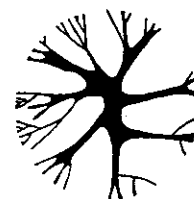


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FOUR UPDATES

A Collaborative Project of *Communication Research Trends* and
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This summer the *Revista de Ciencias de la Información* published by the Faculty of Information Sciences of Complutense University, in Madrid, is bringing out a special issue consisting of translations of four issues of *Communication Research Trends* with additional sections, mostly by Spanish or Latin American authors.

We are devoting this issue of *Trends* to bringing you, in digest form and in English, the additional sections of the Complutense review.

Although this represents a deviation from *Trends'* policy of presenting as nearly as possible the 'state of the art' on one topic per issue, we believe it is justified for at least two reasons.

It gives us a chance to bring to your attention some of the work which has been done on the four topics since the relevant issues of *Trends* first appeared.

Even more important, however, is the opportunity to introduce, in English, some of the work which is being done in communication research in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula. These areas of the world are sometimes neglected in English-language surveys, but work in communication research there is intensive, rapidly expanding and often of high quality.

Our next issue will resume our usual worldwide treatment of a single topic. In the meantime, we hope that our temporary shift to a narrower geographic focus will be useful in spotlighting an increasingly significant arena of research activity.

I. Introduction

This issue is based on papers written as part of a project to bring some of the contents of *Communication Research Trends* to readers of Spanish, in a special edition of *Revista de Ciencias de la Información*. The four original papers--on soap operas (Frey-Vor, 1990a; 1990b), children and television (Cordelian, 1990), violence in the media (White and Sheehan, 1984), and semiotics/semiology (Tomaselli and Shepperson, 1991a; 1991b)--can be consulted in English in the respective back issues of *Trends*. Here, we concentrate on the ten updating sections as they address the same topics from different perspectives of time, place and research context.

Two of the ten were written by authors of the original *Trends* issues, Gerlinde Frey-Vor and W. Cordelian. They have been able to summarize developments in research on their topics in the three or four years since their original papers were written. The others show less continuity with the earlier texts, but they have the advantage of revealing research developments in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries, many of which are not found in English-language sources.

Space limitations prevent us from publishing the full texts of the updates, which fill well over a hundred pages in the Complutense University

publication. We hope that the abridgements provided here will be sufficient to carry the chief conclusions of those papers as well as some sense of the intensity and ferment of communication studies in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking world.

Since each 'update' is a separate work their references are listed after each one, rather than being consolidated, as would be our usual practice.

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I. Soap Operas and Telenovelas

a. The State of Research on Latin American Telenovelas

By Nora Mazziotti

Research on the 'telenovela'--the Latin American 'soap opera'--is extensive, but often organized in an informal way, through personal contacts and networks, and with a sense of sympathetic personal involvement in the topic by the researchers. An initial sensitivity is needed to gain the insight into the genre upon which detached scientific analysis can later be based.

The earliest serious students of telenovelas recognized that, while they are fiction they nevertheless have a role in structuring reality for their viewers. This was the position of Eliseo Veron (1980), who spoke of 'the work of constructing that which is real from the core of the communication media'. And writing on telenovelas frequently describe them as 'breaking the boundaries between reality and fiction'.

Melodrama

Some of the most important students of the telenovela have emphasized its melodramatic character. Despite the 'industrial' format of the 'mass produced' telenovela, its melodramatic character gives it great power.

Jesús Martín-Barbero is a pioneer in considering melodrama as fundamental to this genre, based on empirical research in Mexico, Peru, Brazil and different cities in Colombia. Recently-published research from Cali, Colombia (Martín-Barbero and Muñoz, 1992) generally confirms the findings of Martín-Barbero's earlier studies. The lavishness and exaggerated emotion of the telenovelas seem to represent a need to break out of the strictures of everyday life, with its commercialism and anonymity. Martín-Barbero wonders whether within the 'struggle

to be recognized' which surrounds melodrama there hides the 'secret link between melodrama and the history of Latin America.' The dominance of primary relationships in the telenovela may signal the audience's subconscious rejection of modern society, which frustrates the fulfilment of those relationships in real life.

Jorge Gonzalez (1988) sees in the Mexican telenovela a 'brotherhood/sisterhood of endless emotions', in which melodrama provides the 'object and continuing material of struggle and historical redefinition of the "familiar"' in an effort to make daily life more orderly and comprehensible.

Jesús Galindo (1988) regards the tele-novela as a 'text and pretext' in which 'what occurs in daily life is selected and shown in a dramatic way,' thereby distinguishing sharply between what is real and what is unreal.

'Telenovela' and 'Soap Opera'

Although 'telenovela' is usually translated as 'soap opera', there are some significant differences. A major difference is that the 'soap opera', as originated in the United States, is designed to be unending, going on as long as sufficient audience is guaranteed to persuade sponsors to pay for the programme. The 'telenovela', on the other hand, is designed to have a duration of 120 to 300 episodes, but today is standardized at 180 to 200 episodes. In the telenovela, the protagonist is a couple, emphasizing the 'star system', whereas in the North American version the protagonist often is a family or whole community (Pumarejo, 1987). Class conflict and social mobility also are more heavily stressed in the Latin American productions (Rogers and Livia (1985).

Production and Circulation

Studies of the industrial production and distribution of telenovelas are not yet well developed. Ortiz Renato, Simoes Borelli and Ortiz Ramos (1989) discuss how the production of Brazilian telenovelas has intertwined with culture through different periods of its development. They aim at 'considering how a cultural industry works, and how it embodies the concept of cultural work.'

The commercial expansion of the giant of Brazilian telenovela production, Globo, since its foundation in the 1970s, has been described by José Marques de Melo (1988). Marques de Melo attributes Globo's success in exporting its product to 128 countries to its attention to both pre- and post-production details, carefully supervised by a

'patron de calidad' (master of quality), who controls script, sound effects, music, audio, wardrobe, lighting, etc., as well as market testing through surveys and panels. What is produced by Globo is a 'glamorized mirror reflection', corresponding more to the world of desire than to the reality of Brazilian life.

Jorge Gonzalez (1992) has described the work methods of telenovela production in Mexico, stressing the relationships among all who participate, whether at the level of corporate structures or those of 'show business' or worldwide marketing.

Reception

Many observers have remarked on how the telenovela appears to establish a relationship of 'symbolic exchange' between itself and its viewers--an exchange which, of course, goes on entirely within the viewer, and is only catalyzed by the viewing of the production. Michelle and Armand Mattelart (1989) remark on how the mechanism of production is lost sight of, and others emphasize the circular nature of the process of communication, as the audience establishes its equality with the transmitter in defining a programme's meaning.

Jorge Gonzalez (1992) says that the fascination of the telenovela lies in the 'complexities of the secret which is granted to those who know far off lands'. The fan is brought into 'an emotional involvement in powerful fictitious scenes wherein aspects of human nature are involved: honour, kindness, love, wickedness, betrayal, life, death, virtues and sins, which in some form or another have something to do with himself or herself.'

Jesús Galindo (1988) points out that 'the fan picks up guidelines to life from the situations shown in the telenovela', which thereby becomes 'a means of combining with the lives of millions in order to create their imaginary worlds'.

Martín-Barbero (chapter one in, Martín-Barbero and Sonia Muñoz, 1992) examines 'the way telenovelas combine the commercial logic of their production with the cultural logic of their consumption.' Jorge Gonzalez (1988) suggests that both telenovelas and soap operas help people add vitality to their social and cultural experience of life in ways which are difficult to measure or analyze, but that the continued effort to study them can yield insights into a better understanding of what is meaningful for people in modern day society and culture.

Martín-Barbero stresses the ways domestic and family life respond to telenovelas. Gonzalez and Mugnaini (1986) say that the telenovelas viewed by a family stay in their minds as reference points for the real events of their own lives, being reworked in other texts, objects, references and discussions.

Rosa Maria Alfaro (1988), reporting on extensive interviews with urban working class women in Peru, notes that the satisfaction the women gain from attachment to watching a particular telenovela does not affect their domestic life. Their viewing enables them to examine themselves with the use of other social values and morals and to understand the process of urbanization as it pertains to the disorder of their own city life. Sonia Muñoz (in Martín-Barbero and Muñoz, 1992) found a similar dialogue between the unreal world of television and the real world of daily life carried on by women of three social groups in research in Cali, Colombia. Older women, especially those with little or no literacy, establish stronger emotional bonds with the telenovelas than do younger people of the same social class, who demand a higher standard of story line and action. Teenagers from higher socio-economic strata revealed a critical understanding of television language, acting and visual elements, and were able to play with the story as 'pure fiction'.

Fachel Leal (1988) carried out ethnographic research on families from two social backgrounds in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in which they were asked to watch a few episodes from the telenovela, 'Sol de Verano' (Summer Sun), then asked to give their accounts of the story line. The less economically well-off group tended to give the story a mythical and realistic importance and intensity which 'brings it into a realistic dimension'. The story is seen as a more-or-less accurate portrayal of life in a higher, more powerful social class, which they would like to join. The economically better-off group, on the other hand, tended to disparage the soaps and to criticize their lack of realism. They also showed a more critical understanding of the genre as televised fiction.

