This article develops two ideas pertaining to television and role taking from the perspective of symbolic interactionism. First, viewers may take the role of salient television personalities, during viewing and in nonviewing contexts, and may modify their behavior to conform to the imaginary evaluations of those television characters. Second, viewers may vicariously evaluate the behavior of one television "other" from the imagined perspective of a second, thus role taking both characters. This process, and the resulting observational feedback on accuracy of the vicarious role taking, is hypothesized to provide a training ground for the acquisition of role-taking skills. The conceptualization of seven propositions related to TV others and vicarious role taking point to an important prosocial function of a rapidly proliferating technology.

Television Characters as Significant Others and the Process of Vicarious Role Taking*

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The social psychological process of role taking is one of the most important elements of interpersonal functioning. However, surprisingly little attention has been paid to alternative sources for significant others and to the acquisition of role taking as a learned skill. A symbolic interactionist perspective might suggest that television serves as (1) an alternative source of significant others for role taking and (2) an additional training ground for the acquisition of the skill of role taking through the process of "vicariously" role taking television

interaction. In the process of developing these ideas, this article develops seven theoretical propositions. Because of the preliminary nature of these propositions, subtle nuances in the arguments and empirical tests of the seven propositions go beyond the objectives for the present article.

The looking-glass-self process of symbolic interactionism (Cooley, 1978) has long been recognized as central to the understanding of human interaction (Burr et al., 1979: 62) and the development of the self. If the individual fails to appropriately adopt the perspective of the significant other, socialization is interrupted and, in the extreme, social intercourse becomes impossible (Lauer and Bordman, 1971).

According to the conceptualization of Cooley (1978: 169), the looking-glass-self process has three components: "the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgement of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification." The self is formed when the individual (1) perceives that he or she is a social object on which others may act and to which they may react, and (2) comes to view that "object" from the perceived perspective of these significant others (Meltzer, 1978: 18). This process is usually identified as role taking and has been defined in a variety of ways. Lauer and Bordman (1971: 137), for example, define it as "the process whereby an individual imaginatively constructs the attitudes of the other, and thus, anticipates the behavior of the other" (see also Stryker, 1957: 138). Another definition identifies role taking as "the capacity to engage in the mental activity of imagining or perceiving what is in the mind of another person" (Burr et al., 1979: 62). In other words, when individuals take the roles of others, they arouse in themselves the same evaluation of their own presentation of self that they *imagine* would be called out in the others.

Most symbolic interactionists recognize a degree of selectivity in role taking. Cooley (1978: 170), for example, writes: "Of the new persons that a child sees, it is evident that some make a strong impression and awaken a desire to interest and please them, while others are indifferent or repugnant." At an early age, the child "already cares much for the reflection of himself upon one personality and little for that upon another." Basing an analysis on the work of

Gerth and Mills (1953), Hewett (1976: 101) points out that, as much as possible, people tend to restrict their relationships to those others who provide a positive reflection, thus retreating to a circle of "confirming intimate others."

TELEVISION AS SIGNIFICANT OTHER

The notion of the looking-glass self, of course, does not require that the significant other be physically present. People routinely evaluate their behavior from the point of view of such significant others as deceased parents, former friends and enemies, or the employer in the office upstairs. In this case, the "interaction" occurs only in the individual's imagination. This possibility was clearly anticipated by Mead in his explanation of minded behavior: "It is this conversation with ourselves . . . that constitutes the mind. Thus, what the individual actually does in minded behavior is to carry on an internal conversation" (Meltzer, 1978: 21). Of course, the "generalized other" is neither a real "person" nor part of an external interaction. Role taking the generalized other involves another internal conversation, this time with an other who has never existed but represents a compilation of significant others with whom one has interacted as well as elements of society at large (Lauer and Handel, 1977: 71). This level of role taking represents abstract cognition and may be particularly important for older children and adults.

