Radio and Education.

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Over a hundred million people in this country listen more or less regularly to the radio. The average American has his set tuned in for some four hours a day. These are striking facts which, with others no less striking, never fail to attract attention to the subject. But the real interest of radio lies back of the statistics. Moreover it is not only with their implications that we are concerned, but with the bearing of purpose on practice in the wider social context of our common plight today.

The commodity which radio purveys and the structure of the industry as we know it are no mere accidents. Both are the product of circumstances and forces which have brought them into being, which condition the structure and affect the service. Radio does not exist in a vacuum.

Neither radio nor education, nor the relation of one to the other, can therefore usefully be studied except in this wider context. More, perhaps, than any other invention of modern science, radio mirrors back to us our present state, the forces with which we contend and the decisions of purpose and of practice which confront us.

My approach itself requires clearer definition, for it conditions at once the aspects of radio to be studied and the conclusions to be drawn. To clarify my purpose, I venture to quote Thomas Jefferson. "This country, which has given to the world the example of physical liberty, owes to it that of moral emancipation also, for as yet it is but nominal with us." The moral implications of radio's influence on people are, then, chosen as the basis of appraisal of what it does and what it may yet do. These are chosen advisedly because we face a moral issue in the revolutionary situation which confronts us. From this standpoint, radio may seem to be in the position of the rich man in the parable, who went away sorrowing "for he had great possessions." The parallel, of course, is not exact in that the radio industry, unlike the rich man of the parable, is not confronted, in the matter of choice and of decision, by one who was himself the incarnation of the good. Radio, rather, stands over against a public, and agents of the public, as divided and confused about ends as is radio itself.

If, at this early stage, then, we may hazard a generalization, it is that this infant prodigy, this new instrument of power, as yet lacks consistent purpose. It is with the absence of policy and the reasons for that absence that we shall be concerned, and with an attempt to clarify what in the course of time may yet emerge as policy enriched and fortified by purpose.

In recognition of the fact that undivided purpose is absent, and that its absence is characteristic of our state, as of that of radio, is to be found the corrective to false hopes and a clue to the proper context of thought about the problem. Science and invention have tempted us to exaggerated hopes, to an undue preoccupation with the unlimited means at our disposal, to concern with processes, and to oversight of ends, ends, mark you, that are unattainable and yet to be pursued. The prevalent disillusionment among the young and the general perplexity stem largely from this source of error. We emerge from an era of shallow optimism only to realize that in a quite fundamental sense, whether the context is that of education, of politics, or of society, "the road winds up hill all the way, yes, to the very end." In spite of all the ballyhoo and promotional extravagances of the radio industry, which flatter only to deceive, radio offers no prospect of a cultural millennium. It is a two-edged weapon, capable of great service but adding equally to the complexity of our problems as persons and as collective members of society. Like other instruments of power, radio is there to use and the outcome of its use depends on the integrity and purpose of those who control it, on the powers of response of those who listen, and on the emergent pattern in the kaleidoscope of interacting forces—those "objective influences" of which we hear so much and by which industry and listener alike are held to be affected.

Our concern, then, is with the moralities of broadcasting. To assess them fairly and relevantly we shall have to concern ourselves with three aspects of the problem, first with the inherent possibilities of the medium itself, second, with the limitations imposed upon their use by the structure of the industry, and, third, with limitations and opportunities determined by the nature and circumstance of radio's listening public.

First, then, radio's distinctive attributes. Radio has unique resources. What are they? One can cite but a few. It has range, what is technically known as coverage. It disposes of time and distance. It at once rids us in some measure of the solitude of isolation, and imposes upon us that deeper solitude which comes of wider knowledge and experience. In this, as in so many other respects that we shall touch on, radio at once exemplifies and aggravates conditions

peculiar to our time. The implications of this first attribute of radio are too many and too complex to name. A few may serve as illustration. Radio has range. It, therefore, increases and accelerates the impact of ideas, of information, of events, of a multitude of stimuli, which by their very quantity affect our outlook and our poise. "The world," as Wordsworth put it, "is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." As we shall see later, the nature of such impact is affected by the purposes and interests of those who control radio. Where values are concerned, everything depends upon the accent of emphasis. If we are concerned with the moral implications of the radio, we shall, therefore, do well to identify the accent of its emphasis, those implications of value, which are residual in the listener's consciousness as consequence of the total impact of what he hears. Radio thus, inherently and without willing it, aggravates what Professor Dewey calls "the ratio of impersonal to personal activities which determine the course of events." It constitutes yet another of those objective forces which have induced a sense of helplessness among individuals and robbed them of any real feeling of participation in events.

