

## SOCIOLOGY

# TV Good Life Spurs Delinquency

TV stories beaming the "Life of Plenty" into slum homes create desires motivating juveniles to delinquency—the symbol of unsuccessful youth, Tove Neville reports.

► IT IS NOT the television horror shows or tales of brutal crimes that motivate youngsters in the slums to become juvenile delinquents.

The real culprits are shows daily beaming pictures of sleek cars and pretty girls into poor homes to adolescents who have no opportunity to become the owner of a shiny new car or to gain the company of pretty girls legitimately, a sociologist believes.

Dr. Lloyd Ohlin of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare told SCIENCE SERVICE that TV is the most direct and massive influence in the history of communications because it enters into the homes of millions every day.

It communicates a set of aspirations for the "good life" in materialistic terms. Yet, for the great masses of underprivileged, no opportunities are provided to reach the material well-being seen as enjoyed by others on the TV screen.

The young in the slums resort to crime as a solution to gain the material things of the "good life." The violent means delinquents use to gain their ends, however, may have been learned from watching TV shows which tell that it pays to be tough or fraudulent and outsmart or outwit the other guy.

Stories on TV do not stress enough that success is achieved by moral, ethical, approved (socially acceptable) ways, as did the Horatio Alger stories showing that hard work, thrift and responsibility pay, Dr. Ohlin said.

Instead, many TV shows portray some kind of exploitation. The slum kids do not copy this, or violence, just to do it for destructive reasons, but because it is shown to pay off.

## Modern-Day Models

Many crime tales showing modern-day criminals also serve as "better" models of crime "education" than do tales of adventure and violence in an imaginative setting such as Treasure Island. This is because it is more natural to act out the bad conduct of someone wearing modern clothes than someone in fairy tale attire or from strange and faraway places.

Unfortunately, the example poor youngsters see in their homes and communities are not very good models of behavior and often are like the tough types they see on TV. However, if a young person can attain beneficial goals, he or she can stand much undesirable living conditions without becoming delinquent, Dr. Ohlin believes.

The pressure in this country to achieve success has been very costly in terms of training the young to strive for high moral goals. Families spend more and more time

in becoming materially successful. The result is that when the young need most guidance they are left in a vacuum. At the same time they are economically dependent on the adults while developing skills needed to compete in today's labor market.

This vacuum promotes youth groups which develop their own culture regardless of adult standards. The adults lose appeal in the eyes of the young who sometimes become delinquent.

The many babies born during and after World War II are now passing through high school. Yet, of the 26,000,000 young persons who will enter the labor market during the 1960's, about 7,500,000 will have dropped out of school. These young have nowhere to turn for work because they have no skills and the labor market is already glutted.

Automation and advances in technology producing new machines to make life easier for man and the production of goods faster have put many out of work. Only those with skills to handle the machines can get jobs. Many unskilled and semiskilled workers face constant unemployment or retraining for a new job.

In those jobs where unskilled labor is

still needed, the older, mature unemployed, who generally have families and are more stable and dependable than the young just out of school, are often preferred. Those young who are unstable, unwanted and immature for their years in the sense of taking on responsibility have difficulties in finding jobs, and are most vulnerable as potential delinquents.

Many youths are unwanted because of prejudice against their race, nationality or religion. For example, the unemployment rate of Negroes is about twice that of whites. This is partly due to the fact that many of them are unskilled or semiskilled and dependent on jobs most affected by seasonal cycles and the level of depression in an area.

## Negroes Leave School Earlier

Negroes are generally unskilled because they tend to leave school earlier and in much greater numbers than whites. It has also been found that Negro school drop-outs suffer unemployment four times greater than the national unemployment rate.

The U.S. delinquency problem has been increasing faster than the increase in the young population. In 1960, the number of 10- to 17-year-olds rose two percent over 1959, but delinquency rose six percent.

No large city today is coping successfully with the problem. New York City alone



**TV "GOOD LIFE" DANGEROUS?—**Horror programs are not as important an influence on juvenile delinquency as programs highlighting materialistic forms of the "good life," as shown in this scene from ABC's "Follow the Sun," one sociologist believes. This is because the underprivileged cannot attain such ambitions legitimately.

is now spending close to \$90,000,000 each year to combat juvenile delinquency. Delinquency rate for the city in 1951 was 20.1 per 1,000 youths aged seven to 20 years. In 1960 the figure more than doubled to 42.4.

