

# REFLECTIONS

## STUDY GUIDE CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN MOVIE

### Reflections in a Golden Eye

1. What is the value of criticism? Why does television viewing demand a critical audience?
2. What is a “metaphor”? Does having a metaphorical mind enable the viewer to appreciate TV more fully?
3. Would Thoreau consider television a “pretty toy”? Is it something much more than this?
4. How is TV like an eye? Is it golden?
5. What effect has the invention of television had on traditional education? Have educational methods changed much since the inception of TV?
6. “Would our society be better for watching late-night videotapes...of the trial of the Chicago Seven? Of Charles Manson? Of Lt. Calley?”
7. How does the fact of television censorship challenge the American guarantee of free speech and free press?

8. What is the difference between “descriptive” and “prescriptive” censorship? Would you favor “open TV” or “censored TV”?
9. Why doesn’t South Africa have national television?
10. What role does TV play in politics?

### **Afternoon at the Soap Opera**

1. Do you agree that the soap opera is “denial, masochistic, narcotic”? How did the actual cast feel about *The Secret Storm*?

### **TV’s Queasy Kid Stuff**

1. Why is *Sesame Street* so appealing to children?
2. What is the “Dagwood Syndrome”? Does exposing children to stupid TV males and spineless fathers alter their respect for paternal intellect and authority?
3. What should parents do about the distorted images of men and women that their children are exposed to on television?

### **Americanned Creativity**

1. Does subliminal advertising on TV exist? If so, is it immoral? Illegal?
2. What is the “Hard Sell”? What do you think is the most offensive “Hard Sell” on TV today?
3. Is Gore Vidal’s assessment of the TV commercial correct? Are commercials “more often than not more enjoyable and intelligent than the bumper shows they sponsor”?
4. Give examples of commercials which can be classified as: “Security Sell”; “Sex Sell”; “Musical Sell”; “Ego-trip Sell”;

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**HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK**

“Catch-phrase Sell”; “Epic Sell”; and “Magic Sell.” Why is it important to understand TV advertising techniques such as these?

5. What kinds of attitudes does TV sell?

### **Old Stereotypes, New Myths**

1. What is a “stereotype”? What are some of the stereotypes created by TV?

2. Does TV reflect our culture accurately and completely? Is it the twentieth-century “folk-medium”?

3. What is an “archetype”? Do you agree that TV employs classical archetypes in its dramas, comedies and Westerns? Is the comparison too far-out?

4. Name two recent TV shows which use the Good Woman and the Evil Woman archetypes.

5. What criticism does this text level at the current shows which feature Black performers?

6. What is the drawback of the Nielsen rating system?

7. What innovations must tele-planners make so that TV will become a more meaningful expression in our culture?

## **Projection Project**

### **SHOOT YOUR OWN MOVIE! On Your Own, or as a Class Project**

A basic premise of film and TV viewing is, once you've gotten behind a camera your perception and appreciation of the art of television increases. So, sharpen your critical ability.

For less than two dollars, two (or more) people can share three minutes of fifty feet of 8 or Super-8 color movie film. Buy Anscochrome II or Dynacolor movie film. Both are cheap and processing is included.

Borrow a camera or recruit a group of four or five, and rent a Super-8 from your local photo shop. (Around four dollars.) You can take turns shooting, helping, and learning from one another. Make five commercials, or work together as a production crew on one sixty-second spot. You'll be surprised that the shorter a commercial is, the more salient a punch it needs.

### **SUGGESTIONS FILMMAKING 101**

1. Decide on your product, theme, or message. Decide the kind of Sell you want. Maybe you'll try for a Hard Sell to gain an appreciation of that particular form. Use a 45-rpm record, street sounds on tape, or a recording of the TV news. Write your own catch-phrase dialogue.

2. Before filming people, experiment shooting a few magazine pictures close up. If you have no flood lamps, improvise with sunlight through a window. Decide how long you want each image on screen. Super-8 shows eighteen frames per second.

3. If your camera has a zoom lens, zoom in or out from a part of the picture to the whole. If shooting real-life action, don't pan the camera (move it from side-to-side in a sweeping motion) too fast.

4. Editing. When the three minutes of raw footage returns from the processor, the fun begins. Buy a package of editing tape. It costs only a few cents. Using either an editing machine or a straight fingernail scissors, cut out the bad sequences and splice together the good in the proper order.

5. When your film is complete, project it on a screen, or on a wall, playing your 45-rpm record or your tapes as your soundtrack on another machine.

If you solo, you'll bear the whole creative burden, all the success or all the failure. Maybe you work best that way. In a group production, however, you have obvious advantages.

Different strokes for different folks, right?

Some of your crew may specialize in one phase of production, depending on your needs: writing, direction, camera, editing, lighting, animation, titles, sound recording, set decoration, costuming.

Small crews often double in the usual professional combinations of writer-director, director-editor, cameraman-editor, cameraman-soundman. The combos are as varied as your talents, interests, and ambitions.

