

Television and Radio News as Persuasion

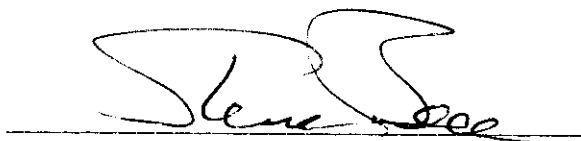
An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Purpose of Thesis

This thesis contends that television and radio news, as the American public knows it today, is a form of persuasion. The thesis does this by analyzing the elements of television and radio news through David Berlo's traditional, linear model of communication. His model outlines the four major elements in any communication process - the source, message, channel and receiver. By looking at the elements of television and radio news through these vehicles, the persuasive characteristics are more easily identified.

The thesis systematically explains the processes and decisions involved in communicating news via the mass media. It demonstrates that while many citizens of this country believe television and radio news to be an objective form of reporting the news, in actuality it does nothing more than create a reality for the viewer and listener. Furthermore, this modern-day form of persuasion is virtually unrecognized, not only by the American public, but also by those who participate in molding the news of the day.

The ancient art of persuasion, or rhetoric, is an idea that is over 2000 years old. Persuasion is a form of communication that has existed since the creation of man, literally since two people have been able to communicate. Authors Stephen Littlejohn and David Jabusch say persuasion in our modern culture serves three main purposes: it regulates social interaction, it enables conflict to be managed and, it serves to disseminate information and innovation (Littlejohn 12). Similarly, Winston Brembeck and William Howell say persuasion is an important form of communication to dissect because, as an audience, the public "can profit from a general awareness and skilled use of persuasion as a mode of social influence" (Brembeck 5).

Looking at persuasion as a mode of social influence, it can occur in different arenas. First, persuasion can occur in one-to-one, interpersonal communication. Each day when someone is talking to an acquaintance or colleague, persuasive messages can be transmitted from one person, the source, to another, the receiver. Persuasion can also occur in more formal settings as well, such as a scheduled speech or weekly staff meeting. Typically, these settings involve a larger number of people, but still allow for interaction among individuals.

In the twentieth century, the American public has seen the prevalence of persuasion increase in a new and dynamic arena: mass communication. This type of communication oftentimes involves a group of people, identified as the source, communicating to the masses, identified as the common receivers. In American society, the use of mass media has enhanced this communication process. And, while the mass media have made the process much easier, they

have accomplished this by being extremely pervasive. The impact of television has been most dramatic: Americans spend more time watching television than doing anything else except sleeping and eating (Jamieson 8). And Americans do not have to look far for the electronic media sources that enable them to become receivers of mass communication. In 1990, there were 10,688 radio stations in the United States (Jamieson 25), and 1449 television stations (Jamieson 19). It is clear no matter where an individual lives mass communication is within reach. However, communication encompassing the masses takes away one vital component in the communication process - that of interaction. Author Kathleen Kelley Reardon asserts this argument in Persuasion: Theory and Context:

... when people are opposed to a certain perspective and realize that they may be required to make some statement, they will create counterarguments. What of the media participants, who know that they will not be required to respond in any overt manner? They are the uncritical participants. They are therefore the most vulnerable to persuasion (196-7).

Certainly, persuasive communication via mass media is not a new concept. After all, what is advertising? In fact, of the 1449 television stations accounted for in 1990, 1,100 carried commercials (Jamieson 19). But, aside from looking at commercials as a form of persuasion, receivers should consider other mass mediated programming for potentially persuasive messages. When radio was first coming into mainstream American culture, Orsen Wells' broadcast of the science-fiction program "The War of the Worlds" had one of the most memorable effects on the American public to date. Because of Wells' realistic, although fictional radio drama, people believed their world was coming to an end. In the 1950's and 1960's, several programs were perceived as

representative of the morals of the day. Programs such as "The Dick Van Dyke Show", "I Love Lucy", and "Leave it to Beaver" were examples of American society as seen through a "typical, average" individual. Although today's storylines are far different, it can be argued that the methodology is the same. Producers and writers of today's sitcoms and dramas have to look no further than down the street or in their own neighborhoods to find material suitable for television and radio programs. Rhetoricians, both historical and modern, have theorized that this concept of identification, or as Aristotle put it, "finding common ground" with the receiver, is one of the key components in the process of persuasion (Larson 9). Hence, television programs that use society as examples can be viewed as potential persuasion because, by using society, they too seek to identify with the mass audience.

