our being and suits man as a complete human being. This good is exemplified in the values mentioned above, namely uprightness, honesty, justice and truth.

Broadly speaking, these values can be acquired on a natural plane and can be called natural virtues. Under proper guidance they can lead one to the acquisition of the supernatural virtues. In other words, if we try to acquire the natural virtues and appreciate their importance in our lives, they should ultimately lead us to the supernatural ones. But to first acquire the natural ones, we must realize the good in them. If, and this is particularly true in the case of children, the greatest mode of communication is the television, and if true values are constantly ignored or relegated to an inferior position through this medium, then television is doing a grave injustice to our society.

I may sound very negative, but the question of true values is at stake. Support for my argument comes from a study by the National Council of Churches. In part, the study says:

Since television, radio and motion pictures exert powerful influences on the opinion, tastes and values held among the people of the world, but mass communication is forced to compete with programming and advertising that seems often designed to sell products without regard to what is happening to the people who buy or to the culture which, in part, is thus being formed. These programs sometimes depend for their success on scales of values, clearly false.<sup>46</sup>

For the sake of clarity a quote from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency will help. The report says:

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National Council of Churches. "Information Service." (1963). (Quoted by Kyle Haseelden. Morality and the Mass Media. p. 135).

It was recognized such models (e.g. the weak or brutal father; the stupid, callous police; the ineffectual mother or teacher; the criminal prospering until his downfall in the last three minutes of a program) for identification, delinquent social standards, values and mores are often representations of the kind of reality with which the child is only too familiar. It is the accumulated effects of such programs over long periods of time and during the most influential years of the child's life which is of most concern.<sup>47</sup>

A final word on the Code from Schramm. He says they have enforced a degree of surface morality. They have not enforced quality. They have not produced any more truthful programs--that is productions which emphasize the essentially honest, rather than the phony. Truthfulness is a quality of morality and in that sense they (codes) have not been able to legislate morality. In short, the responsibility of mass communicators is a higher horizon than can be reached through codes of conduct.<sup>48</sup>

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### (1) Parents

Although I mentioned earlier that children are the ones best prepared for accepting the new culture through television viewing, I also want to state that mass entertainment can be a tremendous force for good or evil, particularly in shaping the character of the young. A grave responsibility, therefore, rests with

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<sup>47</sup>National Council on Crime and Delinquency. Problems and Controversies in Television and Radio. p. 280. (From a summary report on findings and recommendations of the conference (June, 1960) on impact of motion pictures and television on youth).

<sup>48</sup>Wilbur Schramm and William Rivers. Responsibility in Mass Communication. (New York: Harper and Row. Rev. Ed. 1969). pp. 239-240.

parents in the guidance of their progeny towards sufficient and correct viewing.

Mass entertainment rains down on civilized men today like atomic fallout. As somebody said recently, "A producer detonates a television show or a movie and, for weeks and months and years afterwards, the results fall on millions of people all over the country, indeed all over the world."

If parents observe the behavior and attitudes of their children, they should quickly learn whether the effects of television are forming good or evil habits in their children. They should, as well, be able to gauge their norms and standards. The old maxims, "Show me your friends and I can tell what you are" or "We grow like those with whom we associate" can be brought into play. Youngsters who, through association with criminals, sadists, or drunkards for twenty-five hours a week do not necessarily have to relate to them. But some are influenced and that is why I insist on the role of parents as being very important in deciding what is good or not good for their child. A Saturday Review editorial has the three following "food-for-thought" samples:

(a) In a Boston suburb, a nine-year-old boy reluctantly showed his father a report card heavily decorated with red marks, then proposed as a solution that he and his Dad give the teacher a box of poisoned chocolates for Christmas. "It's easy, Dad," quipped the boy, "they did it on television last week. A man wanted to kill his wife, so he gave her candy with poison in it and she didn't know who did it."

(b) In Brooklyn, New York, a six-year-old son of a policeman asked his father for real bullets because his little sister "doesn't die for real when I shoot her like they do when the sheriff kills them."

