

# COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS



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## More on Soaps

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**Trends'** treatment of soap operas has reflected their 'serial' character by continuing our discussion from the previous issue (Vol. 10, No. 1) to this issue. A more serious justification for this extended treatment lies in the degree to which soap operas, telenovelas and comparable productions pervade the television screens of many nations and the extraordinary degree to which they are able to attract and hold audiences. In this issue, aspects of soap opera production are discussed, then the reasons for the ability of the genre to successfully cross national and cultural boundaries is explored. Finally, we consider the contribution soap operas might make to education and development.

## I. The Production of Soap Operas/Telenovelas

Michael James Intintoli. *Taking Soaps Seriously: The World of Guiding Light*. New York: Praeger, 1984. 247 pp.

John Tulloch and Albert Moran. *A Country Practice: 'Quality Soap'*. Sydney: Currency Press, 1986. 303 pp.

Michèle and Armand Mattelart. *Le Carnaval Des Images: La Fiction Bresilienne*. Paris: 1987. 163 pp.

Maria Teresa Quiroz and Ana Maria Cano. 'Los Antecedentes y Condiciones de la Produccion de Telenovelas en El Peru'. in *Estudios Sobre Las Culturas Contemporaneas*. No. 4-5 (Feb, 1988), pp.187-222.

There have been few studies on the production of soap operas. What is available are the more or less popularized accounts by producers or writers of soap operas. Slightly different is a book by Jean Rouverol (Rouverol, 1984), in which the author and others share the experience of writing for the American daytime soap operas.

Michael Intintoli's study is unusual, therefore, in being that of an anthropologist using ethnographic methods, such as participant observation, to investigate the production process of a number

of American daytime serials, especially *The Guiding Light*, now finished, sponsored by Procter and Gamble and broadcast by CBS from 1937. Intintoli conceptualizes soap opera as a symbolic form and considers it as part of social structures and social processes.

The primary dynamic in the production of *The Guiding Light*, according to Intintoli, is the competition of Procter and Gamble for large demographically ideal audiences/markets of women between 18 and 49. Like Allen, Intintoli

reflects on the changes in length and content of the soap opera, in order to attract additional segments of the audience. Procter and Gamble passed the administrative control, and to a lesser degree the creative control, to an advertising agency. Compton Advertising hired the creative and production staff, while the technical staff was hired by CBS. The production process itself took place 'in a hierarchically controlled organizational setting' which involved 'an elaborate division of labor and the use of complex technologies to generate scenes, acts and episodes as part of the on-going storytelling.'

Intintoli concentrates on the investigation of six key roles in the production process: 1. supervision producer, 2. executive producer, 3. head writer, 4. performers, 5. directors, 6. line producers. One of Intintoli's findings is that Procter and Gamble's decision to diminish the power of the head writer in favour of the executive producer was a way for the company to consolidate its control over the programme in the face of fiercer competition from changed ABC soap operas.

The first part of the book by John Tulloch and Albert Moran examines the production of the Australian medical soap opera, *A Country Practice*. Tulloch and Moran's approach is much more directly descriptive and less theoretically framed than that of Intintoli.

In contrast to most other Australian soap operas, *A Country Practice* is designed to present a certain number of social problems in a realistic way. Unlike most other Australian soap operas, *A Country Practice* is shown in blocks with intervals, a structure which resembles the American evening soap operas. The two authors describe each major step in the production of the serial. The authors claim that *A Country Practice* is 'a highly popular programme of good quality which is produced at a fraction of the cost of the US product.' Their particular interest is to show how an innovative style of soap opera, measured by Australian standards, can exist within the commercial television industry. The authors also report two cuts which occurred during their period of investigation. The first was administered when the script was too 'preachy' and the second when the content was too socially critical, though Tulloch and Moran suggest that it would be too simplistic to talk of political censorship in such cases. It would not take account of the kind of majority influence for which *A Country Practice* was aiming.