But what about broadcast news, whose practitioners have always made much of their commitment to objectivity? Although oftentimes the news is not perceived as being potentially persuasive, it is not exempt from this categorization.

After all, it is not the goal of professional journalists to persuade anybody about anything. The canons of objectivity, which have dominated professional journalistic practice and thought for generations, explicitly disavow any effort at persuasion. That is not to say that the news stories of the day are not exactly that, news *stories*. They are indeed! And, like all stories, they structure experience for us, filtering out many of the complexities of the environment and offering a polished, perhaps even literary, version. (McCombs 2)

In this sense, news has the same effects and acts as the same representative force to society, as sitcoms, dramas, talk shows and advertising. In this way, television and radio news is a modern-day, prevalent and pervasive form of

persuasion. News, like the others, creates a reality. Furthermore, few, if any, of the participants in the persuasive process are truly aware of and responsive to the part they play in determining the news of the day. Television and radio news is a subtle form of persuasion that has gone unrecognized and unevaluated in American society.

Defining Persuasion

In order to prove that television news and its components are a form of persuasion, first a definition of persuasion is required. Unfortunately, there is no standard definition acceptable to all. Rhetoricians as ancient as Aristotle and as recent as Kenneth Burke have theorized on the elements of persuasion and what makes up a persuasive speech. And while each has brought their own characteristics to the table, commonality with others has not been the theorists' strong point. This dilemma is recognized in Building Communication Theory.

There is no single approach taken to the study of communication.

Theorists have not determined if communication is a linear process (source - message - channel - receiver) or one that involves constant interaction between the source and receiver. Also, there is debate regarding the intent of the source and how that affects the definition of communication. (Infante 8)

The various definitions used by scholars reflect this diverse perspective. Aristotle said persuasion is made up of artistic and inartistic proofs. He also said it is based upon a source's credibility (ethos), emotional appeals (pathos) and/or logical appeals (logos). Similarly, Cicero identified components of what makes up a persuasive speech. According to Cicero the speaker must invent, organize, and style the arguments artistically, memorize them and deliver them

skillfully (Larson 9). While the ancient rhetoricians focused on the components and source of the message, modern day philosophers' definitions tend to be more all-encompassing. Brembeck and Howell saw persuasion simply as communication intended to influence choice (Brembeck 19). But Fotheringham was more detailed in his definition. He called persuasion that body of effects in receivers that has been caused by a persuader's message. Fotheringham, like many modern theorists, focused on the receiver to determine whether or not persuasion has occurred (Larson 9). Theorist Herbert Simons also looked at the outcome to determine the persuasive value of a message by stating that the process of being persuaded involves responses that either shape, change or reinforce the receiver's opinions (Simons 23). Larson described persuasion as more of an interactive process, stating that persuasion is the co-creation of a state of identification or alignment between a source and a receiver that results from the use of symbols (Larson 11). Since Marshall McLuhan's declaration "the medium is the message," very few theorists in recent years have focused on one of the major elements of persuasion, the way in which the message is received or communicated. Building Communication Theory asserts that the study of the channel in persuasion has received the most limited amount of study (Infante 179). David Berlo's approach is one model of communication that includes the channel in its definition. Berlo defines all communication, and therefore persuasion, as a linear process. It starts with the source, who encodes the message. The encoding may be verbal, visual, musical or any other form of communication. The message is the next element. This is the part of the process that involves symbols used to convey the source's meaning. That meaning is transmitted via some medium, or channel. And lastly, the message is decoded by a receiver, who interprets the message by considering the mode of transmission, the intended meaning and his/her own beliefs and

attitudes (Larson 12). Berlo's model of communication allows an analyst to break down persuasion into four key elements - source, message, channel and receiver and this model provides a means for analyzing television and radio news.

Source

According to Berlo, the first part of the persuasive communication process is the source, who encodes the message. In television and radio news it is oftentimes easy to misconstrue the actual source. Many times the viewer assumes that because the anchors and reporters do the talking, they also are responsible for the content. More often than not, this is not the case. Instead, the source of mass media communication is organizational or institutional (Jamieson 6-7). Each day, television and radio news is the result of many individuals working together: photographers, reporters, anchors, producers, news managers - the list could go on and on. And it is because there is such a long list of participants in shaping the news that actual accountability for the content is difficult to determine.