A similar abstract level of role taking occurs when individuals take the roles of imaginary others they have never met, such as one's fabrication of the "mean spinster" who lives in the mansion on the edge of town, the leader of the local motorcycle gang, and so on. To go one step further, the significant other need not be human. God represents an extremely significant other for many people. Some pet owners routinely take the role of favorite pets and attribute complex human characteristics to them despite the fact that animals are not capable of making cognitive evaluations of human behavior.

It is the general hypothesis of this article that individuals can also take the roles of a third form of abstract others: significant images that are presented through the indirect channels of media. Individuals are expected to become so familiar with certain media characters that the images appear to take on the flesh-and-blood qualities of

humans (Caughey, 1978: 77). The individuals come to "know" (that is, predict) what the characters' evaluations of their behavior might be. Once individuals evaluate their own behavior from the perceived (and imaginary) perspective of the media characters, they have taken the role of the media others. That the characters' evaluations of the individuals' behavior is merely a hypothetical fabrication of the individuals is largely irrelevant, as W. I. Thomas pointed out in his well-known dictum: "Whatever a man defines is real, *is* real in its consequences" (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918).

It is hypothesized that individuals may take the roles of all kinds of salient images, including those presented by radio, print media, film, and live theater (see Nordlund, 1978, for a related idea). However, it is expected that the most prevalent role taking will occur with those images that come into the living room on a daily basis through the medium of television. In other words, television characters or personalities, such as Lucy, the Fonz, Dan Rather, Hawkeye, J. R., and Barbara Walters, can be added to the list of potential significant others available as sources of role taking. (It is possible, although not the emphasis of this article, that viewers may take the roles of the actors themselves—for example, Alan Alda—as well as the TV character—Hawkeye—or the personality "whose existence is a function of the media," such as Bob Barker; see Horton and Wohl, 1956: 216.)

Television is expected to emerge as the most salient forum for this type of role taking for a number of reasons. Compared to radio and print media, television is more salient because TV images are more "complete," and more complete because their visual nature makes them more direct. Print media and radio are limited to written or auditory symbols and require the reader's or listener's processing to personify the images. Televison presents its images as completed visual symbols. In fact, television has often been criticized for leaving too little to the imagination (see, for example, Singer and Singer, 1981: 17); Bettelheim's [1977: 59] criticism of illustrations in children's story books is also related).

Compared to film images and live theater, TV images are usually more salient because the frequency and repetitiveness with which they are presented allow greater perceived intimacy. While certain film characters, such as E.T. and those in *Star Wars*, are undeniably powerful and probably lend themselves to role taking, they are still one-time experiences and cannot be as intimately known as those

television figures who are observed on a weekly, even daily, basis over a period of years in the viewer's own home. Similarly, movies seen on cable television or on home recorders are available for multiple viewing. It is this element of routinization that increases the likelihood of role taking.

It is even possible to make a comparison between taking the roles of television images and traditional role taking. At first glance, the two types of experiences would appear to be quite different: One is fabricated, an illusion; the other seems to be a concrete reality. Examine each type of experience in turn, however, and the differences become less extreme:

(1) Some researchers have found that television images become so compelling that they transfix many viewers (Caughey, 1978; McLeod et al., 1982: 277). The television image is extremely sophisticated and is portrayed so realistically that it closely simulates the real world, even if the "accuracy" of that portrayal is suspect (Gerbner et al., 1980; Signorielli et al., 1982). Thus, the illusion comes to take on a reality of its own. This is particularly true as the portrayal more closely conforms to the viewer's previous experiences—that is, if there is a consensus in the "multiple definitions of the situation" (Lauer and Handel, 1977: 115).

(2) Conversely, a basic tenet of symbolic interactionism is that humans respond not so much to a concrete social reality (Lauer and Handel, 1977: 310) as to an interpreted symbolic reality (Burr et al., 1979: 46; Lauer and Handel, 1977: 168). Thus, concrete experiences are not as "concrete" as one might suppose. They are largely interpreted in terms of their symbolic representation. TV images, of course, are also cognitively processed. Once such processing has taken place, TV images become similar to other forms of symbolic representation, although "the precise similarities and differences between the two worlds remain unclear" (Caughey, 1978: 75).

