

## Television and drama

*During the last five or six years television has become more and more important to drama in general, not only in offering a valuable testing ground for new dramatists, but also in forming taste and preparing audiences, almost imperceptibly, for new things. The advantage with television in this respect is precisely what has generally been taken as its main disadvantage: the relatively uncritical approach of the mass audience. This is not to say they are really "captive", as superior people like to say: one has only to look at the series of TAM ratings, which record the state of the television set in the testing sample's home every thirty seconds, to find out the speed with which a programme will be switched off if viewers don't like it. But though they know what they like and what they don't like when they see it, they do not on the whole have any marked preconceptions before any given programme begins. A play, whoever it is by and whatever style it is written, is judged by the same simple but reliable rule of thumb as Wagon Train or What's my line: if they like it, if it holds their attention, it stays on; if not they switch to the other channel or even, in extreme cases switch off.*

### QUESTIONS

1. When has television become important?
2. What is it important for?
3. Why is it important?
4. Which is the real advantage for television?
5. Do you think it is important to have any preconceptions of a programme before watching it?
6. Do you agree with the text?
7. Explain the meaning of:
  - Valuable:
  - Sample:
  - Drama:
  - Reliable: