

Mass Media and National Development

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Wilbur Schramm

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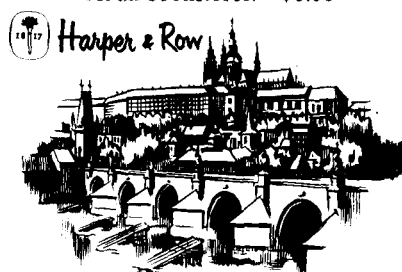
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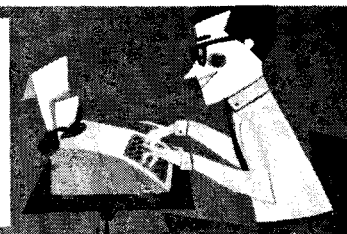


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Top of My Head



On TV War Is Heck

IN A speech delivered recently the Republican nominee for the Presidency announced: "We are at war! As sure as the sun sets in the west we are at war." Of course the Senator was kidding. Because if we are at war why was a major general of the Air Force Reserves in North Dakota instead of South Vietnam? I'm sure the Senator was misquoted. Most likely what he really said was "as sure as the sun sets in the east."

On the other hand, he may have been watching too much television. On TV we are at war. It started a few years back on CBS with *Sergeant Bilko*. Well, the Army having been taken care of, ABC decided the sailor should be represented, so they piped up *McHale's Navy*. But what is a Navy without an Air Force—so ABC this season gave the Navy cover with an Air Force. And now we have *No Time for Sergeants*.

Now CBS, operating on the theory that just as the Yankees can't win without Mantle, neither can a war be won without the Marines. So they drafted a show called *Gomer Pyle*. Well, ABC's Defense Department, operating on the theory that man cannot live by bread alone, foamed in some Waves to boost the morale of our brave fighting men who unstintingly risk their lives in the defense of our country for a half-hour each week.

So far the critics have pinned few medals on any of our new fighting entries. Considering some of the scripts with which these men have had to do battle, it seemed the least we could do was to have awarded our boys away from home and family a medal for bravery. *Gomer Pyle* (in *Gomer Pyle*) and Sam Jackson (in *No Time for Sergeants*) seemed nervous. Being rookies, they would be understandably so under the constant, deadly rat-tat-tat of that laugh track. Who wouldn't be nervous? We are, even in our cozy living rooms. So you can imagine their condition with all those gags and deadly bon mots whizzing past their heads!

The key symbol in any TV comedy war program is "KP." That's the big laugh this year, which replaces Dean Martin's libations and Liberace's jackets. And, needless to say, in their premieres both *Gomer Pyle* and Sam Jackson were immediately and hilariously punished

with kitchen duty. Of course, in the case of the Waves in *Broadside*, their punishment will probably be to keep them out of the kitchen.