... in many instances in the mass media the actual source of the message is extremely difficult to identify. Often the source becomes an institution in which actual responsibility and control of the message is almost impossible to discover. (Anderson 271)

Another element involved with the source of persuasive communication is the source's intent. Communication theorists have argued over the importance of intent in defining whether or not a message can be considered persuasive. It has been argued by several authors that if a message is sent, then communication has occurred even though the person might not have intended to send the message specifically to you (Infante 14). By this definition, all

things, objects and beings are communicating, even when they are not attempting to send messages. This is not true with television and radio news. They are encoding messages for the mass audience and, by intentionally encoding messages, they allow themselves to be characterized as potentially persuasive forms of communication.

While it is true broadcast news organizations are charged with encoding the messages, oftentimes they act as mere unfiltered conduits for media manipulators, public relations officials and spin doctors who have already determined the "slant" or message. Oftentimes, not only in television and radio news, but in all communication, the source of the transaction (in this case television and radio news organizations) is not even aware of the perceived intent. Simon accounts for this by saying,

Seldom are persuaders fully aware of everything they are saying and doing when communicating a message... In the process of communicating intentional messages, they typically communicate a good deal more than they intend... And both intended and unintended messages may produce unintended effects. (Simon 18)

Anderson concurs with Simon, saying the decision to persuade may be the result of conscious and unconscious forces, and we may not be consciously aware that we are attempting to persuade (7). Thus the concept of intent in persuasion is ambiguous. Communication scholars on both sides of the issue agree that it is very difficult to define, to identify, and to measure someone's intention (Infante 16). In relation to television and radio news, it would be virtually impossible to solicit responses from all of the various people, or sources, involved in disseminating the news as to their intent and therefore, like other persuasion, intent is just as difficult to determine.

There is, however, one thing all television and radio news operations intend to do: attract an audience.

TV news, like all other programming, makes money by selling a certain chunk of the audience to an advertiser for a specified time... The programs are intended to attract the viewers to the commercial messages. (Altheide 31)

Anderson supports this statement by asserting that television and radio news programs are no different than other forms of programming in that they exist to turn a profit. Altheide goes one step further by saying that not only does television and radio news exist because of the revenue gains, it is often evaluated in terms of advertising dollars and not content (21). Like any other business, it is money that is the heart of television and radio news organizations, not message content. This is where the intent lies, in the rating numbers and gross profits.

Whether or not a news organization intends to do it or not, it serves an agenda-setting function for the American society. Each day in the world, millions of events take place. Yet, the American public hears or sees only a very small percentage of that enormous number of happenings. This is due, in part, to the perceived newsworthiness of an event. Some of the characteristics used to determine an event's newsworthiness are the prominence of the individuals involved and the issues involved. Other considerations are time available to complete a story, reliance on certain news sources and organizational demands (Altheide 22). This process of evaluation leads to only certain types of stories being broadcast. Altheide calls this the news perspective and defines it as "the capacity to approach events from one dimension and then show their significance by constructing a narrative account with a beginning, middle and end" (73). Furthermore, he says, by showing

events in this light, the news media do more than inform, they shape the meaning of public events (27). McCombs agrees as well by saying that news organizations do not necessarily tell us what to think, but do tell the American public what to think about. They do this by deciding what stories actually get covered, and also the prominence and time for each piece (27). These elements give the news media vast amounts of control over society. It is through this agenda-setting function that Americans are influenced by television and radio news. Society thinks that if something is being reported in the news, it must be important (Altheide 12). Jamieson says this view "suggests that newsgatherers and news organizations are persuaders who shape our views of reality, who induce us to believe one thing rather than another " (30).

The source of mass mediated news messages is one of the key elements in examining the persuasion process. As organizational sources that often lack direct accountability, news operations make it difficult to determine actual intent. Many times it is not the news organizations' intent that needs to be evaluated; rather it is those who manipulate the media as a way to communicate their biased message. Still, broadcast news organizations use the inability of the public to point fingers to their advantage. Because the news media lack accountability and the receiver cannot accurately measure intent, the media are free to report and cover anything they so choose. In this way, the media set the agenda for American society, determining what is important and what is not. Through this story elimination process, persuasion has already occurred at a subconscious level. From here, the persuasive components of the message can be examined.