Radio in one sense, by eliminating spatial isolation, makes of us citizens of the world. Does it, or can it, also make us good citizens? One may at least hazard the view that the very power and opportunity inherent in this instrument may defeat its own ends by the very wealth of the resources which it offers. Our minds and our emotions are on the whole less efficiently organized than our stomachs; but even the stomach has limited powers of digestion. It is arguable that radio creates for us a surfeit of stimulus, of information, and suggestion, which *unless counterbalanced by controls of purpose, selection, and direction,* may well wreak more havoc than advantage.

Another corollary of radio's resource of coverage is that it constitutes the people's instrument. It reaches all, and, therefore, must serve all. The implications of this fact for education will be touched on later. The abuse of the fact in terms of the misleading cliché that radio must therefore "give the people what it wants" will also be referred to when we survey the structure of the industry. But a challenge to that assertion must be offered here and now. Who are the people? And what are their wants? In a final and decisive sense the people are persons, individuals demanding of us that reverence for personality which is inherent in democratic thought. The yardstick of radio's achievement, the measure of its constructive, as against its potentially destructive, influence, is the degree to which it enhances in individuals that sense of and that capacity for being

persons—individual, discriminating, morally, sensitively aware, which is the final object of all education. In the matter of purely literary taste and judgment, Matthew Arnold once suggested that the reader should have in mind lines chosen from some great passage in literature by which to test the inherent quality of what he reads. Extreme as it may sound, a similar yardstick might well prove useful for the listener over against every program that he hears in terms of a question as to whether this or that that comes over the radio contributes to freedom, freedom, that is, conceived of as an enhancement of personality. Is he more or is he less a person for the experience which radio offers? It is by some such yardstick that the structure of our society and the contributory elements therein are likely to be judged in a decisive hour, if not consciously, at least subconsciously by what, for want of a better term, we may call the will of the people. The revolutionary context of our time has reference to this very issue. Radio is merely a microcosm of the wider context of politics and of society.

Radio not only has great range but great resources of technique. American radio in all but one significant field has carried these techniques to a greater degree of skillful perfection than that which obtains in any country. Again the subject is one too vast to be adequately covered, but three instances at least of the peculiar techniques of radio may be mentioned, enhanced as they are by the vast, sweeping range and reach of the wave lengths of the air. Even in this sophisticated age, there attaches still to radio some of the attributes of magic. Its disposal of space and time still carries a romantic appeal which holds our interest. There is an expectancy associated with all listening, a wonder not unlike that associated with the working of a miracle. Communication between persons, wonderful as it is, we take for granted. But communication over the air still has this attribute of wonder. It is for this reason that the spoken word, the radio talk, is, potentially at any rate, charged with such great possibilities. President Roosevelt's fireside talks are an outstanding example of that contagion of personality which is associated with good radio talk. The skills which go to it and their variant potentialities deserve a chapter of their own. But suffice it here to say that to convey intimacy and absolute sincerity is of the essence of the matter. Few men achieve these skills and, for reasons peculiar to broadcasting in this country, their development has gone relatively by default. There are, of course, signal exceptions, but they are few. But the fact remains that the spoken word over the radio constitutes, perhaps, the most powerful integrating force that we have yet enjoyed. There is, of course, much that radio cannot communicate, as we shall

see later. But the resources of the spoken word, still to be developed and exploited beyond anything we now dream of, stand as a signal example of a technique that has attached to it one attribute at least of very special significance. That attribute is associated with the two words already mentioned—intimacy and sincerity. Circumstances recently forced on radio a serious and dangerous distortion of this unique resource. It was inevitable that in a presidential election the microphone should be set up in places and under circumstances alien to radio's true purpose and sphere of service. Candidates and candidates' supporters spoke before vast crowds, playing upon mass emotions, evoking mass response. The atmosphere of the hustings was carried into millions of homes as a brutal assault on privacy and as a travesty of that art of quiet, personal communication, which is, potentially at least, one of the glories of radio technique. Here again we come upon the two-edged weapon. There is no need to point to the analogy of its destructive use in the totalitarian countries where contempt for persons has become an axiom of politics. Let the matter rest at that.