If the television image is still less "real" than an *immediate* physical other, it compares more closely with one's *memory* of a past concrete experience. Moreover, since a considerable amount of "human" interaction involves abstract role taking, taking the roles of TV characters may be more similar to traditional role taking than realized at first.

As discussed above, one of the objectives of this article is to generate preliminary propositions for eventual empirical testing. The first proposition, based on the arguments advanced to this point,

asserts that role taking of television characters does occur, at least for some viewers and in some situations. It can be stated:

Proposition 1: Viewers evaluate their own behavior from the imagined perspective of television characters (TV role taking).

SELECTIVITY IN TV OTHERS

Television provides a very wide array of characters for a person to role take in a one-way situation. However, it is unlikely that viewers would be capable of role taking all of them indiscriminately. There are simply too many potential TV others. There must be some mechanism for selecting among the hundreds of television characters and personalities available for role taking. (Note that the discussion concerns selecting TV others, not selectivity in television content, an issue that is not dealt with in this article.)

Returning to the discussion of selectivity in traditional role taking, the elements that would make some television characters more significant than others are likely the same as those that make one human more significant than another. Characteristics typically listed include salience, power, and affect. For any individual, it is very likely that some TV characters are perceived to possess more of these elements than some others. But there appear to be some additional characteristics that are unique to the television image.

One such characteristic is implied in the concept of "para-social interaction," first introduced by Horton and his colleagues in the 1950s (Horton and Strauss, 1957; Horton and Wohl, 1956; see also Caughey, 1978; Levy, 1979; Nordlund, 1978; and Rosengren et al., 1976). In a theoretical examination of television viewing, Horton and Wohl (1956) point to the deliberate creation of an artificial intimacy between viewer and certain television characters or personalities (labeled "personae" by Horton and Wohl, 1956: 216). In this pseudo-relationship of "intimacy at a distance," audiences experience "the illusion of face-to-face, primary relations with actually remote mass media communicators" (Levy, 1979: 69). The viewer is thought to feel a close rapport with the television persona who is presented, by design, as an intimate confidant and friend in a simulated face-to-face exchange (Horton and Wohl, 1956). This manipulated intimacy is created through the use of camera angles, zooms and close-ups,

routinized behavior of the personae, and regularly scheduled appearances. Although also applied to some fictional characters and TV celebrities, the techniques are largely reserved for quiz masters, announcers, and "interviewers" (Horton and Wohl, 1956: 216).

One might combine the idea of para-social interaction with the observation of Gerth and Mills (1953; see also Hewitt, 1976) that people tend to restrict their relationships to those who provide a positive reflection. The conclusion could then be drawn that television characters become significant when they are percieved to act as "confirming intimate others" in an artificially affective and intimate "para-social relationship." This conclusion is strengthened by considerable literature indicating that individuals practice selective exposure to television programs and selective perception and retention within those programs (Davis and Baran, 1981: 153; DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1975: 204; Ellis and Sexton, 1982; Murray, 1980: 18; Rosengren et al., 1976: 358).

Also contributing to the variability in how much a given viewer may take the roles of television images are characteristics of both the viewer and the image. Although an exhaustive list of these characteristics is not known at this time, such a list might include (1) for the viewer: cognitive and developmental level, frequency and amount of viewing, mediation of other family members or the peer group in the viewing experience, motivation for viewing, perceptions of the reality of the portrayals, and mental activity while viewing, and (2) for the image: consistency with other images, superficiality or sophistication of the character's development in the program, "intensity, duration, and longevity" of the portrayals (Greenberg, 1982: 188), and "media interaction potential" (Nordlund, 1978: 152; see Murray, 1980, for a review of literature in all these areas).