National Variations in Telenovelas

Differences among the telenovelas of different Latin American countries stem from factors of production, marketing and consumer behavior, as much or more than they do from cultural differences (Introduction in Mazziotti, forthcoming). Culturally, they may be more 'an object of pluralistic identity' (Martín-Barbero, 1991) than a symbol of cultural differences among Latin American countries.

The Mattelarts (1989) view Brazilian telenovelas as always having the same story line, constantly repeated, with scripts drawn from both traditional and modern sources and mixing 'an aesthetic of rhythm and pace with an

aesthetic of passion'.

Renato Ortiz (in Fernandes, 1987) has sketched the precursors of Latin American telenovelas in French melodramatic novels and serials, North American soap operas and Latin American radio stories, and he sees continuity through the various format changes which occurred throughout the developmental process. The influence of the radio stories gave a special melodramatic tone to Brazilian telenovelas--depending as they had on sound effects, with the comic book style of Hollywood and the adaptation of Victorian literary texts in the 1960s. This possible influence also has been noted by Joseph Straubhaar (1982).

In the 1960s the Brazilian telenovela abandoned the comic magazine style and began to create its own narrative form: up-to-date and realistic. Distinctive acting styles and the tendency for telenovelas to form the agenda for discussions of national values gave them a distinctive role in shaping Brazilian national identity (Faddul 1985; 1988).

In other efforts to distinguish national characteristics in the Brazilian telenovelas, Muniz Sodre (1990) noted the centralizing tendencies in both the family as portrayed in them and the similar monopolistic character of the country's communication system.

Martín-Barbero has noted a development in Colombian telenovelas comparable to that in Brazil. There is an ironic tendency in Colombian productions, which increases with each episode, reflecting a long Colombian tradition of parody and satire.

Quiroz (1987; and forthcoming) has offered a wide perspective on the Peruvian telenovela, noting its link with a somewhat realistic storytelling tradition which includes fantasy, but only if it appears somewhat accessible. Personalities of major actors are important in Peru.

Oswaldo Capriles (1989) notes that Venezuelan telenovelas also have gone through different stages of development. 'Soap opera culture' was at first disdained by the world of cinema and theatre, although it appealed to the general population. Later, as 'telenovela venezolana' (Venezuelan telenovela), it adopted more popular and populist contents, but still could not please the critics.

Martín-Barbero (1988) outlines Mexican telenovelas' traditional melodramatic foundation, filled with 'a scenery in the style of the baroque period, luxurious interior decorating and sophisticated clothes and make-up.' Recently, too, sets have been radically changed, and a generally lighter visual image is used. Gutiérrez Espindola (1988) notes that the melodrama in Mexican telenovelas is consistent with a similar tendency in Mexico's cinema and music.

Mazziotti (1991) has examined the ways in which literature, custom and melodrama have become involved in the very foundations of Argentinean telenovelas. In this they simply follow in the footsteps not only of Argentina's radio drama but also of the old customary theatre since the beginning of the century. The language, characters, background music and action scenes all are reminiscent of that theatrical tradition.

Recent Television Production

Aspects of overseas marketing have become a major feature in the Latin American telenovela industry. Cost-effectiveness is a key point. Adrianzén (1991) suggests that Peruvian producers make their product 'as little Peruvian as possible'. But Jesús Martín-Barbero cautions that simply copying successful series in other countries or by successful producers is not enough to ensure export success. Mazziotti warns, however, that co-production will create a type of cultural 'neutrality', with no room for colloquialism or distinctively national references and significance; and Capriles cautions that universality cannot be found by eradicating the substance and foundations which give the genre any claim to dramatic or literary significance. A false transnationalization will undoubtedly be detected and rejected by the viewing public.

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b. Recent Developments in The Soap Opera Form and Research On It
by Gerlinde Frey-Vor

More than two years after the publication of *Communication Research Trends*, Vol.10 Nos. 1 & 2, Soap Operas and Telenovelas still proliferate in the television systems of most countries. Despite the fact that soap operas, for instance in the United States, seem to have lost some of their appeal to other forms of popular programming, e.g., the closely related genre of the situation comedy, to a great number of viewers they are still as important as they were in 1990. There are, however, new developments in the genre and a continuation of the research on it.

The most significant change in the United States which occurred during that time is the demise of the prime-time soap opera. The prototype of that sort of serial had emerged in 1978 when CBS started to show *Dallas*. Other similar serials, particularly ABC's *Dynasty*, followed and became centrepieces of the evening schedules of TV networks in the US. They were also sold to a considerable number of countries around the world where, as in the US, they attracted loyal audiences for more than a decade. But in 1991 the transmission of the last episode of *Dallas* seems to have concluded that era of popular television. Nevertheless, especially outside the US, elements of this particular type of serial are still absorbed into indigenous productions, such as the Channel Four soap opera *Family Pride* in Britain, which started in 1991 and features Asian characters as core dramatis personae.

As pointed out in 1990, Jane Feuer was among the first to stress the influence of the 1950s Hollywood melodrama on those serials but at the same time seeing them as variations of the traditional US-American daytime soap opera.¹ The recently published book by Gabriele Kreutzner develops this research tradition further also in application a systematic analysis of four years of *Dynasty* broadcasts including the inserted commercials. In addition, Kreutzner draws attention to influences from predecessors of the prime-time serial on American evening television, such as the action and crime series of the '60s and '70s. She also discusses societal

influences such as the economic crisis at the time of the serials' inception, to which she attributes the enormous attraction of the glamorous milieux conveyed in most of those serials.

As expounded in 1990, the advent of the more glamorous prime-time soap operas on American television had been foreshadowed by the refurbishment of some of the long-running daytime soap operas. According to Robert Allen's concept of the soap opera as an interactive text, these changes occurred in response to shifts in the demography and tastes of the target audiences.

Today it seems that the much older daytime serials have survived the evening soap opera. There are still 12 regular soap operas with daily episodes in the daytime programming of ABC, CBS and NBC, not including the soap operas and also telenovelas (on Hispanic networks) shown on smaller networks.

The daytime serials are partially determined by different commercial and production principles to those of the terminated evening serials. From a narrative point of view, their greater durability can perhaps be attributed to their extraordinary capacity to absorb new elements into their basic narrative structure. The latest absorption seems to be elements of the sensational trend to *Reality Television* originating in some US domestic news departments. They attempt to feature extraordinary real events happening to ordinary people, the guiding principle of *Reality Television*, seems to go well with the traditional tendency of the daytime soap opera towards realism. But at the same time it dissolves the boundaries between fictional and factual programmes, just as other generic divisions become blurred recently.

In his book *Speaking of Soap Opera* (1985), which is reviewed in the 1990 issue of *Communication Research Trends*, Robert Allen had already referred to the beginning of segmentation in the soap opera genre in the United States. This has been brought about by an increasing number of television channels transmitted via satellite or cable, which challenge the hegemony of the three major commercial networks. Allen writes: "There are now "Christian" soaps, "Rated" soaps, teenage soaps, and, in the offing, a soap for deaf viewers."² Since then this segmentation has gone further.

In Britain there are indications that similar developments to those which occurred in the American daytime soap operas in the '70s and early '80s, also affected the indigenous early-prime-time soap operas in the late '80s. Thus, *Coronation Street*, the longest running soap opera on television in Britain, has shifted towards featuring more young characters and since about 1989/90 *Coronation Street* has also included more storylines about crime, a development which is also visible in other British prime-time soap operas such as *EastEnders* and *Brookside*. As had happened a decade before in the American daytime serials, the world of the characters expanded in the British soap opera through the more frequent use of scenes shot outside the main location (cf. Gerlinde Frey-Vor, 1991a).

In other European countries, for instance in Germany, which unlike Britain do not have a long tradition of indigenous soap operas, the form is still in the process of being adapted into the domestic production contexts. The German example suggests that a number of obstacles can exist in a formerly soapless television system which delay a full adaptation of the form. Apart from some attempts to adapt the format of the American prime-time soap opera, the First Public Channel's (ARD) serial *Lindenstraße*, which is still (since 1985) shown only once a week, remained the only home-produced, continuously long-running serial on German television until May 1992 when the relatively new commercial channel RTL Plus started to show its serial *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* (Good Times, Bad Times). *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* is the first daily soap opera produced domestically in Germany (Frey-Vor, 1991b and 1991c).

As pointed out in the section 'Soap Opera: Part of National or International Media Culture' in the 1990 issue of *Communication Research Trends*, there has existed for some time a strand of research which has focused on the cross-cultural impact of the soap opera form while at the same time pointing to cultural variations in aesthetic style and mode of reception.

In fact, my own research interest in the field is located here. Thus, my study of the content, production and reception of the Social Realist type of soap opera in Britain and Germany (published late 1992) investigates the way in which the same basic generic type of soap opera is varied in its thematic emphasis and in its production standards through the interaction with social and cultural factors operating in the two countries. It also looks at how the modes of television reception in general and the ways of

relating to the serials under consideration, in particular, differ.