Let us now turn briefly to a technique of a very different order. Radio drama, not itself very significant as a new form of art and soon, no doubt, to be discarded altogether with the advent of television, today commands perhaps the greatest and the most consistent audience of any programs broadcast. The fact that in radio the stage is the listener's imagination, coupled with that element of magic already spoken of, gives to this technique a power over emotion and imagination with which the student of "soap opera" is familiar. The fact that this technique is used for purposes with which education can have no dealings cannot conceal or dispose of the fact that we have here a powerful means of influence where influence is most needed, that is, where values are concerned and the purging rather than the prostitution of emotional response. From the point of view of Jefferson's moral emancipation, what is significant is that we have here again the means to destroy or, not to cure, but to alleviate. Cure there is none, for us or for any generation. Yet in the range, the coverage of radio, and its resources of technique we have, as has been said, an instrument which is the peoples' instrument, available to us at a time when claims upon the peoples' intelligence and understanding are greater in extent and in intensity than they have ever been. How comes it then that we are so far short of that illusory millennium, that, indeed, we may not even be upon the road which leads somewhere? At least part of the answer can be found in observation of the structure of the industry, which now constitutes our second port of call.

Here, as throughout this study, it will be well to stress again the wider implications of the radio both in respect of cause and of effect. Radio is what it is because we are what we are, habituated to a circumstance and outlook which not only derive from past history and tradition, but are themselves in some measure out of date. It is in this sense that the structure of the radio industry is not an accident. It derives from principles of policy which rest upon past precedent and are inherent in the pattern of American thought and practice. Radio as an industry stands for the principle of free, competitive enterprise associated with the profit motive. By such a practice and by such motive forces the resources of invention and experiment have been made available to the public. It was so that radio was launched, but it was not so entirely that radio developed. (Here again radio illustrates trends and developments of outlook and organization which hopefully affect one's estimate of what is yet to come.) Only a few years elapsed before it became evident that unrestricted competition was impracticable. A gentlemen's agreement between the contestants for channels of the air broke down and led to chaos, and the industry itself sought regulation and protection from government. From Mr. Hoover, then Acting Secretary of Commerce, came a first definition of principles which in the same breath acknowledged the validity of free enterprise and introduced an element of control by government restricting the wanton ravages of cut-throat competition. These three principles are worth quotation. They claim first that government and, therefore, the people have today the control of the channels of the air, in itself a new and significant departure of principle and policy. They claim, secondly, that radio activities are largely free, free of monopoly, free in program and free in speech. The third is a moral principle. "We can protect the home by preventing the entry of printed matter destructive to its ideals, but we must double guard the radio." But, as has been rightly pointed out, no protection of specific ideals is possible unless they are determined and used as a basis for restricting program content. The agency later created to define these ideals in terms of "the public interest, convenience and necessity" was the Federal Communications Commission. Years have passed, but little flesh has been put upon the bare bones of that equivocal phrase. Yet, tardy and tentative as the Commission has proved in practice, its continuing existence is significant, a sign of the emergence of a new concept in politics which is slowly, painfully gaining acceptance. That concept has to do with the new and wider scope and responsibility of government. It is paralleled by the emergent conception of public service, to be associated with, and a prior condition of, continued private enterprise. The activities of the F.C.C. continue

to be resented by the trade, but its influence cannot be questioned, even if it is indirect. Uneasy about further regulation and control, the industry has in some measure put its own house in order. It has its own moral code, excellent within the rather narrow limits which it has so far reached. Moreover, "public service" has been adopted by the industry as the specific label for certain aspects of its work. Under this head, to be sure, we find an odd miscellany. The motive back of its compilation is not wholly disinterested, but it remains significant as a laggard trend.