(c) In Los Angeles, a housemaid caught a seven-year-old boy

in the act of sprinkling ground glass into the family's lamb stew. There was no malice behind the act. It was purely experimental, having been inspired by curiosity to learn whether it would really work as well as it did on television.<sup>49</sup>

A Congressional investigating committee stated that "The greatest danger of such television programs, movies and books is that they are sought out by those children who are least able to tolerate this kind of material."<sup>50</sup> The Director of the California Youth Authority put it this way: "In talking with many boys, we have found that the method used in juvenile crimes of violence has frequently been taken from a television program." Again in New York, of 663 teenagers tested, one out of three admitted that television had some detrimental effect on his life. The reasons given were: too many crime programs; interference with homework; a tendency promoted by television to mimic and imitate. Unfortunately, it is not clear if they are referring only to what was regarded as evil on television. Emulation and imitation of what is good, I must assume, is also possible.<sup>51</sup>

How to get to the children may be the next question. Parents must not give up, even if a constant argument ensues. The point to remember is that the constant argument can and should be a loving argument. Such an argument involves listening by the parent, so a lot of patience and time might be involved, but the parent should not give up. "Parents need to help teenagers gain

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<sup>49</sup>Quoted by Sister Julianus. How Television and Movies Affect the Young. Liguorian Pamphlets. (Miss.: Liguorian Press. 1967). pp. 9-10.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid. p. 10

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. pp. 10-11.

insights and to value themselves," writes a well-known Catechetical worker.<sup>52</sup> He also says, "In fruitful interaction, parent and teenager are willing to learn from one another. Christian parents cannot throw their arms in the air and become bystanders as their children grow up, but make it clear that certain values and commitments are not negotiable as far as parents are concerned."<sup>53</sup>

Some people contend that values are no more, that the age of permissiveness does not cater to moral standards or old values now outdated. But let it be realized that man, in all ages and through to the end of time, will always have to face responsibility, if he's to have any freedom. There can be no privileges without obligations. We must adhere to the law, or else face the consequences of our actions. It's important, therefore, for parents and teens to examine the facts and to see where true values lie. A growth in awareness is important. "The concerned parent is involved in a process of modern parenthood which cannot but be intimidating. He has to be flexible; yet he has to stand for limits, for boundaries."<sup>54</sup>

Plainly, authority is required and if there's an authority there must be obedience and obedience to the lawful authority,

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<sup>52</sup>James Di Giacomo. "We Don't Want What You Want." Sign. (December 1970). p. 31.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid. pp. 10-11.

whether it's the parent or teacher or whoever, should constitute within each one a stable and upright character. Without authority, no society can function. Likewise, without authority, no family can function. Obedience and character formation are almost synonymous, and part of the latter is the assimilation of moral principles. A certain author puts it this way:

"Morality" as such cannot be taught deliberately--but you can stimulate the development of a child's moral judgment. Parents can do it. Teachers can do it. They can do it in a gentle, interesting way--much as Socrates did with his disciples in the fifth century B.C.--by raising leading questions about difficult moral dilemmas and letting the children have their say.<sup>55</sup>

Naturally, for this process to be accomplished, the spirit of obedience and respect for authority must be assumed.

Probably the most important years in a child's life are the first seven. It is during that time that the child is closest to its parents and also the most impressionable. These years are extremely formative during which some of his basic attitudes and beliefs are built up, but probably not formal beliefs. So there's no need for moral discussions, during these early years. A much better period for these discussions is between the ages of nine and twelve years. It's during this time that parents should listen to the opinions and moral beliefs of their children and pay more attention to the reasoning behind these beliefs than to the answers themselves.

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<sup>55</sup>Maya Pines. "Teach Your Child to Behave 'Morally.'" Reader's Digest. (October 1970). p. 164.

According to a Harvard psychologist:

In general, families that encourage their children to express their opinions and listen to them without necessarily agreeing, produce youngsters with a higher level of morality. These (dialogues) open up new aspects of their children's minds and they encourage children to reach out for the best thinking they've got, speeding the growth of their all-important moral judgment. A second period occurs in late high school, when movement to principled thinking begins, usually.<sup>56</sup>

If there's a television problem in the home, where do the foregoing dictates lead? A problem could be whether or not to rush over and switch off the television set when a senseless and violent scene gathers momentum on the screen, in order to protect the children against the "fall-out," which we mentioned earlier. There must be a correct way for parents to react. Probably the best way is to sit through the episode, whether it's violence, sex, anxiety or tension, and later discuss the program with the family. The parents have to remember that they cannot constantly watch programs with their children or indeed supervise the viewing, when their children visit some of their friends down the street.