Message

Berlo defines the message in persuasive communication as not only what is being said, but the symbols used to create the meaning encoded by the source. Television and radio news are full of symbols used to represent overall meaning and many of them are evident when analyzing the message. By definition messages of mass communication are typically transient, transmitted rapidly and public (Jamieson 5-6). To viewers, this means information they receive via television and radio news comes into their homes quickly - sometimes even as it is occurring. The messages cover events of national, regional and local importance, and the messages will lose their importance over short periods of time. Jamieson believes these concepts translate into five basic criteria for television and radio hard news. Potential stories should be personalized and involve individuals; be dramatic and conflict-filled; be an action, event or observable occurrence; be novel, deviant or out of the ordinary; and report events linked to issues prevalent to the public at the time (Jamieson 31-9). It is through this laundry list of checkpoints, or similar ones, that potential news stories are evaluated within the confines of a news organization. Altheide says that, in the course of bringing news to the American public, "the world of everyday life is transformed for news purposes" (24). Further, by reporting an event as a "news story" it decontextualizes the occurrence, placing it in a foreign situation and inherently makes the report biased (Altheide 25).

But persuasive elements within messages of mass mediated communication do not stop there. The idea of gatekeeping, or news judgement, is very persuasive. Gatekeeping is the process of controlling potential messages (Littlejohn 156). Some stories are reported for obvious reasons: the governor of the state has died, the new plant opening in the town will create hundreds of new jobs. It is not these stories that actually get weighed as to whether or not

they should be reported. They are "too big" to pass up. It is the remainder of the potential news of the day that goes through a perfunctory evaluation. This is the process of gatekeeping.

Some of the criteria that qualify a story already have been mentioned. But there is another major element, the quick availability of ready-made news. Press releases make ready-made news possible and play an enormous role in determining what gets covered (Altheide 72). Typically, smaller market news organizations do not have the time to invest in researching, formulating and investigating story ideas. Therefore, if they know that an event will occur and generally what the topic is about, news people can evaluate its newsworthiness based on their predetermined characteristics of news. In essence, press releases solve the news director's problem of finding ready-made news for the reporters to cover (Altheide 73). However, because many news organizations are dependent on press releases and predetermined events, new story ideas and innovations can be stifled, leading to the conclusion that a story's newsworthiness is not actually about content, but rather how easily and efficiently the story can be reported and aired.

It only snowballs from there. Not only do press releases lend a bias to those deciding what potential stories to report, they represent a whole host of problems for the reporter. Though the news director's problems are basically solved, the reporter's are just beginning because he/she is left with the task of finding an interesting, noteworthy element in a staged, scripted event (Altheide 73). This is where a reporter's "angle", or approach to the story, can begin.

A reporter's angle can consist of many things, both within the reporter's control and outside of the reporter's control. An angle can come from a personal experience with the story topic, be a part of a larger series or be the result of organizational demands (Altheide 75). One such example of organizational

demands is the consideration of newscast flow. A reporter may be required to follow leads within a story because it ties in with another story airing in that same newscast (Altheide 75). Oftentimes it is simply left to the reporter to determine what is the most important element, and, therefore, the angle.

Once the angle is established, the story is built accordingly, finding experts, facts, and, in television, pictures to support the approach. By now the potential persuasive effects are easily identified. The reporter has opted to bring the story to the viewer, highlighting some aspects and not others, both in pictures and in words. Simon recognizes this and says to:

... direct your attention to the way messages are framed by the communicator, and the way definitions, illustrations, comparisons, contrasts and other message elements may be used to conceal or reveal, magnify or minimize, elevate or degrade, sharpen or blur, link or divide, simplify or complexify in presenting a picture of the external world. (307)

Furthermore, the facts of the story are often substantiated through a chosen "expert" on the topic. Altheide says this too is persuasive.

While it is apparent that from this perspective, all potential bias may not be recognized, some journalists are aware that merely presenting the 'facts' is not enough because they are often 'somebody's facts.' (17)

Therefore, persuasion occurs not only from the news selection process and the subsequent development of the story, but also from the use of particular experts and opinion leaders to substantiate the news organizations' storyline.

Channel

Berlo says the channel is simply the medium through which the message is transmitted, but, since the dawn of television and radio news, the channel has

never been that easy to define. Neil Postman, a communication scholar, says television and radio, as a continuation of the invention of the telegraph and photograph, have changed the face of public discourse.

To no one's surprise, it was an American who found a practical way to put electricity in the service of communication and, in doing so, eliminated the problem of space once and for all. I refer, of course, to Samuel Finley Breese Morse, America's first true 'spaceman.' His telegraph erased state lines, collapsed regions, and, by wrapping the continent in an information grid, created the possibility of a unified American discourse.