If thus far there seems to be but grudging recognition of what radio has done, let us at once and with admiration concede two signal achievements in the field of public service. Whatever qualifications, in respect of countervailing practice, we must add, regardless of how far research may disclose limits of actual effectiveness, no one can lightly question the efficiency or the integrity of American radio in offering its listeners a full and constant service of news, and in maintaining the principle of free and fair expression of opinion on a wide range of controversial questions. These entries on the credit side are not unique, but they are outstanding. The question they raise—and it is vital from the point of view of education, the effectiveness of which depends upon consistent purpose—is why such credit entries are so far offset by debit entries, which at some points detract from, and at others wholly nullify, the value of such service rendered. The nature of these defects has to be cited. They have, also, to be traced to their source, if we are fairly to appraise radio and education as they stand and as the relation between them may develop in the future. The source appears to be the structure of the industry, the motive forces which have brought it into being. Can man serve God and Mammon? Is the profit motive, in fact, compatible with public service? The point I would here stress is that the posing of such a question implies, and falsely, an absolute choice between positive and negative reply. There are no such absolutes where human practice is concerned. Free enterprise, associated with the profit motive, is the occasion both of merits and defects of radio in America. The total elimination of defects we shall not see; nor shall we taste perfection. The problem is one of adjustment, of the elimination of a self-destructive conflict of purpose. The nature of that conflict we can, as I say, discover only by examination of defects and by diagnosis of their cause. The following are samples.

Radio's coverage is centered on densely populated areas where large audiences and big profits can be realized. Rural listeners are penalized, have relatively inferior service and choice. Competition runs counter to public service in respect of program balance. Dupli-

cation of programs on different wave lengths is monotonously evident throughout the day and night. Concern for profit leads to a concentration on programs judged to be most "popular." Minorities are neglected and even the limited potentialities of listeners with the lowest intelligence are seldom exploited. There is a monotony of entertainment, even though that entertainment masters at times greater resourcefulness and skill than anywhere on earth. Further, the large expenditures which radio involves tend, as in industry, towards centralization of control. The advantages are obvious. Resources become available which could not otherwise be afforded. But the disadvantages, which receive less advertisement, are serious. That culture is most enduring which is native, which springs from the soil. Culture cannot be distributed by mail order. It is in this sense above all others that New York is not America; still less is Hollywood. As radio becomes centralized, the role and status of local stations diminish. They become increasingly the retail distributors of a large central store. And yet for that large percentage of the population which lives in rural or small urban districts research has shown that the influence of local personality, the voice of the neighbor, still is greater than that of radio's giant creations. It is not insignificant, for instance, that in Iowa loyalty to a familiar local personality has secured, in one instance, for news interpretations and in another for musical appreciation audiences greater even than that for some of radio's top flight entertainment stars. For the better interpretation of the whole to the part, and even more of the part to the whole, we should do well still to foster that local initiative which centralization is rapidly destroying. Even more dangerous is that further consequence of centralized control by which the contact of the men of radio with their public becomes increasingly remote and impersonal. The listener is reduced to a bare statistic, an object of manipulation and exploitation which, as we shall see later, conflicts with that conception of human relations on which democratic faith itself is based.

The above considerations may seem remote from the problems of education. But they are strictly relevant, for education's influence, the accent of its emphasis, *even its opportunity to function,* depend upon the pattern of society which results from the interaction of individual parts. The above are but some of the defects of radio that stem directly from the motive forces inherent in its structure. Profit and competition in the old accepted sense of *laissez-faire* have had their day, and above all where the commodity purveyed is of such social consequence as that of radio. Hence that inauguration

of control by government as trustee for the public which has been mentioned.

But the worst and the most dangerous feature of American radio also stems directly from the profit motive. Promotional excesses, the ballyhoo of advertising, the high pitched appeals to the sensational, the constant holding of the top notes of the superlative, all these combine to achieve effects, the harmfulness of which is not capable of statistical analysis, but which with some justification one can claim *a priori* to be inherent in the process. Their danger, in a word, is the inducement of a slave mentality. They further, instead of countering, influences at work in other spheres of our experience. They aggravate that impression of individual helplessness over against objective forces which is a symptom of our neurotic state. The process, as I say, is inherent in the structure of the industry. It is the dialectic of large-scale manipulation, which, because involved in the necessity to secure a mass response to wholesale distribution of commodities, has to induce as far as possible an enslavement of the individual in matters of choice and discrimination, a constant of passivity. It has to induce the illusion of unity by methods of organized ballyhoo and the creation of stereotypes in the pattern of our likes and dislikes. Here again, radio is at once victim and agent. Because of their purposes, in this case the pursuit of profit, men become involved in a dialectic of behavior and of practice which assumes aspects of inevitability which are in fact illusory (because what a man wills conditions essentially what he does), but which assume such proportions of power as to *appear* to be beyond control. This from the point of view of education, or as I prefer to put it, from the point of view of morals is the crux of the whole matter.

