

It does not matter whether one believes this to be a fortunate development or not.

The fact is that if the contestants are to have the relatively equal opportunity to reach the public, which our political system assumes, they must have an equal opportunity to procure time on TV.

At this point we are confronted with the fact that there is not a competitive market in TV time. Because of this it has been thought necessary to achieve the goal of equal opportunity by legal prescription.

It is not my purpose here to consider whether section 315 or something like it is, in fact, necessary or whether assuming the need of some regulation, section 315 is the best solution.

Section 315 has not been my particular field of study and my remarks are directed to the point that TV is indeed unique in this area and that this uniqueness makes a *prima facie* case for some regulation or in its absence a commitment to well-understood customary practices amounting to self-regulation.

It may well be that given the pressure that would always bear on the stations and the fact that if they did not live up to this kind of obligation, they would get legislation that might be enough, but as I say, I don't think we are principally concerned here or interested in section 315 except as part of the analysis of the situation and as a kind of counterpoint to the other one.

Opportunity to respond to attack: It is my opinion that it is only in connection with political campaigning that the uniqueness of TV is overwhelming demonstrable. In the other three areas its uniqueness is at least debatable and is at best one of degree.

Closely related to the notion of TV's uniqueness is the notion of what I would call its autonomy. This is the notion—more or less resting on its uniqueness—that TV is not simply a part of the whole complex of communication. It is thought to be separate, a complete system of communication in itself, in the sense that it has an audience which is reached primarily, even exclusively, by it.

A large mass of TV and radio listeners are conceived as insulated from other channels of communication. It is supposed that they do not read newspapers, magazines, or books and, it would seem, do not receive information informally from their friends, associates, or organizations.

Thus, if an attack on the personal honesty of a reporter is broadcast, it is assumed that unless a defense is subsequently broadcast the listener will not otherwise receive any countercommunication.

In the absence of more precise information than I have, I can only speculate as to the validity of these ideas. I question the validity of the notion of the insulated listener both as a fact and as a significant phenomenon.

My questions go, of course, only to degree. Undoubtedly there are insulated listeners but what I question is that the typical listener is thus insulated, that is to say, that he hears and knows only what is broadcast.

Furthermore, I would conceive of most listeners—and particularly those whose mental habits incline them exclusively to listening—as casual listeners. The impact of any one communication on a casual listener would not be great.