Therefore, to be realistic about viewing this most powerful medium, parents should try to gauge what programs are best suited for their children and a lot depends on whether their child or children are easily frightened or disturbed. The next step, after allowing their children to view, is to assume the responsibility of viewing, or at least part viewing the programs. If false ideas or false values are portrayed as desirable, then parents

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid. Quoting Prof. Lawrence Kohlberg. p. 166. (He has spent fifteen years studying children's morality).



should help to correct this by a discussion some short time later. Leading questions can set off the discussion. Balanced and healthy opinions should be the end result.

Nevertheless, even before a worthwhile discussion can take place, there are certain prerequisites on the part of the parents. These include: a child who has a physical closeness to loving parents; a child who knows approval and reward for being good and also has been given discipline when it was required; a child who gets encouragement to defend his views but who has been gradually and patiently guided to a correct way of thinking when his views were based on false premises; a child who has had the advantage of waiving the burden of commercial pressures through seductive advertising, when the parents pointed out to him the subtlety and expense of the industry; and a child who has had his viewing curtailed in preference to homework and household duties.

In such a household there is a basis for dialogue and true values are at a premium. The child will sense it and with the possibility of a discussion always present, the members of the family will get to know each other better, through each discussion. This is a useful way to build a family as parents and child or children pool their ideas and their experiences. This is the kind of family our society of today needs so badly.

## (2) Television managers

The following directives are a resume of a lecture by Sir Hugh Greene, Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>57</sup> Broadcasting's true objectives are a breaking down of

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<sup>57</sup>Sir Hugh Greene. "The Conscience of a Programme Director." Problems and Controversies in Television and Radio. pp. 127-136.

barriers much as the same principles pertaining to ecumenism. We've got to try to see the other person's point of view and why he adheres to a particular doctrine. It's our duty to find out the why of all this and, if each one tries, then both will emerge with a deeper and fuller knowledge of the other. This also helps towards livelier living.

When applied to broadcasting we obtain the same results, namely a more lively broadcasting, without which there would be only broadcasting to a limited and intellectually moribund audience, which is not the main purpose of broadcasting. The main purpose of the microphone and the screen is to make both of these available to the widest possible range of subjects and to the best exponents available of the differing views on any given subject. So broadcasters should encourage the examination of views and opinions in a healthy atmosphere where accepted attitudes are examined and tested to see if they can withstand the change of time and environment. This is one of the best ways of creating an understanding between people within a population with different viewpoints.

A balance between freedom and responsibility, which is a delicate one, should be the goal. Freedom should not mean total license but a strong editorial control and also a control over the programs of each producer. Control is exercised by way of persuasion instead of written directives, as well as by encouragement and discussion. Each programmer, in using his own judgment and applying the modes of good taste, can avoid censorship or attacks from upholders of cultural standards. A firm stand must always be taken on the side of sincerity and vision, whether in the field of public

affairs or in the less-easily judged world of arts, including the dramatic arts.

It's necessary to take into account the changes in society and to be relevant without being outrageous, but rather provoke the audience, through a healthy and careful assessment of issues within reasonable limits of tolerance. An important factor is to assume that the audience is capable of reasonable behavior and also one that can exercise its intelligence. So it's very important to select the time and circumstances to have such a reception from the audience (in other words, the audience is not at all times in the mood for just any given program).

Too much governmental control and subserviance to sponsors really destroy the true independence of a broadcaster. True independence is indicated by the highest standards of truth, accuracy and impartiality and without these a station cannot be fully trusted. Neither, of course, can a station be trusted--and here a distinction is made regarding impartiality--if it is neutral or unbiased regarding truthfulness, justice, freedom, compassion, tolerance, racialism or extreme forms of political belief. Indeed anything that clashes with basic moral values or is damaging to society, to peace or to good order, is to be abhorred by the broadcaster. If broadcasting is used to support erroneous doctrines, values or philosophies, then it can be accused of conspiring against society.

In the final analysis, let the producers and program directors use their own consciences, their own background and training, to decide what goes on the air. The general code of practice

of a station then becomes the determining factor. If, through that code--whether written or unwritten--a proper sensitivity to the world at large and a concern for the relationship of the audience with their broadcasters, has been built up, the program director and his staff can operate in an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance.

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