But at a considerable cost. For telegraphy did something that Morse did not foresee when he prophesied that telegraphy would make 'one neighborhood of the whole country.' It destroyed the prevailing definition of information, and in doing so gave a new meaning to public discourse.

(64-5)

Information as society knows it today has no boundaries, in topic or in region. There is no subject of public interest - politics, news, education, religion, science, sports - that does not find its way to television and radio, which means that all public understanding of these subjects is shaped by the biases of television and radio (Postman 78).

Yet, the public tunes in to radio and television news everyday, even when the medium itself is biased. This is due in part to the perceived credibility of television and radio as media. The matter of credibility seems to operate not only in relation to the speaker and his message, but also in relation to the vehicle carrying the message (Brembeck 25). Altheide goes so far as to say the medium is more important than the message by stating "people will be more influenced by the television medium than by the message content" (23).

Additionally, credibility plays a part in another component of the channel: the anchor. The anchor is not necessarily part of the source because many times the anchor has very little to do with the creation or reporting of the story. Instead, he/she is the one chosen to look stately, yet inviting, and bring the sometimes heart-wrenching and tragic news into the viewer's home. Possibly Quintillian was right when he said persuasion is nothing more than a good man speaking well (Larson 9).

Still, there are other elements of the television and radio news channel that are persuasive. These involve the "packaging" of the news. Altheide asserts "people's images of reality are not just derived from the television medium per se, but are consequences of the way television (and radio) is used in presenting news messages" (24). Each time a story is aired, television and radio assist in the presentation of the story in many ways. One is camera shots. There are an overwhelming number of ways to frame a subject or object with a video camera. However, by looking at hard news television stories, the typical viewer would seldom have reason to be aware of it. There are reasons. Jamieson states that reporters and anchors are shown either in the medium close-up or medium shot because they are considered objective and impartial. On the other hand, closer shots are used when a story is more emotional so that the viewer can see the reactions (64). By analyzing the different camera shots, the viewer can tell what type of story the news person intends to convey.

Special effects are another component of the channel that can persuade. Jamieson draws upon the old saying "actions speak louder than words." She holds that this directly translates into television through the use of special effects. Although not necessarily needed, the effects usually help the piece "speak" with a louder voice, therefore attracting viewers (67). This is no secret to the network news organizations. Mike Buddy, a director of ABC's "World

News Tonight" is described as spending much of his day "packaging" news stories through technological equipment that gives editorial content a visual "shampoo" (Jamieson 66).

This "packaging" is not just confined to television. Radio is prone to the same potential distortion. Both media use the process of editing to "present" their information to the viewer. However, the editing process rarely consists of merely eliminating the elements that are too long. That would be considered natural editing. It is not very common since few events are short enough in duration or occur in a natural enough sequence to permit telling the story without rearranging the action (Altheide 85). Instead, by using editing to its ultimate advantage, news organizations transform events into news stories. This is how most news people and organizations regard physical editing, as a process that rearranges and reduces elements in order to transform the event into a story with a beginning, middle and end (Altheide 85). Due to this process, the viewer rarely sees or hears events exactly as they took place. Instead, the report is only a symbol of what happened at that place and time.

Many elements of the channel in television and radio news are persuasive. With the mere invention of both radio and television, the face of public discourse has been forever changed. It has brought information into the viewer's home that does not necessarily affect the viewer. Often, it is not about people or events that the viewer cares for or about, nor is it even about events within close proximity. Rather, television and radio news organizations often bring information to the viewer simply because they can. And, it is information that many times has been enhanced by special effects, or at least edited to fit the specific time element. In these ways and others, the channel plays an instrumental role in reshaping the actual message and adding to its persuasive effects.

Receiver

The receiver is the final element in Berlo's linear model of communication. The receiver in mass communication is typically large, anonymous, heterogeneous and charged with decoding the message (Jamieson 4). It is not an easy process considering all the persuasive components within the source, message and channel in television and radio news. However, the receiver is no different; he too is part of the persuasion process.

In recent years, communication theorists have placed increased emphasis on the role of the receiver. Anderson states

While the source and the intent of the source remain a frequent key to the determination of the appearance of the process of persuasion, study of persuasion theory involves increasing emphasis upon the total process - all the elements - with greater attention to receiver response.

