

Questions on W. Phillips Davison “The Third-Person Effect in Communication”

1. What experiences led Davison to form the “third-person effect hypothesis”?
2. What is the “third-person effect”? And why is it specifically called “third-person”?
3. Explain Davison’s four experiments, and the studies of *Roots*, postwar American attitudes toward Jews and the elections he discusses. What were the findings and how do they fit into Davison’s argument?
4. What are the possible reasons for misevaluation of media effects?
5. What are some other contexts where the third-person effect might be important to consider?

Questions on Jeffrey St. John, “Communication as Failure”

1. St. John uses novelists William Gaddis and Marcel Proust to illustrate his main point about failure and communication: what is that point and how do the authors illustrate it?
2. What are St. John’s two main propositions about communication as failure? How does he support those claims?
3. What is the role of imagination in understanding communication? How do understandings of communication shift as we move from the imaginary realm of literature to the realm of real life?