The second proposition, then, asserts that not all television characters are identified as significant others for role-taking purposes. It is likely that the viewer's selectivity of television others depends on such perceived characteristics of the TV character as power, salience, affect, imagined intimacy with the viewer, and a variety of variables related to the viewer or the image. However, it would be premature to include the specific basis for the selectivity in the proposition at this time. Proposition 2 simply states:

Proposition 2: TV viewers selectively define certain television characters as significant others.

TV ROLE TAKING AND BEHAVIOR

For symbolic interactionists, the importance of the concept of role taking lies in its implications for the modification of behavior (Stryker, 1957). The "me" aspect of the individual responds to the perceived evaluations of significant others by organizing and directing the spontaneous and impulsive "I" component of the self (Meltzer, 1978). Since the behavior of an individual results from shared meanings or socially derived definitions of the situation, the power of the role-taking process occurs when the I is motivated to conform to these meanings and definitions. It is this drive to conform that transforms the asocial I into the social me with the "characteristic ways of behaving, the values, norms and attitudes of the social units of which he is a part" (Stryker, 1957: 133). Since "the organized attitudes of others provide positive guidance to the individual in constructing his own conduct" (Hewitt, 1976: 64), social order, through role taking, lies at the heart of interactionism as a dynamic social perspective.

The argument developed to this point suggests that viewers may evaluate their attitudes and actions from the perspective of TV others. If television viewers also modify their attitudes and actions based on the imaginary perception of the character's evaluation, television has had an impact on human behavior (see Levy, 1979: 70, and Nordlund, 1978: 156, for related ideas). Thus, one's television viewing is hypothesized to have implications for: (1) self-"behaviors" such as self-esteem, feelings of competence or self-worth, adoption of social roles (which influence self-identity), and (2) other-directed behaviors, such as presentation of self, expressiveness of emotions, and styles of social interaction. This goes far beyond merely claiming that viewers may model specific behaviors such as aggression. If true, it indicates that television role taking has far-reaching implications for many facets of the viewers' lives. Proposition 3 barely touches the implications of these ideas. It can be stated:

> *Proposition 3:* TV role taking includes self-feelings that result in the modification of behavior to conform to the perceived evaluation of the TV other.

Two qualifications to the argument that taking the roles of television characters affects the viewer's behavior are (1) TV role

taking occurs in nonviewing as well as viewing contexts, and (2) the learning resulting from TV role taking may not always be "accurate." Each qualification will be briefly discussed.

(1) Role Taking in Nonviewing Contexts. The assertion that individuals may take the roles of television personalities and characters and modify their own behavior as a result of this role-taking experience goes beyond the concept of para-social interaction. Horton and Wohl (1956) imply that para-social interaction occurs only during the viewing process (Rosengren et al., 1976: 348). By contrast, traditional role taking occurs after, as well as during, an initial role-taking experience, since significant others are cognitively internalized for later use in abstract and internal role taking (Mead's "minded behavior"; see Meltzer, 1978: 21).

The same process should apply to significant TV others as well. If so, it would imply that viewers would frequently take the roles of television images during *nonviewing* times—an important extension of the logic of para-social interaction. Taking the roles of TV others in nonviewing settings is especially likely to occur when viewers find themselves in situations that are similar to ones typically faced by the TV other. For example, while a male viewer may observe Fonzie during the TV show *Happy Days* and feel a degree of personalized rapport (para-social interaction), it is primarily when he is actually in a mixed-sex group that he might examine and evaluate his behavior from Fonzie's perspective. This is not a trivial difference. If television's effects are limited to the viewing situation, the medium has a considerably less powerful impact than if its effects permeate other aspects of the viewers' lives. Thus, the fourth proposition asserts:

> *Proposition 4:* The process of TV role taking occurs in nonviewing (as well as viewing) contexts.