The illusion of inevitability must be destroyed, or it will destroy us. If this analysis has any value, it centers on the passionate assertion that man today, as at all times, is not the victim of his circumstance but of his own blindness and deluded will. There is, indeed, a dialectic of events, an inescapable logic of consequence attendant upon any course of action. But it is our will, our purpose, which sets us upon the course. If a concern for profit or loyalties no longer compatible with the public interest outweigh in us that desire for moral emancipation which Jefferson sought, the consequence is clear. But let us not delude ourselves by substituting helplessness for irresponsibility as cause and as occasion. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings."

But how, it may be asked, does it come about that such enslavement is in fact practicable, that the public should prove such easy game? Is it fair to cast the whole blame in such a complex situation

on those who control radio? The answer is clear and certain. It is not fair, and no such blame is cast. Those in charge of radio are but part authors of the plot. Nor is it a plot of strict design, of sheer malign purpose. Radio, as I have attempted to point out, has interest only in a context far wider than that of the industry itself. We suffer, all of us, as members of society from a kind of moral jaundice. The blame is indeed distributed. Yet we must face the fact that those who are privileged in circumstance, in the possession of power, in the administration of high office, are in a very real and crucial sense their brother's keeper. There is emergent in the history of radio, as in the developing history of this country, a new and fuller realization of the meaning of trusteeship. It would be arrogant for any man to claim as his responsibility the changing of human nature. But human nature needs to be safeguarded. It is for us to cherish in ourselves and, according to our power and our position, still more for others the possibility of growth, to be vigilant lest "we lay waste our powers." The glaring disparities in opportunity for growth which have resulted from the particular direction of our wills in the context that we have studied are evident but still too little recognized in the society in which we live and from which we glean our comforts and our satisfactions. Concern for that disparity brings us to our third port of call, to radio's listening audience, to that state of the nation to which Mr. Roosevelt in early days persistently and properly drew our attention.

Over a hundred million citizens of the United States devote to radio time and attention only less than that which they devote to work and sleep. The reason why the process of enslavement, unwittingly being realized from day to day, is possible is largely to be found in circumstances common to the large majority of these hundred million people. These circumstances can here be stated only in terms of crude statistics. These listeners are uneducated. Thirty-four million adults have never enjoyed education beyond that of the fifth grade. These listeners are poor. Fourteen millions earn incomes of no more than $26.00 a month. The vast majority of radio's audience enjoy incomes of less than $1500 a year, millions of them much less. These listeners are poor, uneducated, lonely. Their circumstances make them such. That sense of belonging, to which Professor Lasswell has constantly referred, is taken from them by the privations of economic circumstance and the still more devastating inroads on their self-respect of the inhuman tasks which they are called to undertake in industry. The sense of personal participation diminishes. The social fabric of loyalties is undermined. The personal relations of employer and employed that once gave meaning and value to labor disappear

as the forces of centralized control work upon them. As Bacon put it, "Little do men perceive what solitude is and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company and faces are but a gallery of pictures and talk but a tinkling symbol where there is no love. *Magna civitas, magna solitudo.*" Radio's audience is the human stuff on which huge objective forces, or as I prefer to say, the misdirected wills of men, have worked this havoc of solitude.

Some of the consequences, for radio and education, are beginning to emerge from the findings of research. The evidence is still inadequate for full and effective diagnosis and ameliorative measures. But it is ample (and for our major purposes we can forget statistics), to throw light upon the problem which educators are still slow and even reluctant to face. Cursory as this survey has been, inadequate as it must be as even a blueprint for action, it will, I hope, have suggested an approach by suggesting a new perspective, a transfer of our attention, and by demolishing the great illusion of inevitability.