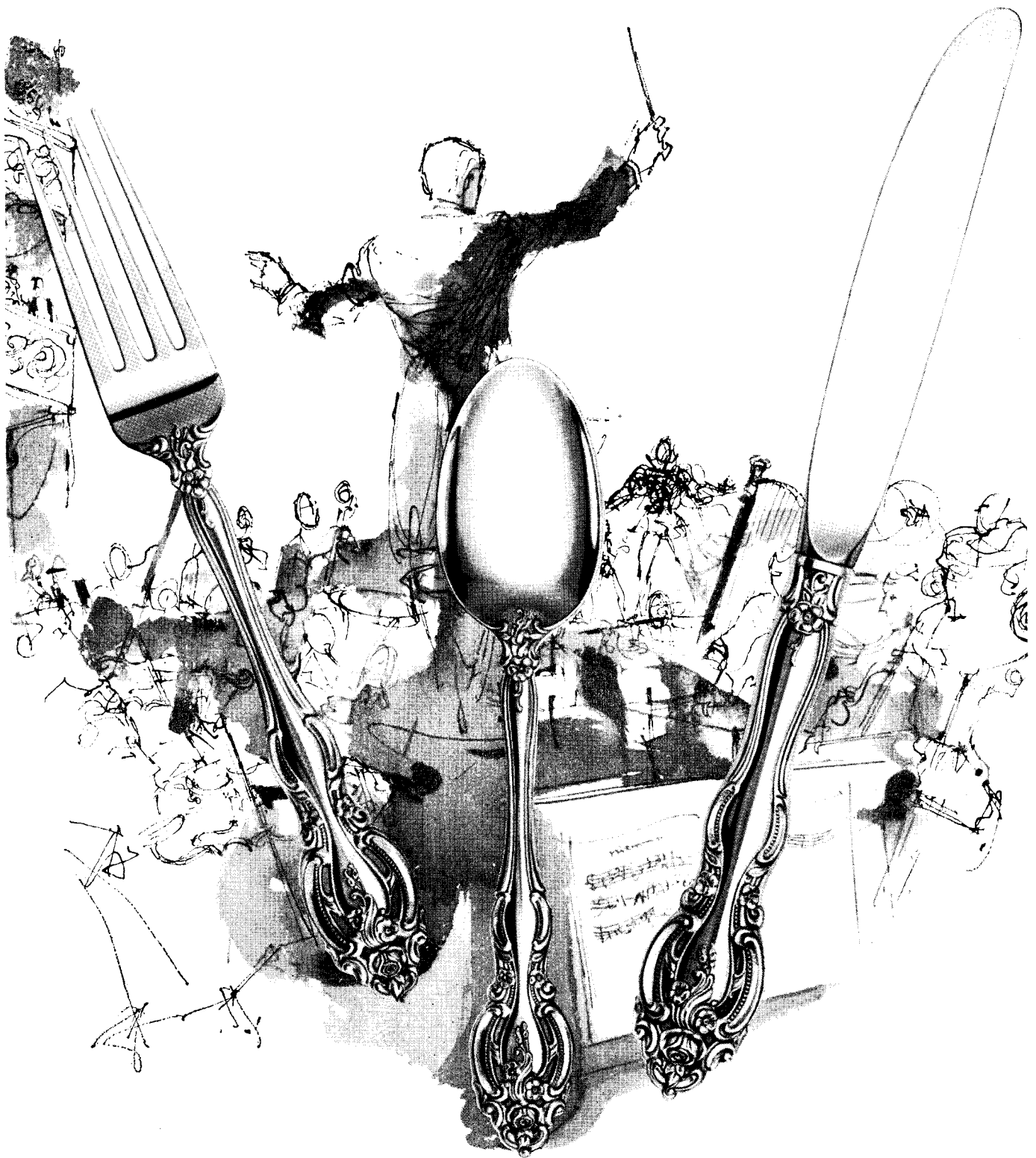
But in this welter of new programs all is not the smell of battle. What a haven of comfort there was in a Walt Disney show about a hound who thought he was a raccoon, instead of a man who thought he was a soldier. Similarly, there was quiet pleasure in a new program called *Bewitched*. And in the opening Bing Crosby show was a needed change in which the husband wasn't stupid and his wife didn't try to outsmart him. They solved a small identifiable domestic problem intelligently and entertainingly. And no one walked over to answer a knock at the door or a ring of the phone to the accompaniment of a loud laugh track.

FRENZIED laughter from the TV screens does not prognosticate a show's success or longevity. As a matter of fact, the laugh track is singlehandedly responsible for the low estate in which television comedy finds itself. Writers of comedic lines don't have the challenge any more of worrying about whether a line will get a laugh. As long as that electronic device retains its sense of humor they're in business. Their problem is timing the electronically produced laugh to come on just after the joke is told rather than to anticipate it before the punch line is half delivered—as is too often the case.

If TV viewers aren't discerning, they will be lulled into a false sense of being entertained because the laugh tracks tell them the war shows are humorous. So the networks will start to pile up more Gomers. Is it too much to hope that the networks may come up one day very soon with a comedy series about the Peace Corps? But if I know networks they don't tinker with success, and to them war is a hell of a lot of money. So if these war shows win the battle of the ratings with their laugh tracks we may be laughed right into World War III.

And if that ever happens, what a low rating that show's going to get! I hear those nuclear bombs can knock your antenna right off your roof. To say nothing of what else they can do to you. Man, I understand they're worse than cigarettes!



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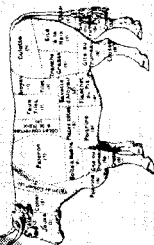
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SR's Checklist of the Week's New Books

Art

EDVARD MUNCH. By Johan H. Langaard and Reidar Redvold. McGraw-Hill. \$19.95 to Dec. 31; \$23.50 thereafter.