Elements of cultural and national identity transmitted by the soap opera form are also the subject of study in Alison Griffiths' research paper which focuses on the Welsh language soap opera *Pobol y Cwm*, and its reception by a sample of Welsh school-children.

Marie Gillespie approaches the topic of soap opera and cultural identity solely from the reception side. In her methodologically innovative qualitative study she looks at how Punjabi young people in a London suburb use the Australian soap opera *Neighbours* in negotiating the relationship between parental and peer culture. *Neighbours* has been very popular with teenagers all over Britain since about 1988. Gillespie investigates the ways in which youngsters from a minority culture utilize the particular modes of narration (gossip narrative) of a popular television serial with a broad social appeal to construct their own cultural identity.

The pioneers in the research on soap operas and cultural differences in the construction of meaning are Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes. Their 1990 book summarizes a long-term research project which looked at how people from different cultural backgrounds read the prime-time soap opera *Dallas*, which through its enormous appeal in a great number of countries became a symbol of US-dominated, internationalized media culture. A separate review of the Liebes and Katz book, by W. E. Biernatzki, follows this article.

Sonia Livingstone in her 1990 book, *Making Sense of Television*, provides further insights - though from a less cross-cultural perspective - into the modes of audience interpretations of television. Soap operas are one genre which she investigates. The many characters in a soap opera, whose personalities audiences could compare and contrast, fit Livingstone's interest in studying gradually constructed audience representations. In the course of her study she compared viewer representations of characters in *Dallas*, *Coronation Street*, and *EastEnders*.

The 1990 issue of *Communication Research Trends* suggested that further research was needed on the production backgrounds of soap operas. The book by Hans Borchers and other members of the German/American research team (1992) certainly constitutes a further important step in that field of research. From the perspective of a structuralist/semiotic approach it summarizes research done in the production studios and archives of the US-American television industry. Adhering to Robert Allen's concept of the interactive nature of the soap opera, this research is linked to textual analyses of

American soap operas and to extensive ethnographic fieldwork among soap opera viewers in the United States.

In continuation of the studies reviewed in 1990, Christine Geraghty's (1991) and Mary Ellen Brown's (1992) books, further underline the centrality of the soap opera form as a part of women's popular culture and a source of female pleasure.

Geraghty's approach to the subject is that of a qualitative content study of British early-prime-time soap operas and the imported US-American prime-time soaps *Dynasty* and *Dallas*. She stresses the role of the soap opera as impetus in the development of a feminist media theory. In addition to offering more aesthetic pleasures to women than other forms of television, Geraghty thinks that the soap opera narrative structure contains a Utopian potential. The endless narrative structure can mean that characters initially presented as 'bad' are redeemed and welcomed into the soap community. Likewise 'divorce is survivable, deaths are forgotten or even reversible' (Geraghty, p.130). In contrast to more finite forms of women's fiction, such as the romantic novel or women's films which Geraghty also discusses, the soap opera offers to its viewers a notion of change. Like these other forms of female fiction it contains the key utopian categories of women's fiction 'intensity and transparency', which it translates into practical competencies of women's experience and offers a means of testing out how they could be lived in the day-to-day world (Geraghty, p.130).

But Geraghty also points to the de-feminisation of, especially, the prime-time soap opera due to the pressures to broaden the appeal to male viewers also (cf. the development of the genre described in the 1990 issue of *Communication Research Trends*). Geraghty sees two strands in that development, one is the inclusion of more male-oriented aesthetic pleasures such as crime, Western elements and sports events. The other one is 'a shift of focus to an examination of the male characters' personal and emotional life and a tendency to present even the weak males as sympathetic characters who are to be understood, rather than dismissed with the conventional soap phrase, "they're all the same, men" (Geraghty, p.172). She sees the latter shift predominantly in the British soap operas *Brookside* and *EastEnders*.

Geraghty analyses the de-feminisation of soap opera contents as a loss in the pleasure traditionally offered to women (Geraghty, p.197). But at the same time she is aware of the fact

that there is no definite conclusion to the question whether formerly devalued forms of female popular entertainment, such as the soap opera, which have been reevaluated by feminist critics, provide 'a space or a ghetto' for women's cultural expressions. To provide at least a tentative solution, Geraghty stresses the concept of the active viewer who can dissect, expose, celebrate, disrupt or escape from the space which the never ending set of narrative puzzle of the soap opera offers (Geraghty, p.198).

In line with her earlier publications, Mary Ellen Brown in her latest book conceptualizes the soap opera as a space of empowerment for its female viewers. She develops this concept by interpreting the results of her ethnographic study of soap opera fans in the United States and Australia in the light of hegemony theory, as first proposed by Antonio Gramsci, and recently developed further by Jesús Martín-Barbero in the Latin American context (cf. the 1990 issue of *Communication Research Trends*). Martín-Barbero stresses that subjugated social groups do not exist separately from the dominant groups in society but in an unbalanced state of interaction with them. That is why, with regard to media content, it is assumed that subordinate social groups (such as women in a patriarchal society) must be able to recover traces of their repressed discourse in the dominant discourse and turn it into their own popular culture.

In this context Brown also employs Fiske's notion of the 'tertiary text' (John Fiske, *Television Culture*, 1987) which the active viewer creates herself out of the 'secondary text' of the manifest content of the television programme. As other ethnographic researchers, Brown stresses the oral dimension of the soap opera. Thus, gossip about soap opera contents and characters constitutes an important element in the fan networks investigated. Through informal soap opera fan networks women take control over their own viewing, support and empower each other, which enables them to resist dominant systems of control. A vital element in the feminine discourse about soap operas engendered through the fan network is a playful handling of the text. This involves laughter about, e.g. the absurdities of plots, characters and production values, or the viewers' own position as soap opera fans. It also expresses itself in jointly enacted playful imitations of soap opera characters or aspects of their speech or demeanour. A main source of pleasure which, according to Brown, the soap opera text provides to women, is derived from their social interaction with each other. 'Women's taking pleasure into their own hands is in defiance of the codes of dependency which work to keep women tied to notions of romance (notions that imply that women can live their lives being taken

care of by someone other than by themselves).

Footnotes

¹ Cf. Jane Feuer, 'Melodrama, Serial Form and

Television Today.' *Screen*, Vol.25, 1(1984).

² Robert Allen. *Speaking of Soap Opera*, The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill/London, 1985. p.4.

Book Review

Liebes, Tamar, and Elihu Katz. 1990. *The Export of Meaning: Cross-Cultural Readings of 'Dallas'*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dallas has attracted scholarly interest because, at its peak, it was clearly 'the most popular program in the world.' It had pioneered prime-time soap opera in the United States and most of Europe, although prime-time soaps had long been a staple of British and South American television. But its popularity extended far beyond the North Atlantic region. Liebes and Katz suggest that American television programs, such as *Dallas*, are popular in diverse cultures because of the universality of their themes, a polyvalency and openness in their stories which gives them value to audiences for negotiation and play, and because abundant production for the American domestic market makes many inexpensive programs available to overseas broadcasters who cannot produce enough of their own material to fill their air time. The special popularity of *Dallas* appears to stem from the first two of these characteristics.

The authors studied the ways in which the program was received and used by audiences in Israel and the U.S., countries in which it succeeded, and in Japan, one of the few countries where it failed. The Israeli study covered four cultural groups.

Most groups of viewers used the program as a ludic experience, having fun with it, playing with its use of familiar themes from the mythology of Western culture and using it as a foil for discussing their own experiences. Contrary to

some observers' impressions, *Dallas* is both complex and dependent on dialogue, not simple or reliant chiefly on visual appeal. It 'offers viewers at different levels and in different cultures something to do.' Everyone appears to understand the basic story, but with widely differing kinds of understanding (p.151).

Among most groups it easily stimulated conversations more or less referring to its content. Less traditional groups--Americans and second generation *kibbutzim*--tended to be more metalinguistic in their discussions, speculating on the reasons the writers and director included certain plot lines, for example, and criticising it playfully. Arabs discussed it moralistically. The Russian emigrant group in Israel criticised its aesthetics and ideology - "They tell us the rich are unhappy because that is what they want us to think!" -- but nevertheless enjoyed it. The Japanese groups rejected *Dallas* because of its inconsistencies and their consequent inability to fit it into their own cultural frames of reference (pp.152-153).

One of the authors' major conclusions is that 'Viewing escapist programs is not as escapist as it seems,' since viewers use it as 'a forum for discussing their own lives.' The effect of the program on its audience therefore depends not so much on its objective content, but on how the audience uses that content for their own purposes.

W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.

A Selection of Recently Published - and Forthcoming - Books and Conference Papers On Soap Opera

Biltreys, Daniel. 1991. *Consuming American Versus Watching Domestic: A Comparative Quali-tative Audience Approach to the Decoding and Impact of US-Fiction in a Small European Country*. (Paper presented to the Fourth International Television Studies Conference in London, July 1991).

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Cultural Production of Meaning. Trier: WVT Verlag.

