

The tolerance of visible scientists shows most clearly in their reactions to television. A relatively new and yet pervasive medium, television has traditionally turned off scientists. In a frank analysis of his feelings about television, Joshua Lederberg (1973) probably reflects what scientists find most disturbing about television:

I have a deep prejudice against television. It's not a snobbish one. It has to do with my own analysis of it as a medium. My concern (about it) is that it has tremendous affective impact, that it grips the viewer in a ⁵vive; he's

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time-bound to the medium, he can't set the time back a sentence or forward a sentence, he's locked into the temporal sequence of what goes on. It's bi-modal. So he's captured; he has very little free will except to turn the thing off. He can't even do too much thinking while it's going on, if he's going to remain engaged with it. That's my prejudicial image of it as a medium. And while I think it has a tremendous role as an art form, and for influencing people, I don't see it as a very good way of getting people to think for themselves. They're too controlled.

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I would say, if you asked me what's the main mission that I'm trying to accomplish in my writing at a public level, it's not to sell one point of view as against another, but it's trying to establish a more thoughtful attitude, a more skeptical one, one of further inquiry, not to regard things as settled that are very much unsettled. And I don't think television is very good for that purpose. . . . I feel very uncomfortable giving an interview under those circumstances. You also don't get much feedback. But mostly it's prejudice, as I say . . .

I also don't like the sense that I have no control about whatever eventually comes out. I know it's impractical. The performer has to be at the mercy of the director. He's got 37.9 seconds to fit things in, and that's an iron law. It can't be helped. But that doesn't give me a chance to be that reflective. I can't redraft what I have to say. Since many of my thoughts emerge in the process of communicating them, I find that very uncomfortable.