

will be smart enough to keep his distance from the sort of maniacs who, unemployable elsewhere, gravitate to educational, public or commercial, videoland to find fame and fortune?

How come a zillion (or more) studies show that kids in general do no better (or as badly) in their schoolwork when taught by television than when given old fashioned, text-book, chalk and blackboard instruction? If the medium of video has quasi-mystical powers that "open windows to the world", gather the "best minds" to spread like apple seed their wisdom, etc., etc., etc., how come the sum total of its results of teaching anything (including long-term end-products from alumni of Seesame Street), when held against others, taught in an old fashioned way, demonstrate a superiority that adds up to zilch?

Why was television education once touted by early enthusiasts as the miracle that would economize education, cut costs, use teaching talent most effectively, etc., etc., etc., when in fact, a little arithmetic demonstrated clearly that any kind of video (tape, cable, open and closed circuits) is almost always extremely expensive, far more so than face-to-face schooling? While I myself was quoting these deceptions twelve years ago, I felt something was wrong with them. I was, however, too stupid to attempt some elementary arithmetic with equipment costs, labor costs and other matters that these enthusiasts had overlooked. Why did the Ford Foundation and Uncle Sammy have to spend billions to find out that video education cost many, many more billions? Who goofed? Are they still goofing?

#### And More Questions

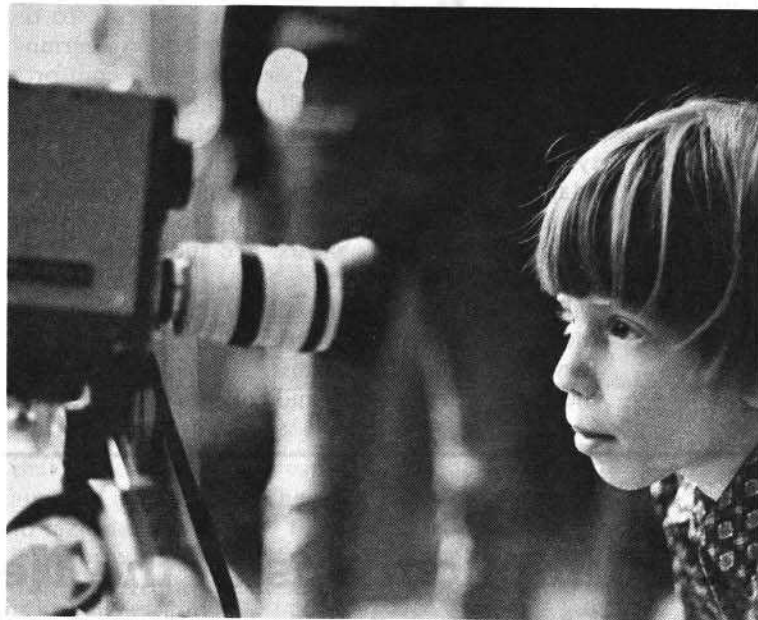
Who was the first twerp who got the words "entertainment" and "education" mixed up? Or the words "salesmanship" and "learning?" Or "personality" and "teacher?" Where is it written that because something - anything - may be able to excite, arouse, or stimulate people, it must also be able to educate them? Did the Roman believe that gladiatorial contests had "enormous educational potential?" Will you look me in the eye and make the latter claim for football games, Mardi-Gras, pie-eating contests or carnival tent-show pitches? What giant intellect surveyed a Trendex chart and concluded that because millions of Americans were at one time worshipping at the feet of Milton Berle (okay kids, ask me "who dat?"), a new era was opening in foot worshipping, that would eventually include adulation of educators and their - inevitably - none-too-attractive wares? Who first fell for the screwball canard that you can sell literature, chemistry, biology and language instruction the way you sell hair tonic?

Where did visual cultism come from, as if mankind's visual perceptions were somehow born the day television (or the movies) were invented? As if people had not been observing other people, ani-

mals, snowstorms, rocks, rivers and moving objects for hundreds of thousands of years before the invention of photography? As if the Italian Renaissance, the most visually oriented culture man had known to date, had never existed? As if the poetry and drama of a Shakespeare is not an exercise for the eye and the minds-eye, and has been for hundreds of years? As if words, villains of the misnamed "print tradition," are not themselves exercises in visual acuity. And as if their main function is not to stimulate a visual galaxy of imagery in the human sensorium - and imagination?

Who coined the term "visual literacy?" Erect a statue to him, shoot him - or both!

Who, in Arthur Koestler's wise words, put the "ghost in the machine?" What diabolical genius - or coven of geniuses - conned a culture into be-



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lieving that the very technology that they themselves have created as a servant was somehow inhabited by an incubus that turned it into a master? Was it just a coincidence that, during a period (mercifully past) when opinionated idiots were proclaiming loudly that "God is dead" in our churches, these same mousebrains were muttering incantations over what they feebly (and ungrammatically) insisted on calling "media?" Why were sensible academics, newsmen and others taken in by these dregs of medievalism? (See Richard Schickel's article on this fraudulence in the August 1973 issue of More!) What intellectual devastation has been left in its wake - especially in our schools and colleges?

So I said, I have questions to ask.

I wish I knew the answers.

I do not.