(2) The "Accuracy" of TV Role Taking. The "cultivation hypothesis" of Gerbner and his colleagues (1980: Signorielli et al., 1982) questions the accuracy with which television reflects social life, especially in its portrayal of sex roles, minorities, family dynamics, and the frequency of violence. The hypothesis basically asserts that "the more time one spends living in the world of television, the more likely one is to report conceptions of social reality that can be traced to television portrayals" (Signorielli et al., 1982: 169). If this is true, TV role taking may not necessarily be "correct" in the sense of being consistent with what the viewer would experience socially. This

implies that viewing may foster unrealistic perceptions of the world, and the behaviors learned may not necessarily be appropriate. Some examples may serve to make this point:

(1) A young female viewer might watch the program *Happy Days* and observe a typical interaction between Fonzie and the adolescent girls who frequent Arnold's drive-in. She would learn that the appropriate response called out in the girls when the Fonz snaps his fingers is to squeal and come running to him. It is doubtful that this response would be appropriate in similar social situations in real life.

(2) In the absence of direct face-to-face interaction with racial minorities, heavy viewers adopt the racial stereotypes portrayed on television (Greenberg, 1982: 184; Hartmann and Husband, 1974). To the extent that a viewer adopts an inaccurately portrayed minority television character as a significant TV other, the viewer may well be acquiring an "unrealistic" other and learn behaviors that would not fit actual social interactions.

VICARIOUS ROLE TAKING

While symbolic interactionists agree that role taking is an essential capability, additional conceptualization and research is needed on how this skill is acquired. Most assume a natural developmental process based on Mead's identification of the three stages of play (Hewitt, 1976; Meltzer, 1978: 18), although some sociologists (for example, Turner, 1956) and developmental psychologists (for example, Flavell and Botkin, 1968; Selman and Byrne, 1974) have amplified on these stages. Most empirical applications treat role taking as the independent variable; that is, variation in role taking is assumed to exist but is not the object of the explanation (see, for example, Stryker, 1957.)

One antecedent of the acquisition of role-taking skills that may be assumed from the work of Mead is that individuals gain ability to take roles through practice during interaction with family members and other close associates (Hewitt, 1976; Lauer and Handel, 1977; Meltzer, 1978). Using this logic, the more interaction that people have with significant others, the better they will be at role taking them (Lauer and Boardman, 1971: 143). This line of reasoning is so compelling that it is generally taken as a given. Very little literature

questions the assumption that humans learn role taking through social interaction—especially, and initially, within the family context.

Because personal interaction allows immediate feedback on the accuracy of the perceptions, it probably represents the ideal training ground for the development of role-taking accuracy. In the family, this feedback is most often provided by the significant other, who (a) is often able to discern and correct a misperception, and (b) could be requested for feedback by the individual doing the role taking. Interaction in the family, then, can be segmented or repeated for assimilation and allows verification of impressions and interpretations through dialogue and feedback.

It is the perspective of this article that television can also serve as a training ground for the acquisition of role-taking skills. One of the most important characteristics of any training ground for role taking would seem to be the opportunity to obtain feedback on whether one's role taking (that is, perceptions of the other's evaluation) is "correct" or consistent with the other's *actual* evaluations. For television to fulfill this function, it would be necessary for the viewer to receive feedback on the accuracy of his or her perceptions of the TV character's evaluations. Naturally, such feedback cannot come from the television image itself.

In order to solve the problem of lack of feedback from television, it is necessary to introduce a new concept. This concept would be consistent with symbolic interactionism but would not be limited to television viewing. As discussed earlier, it is generally accepted that individuals routinely take the roles of significant others and evaluate their behavior from that perspective. This could be called simple role taking (see Figure 1a). However, it is also possible that individuals, while observing people in interaction, can take the role of one significant other from the perspective of a second significant other, thus role taking both others. This process might be labeled "vicarious role taking" (see Figure 1b) and appears to have several components:

(1) A person imaginatively takes the perspective of a significant other (SO 1), but not to focus on an evaluation of his or her *own* behavior. Instead,