The book by Michèle and Armand Mattelart contains a section on the production of telenovelas in Brazil. Three elements seem to be particularly important in their analysis of the Globo production system. First, the role of the author of a telenovela, like the head writer in earlier US soap operas, had great influence. Although he or she is often supported by a co-

author and a team of sub-writers, the author still has to sustain the scripting of an 'open text' during an intense period of six to eight months, during which the development of the storylines depends on audience reactions. The Mattelarts quote one of the script-writers of *Roque Santeiro* saying: 'During eight months, one cannot do anything else .. the thought of becoming ill terrifies an author more than anything else. If one cannot write a chapter on one day one has to write two on the next day... After *Roque Santeiro* I think I will rest for one year'.

The second important factor is political censorship by the Brazilian government, which continues under the present government. In 1975 under the military government the telenovela *Roque Santeiro* was so censored that in the end Globo decided not to show it, even though this meant losing their investment in 31 initial episodes out of the planned 148 episodes. *Roque Santeiro* was relaunched only in 1985, in a completely new version. According to the Mattelarts realistic portrayals of Brazilian political realities were still problematic. Sex and violence were also strictly censored. A quote from the author, Dias Gomes, describes how he tried to trick the censors: 'If you want an army to cross a river full of piranhas, you sacrifice a cow ... The game is inventing an episode which captures all the attention of the censors. Censorship is an integral part of my professional life'.

The third element influencing the production process of Brazilian telenovelas is 'merchandising', that is, adapting the narrative to allow the insertion of a product for advertising purposes. The authors maintain that such methods of covert advertising have become much more refined and are applied with much more subtlety in Brazil than in the United States where this advertising strategy aroused public protest. Globo even founded its own sales agency APOI for merchandising. This means that 'thirty people devote all their daily working time to studying possible interactions of texts and products to find subtle and agreeable ways of inserting the products.'

Maria Teresa Quiroz and Ana Maria Cano describe the structures of domination in the Peruvian television market, through programme imports from the United States and other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela. It is cheaper to buy programmes from these countries than to produce them in Peru. Since there is a lack of finance, experienced staff and equipment, it is difficult to increase the local television production, of which telenovelas are a key element. The production of a long-term telenovela can be a high-risk venture for commercial production companies in Peru. But since regulation requires 60% of the programmes shown in Peru to be of national origin, Peruvian television companies have bought

complete scripts from TV Globo in Brazil, which are then adapted locally. This is the situation in which the independent production company PRO was founded by people who formerly worked in the theatre and in film. PRO which, according to the authors, is unique in Latin America, is not limited to one particular channel, but sells programmes to all existing national channels.

PRO produced two innovative telenovelas with socially relevant topics and a less conventional filmic style. The productions did not attract as many viewers as the more conventional foreign telenovelas. Quiroz and Cano account for this by arguing that non-Peruvian telenovelas have set the standards and conventions to which the audience is now accustomed.

## II. Soap Opera Part of National Or International Media Culture?

Jean Bianchi. *Comment Comprendre le Succès International des Séries de Fiction à La Télévision? Le Cas Dallas*. (Un report pour la Ministère de La Recherche), Paris: 1984. 92 pp.

Tamar Liebes. 'Cultural Differences in the Retelling of Television Fiction'. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 5, 4, December, 1988.

Herta Herzog Massing. 'Decoding Dallas: Comparing American and German Viewers'. In Arthur Asa Berger (Ed.), *Television in Society*. New Brunswick, NJ: 1987.

Alessandro Silj et al.. *East of Dallas: The European Challenge to American Television*. London: 1988. 224 pp.

Michael Schenk and Patrick Rössler. *Prime Time Soap Viewing in Germany: An Audience Oriented Comparison of Two Favorite Television Programs*. Unpublished

*Dallas* has become a symbol of the internationalisation of television fiction under US dominance. Serials like *Dallas* which emerge from the very competitive US media industry seem to have an almost universal appeal. Jean Bianchi attributes the enormous success of *Dallas* to its basic structure which is based on serialization and draws on the well-known forms of popular melodrama and primordial, mythic elements (such as the primacy of a powerful family). In comparison with those primary structural elements the more local elements of American culture, are secondary and less powerful.