Boyle, Raymond, and Barbara O'Connor. 1991. *Dallas with Balls? Male and Female Soap Opera*. (Paper presented to the Fourth International Television Studies Conference in London, July 1991).

Brown, Mary Ellen. 1992. *Soap Opera and Women's Discourse: The Pleasure of Resistance*.

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- Cassata, Mary, and Barbara Irwin. 1992. *Message Systems of Daytime Serial Drama: A Cultural Indicators Perspective and The Daytime Television National Archive*. (Papers presented at the Popular Culture Association Annual Meeting, Louisville, KY).
- Frey-Vor, Gerlinde. 1991a. *Coronation Street: Infinite Drama and British Reality: An Analysis of Soap Opera as Narrative and Dramatic Continuum*. Trier: WVT Verlag. 180 pp.
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- Frey-Vor Gerlinde. 1991c. *Produktion, Struktur und Rezeption von Langzeitfernsehserien im Internationalen Vergleich: Lindenstraße und EastEnders deutsches und britisches Fallbeispiel* (completed Ph.D. thesis at the University of Marburg [co-supervised at the London School of Economics] on the contents, production and modes of reception of Social Realist Soap Operas in Britain and Germany).
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- Livingstone, Sonia. 1990. *Making Sense of Television: The Psychology of Audience Interpretation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. (This book contains, among other research, work on the reception of British and American soap operas by British viewers).
- Malwade-Rangarajan. Amita. 1991. TV and Social Identities: Audience Interpretations of *Hum Log*. (Paper presented to the Fourth International Television Studies Conference in London, July).
- Mikos, Lothar. *Es Wird dien Leben! Familienserien im Fernsehen und im Alltagsleben der Zuschauer. Eine qualitative Studie zur Bedeutung von Fernsehserien im lebensweltlichen Kontext am Beispiel von Dallas, Denver-Clan, Lindenstraße und Schwarzwaldklinik*. (Completed Ph.D. thesis at the University of Bochum on the significance and meaning of German and American serials/series in the everyday life contexts of viewers (publication forthcoming).
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III. Television and Children

a. Research on Children's Use of the Screen: An Update by W. Cordelian

Technology has increasingly extended the use of mere broadcast television. Much new study has documented the extent to which children use video cassettes, computers, and cabled services; but examining what has most recently been reported soon raises questions about what has not been sought; or perhaps, even if it has been, why so little evidence of some new possibilities has surfaced. Thus the videocamera, and creative work with the screen analogous to writing with relation to reading, are noticeably absent in the unfolding story, in spite of the anomalous use of the term 'television literacy' from time to time. More precise description of the patten of the content of children's viewing experience, in terms of programmes and genres, in relation to what is their cultural consequence is also lacking. A continuing theme in the new research is, however, the realisation of the child as an active viewer, choosing what to seen and interpreting it in terms of developing mental structures or 'schemata'.

A team at Michigan State University (Atkin, Greenberg and Baldwin, 1991) have reported that 'having cable (screen services) in the house may result in more viewing sanctions as well as more unsanctioned viewing'; the survey covered over 800 fifth and tenth grade children (without focusing on actual ages - tenth graders are teenagers) and found that the more that respondents used the screen the more R (restricted) movies they saw, while overall viewing time was not related with parental restraint; however, those who saw more R movies also tended to report (regardless of age and other attributes) more parental restraint.

Greenberg's parallel team activity has been worldwide, to document patterns of screen use and family interaction amongst school populations. This has been done in Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan and in Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, West Germany and the U.S. Copies of these studies are available from Professor Greenberg's office (see below).

Turning to what is available to children if they have one or another means of access. Wartella, et al, surveyed the prosperous white community of Champaign-Urbana; they found that one in five children had no home access to cable, relying

thus on videocassette or network terrestrial broadcasting. On the latter, the 'children's programming' consisted entirely of cartoons. The 'public' broadcasting system station offered 70% of its output as information; however, this is less widely viewed. the study 'looks towards the light' in focusing on positive aspects of what is available and used--but in so doing cannot help revealing the "shadows" of a depleted experience for substantial minorities in such a community; for other more urbanised "markets" in 1992 riots suggest that much remains to be done to enhance the experience of the whole child population.

How does one truly measure how much children have been viewing? Van der Voort com-pared what he termed 'direct estimates' (the child says how many hours a day are spent viewing) with day by day diary records of time use, split into quarter hour blocks. Correlations were quite good (.5 or so) but less effective amongst younger children and those of lower socioeconomic status. Van der Voort's assumption is that the diaries are more correct.

Turning to processes of perception and interpretation Flavell, et al. show that while 3 and 4 year olds can interpret images on the screen as representations of real objects, 3 year olds are less able either to make, or to reveal such a perceptual distinction. Sheppard tested 6-9 year olds, finding patchy recall of elements in three programmes she showed; the younger children in particular showed poor comprehension of motives and character, and relating poor interpretation of events across scenes, though they clearly made their own meanings of what they saw. Even the 9 year olds, however, were not generally correct in interpreting the 'specific moral dimension' (that is, who does wrong and gets punished, and why) of the two non-cartoons they saw.

Wilson examined whether children aged from just under 6, through 12, could tell what they saw on screen showed a dream. If given a context of a child (dreamer) in bed, with dissolves and special effects they all recognised the dream; moreover, the context at the outset reduced any negative perceptions of the content. Cantor and Hoffner looked in the 'opposite' direction and found that among 5 to 8 year olds higher levels of fear, self-reported or assessed by facial expression were found when children felt that threats of the kind they saw depicted did exist locally.

Dorr and her colleagues found how children compared real life families they knew with portrayals of two fictional families which they watched most

often. These 'social realism' judgements depend on the age and experience of the viewers as well as on the context of what is shown. A similar study using over 600 children, asked about the well-known *Cosby Show*. Austin, et al. found that discussion within the family helps to form a grasp of reality, and the more that children thought that the Huxtable family was unlike their own, the less realistic the Huxtables were considered to be. Basing their work on group discussions among 7-15 year olds, Gunter, et al. illustrated through copious quotations of dialogue how children make sense of what they see.

Though this study attended to different genres, little was developed about children's perceptions of adventure action series or thriller films in which much of the potentially disturbing fiction they see is to be found.

On one of two quite diverse matters Liddell

and Masilela found that about four in ten black South African children aged 3-6 watched pre-school education programmes at home. The authors advocated the need to increase this audience and to implement ways of integrating their contribution amongst other educational procedures. On the second topic Wober and Young found, during the war to liberate Kuwait, that children were very much aware of the war, through television as well as by other means; they disliked the war, did not see it as a 'computer game', held Saddam Hussein personally responsible and were angry and sad about the suffering brought about. Other recent studies in children's perceptions of the war are found in *Communication Research Trends*, Vol.12(1992), No.3.

Three brief textbooks have appeared in 1991, from France (highly illustrated and playful), America and Britain. They offer a similar, positive approach to what can be the benefits of actively viewed television.

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b. Freeing the Children of Television and Banishing the Media Myth

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Approaches

The unidirectional fallacy of Lasswell's behaviourism still haunts research on the television behaviour of children. Many seem still to assume that the initiative is exclusively in the communicator and the effects exclusively in the audience. Hand-in-hand with that view goes the presumption that television is uniquely powerful and influential, and that an audience of children can only be passive, helpless and easily influenced in its presence.

This approach inspired studies centred on the cognitive and emotional effects of the medium, on the one hand, and, on the other, analyses of the technical and educational possibilities opened to children by television.

In research of the past decade, however, the tendency has been to relativize the influence of television. Many demographic, economic and sociological variables which affect the context of children's reception are being given serious attention. The complexity of the situation is being more fully appreciated, and with it the need for more interdisciplinary collaboration.

Factors being brought into the complex equation include the confluence of different enculturating agencies (family, school, etc.), and the influence of socializing factors in primary groups (customs, style and intragroup culture, social positions, and socio-economic levels, etc.) on the child's cognitive and social development. The increase in the quantity and diversity of audiovisual equipment and channels, in both home and school, has added other factors to the child's experience. The need to study that experience as a whole, not just from limited aspects, has become evident--even if still difficult to attain.

In Spain, research on TV and children peaked after the massive introduction of media in the '60s and '70s. Some of this research interest was aimed at evaluating and improving instructional television. Research declined in volume in the '80s, and attention shifted to the new technologies then being rapidly introduced. The initiation of new private channels in the '90s may increase the demand for research, especially if they and the media in the 'autonomous' regions propose to exploit one segment of the audience--such as children--commercially. Much more research in this area is needed, to give decision

making a firm base.

To help fill the need for research about research, Caffarel and Caceres (1991) recently published a bibliographic study on basic communication research in Spain. From that study, it appears that few are studying children, although there is some interest in the educational psychology of the image and in the semiology of the audiovisual media. Specifically educational studies are more abundant; but studies of social usage are scarce, even though they are indispensable for contextualizing more narrowly focused research (Martin Serrano, 1982).