(2) he or she vicariously, and simultaneously, takes the perspective of the third individual (also a significant other—SO 2) and

(3) focuses on the behavior, or presentation of self, of the first significant other (SO 1), thus vicariously role taking SO 2 from the perspective of SO 1.
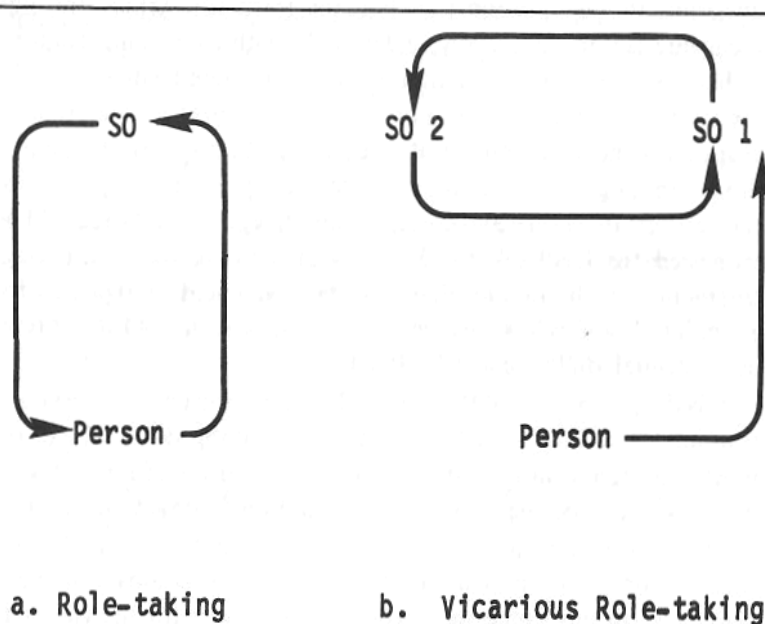
a. Role-taking   b. Vicarious Role-taking

Figure 1: Simple and Vicarious Role Taking

(4) The individual would then reverse the process and take the role of SO1 from the perspective of SO 2. The two phases would be repeated alternately for the duration of the vicarious role taking. (Note: To avoid confusion, Figure 1b illustrates only the first phase.)

The mechanism of vicarious role taking is expected to allow individuals to obtain observational feedback about the accuracy of their role taking. Hence, vicarious role taking is hypothesized to serve the same function as face-to-face interaction: helping to teach the essential skill of role taking. Although vicarious role taking is expected to be particularly important in instances where direct feedback is not likely, it probably occurs in many social situations. In the family, for example, children often have an opportunity to vicariously take the role of one parent from the imagined perception of a second. Similar vicarious role taking could occur in other triadic relationships in the family. But what does vicarious role taking have to do with television viewing?

The application of vicarious role taking to television viewing involves the viewer's taking the role of one TV other's evaluation of the behavior of another television character, and vice versa. When an individual adopts a television character as a significant other, there is a weekly, if not daily, opportunity to observe the character in interaction with other characters. The viewer can become adept at vicarious role taking, or predicting how the character will evaluate the behavior of other TV characters. Through this process the viewer is usually provided with some observational feedback on the accuracy of the role taking. Moreover, the feedback is usually direct, immediate, and relatively uncomplicated.

The idea behind vicarious role taking of TV images is not without some discussion in the literature. Although not talking about role taking, Bandura (1977) employs the social learning concept "vicarious reinforcement" to discuss motivational aspects of observing the consequences of a model's behavior (1977: 28; see Comstock, 1982: 336). As early as 1951, Maccoby (1951: 439) expressed interest in "vicarious satisfaction." In the same tradition of exploring the attraction of television and film, Tannenbaum (1980) discusses vicariously experienced emotions as an incentive for viewing.