There are, however, a number of countries where *Dallas* has not been so successful. The most striking example is Japan. John Lent suggests that *Dallas* was rejected in Japan because 'its traits of greed, self-interest and lying did not mesh with the Japanese cultural values of loyalty, self-sacrifice and the honouring of obligation'. (Lent, 1989). In contrast, the Japanese soap opera *Oshin* (broadcast six days a week for 15 minutes) with 63 % of the audience, recorded the highest viewing figures in Japanese history.

As has been mentioned before, in some Latin American countries local telenovelas were also more popular than *Dallas*. Jean Bianchi compares the reception of *Dallas* in Peru with that in Algeria. In Peru *Dallas* did not achieve high ratings because a competing channel scheduled a locally produced serial against it. Jean Bianchi concludes that given the choice, viewers are likely to prefer a serial which, though marked by a similar structure to *Dallas*, is closer to their own situation. In Algeria *Dallas* was shown on the

only channel available and its success was partially due to the lack of any competing programme. Another reason for the appeal of *Dallas* in Algeria, is given in a journalistic survey by Joelle Stolz in 1983. According to Bianchi that survey found the major attraction of *Dallas* in Algeria related to the centrality of the powerful family clan of the Ewings, which in its patriarchal structure and some of its values resembled the local influential family clans. The self-image of those local family clans is often in opposition to the role which is assumed by the socialist state. Bianchi suggests that the Algerians also used *Dallas* to take revenge on the dominant socialist ideology which insists on a modern state organization with community-oriented values. Much closer to their own secret ideal, *Dallas* represents the archaic model of a self-governing family which is ruled and publicly represented by the patriarch Jock, whom even his grown-up sons obey. In contrast, other narrative elements in *Dallas* were much more problematic in Algeria, especially the liberal sexual conduct of the protagonists and the theme of the illegitimate child. For, although extra-marital births are on the increase in Algeria, this topic is tabu in official discourse.

Bianchi proposes three overall directions for further research on television serials with a wide international appeal: 1. To focus on the distinct characteristic of the aesthetic form of the serial, 2. To investigate which elements of a specific culture match prominent elements of the foreign serial, 3. To look at the reception process which can vary considerably from one person to the next and from one culture to another.

The last two aspects have been made the particular focus of the work of Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes. In an extensive research project they investigated the reception of *Dallas* among different ethnic groups in Israel and in the United States. The article by Tamar Liebes summarizes some aspects from that research. She focuses on the different ways in which members of four widely different ethnic subcultures in Israel (Arabs, Moroccan Jews, new immigrants from Russia and second generation Israelis living in a kibbutz) and second generation Americans in Los Angeles retell and discuss episodes of *Dallas*. The method applied was small group discussions with 54 groups (approximately ten from each subculture). Through a pretest and by aid of Roland Barthes' classificatory scheme derived from the structural analysis of narratives, three major ways of relating to television narratives were defined: 1. The linear way (primarily concerned with the on-going action), 2. The segmented form (primarily concerned with characters), 3. The thematic form (preoccupied with messages and tending to neglect events and characters).

According to Liebes, the project revealed that the linear way predominated the members of the two more tradition-oriented groups Arabs and Moroccan Jews. Liebes states: 'They select the action-oriented subplots for attention, defining the hero's goals and adventures in trying to achieve them. They tell the story in 'closed' form, as if it were an inevitable progression ...'. With the Russians the researchers found the thematic way of retelling the episode dominant. 'The Russians speak of the episodes in themes and messages. They ignore the story in favor of exposing the overall principle .. Like the Arabs and Moroccans, their story is closed and deterministic, but the determining force is ideological rather than referential'. The segmented way was found to predominate amongst the second generation Americans and the kibbutzniks, with whom it acquired a playful quality. 'Their retellings are open future-oriented, and take account of the never-ending genre of the soap opera .. Segmented retellings label the characters in terms of their on-screen or off-screen personae. .. These comparatively secure, second-generation viewers .. have no illusions about the reality of the story; they allow themselves to dive into the psyches of the characters, oblivious of those aspects of ideology, the morality, and aesthetics of the program that occupy others.'