Exposure and Environments of Media Reception

Child viewers in Spain total about seven million. They prefer to watch from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Mondays to Fridays, and 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays; although there is a growing tendency to watch in the mornings and later at night, partly as a result of changing programming schedules and the initiation of private and independent TV channels, but also because half the child audience reports watching programming intended for adults.

According to the General Study of Media (Estudio General de Medios) [author gives no further information--Ed.] carried out in the first semester of 1991, children between four and thirteen years of age watch television an average of about three hours per day. It might be speculated that the increased time spent watching television draws mostly on time which would be spent playing with other children. This, in turn would raise questions about what effect this might have on the children's effective socialization. A high early diet of television might also contribute to a decline in television viewing among adolescents, as peer group interaction becomes more attractive to them.

Within the family, however, television remains a catalyst of interaction among family members. A family tendency to watch relatively more TV will oblige the child to watch more as well, to participate in this common activity of the family. Family interactions, of whatever kind, also tend to go on with a turned-on television set as background. Many other factors enter into the child's media experience in the home, such as parents' work schedules, number of television sets, parental attitudes, etc.

In brief, media scholars have tended to demote television and other media from an omnipotent role and to consider them more as part of an holistic environment. They may be an important part, but in

some cases their direct effect may be practically negligible. Interactions in family and school remain the most important factors in child development, not the mass media.

Contents of TV and Viewer Attitudes

Roche (1991) studied 'prosocial' and 'aggressive' role models as presented by Catalonian TV in the 1980s, pursuing the interest of educational psychologists in optimizing the social role of general television programmes. The resulting model offers guidelines for educational intervention stressing application to real experience throughout the entire educational career, from pre-school through university.

The 'rules' for the formation of critical attitudes in schools also can be adapted for use in the family. Roche suggests a plan for 'prosocial television deconditioning' for parents to follow before, during and after their children's viewing periods, and the parents are seen as 'metacommunicators', asked to clearly express approval or disapproval of relevant contents while viewing them with their children. Criteria for their comments are based on such items as: How is the dignity of the human person treated in the programme? Is there discrimination because of gender, ethnicity, wealth, etc.?

Effective in 1992, a directive of the Council of the European Community, 'Television Without Frontiers', obliged the member states to adopt means to avoid the pernicious effects of television programmes on the physical, mental or moral development of minors. Public broadcasting in Spain has responded positively, to at least some extent, but the new private television stations have been sluggish, limiting themselves to producing children's programming with the greatest potential profitability, such as game shows. Most other children's programming comes from the United States and Japan (Cortes, 1991).

Advertising is commonly believed, by Spanish television scholars, to respond to economic motivation more than to anything else. J. Benavides (1990) says that advertisers use the child as a sales-pitch, as a person symbolizing one phase in the life cycle. The child represents family openness, students, city people, the values of play, a certain conservatism, security, life, health, pleasure, etc., opening the viewer to excessive consumer behaviour, proper to carefree children, but out of place in responsible adults (Benavides, 1991).

The Coming Media Millennium

We no longer need to think of children becoming

a homogenized mass of 'telechildren', without the influence of other media besides television. The current media situation is much more complex than such an analysis would imply. Data about television, alone, do not describe the whole of the mass media. Books, newspapers and comics, audiotapes and discs, radio, videos, computers, video games, etc., all help make up a multimedia scene which weaves its life daily. These multimedia together exercise a dynamic immediacy, shaping the child's consciousness, but always acting in conjunction with direct interpersonal relationships.

Audiovisual equipment is moving into the school as it is into the family, and pressures are increasing for even faster developments of this kind. In Spain, 'Project Atenea' attempted a massive introduction of computers into schools between 1985 and 1989. 'Interactive' then became a key word, with regard to television as well as computers. J. Delval (1986) remarked on the unique interactive possibilities of computers and their integration with television is imminent, giving great potential for interactive instruction. Some even see an educationally positive relationship of these technologies to computer games. Easy electronic interaction with real people in remote places promises to give a new dimension to childhood experience (Sobrinó, 1992)

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c) T. V. and Children from a Latin American Perspective: The Case of Mexico
by Guillermo Orozco Gomez

General Trends

In Mexico, as in other Latin American countries--especially Brazil and Colombia--research interest in the relationship between children and television has grown rapidly during recent years. It is estimated that two-thirds of all research projects on TV in Mexico are explicitly concerned with child viewers. Most of these studies--an estimated 85 percent--focus on educational aspects of the relationship. Special attention is devoted to television's effect on the children's national identity, as Mexicans.

Although, according to Sanchez (1989a) and Fuentes (1988), around 70 percent of Mexican research projects on TV and children can be classified as 'Media Effects' studies, a good deal of theoretical and methodological ferment and development is going on, in which at least four other models can be distinguished: 'Needs, Uses and Gratifications of the Audience', 'Television Applications', 'Multiple Mediation and the Process of Reception', and 'Strategies of Television Reception'.

Towards the end of the millennium, Mexican research on TV and Children--with that of other Latin American countries--stands out as a fertile and creative field where diverse quantitative and qualitative methods coexist and are used to reinforce each other.

The Educative Impact of Non-Educational Programming

In Mexican media effects studies two streams have developed (Orozco, 1992b). The first concentrated on the educational effects of non-educational programming and was the more prolific and dominant tendency until about five years ago (Orozco 1987). Its underlying assumption was that children were educationally more strongly influenced by ordinary television programming than by explicitly educational programming. The second stream gave more attention to programmes with educational intent, such as *Sesame Street* (Diaz Guerrero et al, 1974), as well as instructional broadcasting, like *Telesecundaria*, secondary school courses broadcast on television (CNTE, 1983).

One of the earliest empirical studies of TV and children carried out in Mexico was that of Cremoux (1968), who was preoccupied with the harmful effects of commercial programming. It dealt with many of the usual variables: time children spent watching TV, the kinds of

programmes they watched, their socio-economic strata, etc. The study concluded that the ideology of the commercial stations was a more critical factor than the actual amount of time the children spent in watching them.

Since that early study, two ideas have dominated effects studies in this area: that younger viewers are more vulnerable to TV effects than older viewers, and that commercial TV programming is not ideologically neutral, but represents the interests of foreign enterprises and is, consequently, detrimental to national values.

Montoya and Rebeil (1983) found in their evaluation of the televised secondary educational system that commercial TV was more powerful as an educator than the explicitly instructional broadcasting.

Sanchez (1987) examined the role of TV in the socialization of children in basic education, approaching explicitly some of the mechanisms by which TV takes part in the cognitive processes of the children, as a mediator between them and reality. This study and others done later with the same emphasis (Sanchez, 1989b; Rebeil and Montoya, 1987; Charles, 1987; Maya and Silva, 1989) drew a picture of television and other mass media as creators of consensus and legitimizers of public authority. These studies, together with Medina's (1986) influential textbook present data supporting a negative evaluation of the role of TV in the education of children. For example, they contend that children know more about the world as presented by TV than they do about the world as described in classes and textbooks. They also concur in the view that TV is gaining space in the minds of the children, which formal education is losing relevance for them (Orozco, 1988).

Needs, Expectations and the Construction of Identities

'Uses and Gratifications' research developed as an 'antithesis' of more traditional 'Effects' research among those studying Children and Television in Mexico. Acosta (1971) pioneered this stream, and it attracted many younger scholars in the 1970s, including Fernandez and Baptista (1976); Almeyda, Villazon and Gutierrez (1977); Bravo, Lambert and Perez (1981), and Elkes (1981).

The general assumption in these studies is that the audience is active, not passive (Rota, 1982). Rota stimulated other Mexican researchers to recognize that TV and other mass media are only one of many sources of satisfaction for information and

entertainment needs, with which they compete for attention.

In other studies of this kind, Fernandez et al. (1986) compared children's TV use with their use of other media, while Rota and Tremmel (1989) studied the relation of TV to cultural identification among rural children of southern Mexico. According to them, parental control correlates most significantly with the preferences of children for foreign TV programmes, cultural identity is less strong among urban than among rural children, type of programmes watched is more relevant for the child's identity than the length of viewing time, and older students who did well in school showed the highest levels of national and cultural identity.

In the same tradition, Malagamba (1986) studied television and family structure in families on the United States border. Contrary to expectations, proximity to the border and to United States TV had less effect on socialization of the children than gender and socio-economic strata. This and similar studies have led many to question the thesis that TV is an 'all-powerful' force imposing foreign influences on Mexican children.

The cumulative results of these years of research about TV and children has promoted a 'deideologization' of Mexican audience studies and a renewed impulse for empirical research.

Practical Applications of Mediation and Reception Strategies

Mexican research on Children and Television has moved researchers to the view that the process of television reception is of more significance in the kind of effect the medium has on its audience than is the mere fact of exposure to TV. The realization that the effect of TV on children is the result of a complex negotiation involving many contextual factors began to develop with an early study (CEMPAE, 1976). In it the relationship between children and television was taken to be an interaction carried on within a concrete psycho-social and cultural context.

More recently, Corona (1986; 1989) studied pre-school children to learn how they used their experience of TV superheros. To do this, she observed the ways the children imitated Superman, Wonder Woman, etc., in their play during school recreation periods. In a similarly oriented study, Zires (1986) looked deeply into the relation between television viewing and children's ritualistic behaviours.