Horton and Strauss (1957: 580) come closer to vicarious role taking in their discussion of "vicarious interaction," where "the observer takes the roles of the various actors alternately and reciprocally." However, their interest in this concept appears to be primarily in how the vicarious interaction between the television persona and a second figure is deliberately created to amplify the para-social relationship between persona and viewer (1957: 582). There is no discussion of how observation of the interaction provides feedback for the viewer who is taking the role of both TV images.

It is the observational feedback possibility of vicarious role taking that allows television to serve as a training ground for the acquisition of this social skill. The proposition suggested by the concept of vicarious role taking can be stated as follows:

Proposition 5: Viewers vicariously take the roles of selected TV characters from the perspective of other TV characters.

VICARIOUS TV ROLE TAKING AND INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION

Television viewing has been faulted for a variety of reasons, but one of the major criticisms is that it takes away time that people, especially families, spend doing things together (McLeod et al., 1982:

277). Research indicates that high television-consuming familes eat fewer meals around the dining table, play fewer family games, and spend less time in conversation (see Murray, 1980). A recent trend is for increasing numbers of families to own multiple sets, thus encouraging the phenomenon of isolated viewing (Comstock et al., 1978; Ellis et al., 1983). What is not known is the influence that high television usage may have on the acquisition of individual role-taking skills. There seem to be two possible, but conflicting, expectations.

The first expectation is that, since television viewing decreases the time for interpersonal interaction, it would *impede* the development of accurate role-taking skills. Because of high amounts of viewing, an individual would have less opportunity to practice taking the roles of others and therefore would be less accurate in predicting their evaluations. This expectation assumes that role-taking skills can be acquired only in face-to-face interaction and is not the position taken in this article. It suggests a negative relationship between amount of viewing and social skills such as role-taking ability.

The second expectation, and the one adopted in this article, is that high television viewing may *facilitate* the development of accurate role taking by serving as an additional training ground for its acquisition. The present conceptualization, then, does not consider high television viewing and role-taking skills to be mutually exclusive. Indeed, Nordlund (1978: 163) found a positive correlation between exposure to television and the related concept of "media interaction." The sixth proposition, reflecting this expectation, is:

Proposition 6: Extent of vicarious TV role taking is positively related to accuracy of interpersonal role taking.

As mentioned above, face-to-face interaction probably represents the ideal training ground for the development of role-taking accuracy. The acquisition of this skill through vicarious role taking of television images is assumed to be a less desirable way to learn this important social skill and should be most pronounced for those lacking the opportunity for interpersonal interactions. Some support for this idea is provided by Levy (1979: 70), who builds on the work of Horton and Wohl (1956) and points out that "the more opportunities an individual has for social interaction, the less likely he or she will engage in a parasocial relationship with news personae" (see also Nordlund, 1978: 153). Thus, individuals who enjoy high levels of

interpersonal interaction are expected to be good at taking the roles of others regardless of their level of television use. Individuals who are in a situation of limited interpersonal interaction, on the other hand, should be good at taking the roles of others if their use of television is high but poor at taking the roles of others if their use of television is low. In any test of these hypotheses, therefore, it would be desirable to control for opportunities for social interaction. The final proposition postulates a contingency relationship:

Proposition 7: As the extent of an individual's opportunities for social interaction decreases, the positive relationship between extent of vicarious TV role taking and accuracy of interpersonal role taking is strengthened.

SUMMARY

This article has hypothesized that viewers can, and do, take the roles of those television personalities or characters that they perceive as significant. In this way, television images exert influence on the viewers' behaviors. It is further expected that, through vicarious television role taking, viewers acquire a social skill that can be generalized to other life situations and can indirectly enhance their social relationships. Thus, the symbolic interactionist perspective seems compatible with, and an important contribution to, the investigation of the prosocial functions of television (a topic that "burgeoned into one of the most significant developments in the decade"; Pearl et al., 1982: 48; see also Murray 1980: 44). As with the majority of theoretical articles, the present essay raises more questions than it answers. Perhaps that is how it should be. Clearly, the next step is an empirical examination of the propositions outlined above.

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