VOLTRON: Sculpture of David Smith. Text by Giovanni Carandente. Abrams. \$15.

Crime, Suspense

DON'T CRY FOR LONG. By Thomas E. Dewey. Simon & Schuster. \$3.50.

THE GUARDIANS. By Steve Bracken. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. \$3.50.

Current Affairs

DANGER ON THE RIGHT. By Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein. Random House. \$4.95.

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS. By John F. Kennedy. Hardbound, Harper & Row, \$2.95. Paperback, Popular Library, 50¢.

REGULATING UNION GOVERNMENT. Edited by Marten S. Estey, Philip Taft, and Martin Wagner. Harper & Row. \$4.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL EUROPE. By E. A. Gutkind. Free Press. \$17.95.

Education

ISSUES IN EDUCATION. Edited by Bernard Johnston. Houghton Mifflin. \$6.95.

Essays

NOT UNDER OATH: Essays and Reflections. By John Kieran. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

Esthetics

THE IRRESPONSIBLE ARTS. By William Snaith. Atheneum. \$5.

Fiction

THE COMPLETE NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN. Edited by Charles Neider. Doubleday. Two volumes, boxed. \$12.95.

I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. By Hans Koningsberger. Simon & Schuster. \$3.95.

ILYITCH SLEPT HERE. By Henry Carlisle. Lippincott. \$4.95.

THE LAST BELIEVERS. By David Karp. Harcourt, Brace & World. \$5.95.

A MULE FOR THE MARQUESA. By Frank O'Rourke. Morrow. \$3.95.

STATIONS. By Burt Blechman. Random House. \$3.95.

UNDER THE SKIN. By Nina Bawden. Harper & Row. \$3.95.

History

COMMUNISM AND THE FRENCH INTELLECTUALS, 1914-1960. By David Cauter. Macmillan. \$10.

EDWARDIAN ENGLAND, 1901-1914. By Simon Nowell-Smith. Oxford Univ. Press. \$15.

THE FALL OF EAGLES. By Zinaida Schavkovskoy. Harcourt, Brace & World. \$6.95.

ITALY AND THE GREAT WAR: Politics and

Culture, 1870-1914. By John A. Thayer. Univ. of Wisconsin Press. \$10.

THE LONG DEATH: The Last Days of the Plains Indian. By Ralph K. Andrist. Macmillan. \$8.95.

THE WAR IN THE WARDS. By Stanley Weintraub. Doubleday. \$4.50.

Literary Criticism

DEATH IN THE LITERATURE OF UNAMUNO. By Mario J. Valdes. Univ. of Illinois Press. Hardbound, \$5. Paperback, \$4.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY AND THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE. By John Buxton. St. Martin's. \$5.50.

Miscellany

BETTER HEALTH AFTER FIFTY. A Retirement Council publication. Harper & Row. \$4.50.

BIRDS OF THE NEW YORK AREA. By John Bull. Harper & Row. \$8.95.

THE DOG WHO LIVES AT THE WALDORF. By James Brough. Little, Brown. \$3.45.

THE FIRESIDE BOOK OF FOOTBALL. Edited by E. A. Newcombe. Simon & Schuster. \$8.95.

FLORIDA: POLLUTED PARADISE. By June Cleo and Hank Mesouf. Chilton. \$4.25.

LEATHER ARMCHAIRS. (A guide to the great clubs of London.) By Charles Graves. Coward-McCann. \$7.95.

LIFE UNDER SAIL. By Frank Snyder. Macmillan. \$9.95.

THE MACMILLAN BOOK OF BOATING. By William N. Wallace. Macmillan. \$12.50 to Dec. 31; \$14.95 thereafter. De Luxe edition, \$14.95 to Dec. 31; \$17.50 thereafter.

MY FAVORITE THINGS: A Personal Guide to Decorating and Entertaining. By Dorothy Rodgers. Atheneum. \$12.95 to Dec. 25; \$15 thereafter.

THE SEVENTEEN COOKBOOK, with a Complete Guide to Teen Party Giving. By the editors of *Seventeen* magazine. Macmillan. \$5.

THE SPORTSMAN'S NOTEBOOK. By H. G. Tappley. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. \$5.95.

(Continued on page 47)



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