At Iberoamericana University, in Mexico City, a somewhat different line of enquiry dealt with

the ways television viewing affects children's behaviours in other settings, away from the television set (Orozco, 1989). What they see on TV provides children with outlines of 'scripts' by which they can pattern their behaviour in other life situations, but nevertheless conditioned by the many and varied factors which impinge on and mediate those situations. Orozco (1992c) sees the child as a 'cultural apprentice' immersed in the learning experience of life in a community in which the mass media are part, but only part, of the enculturative influences.

Perspectives and Challenges

Three tendencies have coincided with three historical stages in the evolution of Mexican research about children and television. The first asked, 'What effect does TV have on children?' The second asked, 'What do children do with TV?' Now, we are asking a wider range of questions: 'How does the process of reception take place among children?' 'What are the social processes interacting with TV to influence children?' 'How is the child's perception of TV mediated by other forces?' and, in the more action-oriented spirit, 'How can the reception process be made more relevant and beneficial by television audiences?' and, 'How can strategies of reception in family and school best be structured?'

Methodological aspects are complicated by epistemological questions. Cornejo (1992) has used psychodrama techniques to recreate and analyze both children's television reception experiences and the strategies of family and school reception, as well as the children's perception of adult intervention into their viewing patterns.

The interaction between children and television is hugely complex. The process of television reception is mediated by a wide range of factors. Capturing it and understanding it, let alone predicting and explaining it, will remain a major challenge for television researchers.

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IV. Violence in the Communication Media

a. Violence and Television in Europe by José Martínez de Toda y Terrero, S.J.

[Editor's Note: This paper is based on a study of research on violence and television in Europe carried out by Paul Kenney, S.J., of the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, in October 1987, and not previously published. Although it 'updates' the 1984 issue of *Communication Research Trends* on 'Violence in the Media' to 1987, few sources after that date have been added. Its chief value for the present issue of *Trends* therefore lies in updating the 1984 issue to 1987, in providing deeper coverage of European research prior to 1984 than appeared in the 1984 issue, and in drawing upon entirely different sources than the 1984 issue. It should not be regarded as an 'updating' to 1993, except where specifically indicated in the text].

The portrayal of violence on television increased between 1984 and 1987, and has continued to do so into 1993, not only in fiction but also in factual news reporting as daily scenes from the war in Bosnia, war and famine in various countries of Africa, ethnic conflicts in the area of the former Soviet Union, etc., amply illustrate. Western European researchers have been especially concerned about the relationship between terrorist acts and the way they are reported in the media. Increasing exchanges of television contents among the countries of the region are another focus of interest. The following survey will outline research in major and/or representative countries, in [Spanish] alphabetical order. It might be noted that research in some countries not mentioned here, such as Norway and Denmark, may have accelerated since 1987, and the research situation in middle and eastern Europe has, of course, changed drastically.

Germany

According to findings collected and summarized by Schorb, Schneider-Grube and Teunert (1984) the consideration of violence on television should not be limited to physical violence, since cynicism and socially structured violence also are traumatic. They also say that research findings suggest that the condition and context of the audience may have more influence on viewers than any particular violent contents to which they may be exposed. According to them, media violence cannot be dealt with effectively without simultaneously trying to reduce the level of violence in society.

Some of the studies whose findings agreed

with all or part of the above summary include those of Beddig (1985), who analyzed drawings children made after seeing TV and video horror films to determine what kinds and levels of anxiety they indicated, and Kraus (1986), who stresses the broad context of family and society in his study of the effects of violent TV on children. Schultz (1986) had children with learning difficulties make their own videos, from which some insight into their aggressive fantasies could be gleaned.

Woerdemann (1978) had, earlier, done a seminal study which considered the relationship between terrorism and the mass media.

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Czechoslovakia

In a still-Communist Czechoslovakia, the International Organization of Journalists (1980) did a study, based on the assumption that the harmful effects of prolonged exposure to violence on television had been adequately established, which examined the following effects found in children who watch too much violence: they copy the violence they have seen; they are abnormally stressful and unable to control their emotions; they tend to rely on violence to solve problems; they tend more to accept aspects of violence which are norms of their society; they are more subject to feelings of fright and horror; and they tend to become insensitive to observed violence. In characterizing child audiences which favour violent programming, the study found: that those prone to watching violent programmes already are initially either more aggressive or socially deprived; that children without parental guidance accept violence

more easily; that a child who is more frustrated, angry or unstable while watching violent television is more likely to commit an aggressive act; and that the more easily imitated a violent televised action is the more likely it is to be imitated.

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Scandinavia

As previously noted, research in Norway and Denmark was sparse, but Finland and Sweden were quite productive.

In Finland, Vappu Viemero (1986) found that children exposed to large amounts of television violence while young show increased aggressiveness in the long term. This finding was unqualified among girls, but among boys the long-term relationship was indirect and depended on the degree of identification with the characters. Viewing violence increases aggression, according to her findings, but aggressive children also select more violent programmes. Of several countries studied, Finnish children were least aggressive and American children most aggressive. Boys were more aggressive than girls. Children with high levels of anxiety were less aggressive than those less anxious. Boys regarded violent content as more true-to-life than did girls. High identification with TV characters was related to higher aggression. Viewed violence increases the aggression of an already aggressive child. Aggressiveness did not vary by socioeconomic class. Apart from violent television, higher levels of viewing, *per se*, had little to do with the viewer's aggressiveness.

Bjorkqvist (1985), also from Finland, adds the finding that anxiety about violence is not usually present in an individual at the same time that individual is behaving aggressively.

Both these researchers were criticized by the Swedish scholar Cecilia von Feilitzen (1987) for paying inadequate attention to social context.

Gunter (1987) has commented on the popularity of George Gerbner's 'cultural indicators' approach in both Dutch and Swedish research of the late 1970s. A major example of this was Hedinsson's longitudinal study of 1,000 young people during the late 1970s and early 80s (1981: Hedinsson and Windahl, 1984). The results showed that the more involved children became with TV the more exaggerated were their perceptions of crime levels in society. Those who

watched more TV scored higher on a 'retribution index', designed to reflect the level of an individual's desire for the punishment of wrongdoers.

Other research in the period included that of Ulle Holmberg, of the University of Lund, Sweden, who studied how a class of students bring their experience and interpretations to TV and video violence, Jan Erik Norlund, of the University of Umea, Sweden, who, in 1987, planned to study gender roles and television violence over a three year period, using qualitative methods to investigate motives for watching TV and video violence, and linking mass media consumption with the attitudes and values of the viewer; and Lagerspetz and Viemero (1982), who reported the Finnish findings of a six-nation international research project to explore the relationship between the social behavior of children and a number of background variables.

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Spain

In Barcelona, Morcellini and Avallone (1981) studied the behavior and role of the mass media in the Aldo Moro kidnapping, in Italy in 1978, as well as the political incidents in Spain in February 1981. An investigation by Roman authorities after the kidnapping found that the role of the information services in such a situation was 'central'. The authors stressed the moral, political and professional responsibility of the media in such emergency situations.

Miguel Rodrigo was, in 1987, writing a doctoral dissertation at the Autonomous University of Barcelona on terrorism and the mass media from a semiotic perspective.

In 1987, too, research was being conducted at the Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, on 'terrorism and the law of the press'.

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France and Belgium

Roselyne Bouilli-Dartevelle (1984), at the end of her study of adolescents' leisure attitudes, concluded that for them television is mostly an easy way of passing the time and escaping from social responsibilities.

Henri-Pierre Jeudy (1979) sees a more positive role for television as a 'catharsis', neutralizing violent tendencies by giving them vicarious expression.

Ackermann, Dulong and Jeu (1983) say that the media 'have no small part' in the breakdown of communication among individuals and the loss of ethical guidelines. An ideology of security is fostered by the media, in their constant promotion of a sense of insecurity. Methods of 'self-defense' are suggested and legitimated, promoting a spiral of violence in society. In the authors' view, clarity and balance in describing the causes of danger and the best ways to deal with it would improve the situation.

George Gerbner (1987)--mentioned under 'France' because of UNESCO's publication of the book in Paris--has had much influence in Europe, especially in regard to the discussion of violence.

Xavier Raufer (1986) is especially critical of the 'frequent errors' made by the mass media, becoming accomplices of terrorists rather than trying to understand their acts.

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Great Britain

An extensive study by the research section of the Independent Broadcasting Authority was conducted in response to a growing concern in the United Kingdom about the quantity and type of violence on television (Gunter and Wober, 1983; Gunter 1987). This survey of 3,000 members of the 'TV Opinion Panel'--a continuous survey group maintained on behalf of both ITA and the BBC--yielded the following major conclusions:

Although the vast majority said there was too much violence on television and that it could harm children, few regarded the usual crime series as a threat. Most felt the problem could be handled by parents regulating their children's viewing--although most recognized that was unlikely. It was generally felt that elimination of crime series would allow young children to have a more optimistic view of life. Over half thought violence on TV is copied by children, that it frightens them, and that it makes them insensitive towards violence in general. A majority also believed that controls should be exercised over the broadcasting of violent material--just as there is over sex and bad language--but they did not want any of these wholly eliminated from adult programming. Although only a few members of the sample said that they, themselves, feel more prone to violent acts after viewing violent programmes, this represented two million people, when projected from the sample to the entire U.K. population. The study yielded some evidence that people who view more violence tend to express heightened fear of crime in their real-life environments.