In radio, in education, in the sum total of our living we face a moral issue. A choice is forced upon us by the progress of events which follow, as night follows day, the misdirection of our will. It is a choice admitting of no piecemeal answer, not an answer of lip service only but of a dominating purpose permeating all activities in which we are concerned as members of society. The choice has to do with two alternative attitudes to people. We can despise them, or we may reverence them, as we must reverence ourselves if life is to have meaning. In terms of society we can, according to our choice, manipulate people or serve them. The first is easier, the second harder than it has ever been. Easier because the status of the individual has been reduced by the inhuman factors inherent in industrial development, by the decrease of economic self-dependence and of that residuum of self-respect which men salvage from the wreckage of the conflicts of human greed and aspiration. Easier, too, because of the perfected instruments for dominating men's minds and emotions of which the radio is the supreme example. The alternative choice is the harder for the same reasons. We are far gone in circumstance. Over against the manipulative point of view of the authoritarian, we have, as President Hutchins has pointed out, little to offer in terms of superior efficiency or of material circumstance. All we have left is the remnant of a faith in persons, most positive and clear in its passionate rejection of the evil that it recognizes in the challenge which the man manipulators have flung down, too positive in terms of lip service to the mere vocabulary of freedom and emancipation, and as yet scarcely positive at all, considering the immanence of crisis, in terms of action carried into the field of government, of

administration, and private industry. We are involved today as never before; and the paradox of the centripetal forces manifest in industry and government, resulting as they do in a centrifugal reaction, where the sense of individual belonging, of pride and purpose are concerned, has been touched on in this study. The situation is, indeed, grave, and only a colossal effort of the will, a supreme sense of responsibility for public service, can keep at bay the evils and the dangers at our door. This is the context by reference to which we may consider the challenge, the hope and the opportunity which radio offers us.

Radio, as has been said, is inherently and as of right the peoples' instrument. The challenge to educators implicit in this fact is that of a redirection of attention, an emphasis on education of the people, the urgency of which at this stage scarcely needs to be pressed home. Radio as a means is thus timely, almost heaven sent as opportunity.

Devotion and enterprise on the part of those concerned with radio have developed skills most apt for communication with the people. That these are much abused by standards of the peoples' needs is not here relevant. For education the relevant consideration is the existence of a new medium and method of interpretation. The impatience of the industry with educators over their tardy recognition of the absolute necessity to find the appropriate means by which to convey truths and values, means that take account of the pathetic helplessness, the intellectual immaturity, the life and circumstance of those whom radio serves, is in large measure justified. The counter objection of the educators is no less true, namely that radio, while master of many skills, has all too often lamentably failed in exercising them for ends that correspond to peoples' true, as against their superficial, needs. It is uncomfortably true that what radio gives with one hand it takes away with the other. The virtue of education is in consistent purpose. Without adjustment of the proportions of radio's constructive and destructive influence, there is small hope that it can realize its manifest destiny in the wider context of crisis with which we are concerned. Radio has rightly stressed the need to gild the pill which is to be offered to a sick and undernourished patient. As a point of technique, this is at once appropriate to the condition of the listener and to the circumstance of radio as servant of men's leisure. Radio is right again (where it in fact succeeds in doing so), in adapting its techniques (as in the quiz program) to a frame of reference relevant to the background of experience of the listener. Radio's contributions in these respects have been both shrewd and realistic. Its shortcomings have to do with that tendency which we have noted to think of the listener in static rather than in dynamic

terms. Skills of technique are nothing worth except as vehicles of matter that is significant and by which the seeds of growth and sensitive awareness can be sown. "Soap opera" attracts by its relevance to the anxieties and morbid propensities of those who listen. It offers a context which is recognizable. Therein lies its technical merit. Its defect is that it evokes no response in which is inherent the possibility for growth of understanding. It adds nothing to experience. The present failure and the future opportunity of radio is to be found in the fruitful exploitation of techniques. And it is here that service may yet be rendered by those best fitted to charge communication with significance. The poet, the writer of genius and distinction if, while maintaining his integrity, he can keep the common touch, eschew the esoteric, has in radio a means of significant communication through which the writer's art itself may find a new lease of life and by which a truly democratic culture may yet come into being. Remember W. B. Yeats' dictum, "Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people."

