

FROM THE RADIO-TV MAILBAG

To the Radio-Television Editor:

FOR what it's worth, this is a critique of television after three months' ownership of a set here in an Ohio village where we pick up seven stations, two with perfect clarity.

First, we're much surprised. We thought ourselves "too high-brow" for this toy. But we've been delighted with certain programs, have been amazed by the variety—though often too many stations broadcast the same time-slot with the same kind of program.

Second, we're fascinated with television's still only partly realized possibilities, not only as an entertainment medium, but also as a factor in education and public information.

The programs we like best have been the U. N. coverage, the news broadcasts—with maps and newsreels—the programs where we have had the opportunity to meet, informally, world personalities.

We miss most good music—symphony, opera, recitalists—and for this we return to radio and records. And we are much worried that radio is still doing a poor job in giving us enough of what it can give us best.

We find ourselves more critical of television, however, than we ever were of radio. The discipline of viewing, the total immobilization of the attention, apparently arouses strong reactions. The following points can be made, now that the novelty of tele-viewing has worn off:

(1) Shows presented in theatres are flat. The camera is limited to orchestra and balcony views of the stage. Performers play to the

visible audience too much. Applause, repeated curtain calls, and extended commentary by the masters of ceremony, slow up the show. The viewer at home feels too much like an uninvited guest.

(2) Visual performance, entertainment for the eye, is still too rare. Dancing offers most. Also, pantomime. Plays are too often "staged." The camera ought to be the viewer's eyes, not his theatre chair.

(3) Backgrounds, scenery are on the one hand, often too elaborate or, what is worse, entirely lacking. There are too many performers in gray suits standing against gray theatre curtains.

(4) The longer the commercial, the more frequent, the greater the boredom. The animated commercial is better than the "pitch."

(5) In general, all programs are too studio-bound. They could use more fresh-air, natural settings. Except for sporting events, the camera is never allowed outside the glare of the studios and theatres.

Now is the time for television to experiment, to buy, at whatever price, writers, producers, actors with imagination. As in the early days of the talkies, the novelty is the enchantment; a vast audience is on tap. But soon that audience will, as always, discriminate; will choose its programs as it chooses its books, its music and its other forms of entertainment.

NOLAN MILLER.

Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Color TV

To the Radio-Television Editor:

Please accept my sincere con-

gratulations on the outstanding job in the Sunday *TIMES* on color television. It was one of the most factual and impartial analyses of the whole problem that I have seen to date.

I am sure that much of the public confusion over color television would be eliminated if this type of information could be put in the hands of everyone.

JAMES D. SECREST,
 General Manager, Radio-Television
 Manufacturers Association,
 Washington, D. C.

Also

To the Radio-Television Editor:

I wish to comment on the full-page treatment you gave to color last Sunday. It was an excellent job—thorough and fair.

FRANK STANTON,
 President, Columbia Broadcasting
 System,
 New York City.

Opinion

To the Radio-Television Editor:

You worried me a little with your piece about *Suspense*, which, you said, "for thirty dreadful minutes thought it entertaining to dwell on the gruesomeness of violent death."

This seemed to me, and my wife, a woman of delicate sensibility, rather fine entertainment. We thought it dealt not with preoccupation with the gruesome, but with a tender desirable quality, to wit: compassion.

E. H. TIFFANY Jr.
 New York City.

Horror

To the Radio-Television Editor:

This is a note of thanks and appreciation for your criticisms.

It is a sad commentary on our present level of entertainment that puts shock and terror on the top.

Mrs. PHILIP F. ROSMARIN,
 New York City.

Con

To the Radio-Television Editor:

I am sick and tired of hearing television critics such as you criticize programs for presenting stories with horror as their themes. What do you expect to see on a *Suspense* story, a thrilling love story?

Suspense, *Lights Out*, etc., are programs meant for people like me. People who enjoy seeing on television horror and death in all its gruesome details.

If watching it was such a horrible ordeal, why force yourself? Turn the dial! Or shut up!

ARTHUR CORDTS,
 Brooklyn, N. Y.

Pro

To the Radio-Television Editor:

My heartiest congratulations on your article re: *Suspense Show*.

I will show this article to my family. I read your other reports—you're no crab either.

SIDNEY FRIED,
 New York City.