Different culturally determined styles of 'reading' *Dallas* and deriving enjoyment from the serial are also proposed by Herta Herzog. Based on a pilot study which involved two structurally comparable samples of 51 *Dallas* viewers in West Germany and in the United States. She conducted qualitative interviews combined with a brief projective personality test. Herzog's investi-

gation revealed that the majority of the American interviewees had a more playful and flexible relation to *Dallas* than most of the German panel members. This was partially due to the greater familiarity of the Americans with the soap opera genre. Herzog concludes: 'U.S. viewers decode *Dallas* as a seamy soap opera which permits them to fantasize and to exercise their creative ingenuity and attitudinal predilections.' Although Herzog finds some indications among young German viewers of a more playful use of *Dallas*, the majority of the German interviews seemed to be deeply involved with a genre which in 1982 was largely unfamiliar to them. Herzog states: 'For the German viewer the projection and temporary release of subjective psychological needs is a major reason for program enjoyment'. This is one reason why she suggests that there exists a cathartic element in the reception of *Dallas* in West Germany, which is largely missing among the American viewers. It should be added, however, that Herzog's results are impaired by the fact that the German interviews were conducted three years before the American research.

The 1988 book by Alessandro Silj and others is the result of research conducted by an international team in five West European countries (Ireland, Italy, Great Britain, France and West Germany). Although the book includes some work on audiences, its main emphasis is on the traditions, contents and narrative structures of indigenous television serials/series in the five countries. A main focus of the book is a look at how local serial productions have been affected by the advent of *Dallas* and other American serials within broadcasting which have been recently affected by deregulation, commercialisation and the greater application of market principles.

The authors suggest that the only countries where the long-running continuous serial has a long tradition are Britain and Ireland and to a certain extent France. In the other countries other types of serials/series predominated prior to the advent of *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. France and West Germany responded to the unparalleled success of *Dallas* by producing indigenous serials in which some elements (e.g. in content, style and production methods) of the American serial were absorbed. But Silj and others suggest that even the two serials *Châteauvallon* and *Schwarzwaldklinik* where this was the case, were much more rooted in a specific French or German culture than *Dallas* is rooted in a specific American culture. This is suggested as being true of most European serials/series and considered to be one reason why successful serials from one European country are rarely successful in another European country. The book points out that although *Dallas* was successful in each of the five countries investigated, there were always local productions which were more successful.

However, *Dallas* was given priority over serials from other European countries (which is a difference from the Latin American experience). For, instead of drawing on a specific culture and social identity, *Dallas* is more immediately understandable, it amuses, requires less effort and rings universal bells, and therefore 'works' anywhere - or almost anywhere'.

Michael Schenk and Patrick Rössler attempt to trace the differences between the reception of *Dallas* and the German serial *Schwarzwaldlinik* among viewers in West Germany. The study is based on a refined 'uses and gratifications' approach. The methods are standardized interviews with 206 viewers who were selected according to a quota sampling procedure. They investigated the subjective images which the two programmes engender in their viewers, their motives for watching the two programmes and the overall gratifications obtained from them.

Their results show that the two prevalent attributes which both programmes are perceived to share, are 'love' and 'success'. But apart from

that, the two profiles which the viewers attribute to *Dallas* and *Schwarzwaldlinik* differ widely. The more positive qualities, such as helpfulness, security, justice, meaning of life, everyday problems are attributed exclusively to *Schwarzwaldlinik*. *Dallas* is associated primarily with more negative items such as power, scandal, hatred, violence and wealth. The main motives for watching the two programmes also differ. Nevertheless, the gratification profiles of both programmes are similar. For both programmes the main gratification is entertainment, but more entertainment is derived from *Schwarzwaldlinik*. While *Dallas* provides more thrill and excitement, *Schwarzwaldlinik* provides considerably more enjoyment in the scene of action. It is significant that for both programmes the social use complex of gratification is very low. If all possible gratifications are taken together *Schwarzwaldlinik* achieved a higher average gratification value than *Dallas*.

### III. Soap Operas and Telenovelas for Education and Development

Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers. 'Pro-Social Television for Development in India' in Ronald E. Rice and Charles Atkin (Eds.). *Public Communication Campaigns*. Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications Inc. (forthcoming)

The soap opera format can also carry an educational content. The British radio serial *The Archers* started off by consciously conveying the latest agricultural findings in a period (1950) that was still marked by a shortage of food in the aftermath of World War II. In the early years of the serial there was a close link between the BBC production team and the Ministry of Agriculture. The serial, which has been broadcast continuously five times a week until the present day, still occasionally returns to that initial function. Meanwhile three generations of farmers have progressed from traditional farming to modern intensive farming and back to organic farming.