The impatience of radio men with educators is no less justified in one other respect. There are aspects of education irrelevant to radio because alien to its resources of techniques. Alien, too, to the more pressing needs of radio's audience. It is in this connection, as with respect to the two matters above referred to, that a transfer of attention on the part of educators is necessary. Radio cannot teach. Teaching involves communication of a kind that radio cannot attempt, —a discipline, a concentration, a circumstance that have nothing to do with radio's circumstance. Nor can radio communicate the subtleties and refinements of thought and feeling that are the product of higher education. Radio can achieve little more than a stimulus. By constantly repeated injections, such stimulus may induce some modifications in our system. But it is most dangerous in education to project on others our own experience, to assume similar susceptibilities where background and circumstance are as tragically different as we have seen them to be. The men of radio are more realist than educators in recognition of ordinary peoples' priorities of need. Their fault, as we have noted, is in the too frequent exploitation instead of service to such needs. Of these priorities of need, something must here be said.

The fruits of culture in the proper sense of that term stand unassailable in their own right. But these are fruits we gather at the end of a long journey, and few have had opportunity to make that journey. For the mass audience of radio, apart from the need (which stems directly from their circumstance) of escape into a world of glamorous distraction, the first concern is with material needs, with

problems of health, of food, and the handling of children, the practices and the concerns of their humdrum day-to-day existence. Radio has found ready response to service for such needs. Whether what is communicated on such topics is always the best and the wisest that can be communicated is a moot question. Too often, preoccupation with a quick return of interest, associated with the profit motive of the advertiser, runs counter to genuine concern for service which the gilding of the pill, the simplification of things inherently not simple, may dangerously imperil. Radio both gives and takes away.

Whereas material needs are the most obvious, the listeners' psychological needs are probably the more urgent. A pathetic example of such need and of the morbid sympathetic interest which it arouses is the Good Will Court of Mr. Anthony. That Mr. Anthony dispenses but rough justice those who have listened are hardly likely to question. Doctors, psychologists, and social workers may be provoked to indignation, disgust, or to despair, by what transpires at these strip-tease acts of the human soul. Yet from a social point of view, these tawdry proceedings challenge us to thought. Rough justice may be dispensed, *but the courtroom is crammed.* The pathetic helplessness of people is here exposed in all its nakedness. Is there nothing to be done about it? Are doctors and educators, confident that they know better than Mr. Anthony, going to stand by while radio in this instance, as in many others, dips down into the unsavory depths of peoples' need? Here are priorities of need, and the rough justice dispensed over the radio may, from the point of view of these poor creatures, prove more valuable than the superior integrity of those whose knowledge stays them from rushing in where angels fear to tread. Here at least is an instance of the level at which education is urgently required. If, through the voice of Mr. Anthony, radio does disservice, it at least voices a challenge of attention to educators in their ivory towers.

What, next, of society's need of the listener? Reference having been made to radio's power of integration, we must pause a moment at least to suggest the possibilities yet to be realized by the proper adaptation of techniques for integrating our society in respect of social purpose. The new and expanding role of government demands of us accelerated powers of adaptation, of quick release from those adhesions of the past, those habituations of thought and prejudice which make us reluctant to face manifest necessities of social change. As the activities of government increase, more and more persons are affected by it. Yet it stands remote, impersonal, symbol again of the objective forces which in our confusion of purpose and of insight we are coming to believe in as disembodied powers. The new role of

government requires, and urgently, a new and intensified degree of apt interpretation. For the distortion, for selfish and disingenuous ends, of such verbal symbols as unity and patriotism, we need to substitute dynamic symbols of true unity. These can only be created and they can only be understood by the wider dissemination of knowledge about social circumstance and by the realization through government and in society of projects and activities, the constructive purpose of which can be vividly brought home to people. Radio in this matter cannot, of course, act as pioneer but merely as interpreter. It must wait upon events. Yet in respect of a more widespread consciousness of social facts, there is already work enough to do. One instance drawn from British experience may illustrate the point.

Some years ago it was decided to communicate through radio facts relevant to housing conditions in Great Britain. Week by week over a period of three months a popular sports commentator (chosen advisedly for this purpose) visited the slums and the rehousing projects of the country and reported what he saw to radio's listening audience. As a result, awareness took the place of ignorance, of that indifference to the unknown which, as society becomes more complex, becomes increasingly a source of danger and dissension. The significance of the achievement was the creation of an "area of consciousness." The public conscience was stirred. Radio was not concerned, as it must never be, to influence opinion on public policy. Its range and its resources, however, are available to us to quicken conscience, to integrate experience, by extending knowledge and promoting sympathy. The subject is, alas, too large for proper development here.