In another study, Gunter (1985) found that most do not believe violent comics are as disturbing to children as crime dramas, especially when the violence in the latter programmes is exercised by upholders of the law or is against women. More aggressive personalities are more likely to describe as 'mild' the same violent scenes which the non-aggressive describe as excessive. The study indicated

that children are most disturbed by the following forms of violence: gunfire and punches in fight scenes; violence which results in injury, suffering or death; violence in modern and realistic settings, night scenes of violence, and violence inside buildings, rather than outside.

Peter Marsh and Anne Campbell (1982) included in their collection of studies on violence the useful paper *Mass Communication and Social Violence: A Critical Review of Recent Research Trends*. After assessing the usefulness of several other models, Murdock concludes that the critical approach is most fruitful in studying violence in the media.

In a study for a parliamentary enquiry, initiated in 1983, 6,000 English and Welsh children, teachers and parents were surveyed. Widespread viewing of violent and frightening videotapes was reported (Barlow and Hill, 1985). Parents had some influence on their children's viewing, but tapes often were watched at friends' houses, so control is much diluted.

Ongoing research in Britain in 1987 included the following:

Jay Blumler, Allison Ewebank and Michael Gurevitch, of Leeds University were studying the presentation and perception of social conflict in TV news.

Guy Cumberbatch of Aston University, Birmingham, had just completed a cultivation-effects study of the influence of televised violence on British society.

Robin McGregor of the BBC Research Department was reviewing the complaints and other responses BBC had received from viewers about televised violence.

Philip Schlesinger of Thames Polytechnic, London (now at the University of Stirling) was working on a two-year project on crime, law and justice, focussing on crime reporting, as well as revising an earlier book (Schlesinger, Murdock and Elliott, 1983).

Brian Young, of Salford University, was researching TV, children and family beliefs.

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Netherlands

Among many Dutch studies done in the early 1980s on the topic of television violence, two especially stand out.

Tom H. A. van der Voort (1986) focussed on what children experience while watching violent TV, in order to learn if it frightens them and instigates or reinforces aggression; if they mimic it; if it inclines them to consider violence normal and blunts their feelings; and how it influences their notion of the world.

Children from ages 9-12 preferred children's programmes, but there was a gradual shift to a preference for adult pro-gramming. He found that age did not increase children's critical and moral attitude towards TV, and that older children still continued to identify with perpetrators of violence as much as did younger children.

The preference for aggressive programmes increases as children grow older, but they often do not regard as violent cartoons and some other programmes adults would regard as excessively violent. Twelve-year-olds can distinguish fantasy from reality as well as adults can. Children are more strongly affected by programmes they regard subjectively as violent and those which are more realistic, rather than those quantitatively rated as having more violent acts or those which are clearly fantasies. For most children, 'violence' must be physical to be identified as such. The author feels that they still need to be taught to identify violence as violence, as well as to have a more critical attitude towards television, so they will stop condoning automatically 'whatever the good guys do'.

Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf (1982) treated children's experience of violence which appears unexpectedly in news broadcasts, although parental control inhibits their viewing other violent programming. Their findings support the deduction that 'insurgent terrorism' is logical in using television to convey its message. They look at how terrorists, the media and political authorities use the reporting of terrorism, and they conclude that 'the audience is the loser', because all this manipulation prevents them from gaining a critical grasp of world events. Media personnel often find themselves unable to resist these outside forces.

In the period under consideration, Dutch television contained generally less violence than American

television. Even though some areas of programming are equally as violent as America's, the character of the violence is somewhat different. More crime dramas came from Britain and Germany, rather than America. Bouwman and Stappers (1984) believe that the relative absence in the Netherlands of effects traceable to the growth of TV is due to minimal dependence on TV for news, the presence of an abundance of popular local and regional newspapers, and to Dutch laws requiring widely varied programming.

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Italy

The main interest of Italian communication researchers during the period was terrorism. This preoccupation was perhaps most evident in the two-volume international work, *Terrorismo e TV*, published by the national network, RAI (Morcellini, Elliott, et al., 1982). Wagner-Pacifici (1987) dealt with the Moro kidnapping as a case-study of terrorism from a sociological and dramaturgical perspective, while Tomorra (1985) discussed the operation of stereotypes in the media and Iozzia and Priulla (1985) addressed the special problem of the Mafia.

Paola Mancini (1986) reviewed a thirty-year period of Italian media research, stressing its general direction and focus. Catholic culture has had a fundamental influence on the educational and social goals of the mass media, especially high standards of human dignity and social cohesion--which the author believes are under serious threat from recent developments in the mass media.

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Conclusion

The impact of television violence on viewers, especially on children, has perhaps been the topic of greatest interest to European communication researchers, at least within the time-frame of this paper. However, the results often are contradictory. Some findings, however, have achieved a certain level of consensus.

Opinion research appears to be the least-flawed means of generating data about the effects of violence on people for the purpose of policy formulation--although its own limitations are obvious. Most European researchers at the time of the studies dealt with here appeared to favour a modified critical theory for analyzing the data on violence, with some help from semiotics. Direct interviews and questionnaires are generally preferred to laboratory experiments for gathering reliable data.

Violence research has focused on children because they appear to be the audience which is most impressionable and easily affected by viewing violent programmes.

It is generally agreed that the violent scenes which have the greatest impact are those which take place in settings which are identifiable to the viewer. A desire to view the violence, itself, seems less of a motive for viewing it than is a sense of an inner desire, on the part of the individual viewer, to punish evil-doers. There is a complex interrelationship between terrorism and the media, which suggests a need for extreme care in handling news about terrorism.

Analysis of violence should not ignore psychological and structural violence, which may do as much harm as physical violence. Easy availability of video cassettes to children poses a severe threat to any comprehensive parental control over their children's viewing.

There seems to be a definite link between longer periods spent viewing violent TV and a higher fear of crime in one's real environment. Some 'cultivation effect' from a long-established television schedule

with a heavy content of violence seems undeniable, although its exact nature may still be debated. People in cities seem always in a state of tension and fear, for which the mass media seem partly to blame.

On the other hand, many believe that violence on TV has a cathartic effect, which rids people of

destructive tendencies which might otherwise be vented on society. Also, historical research suggests that present-day levels of violence in society, although they may be higher than in some periods in the past, may also be lower than in some other periods which were not influenced by mass media.

b. The Violence Programmed into Television and its Influence on Children, From the Venezuelan Perspective

by Jesús Maria Aguirre

Introduction

No one can doubt the extent of violence on television screens in practically all parts of the world. It has been estimated that crime is twenty-two times more frequent on TV than in real life. Recently, satellite technology has brought the wars being fought in the most remote places into almost every home, for the viewing of even the youngest children.

Governments have shown concern about this, but have been able to do little. In 1969, both the United States and the United Kingdom published reports by their government-sponsored studies of the problem. In Venezuela, the psychologist Eduardo Santoro (1969) issued a research report which aroused public opinion. Five years later, a report was issued by the Venezuelan Council for the Child (1974), and that same year the Fifth Congress of the Venezuelan Society of Psychiatry had as its theme, 'Media of Social Communication and Mental Health' (Muñoz, 1974). A government-sponsored study was published in Argentina in 1975 (Arenas, 1975). Similar government-related studies were done in Mexico (as reported in *El Nacional*, 1982), and Colombia.

Few of the Latin American studies have relied on quantitative empirical surveys, but some have used anthropological methods and content analysis. In the greater part of their findings, the conviction prevails that excessive exposure of children to programming containing violence reinforces the aggressiveness of individuals and encourages non-peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Some violence must be expected in drama, as in history, but the quantity and quality of TV violence are new, and it must be judged in terms both of its television context and its real-life context, as well as in terms of its ethical significance in the light of those contexts.

The Representation of Violence on Television

Although the definition of 'violence' has not yet been agreed by all researchers, it can be descriptively defined as 'recourse to means of action that injures the physical, psychological or moral integrity of another' (UNESCO, 1971). A violent portrayal on television, then, can be described as the aggressive expression of dramatic human conflict in which the relationships are those of force.

The causes of the continuation of high levels of violent programming have been extensively explored, but are still debated. One factor is simply lengthening viewing times--the average Venezuelan home has its set on approximately 5 hours per day. The increasing demand for entertainment makes the medium more competitive, and the tendency to use more sensational programmes to attract a larger share of the audience is difficult for stations to resist (Aguirre, 1976). Objections to violent contents are met by media managers with the 'classic reply': 'We give the public what it wants.' But the public has so little choice that it is hard for it to know what it wants. The one rule, even of news production, is to gain the largest possible audience by making the production ever more spectacular (Bockelmann, 1983). The easiest way to make it more spectacular is by resorting to violent portrayals.