Social realist television serials such as the British *EastEnders* and *Brookside*, and the German *Lindenstrasse*, have some educational features. They try, for instance, to give a positive example of the integration of racial or national minorities and to deal with such issues as rape, alcoholism or - in the case of the German serial - ecological problems in a didactic way. Quite a number of popular soap operas, whether or not they are explicitly dedicated to any educational purpose, have acquired educational qualities by simply focussing the attention of a great number of people on problems which prove to be relevant at a certain time.

Apart from such more or less random educational content, soap operas have also been used to carry carefully designed pro-developmental messages in a number of under-developed countries, where television consumption has risen significantly during the last decade or so. The first attempts to produce developmental telenovelas were made in Mexico between 1975 and 1981. Miguel Sabido of the private network Televisa initiated six pro-developmental soap operas. The idea emerged after the accidental educational impact of the 1969 Peruvian telenovela *Simplemente Maria*, which featured the 'rags-to-riches' story (so typical of many telenovelas) of the migrant girl, Maria, who managed to achieve socio-economic success by aid of a Singer sewing machine (even though Singer, at that time, did not purchase advertising time on the serial). *Simplemente Maria* had a commercial and an educational impact as Singhal and Rogers point out: 'The sales of Singer sewing machines increased sharply wherever the series was broadcast in Latin America, as did the number of young women who began to sew'. Subsequently Televisa produced pro-developmental telenovelas focussing on adult literacy, family planning, child-rearing, female equality and aspects of national history. In 1988 Televisa had a further pro-developmental telenovela in planning. The same idea of combining an entertainment format with

educational content governed the production of several radio serials in Jamaica, such as *Naseberry Street* which has promoted family planning since 1985.

An institution which has been instrumental in spreading the Mexican experience with pro-developmental series to other countries is the Center for Population Communications-International in New York. Because of them the Indian government channel *Doordarshan* came to produce its first pro-developmental soap opera of 156 episodes *Hum Log* (we people) in 1984/85. In 1988 a similar serial was being planned. In Nigeria too, a television serial is being produced, while Kenya has had a pro-developmental soap opera, *Tushauriani* (Let's Discuss) since 1987. In addition, several other Third World nations are considering production of such serials.

With the financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation, the two scholars, Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers, investigated the effects of the Indian serial *Hum Log* after its termination. Their four-step research project is based on a number of hypotheses developed from social learning theory and from work on para-social interaction with personalities in the media.

*Hum Log*, which was set in a Hindi-speaking North Indian cultural environment, attracted an average audience of 50 million people (at that time the largest audience for a television programme in India). It began as a family planning soap opera, which did not make it too popular. Only after the first thirteen episodes, when the direct approach to family planning was de-emphasized in favour of such closely related themes as the status of women, family harmony and family welfare, did the serial acquire its stunning popularity.

Singhal and Rogers conducted a content analysis of 149 episodes of *Hum Log* to identify the pro-developmental themes. They also undertook a content analysis of a random sample of 500 letters from a total of about 400,000 letters sent by viewers to the broadcasting station or the actors. In addition, 321 questionnaires were sent to letter-writers (response base 90%). Finally, they surveyed 1,170 Indian adults (who were mainly viewers) from three different regions (in and around Delhi in North India, where mainly Hindi is spoken, in and around Pune near Bombay in West India, where mainly Marathi is spoken, and in and around Madras, South India, where Tamil is the main language).

The final conclusion of Singhal and Rogers is as follows: '*Hum Log* was a success with both its audience and its advertisers but was somewhat of a mixed success in achieving its educational-developmental goals. The effects of *Hum Log* were mediated by its language (and culture) of broadcast, Hindi, and by the pre-existing attitudes and experiences of its viewers''.