One final point, however, must be made that bears on radio's possibilities in education. Seeing that it adds to the complication of our living by the increased impact of ideas and information, it must, unless confusion is to be worse confounded, offer to a bewildered public something by way of what I term selective direction through the maze of issues and impressions with which the listener is confronted. In its interpretation of the war in Europe through news reporters and commentators, radio has rendered this very service. It is curious, though perhaps not surprising if we think of the deterrent influences, that small attempt at similar interpretation of domestic issues has been made. The need for interpretation is, as I have said, inherent in the very circumstance of radio. Its very power and range demand some such corrective to confusion and distraction. The achievement of one of these commentators must be referred to as illustrating aspects of radio most relevant to education and charged

with hopeful possibilities. Let us examine the record of Mr. Raymond Gram Swing.

The Crossley ratings show that he commands a regular listening audience of over eight millions. How and why is this significant? How has this following been achieved? By perseverance, by integrity, and by mastery of the techniques of radio talk. Each point has a special significance. Three years ago the name of Raymond Swing was scarcely known to listeners. Today for millions it has the connotation of a trusted and a needed friend. Concern over the war created, of course, the necessary frame of reference to which his commentary could be related. But his regular, recurrent presence at the microphone, together with the inherent merits of the man, created this vast audience. As with the plugging of a song, as with the constant repetition of advertisement, so with Mr. Swing. Merit given time, given also a context relevant to men's preoccupations, wins through. Relatively few such personalities have been created at the microphone because of the advertisers' concern with quick returns. It is for this reason, among others, that I stressed earlier the as yet unexplored resources of the spoken word available to radio, given time for their development. Raymond Swing's achievement is remarkable no less for the integrity of his performance. He, above all others, has recognized and cherished the ideal of realizing through radio something that I can only call a convention of good manners in communication. The integrity of his approach and of his subject has at no time been compromised. Statistics cannot prove the worth of such achievement. But Raymond Swing's eight million listeners stand as proof that the dynamic conception of human personality, the belief that discrimination is not confined to men of education is not a mere delusion.

It is, however, time to bring this study to a close. Let me summarize the argument.

The interest of radio lies in its bearing on the wider social context of crisis that has been discussed. It at once exemplifies new trends and the persistence of attitudes and loyalties no longer apt. A conflict of purpose results which is evidenced by confusions and incompatibilities in its practice. Radio exemplifies the emergent social concept of trusteeship. It is, therefore, subject to control which is as yet inadequate because it rests on no clear formulation of radio's function in society. The official agency of such control is governmental. But in a democracy such agencies of government must function as a filter of public opinion. Thus radio involves a partnership with its own public. But public opinion is as yet inadequately mobilized; and the relationship of the two partners, the balance of

power is, therefore, dangerously maladjusted. This has made possible the heresy that radio gives the public what it wants and has obscured the vital truth that the public is incapable of articulating its true needs.

It is with this issue that educators are, or should be concerned. They can voice the public's need and define that body of consistent principles on which true education rests. But they can only do so by a transfer of their attention to the priorities of need of those whom radio, the peoples' instrument, serves, and by a more practical familiarity with the resources of interpretation which radio offers. Educators can foster criticism. It is most necessary, its absence a singularity, and a measure of our tardy recognition of the power and influence and potentialities of radio.

As a basis for criticism education should foster research by means of which a nicer adaptation of the resources of radio to the ends of education may be realized. Radio integrates experience, and it can to some degree integrate society. It will do so the more and the better for collaboration by educators in securing wider frames of reference (in the experience and activities of the public) with which what radio offers can be associated and to which its developing services may be related. Is this the conclusion of the whole matter? It is not, for there is none such. We can look for no more than partial achievement. But in one respect we face a choice more absolute than relative, a choice which has to do, not with particularities of radio technique or organization, but with that issue of moral emancipation which Jefferson foresaw as America's paramount objective. With the issue of private enterprise or public control of unrestricted or restricted opportunity for profit, we are not concerned except by inference. The bearing of radio on education has finally, fundamentally, to do with the will, the purpose of those who control it, with the sincerity of their concern, as a first and dominant concern, for persons; for "faces are but a gallery of pictures and talk but a tinkling symbol where there is no love. *Magna civitas, magna solitudo.*"