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David Lavery

Response to Jonathan Gray

Jonathan Gray

'Critiquing the Critics: On _Teleparody_'

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<http://www.film-philosophy.com/vol7-2003/n17gray>

When Jill Hague and I were still in search of a publisher for [_Teleparody: Predicting/Preventing the TV Discourse of Tomorrow_](#), a gestation period which lasted several years, we had begun to wonder whether the 'prophetic/prophylactic criticism' (once the subtitle of the book) we sought to assemble would ever find an editor able to comprehend what exactly we were up to. When Yoram Allon of [Wallflower Press](#) replied to our initial proposal by suggesting that, in keeping with our intent, he should merely review our book instead of producing it, we knew ('happy, happy joy joy!')

that we had found the proper home.

Yoram Allon never did write that review, nor has Teleparody, to date, inspired many reviews, but if we had imagined in advance a fair and equitable review, an evaluation that did justice to the efforts of our contributors and the nature of our mission, we probably had something like Jonathan Gray's essay in mind.

The editors of a book offering make-believe reviews of make-believe books of television criticism should certainly be able to withstand the scrutiny of others, and reading Gray's discerning commentary didn't hurt at all. We certainly accept Gray's contention that Teleparody is a 'bold and highly amusing book, often as outright hilarious as it can be insightful', and admit that indeed it is 'not 'just' comedy' but, like all parody, 'theory in illustration'. We loved his remark that our imaginative and brilliantly comic contributors' 'fashion show of jargon and over-theorization at its worst' is in the spirit of the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest.

But we understand, too, the reviewer's contention that not all of the over two-dozen parodies that make up the book are equally humorous or valuable, recognize the possible validity of his criticism that there may well be some repetition and overlapping, and find his observation that cultural studies and mass communication approaches are perhaps slighted observant and accurate. (Of course, being neglected in a book such as this might well constitute a compliment.)

As we relate in the Introduction to Teleparody, some

colleagues who heard early versions of the four original teleparodies (by Hague, Graham, Wilcox, and Lavery) were insulted, and insisted that we had 'gone too far'. We wanted the book to provoke, and we are delighted with the response it motivated in Jonathan Gray. We hope it will provoke others as well. Our most grandiose ambition for our book, after all, was that it might lead to the development of a new critical genre.

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