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## PERSPECTIVE

# Complicated Stories, Complex Audiences

This review of research on the soap opera and the telenovela has revealed the extraordinary diversity of programmes that these headings cover. If one common trait emerges, however, it is that of the genre's rootedness in popular culture. The soap operas and telenovelas are no mere products of some vague overwhelmingly powerful transnational media industry. They are quite specific expressions of the local cultures in which they were made. Yet these same programmes have often had immense success in many other countries. And part of the reason for such success, as this issue of *Trends* makes clear, is the capacity of soap operas and telenovelas, 'mere entertainment', to speak to the hopes, fears, preoccupations and aspirations of ordinary people in all cultures.

The research on the soap opera makes it abundantly evident that this is no simple genre. Even at the obvious superficial level of plot there is immense complication and no little ingenuity. Stories are spun out with increasing, and bewildering, elaboration for years. The cast is large and constantly changing. In the cliché, all human life is here. This very complexity of the genre is matched by the complexity and subtlety of the audience response. Empirical studies, cultural studies, audience ethnographies and studies of uses and gratifications agree in finding that viewers of soap operas are not easily dismissed nor categorized in their responses. People manage to find in the soap opera stories and lessons, meanings and values that research finds hard to explain, let alone predict.

What then is the implication of these conclusions for future research? There seem to be at least three major issues that researchers could usefully address. Firstly, research needs to build upon and extend the studies carried out on the soap opera audience. Here eclectic and cross-disciplinary approaches seem the most fruitful in going some way towards capturing the variety of audience responses.

Secondly, there is much to be gained by further extending the scope of comparative research. Soap opera and telenovelas are international programming phenomena and their impact is worldwide. The suggestive studies which indicate how people in different cultures are able to interpret and appropriate stories from other cultures should be extended and developed. What are the commonalities, of plot, mythic structure or characterization, which mean that these programmes are able to cross cultural boundaries so successfully.

Thirdly, much research still needs to be done on the soap opera as a commercial product. Pioneering studies of the production process could be built upon and expanded. The influence of commercial considerations and the processes of commercial decision-making could be investigated in greater depth. Soap operas and telenovelas are important and influential components in popular media culture - it is well that we as consumers should know more about how our favourite entertainments are designed and produced.

Jim McDonnell, CSCC

## Current Research

### Columbia

**Amparo Cadavid**, (Centro De Investigación Y Educación Popular, Carrera 5a, Bogotá) is currently writing up the results of her case study on a sample of working class families in Bogotá. The study looks at audience interpretations of a particular telenovela, the social and economic condition of consumption and its role in everyday

life and its relation to the folk, narrative tradition of the community.

**Jesús Martín-Barbero**, (Universidad del Valle, Departamento de Ciencias de la Comunicación, Apartado Aéreo 2188, Cali., Colombia) is one of the initiators of a Pan-Latin-American research project on various aspects of the telenovela (eg. the cultural matrixes which brought about the success of the telenovela, the role of the tele-

novela in everyday life, the significance of the telenovela in the development of the indigenous television production in various Latin American countries). Apart from Columbia, the research is being conducted also in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and Peru.

#### **Ecuador**

**Juan Brown**, (Av. Almagro y Andrade Marín, Apartado 584, Quito) has compiled an issue of Chasqui on soap operas and development.

#### **Denmark**

**Kim Christian Schroder** (Department of Language and Literature, University of Roskilde P.O. Box 260, 4000 Roskilde, Denmark) completed a qualitative, empirical project on the the cross-cultural reception of Dynasty (in Denmark and the USA).

#### **France**

**Jean Bianchi** (Dépt. de Communication, Institut Catholique de Lyon, 10-12 rue Fochier, 69002 Lyon) is studying the reception of feuilletons and popular media culture.

**Luiz Busato and Sergio Caparelli** (University of Grenoble, 4, Place Jean Moulin, 38000 Grenoble) are editing a book on telenovelas in Europe to be published in Brazil.

**Régine Chaniac** (Instiut National de l'Audio-visuel, 4 Ave. de l'Europe, 94366 Bry-sur-Marne Cedex) investigates the economics of producing and the programming of series and drama in Europe.

#### **Great Britain**

**Jay G. Blumler and T.J. Nossiter** (Centre for Television Research, Leeds and the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC 2) have conducted research on British producers of soap operas and other types of programmes' perception of their creative environment and their assessment of likely imminent changes in the system. The research is part of a number of studies commissioned by the Peacock Committee which will be published in *Broadcasting Finance in Transition* edited by Blumler and Nossiter.

**Charlotte Brunson** (Department of Film Studies, Warwick University, Coventry CV4 7AL) is conducting research on soap opera and gender.

**Christine Geraghty** (1 Mabledon Place, London WC1) is conducting research on the representation of gender in soap operas and its ideological implications.

**Anders Hansen** (University of Leicester Centre For Mass Communication Research 104, Regent Road, Leicester LE1 7LT) is conducting research on soap operas within the wider context of research on the representation of alcohol in popular television and its cultivation effects.

**Sonia Livingstone** (Department of Experimental Psychology, Nuffield College, Oxford) is conducting research on the psychology of viewers' interpretations and decoding of soap operas and its significance for the advancement of media

reception theory and psychological theory in related areas.

#### **Israel**

**Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem) have been summarizing the results of their research on Japanese viewers' responses to American and indigenous soap operas.

#### **Mexico**

**Jorge Gonzales**, (Programa Cultura, Apartado Postal 294, Colima, Col., Mexico 2800) is conducting ethnographic research on 'The Ways of Watching' and Differential Uses of Soap Operas.

#### **Peru**

**Teresa Quiroz Velasco** (Centro de Investigación en Comunicación Social de la Universidad de Lima, Av. Javier Prado s/n. Monterrico Lima, Peru) is conducting similar research to Jesús Martín-Barbero and other Latin American researchers.

#### **United States**

**Mary Ellen Brown**, (Dep. of Communication at State University of New York at Brockport, New York 14420) is conducting research on soap operas and women's culture. Currently she is analyzing the data for her forthcoming study 'The Colonization of Prime Time: Soaps and the Question of Pleasure'.

**Mary Cassata**, (Dep. of Communication at State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260) is director of the on-going, long-term research project 'Project Daytime', in which research on daytime soap operas plays a central role. Currently, her research team is working on a long-term study on the uses and gratifications of soap operas with various segments of the audience and on an assessment of the degree to which the serials are models for problem-solving in families. Two of her graduate students are conducting specific research for their Ph.D. theses: Barbara Irwin's is called 'An Oral History of A Piece of Americana: The Soap Opera Experience' (she presented an aspect of that research at the ICA Conference in San Francisco in May 1989), Frances Sorge's is called 'Viewer Perceptions of Soap Opera Portrayals of Health Professionals and Health Care'.

**Everett M. Rogers** (Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California, 3502, South Hoover Street, Los Angeles, California 90089) is conducting research on pro-developmental soap operas and participated in the organisation of a conference in March 1989 on 'Entertainment For Social Change' at the Annenberg School of Communications.

#### **West Germany**

**Hans Borchers, Eva-Maria Warth and Gabriele Kreutzner** (Universität Tübingen (Abt. für Amerikanistik, Wilhelmstraße 50, 7400 Tübingen) and Ellen Seiter of the University of Oregon (USA) completed an extensive research



project on various aspects of the American evening - and prime-time soap opera.

**Gerlinde Frey-Vor** (Osterberger Reihe 10, 4500 Osnabrück) is completing a Ph.D. thesis at Philipps-Universität Marburg, for which she is conducting a cross-cultural study on the contents and reception of the Social Realist type of soap opera, as constituent of the overall soap opera genre, (through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods) in West Germany and Great Britain.

**Lothar Mikos** (Grunewaldstraße 17, 1 West Berlin 62) is completing a Ph.D. thesis at the

University of Bochum, in which he compares contents and reception of American prime-time soap operas broadcast in Germany to German serials/series. He primarily uses qualitative methods and looks at the programmes' psychological implications and their roles in the everyday contexts of the viewers.

**Jan-Uwe Rogge** (Bachstraße 140, 2072 Bargtheide) is doing research on the reception of shorter - or longer term serials/series within the wider contexts of extensive ethnographic projects on the role of the media in family life and a media education project.

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