To cope with the situation of increasing delinquency, President Kennedy created on May 11, 1961, the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime.

On Sept. 22, 1961, Congress approved the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act, authorizing \$30,000,000 for combating delinquency over a three-year period. The money will be administered by the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Labor who together comprise the President's Committee.

About half of the money will be used to support anti-delinquency demonstration projects, the other half for training personnel in the youth field.

The first all-out demonstration grant of \$2,100,000 for a three-year period (\$700,000 a year) has just been awarded to New York City. The project will be carried out in an area of Manhattan's Lower East Side with a population of about 100,000. The grant was given on the basis of a study of this area made by Mobilization For Youth, Inc., a non-profit corporation composed of representatives of agencies and institutions on the Lower East Side and persons recommended by the New York School of Social Work at Columbia University.

Special Assistant to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, David Hackett, told SCIENCE SERVICE that this project will receive an additional \$10,000,000 from the City of New York, the National Institute of Mental Health and private foundations.

The funds will make it possible to carry out the scheduled program attacking all sources of delinquency and youth problems. Mr. Hackett believes that never has a project of this scope been undertaken.

### Investigate Contributing Factors

The factors contributing to delinquency to be investigated include family disintegration, slum housing, racial discrimination, lack of health and recreational facilities, failure in school and school dropouts, and youth unemployment. Such a program to be considered successful must be transferable to other areas and must have a built-in method for evaluation to measure its effect.

The program planned for New York includes an Urban Youth Service Corps, which will provide paid employment for several hundred unemployed out-of-school young people. Neighborhood conservation projects, manufacturing of toys, refurbishing furniture for low income residents, employment as aides to public and non-profit private institutions—such as housekeeping aides and assistants to youth groups—will be some of the jobs under the Corps.

The value of the program will be the training and upgrading of youngsters who presently are virtually unemployable. When a young person has completed the program, special attention will be given to helping him find a permanent position or aid in his further training.

Another aid to the education of slum youth is a special teacher visitation program in which teachers will visit the homes of their pupils as part of a course to gain better understanding of the pupil and his circumstances. A special laboratory school will attempt to improve the language arts instruction as part of overcoming the barriers facing the slum child in the slum school. A Homework Helper program, whereby low-income high school students with good grades can be hired to tutor students who are failing academically, will help the better students from becoming drop-outs.

To help young narcotics addicts, a program including detoxification, psychological treatment with access to vocational guidance, job training and placement will be undertaken.

### "Coffee Shops" for Delinquents

A unique part of the New York program will be the establishment of three "coffee shops" where delinquent and near-delinquent youngsters can drop in casually to listen to music, play chess and checkers or pursue other interests. Performances by professional entertainers or neighborhood talent will be planned frequently to reduce operating costs.

As the coffee shops become accepted their services and purposes will expand to include a referral center with a professional staff to offer vocational, educational, medical and psychiatric guidance for troubled youths.

Two other interesting projects of the Lower East Side program are the Pre-adolescent Project and the Adventure Corps, which will sponsor healthy activities such as athletics, camping, marching bands, music and such cultural and educational activities as museum trips and workshops. Planning grants amounting to about \$800,000 have been awarded this spring to Los Angeles, Houston, Cleveland and Philadelphia. Eventually, five or six programs similar to that in New York will be supported.

• Science News Letter, 81:362 June 9, 1962

### ASTRONOMY

## Kitt Peak Telescope Named for Dr. McMath

► THE WORLD'S largest solar telescope, located at Kitt Peak National Observatory near Tucson, Ariz., has been named for Dr. Robert R. McMath, in memory of the man whose scientific dream it represents.

The giant instrument, which has a focal length of 300 feet, will form an image of the sun 34 inches in diameter. The late Dr. McMath was a professor of astronomy at the University of Michigan and former board chairman of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy, Inc., which operates the new national observatory for the National Science Foundation.

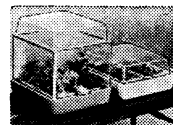
The McMath solar telescope, located 40 miles southwest of Tucson, will permit studies of the sun in greater detail than has ever been possible. It will form a solar image larger and more brilliant than attainable with any other instrument.

• Science News Letter, 81:363 June 9, 1962

## SCIENCE BARGAINS

Order by Stock No.—send check or M.O. Shipment same day received—satisfaction or money back.

### NEW . . . PORTABLE ELECTRIC GREENHOUSE FOR YEAR-ROUND GARDENING MAGIC



Now you can practice gardening as a hobby 12 months a year! Grow endless varieties of plants to maturity summer and winter . . . experiment continuously with plant growth and development. Thermostatically controlled temperature and humidity for rapid germination of seed, rooting of cuttings, and maximum growth potential. Size 15"x18", with styrofoam base, 25-watt heater and thermostat, 2 polystyrene planter trays, clear styrene lid. 2 sizes available each including bag of growing medium. Stock No. 70,490-Q—Low-lidded model, 7" high \$14.95 Postpd. Stock No. 70,491-Q—High-lidded model, 15" high \$21.95 Postpd.

### 'FISH' WITH A MAGNET

Go Treasure Hunting on the Bottom



Great idea! Fascinating fun and sometimes tremendously profitable! Tie a line to our 5-lb. Magnet—drop it overboard in bay, river, lake or ocean. Trawl it along the bottom—your "treasure" haul can be outboard motors, anchors, fishing tackle, all kinds of metal valuables. 5-lb. Magnet is war surplus—Alnico V Type—a terrific bargain. Lifts over 125 lbs. on land—much greater weights under water. Order now and try this new sport. Stock No. 70,183-Q. 5-lb. Magnet. . . \$9.95 Postpaid

### CRYSTAL-GROWING KIT

Do a crystallography project illustrated with large beautiful crystals you grow yourself. Kit includes the book "Crystals and Crystal Growing" and a generous supply of the chemicals you need to grow large display crystals of potassium aluminum sulfate (clear), potassium sulfate (purple), potassium sodium tartrate (clear), nickel sulfate hexahydrate (blue green) or heptahydrate (green), potassium ferricyanide (red), and copper acetate (blue green). Stock No. 70,336-Q . . . . . \$9.50 Postpaid

### VISIT AND SEE THE FAMOUS EDMUND RAINBOW SHOWPLACE

SEATTLE WORLD'S FAIR—

April 21 to Oct. 21



### BUILD A SOLAR ENERGY FURNACE

A fascinating new field. Build your own Solar Furnace for experimentation—many practical uses. Easy! Inexpensive! Use scrap-wood! We furnish instructions. This sun powered furnace will generate terrific heat—2000° to 3000°. Fuses enamel to metal. Sets paper flame in seconds! Use our Fresnel Lens—14" diameter. Stock No. 70,130-Q . . . . . \$6.00 Postpaid

### SPELLBINDING EXPERIMENTS with SILICON SOLAR CELL AND SUN BATTERY!



Experience endless fascination in converting sunlight into electricity to power small motors, amplifiers, etc. Ideal for scientific student projects. Plastic case 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 3/16". Produces 3 to 4.5 volts—10-16 milliamps. 24-page Handbook gives full data on 12 pat experiments.

Stock No. 80,216-Q . . . . . \$2.25 Postpaid  
Selenium Photocell. Lower power, lower price than Silicon Cell.  
Stock No. 30,411-Q . . . . . \$1.50 Postpaid  
Solar Cell and Photocell Handbook. Fascinating 112-page Handbook on Silicon-Cell and Selenium projects, demonstrations, etc. Explains photovoltaic theory, performance. Gives infrared and ultra-violet applications. Paperbound 6" x 9".  
Stock No. 9230-Q . . . . . \$2.00 Postpaid

### WOODEN SOLID PUZZLES



12 different puzzles that will stimulate your ability to think and reason. Here is a fascinating assortment of wood puzzles that will provide hours of pleasure. Twelve different puzzles, animals and geometric forms to take apart and reassemble, give a chance for all the family, young or old, to test skill, patience, and—best of all, to stimulate ability to think and reason while having lots of fun. Order yours now.

Stock No. 70,205-Q . . . . . \$3.00 Postpaid

TEACHERS! Write for Educational Catalog Q-2  
Edmund Scientific Co., Barrington, N. J.

### MAIL COUPON FOR FREE CATALOG "Q"

160 Pages! Over 1000 Bargains!  
EDMUND SCIENTIFIC CO.  
Barrington, New Jersey

Name . . . . .  
Address . . . . .  
City . . . . . Zone . . . . . State . . . . .