(15)

Brembeck and Howell realize this as well, saying it is important what the speaker thinks about a given subject, but it is more important what the receiver thinks (Brembeck 14). This could not be more true than in television and radio news, where what the audience thinks about the given topic, and the way the topic is presented, are quite literally the bread and butter of the news organization.

But what the receiver of the mass mediated message actually thinks is a complex process in itself.

We must remember that the receiver of a message runs it through his elaborate filter system made up of his experiences, perceptions, attitudes, motives, biases and prejudices and makes of the original

message only that which his own interpretations permit. In this sense, and please do not misunderstand the point, if the receiver is persuaded, he is persuaded by his *own* message, and not necessarily by that planned by the speaker. Ideally, of course, *that message structured by the receiver is an approximation or duplication of that intended by the speaker.* (Brembeck 14)

In this way the receiver is perhaps the worst offender in allowing television and radio news to be persuasive. Larson defines persuasion as a state of co-creation of meanings between the source and the receiver (9). This means virtually all persuasion is self-persuasion because the receiver participates in the process of allowing himself to be persuaded (Larson 11). In television and radio news this is definitely true. By and large the public is uncritical of the news; like the news itself, receivers are subjective in their opinions, experiences and interpretations. In essence, the public is not only persuaded by the distinct elements involved in the source, message and channel of television and radio news, but by themselves as well.

Television and radio news as Americans know it today is persuasive in all of the four main elements of the communication process - the source, the message, the channel and the receiver. Theorists are only now beginning to realize the vast effects mass mediated communication can have on the public.

Part of this new look at mass communications has been the discovery that the audience not only learns some facts about public affairs, but also learns how much importance to attach to those facts from the emphasis placed on them by the news media. Considerable evidence has accumulated since 1972 that journalists play a key role in shaping our

pictures of the world as they go about their daily task of selecting and reporting the news. (McCombs 3)

Indeed, they are creating reality each and every day in the minds of the viewers and listeners of television and radio news. And while it might not be their intent, news organizations, just like other broadcasting entities, are performing an entertainment function for a certain segment of the mass audience.

In the United States the mass media are operated by commercial institutions whose goal is to deliver an audience to potential advertisers or communicators who will pay to reach this audience. From this viewpoint the informational ... and educational functions performed by the mass media are only incidental. (Anderson 271)

The effects, however, are not incidental. Rather, they are astounding. The circumstances for allowing television and radio news to be so persuasive lie in many areas. The source is ambiguous, with no real accountability. This lack of accountability quickly leads to news organizations reporting and covering only those events they so choose, therefore setting an agenda for what is important in American society. The message is persuasive as well. Like the source, it is involved in the story selection process. It also links the reporter and the story together, subsequently drawing in the reporter's innate biases as well. The channel distinguishes television and radio news from other forms. It not only allows, but calls for, the shortening and rearranging of material through editing and the "visual shampoo" provided by special effects. Furthermore, claims and "facts" are substantiated in many news reports by selected "experts," often the ones the news organizations think are qualified to comment on such topics. Finally, the receiver is a willing, and generally, uncritical participant in the process, fooling himself into believing that he is being informed objectively each night by the newscasters and reporters both at the regional and national level.

Plainly, television and radio news is a modern-day form of persuasion that has permeated American society at every level. There is virtually no way to avoid radio and television news. It is that pervasive. There are ways, however, to protect against being unduely persuaded by television and radio news. According to Brembeck and Howell, it simply goes back to the age-old concept of free will.

In our view, the individual who benefits most by the exercise of free will never purposefully keeps himself uninformed. He receives contrary persuasions thoughtfully, extracting from each what is meaningful to him. He reaches a decision when his good judgement tells him the time for decision has come, and he makes his decision according to explicit criteria formulated in part by the persuasion received. When citizens function in this fashion as persuadees, persuasion plays a truly constructive role in human affairs. (22-3)

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that citizens of the United States have been applying this analytical process to television and radio news. And, few of the people involved in creating, reporting and watching the news of the day recognize that they too are part of a persuasive process. In a democratic society, news, like any other form of broadcast communication, demands to be evaluated and put into proper context. Yet, the American public has allowed it to go virtually unchecked as an objective form of information. There is no filtering process in regards to television and radio news. Yet, for the American people, that analysis process is the key to being an adequately informed society and electorate living in an unprecedented and unimagined information age.

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