The byproducts of this tendency are numerous and tragic. For example, victims of crime, terrorism and war are fated to become victims again, the second time to sensational media manipulation. Robert Snyder, a noted paediatrician and child psychiatrist (cited in Colombo, 1983, p.108ff.), has said that children should not be exposed to the direct form of the news as it is presented in newspapers and on television, because they, or at least those below the age of twelve, do not have the selective capacities necessary to deal with the techniques employed by the media. 'Creating adulthood in youngsters is an illusion which gratifies only educators and parents,

since it feels so very modern. On the contrary, it unleashes in youngsters waves of fear.' Gerbner and his collaborators (Gerbner, et al, 1980; Gerbner 1988) also have commented that television is tending to socialize children for a conceptual world which does not correspond to the real world in which they have to live.

Psychoanalyst Raquel Soiler (1981) has defined a neurotic syndrome, 'televiosis', which is characterised by intense persecution anxieties, phobias and mental disorganization related to the construction of a false reality by television and especially influenced by the violence in television contents.

The freedom of communication media is essential to a free society in the modern world, but the resulting permissiveness raises serious problems which have to be faced squarely. The destruction of moral norms and values is one of these, but perhaps of equal seriousness is the creation of a culture of pseudoreality. It may begin to affect children from their earliest years, making them incapable of leading fully coherent, autonomous lives. There may never be absolute scientific 'proof' that this is happening, but its probability is high enough to face it as a serious social responsibility, in order to guarantee a healthful cultural environment for future generations.

Violence in Fictional Programmes

Television is, before all else, an entertainment medium. Competition for viewers creates a thrust towards more and more action, sensationalism, and, inevitably, violence in that entertainment.

The amount of television violence varies from country to country, but so does the nature of the violence and the amounts and kinds of violence in different genres of programmes, regardless of country (Gurevitch, 1972).

Animated cartoons are the most violent category. Until recently, North American cartoons dominated the Latin American market, and an estimated 98% of them contained violence, as did 100% of the British cartoons rated at the same time (Gurevitch 1972). More recently, Japanese cartoons have entered Latin America, and are, if anything, even more violent.

The short 'takes' and rapid 'cuts' characteristic of modern television cinematography are part of an aesthetic of action and violence. It keeps the attention of the audience, but there also is reason to believe that it promotes impulsiveness--which, from the advertisers' point of view, is a desirable trait in a consumer culture. The violence endemic

in police, war, horror, western and similar fictional genres is evident, but they also are subject to stereotyping and to the creation of falsely rigid oppositions--the 'good guys' vs.the 'bad guys'--which are never so clear-cut in real life. The contribution this could be making to racism and ethnic conflict is obvious. North American films, in particular, may tend to promote an individualism which is not conducive to the cooperative achievement of social objectives (Murray, 1980).

Venezuelan programming is heavily North American in origin and form. So much that has been learned about U.S. television can be applied to Venezuela, but with the added problem of its representation of foreign interests and values. Studies by Santoro (1969), Marcano and Moncada (1971), Montano (1977), Bisbal (1986), Colomina de Rivera, and Ferranza et al. (1975) found high levels of violence in Venezuelan TV, a preference for violent programmes on the part of children, a high level of popularity for soap operas (telenovelas), and considerable violence in soap operas.

All the same, the elaboration of indices of violence do not seem to tell the full story. Verbal violence could frighten children more than physical violence because it takes place in a setting which is familiar to them. Also, violence done with more accessible means (knives instead of laser beams, for example) is more likely to be imitated; and these are the weapons most used in soap opera violence.

Although comparisons are hard to make, the experts seem to lean towards the view that the effects of fictional violence can be more serious, in the long run, than non-fiction (news, documentaries, etc.). The fundamental risk is of the tacit acceptance, including approbation of violent mechanisms as the routine way to solve problems. The fundamental problem is not what weapons or injuries are inflicted, but how conflicts of xenophobia, racial segregation, competition for life, class division, machismo and sexual exploitation, marriage infidelities, etc., are resolved in daily programming which reflects real life. A spiral of escalating violence is generated when audiences are persuaded that the environment is so threatening that they must preoccupy themselves with preparing means for self defence--means which often become aggressive.

Towards an Inventory of Effects

Inventories of sociological findings always encounter difficulties of varying interpretations of the evidence, disagreement about methodologies, and even about the validity and reliability of the findings. Studies of media effects are especially plagued by the question of whether short-term effects can indicate anything about long-term effects.

Nevertheless, a body of reliable findings is being built up which, if used judiciously, can help those who must make practical applications and develop policies.

Experimental studies have been carried out in the United States, Australia and Europe which show definite increases in aggression by children after viewing violent programmes. Some of that research has cast doubt on the view that violence in animated cartoons or other less realistic genres is 'harmless'. However, the prior aggressiveness of particular children is a better predictor of aggressive behavior than is exposure to violent films. Home, school and peer group environments also are significant mediating factors. Hardly any significant experimental studies have been carried out in Venezuela.

Correlation studies have been more prominent in Venezuela, with the studies by Ferrenza et al. (1975) and by Montano (1977) generally supporting the views of Halloran (1970) that socio-economic factors are more important predictors of violent behaviour than is television exposure. Studies in the United States and Britain, in particular, suggest that aggressive tendencies contribute to a preference for violent television, rather than the viewing causing the aggression. Other studies show violent behaviour in the late 'teens to be associated with a preference for violent television in childhood.

Some research permits more specific conclusions, which qualify these findings. There seems to be a broad consensus that interpersonal violence is seriously increased by a large exposure to dramas or films with verbal or physical aggression, programmes with gratuitous violence which has no narrative function, programmes in which the violence is in support of a noble cause, and violent Westerns. However, all these findings could be explained largely by the tendency of violent children to watch violent television.

Catharsis?

Swimming against the current, some have suggested that the viewing of aggressive contents on television not only does not produce an increase in aggressive conduct but rather reduces it by releasing tensions vicariously. The notion of catharsis still is not well defined for application to users of the mass media. Current thinking tends towards the view that, while most children exposed to violent TV increase their aggressive feelings, attitudes and/or conduct, a minority do discharge their aggressive tensions through the same experience. To date, there

have been no Venezuelan studies to counter this view.

The key question for Venezuelans is, Will there be as much or more incitement to violence as in the United States, whose televised programming provides much of the content of our TV? To date, no one knows.

Factors of Inflexibility

Violence tends to remain a permanent fixture of television because of a combination of numerous variables. Among these are the characteristics of the violent message; the characteristics and predispositions of the viewers and the conditions under which they receive messages; and the different ways they responded to questions after they viewed the programmes.

Characteristics of Violent Messages

It can be said that a majority of children imitate violent actions, especially if they are presented as successful. Younger children are harder to study because they do not yet fully appreciate the boundary between reality and fiction. A perception that the villain is not punished conduces to violence in normal children, and justice delayed to the end of the movie is justice not perceived by the viewer and has little inhibiting effect. Aggression with bladed weapons hurts sensitivities of children more than that with guns or nuclear bombs. Proportioned presentation of the effects of certain types of violence may cause people to give heed to their dangers. Verbal violence in recognizable situations affects children more than physical violence in fantastic situations. The use of intense cinematic techniques--closeups of horrible details, fearful sounds, etc.--increase children's fears and can cause fatigue, nightmares, etc. The fast action and dynamism of violent programmes may be more attractive to audiences than the violence itself.

Characteristics of the Audience

Violence is favoured more by boys than by girls, and boys aged 12-16 years watch more aggressive programmes than any other group. Those with low education levels tend to imitate violent TV conduct than those with more education. Children with more family problems watch more TV. Aggressive films seem to act as stimulants and triggers of psychopathic tendencies in psychopathic children. Most adolescents give TV high ratings for veracity and credibility. Few children or adolescents adopt a spontaneously critical attitude towards television contents.

Conditions of Reception

Viewing violent films in normal conditions causes

increased aggressivity in normal children. Many children watch adult programmes, and few report any parental control over their viewing. The peer group is the most influential interpreter of television programmes for most children. Horror shows affect children most when their viewing environment is dark or lonely, and the presence of family members weakens the fearful impact of the show. When forced by parents to watch something, children react by subconsciously reducing their predisposition to learn from it. But family or group disapproval of violence in a programme makes imitation of violence by the children less likely.

Types of Response

Most younger normal children imitate in some ways the principal characters of violent stories seen on TV. Even normal children tend to remember the forms of exercising violence which they see on television. Violent contents tend to confirm aggressive children's habits of solving problems violently. Programmes which present the models of aggression most easily imitated with accessible weapons are most dangerous. Marginal children may increase their aggressiveness due to their inability to conform to the world as seen on TV. Finally, it is probable that saturation by violent programmes desensitizes and brutalizes people over the long term.

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c. Violence in the Spanish Communication Media

By Rafael Calduch Cervera

Introduction

During the past decade, terrorist violence in Spain has focussed the attention of Spanish communication researchers on the relationship between the mass media and that violence. Their research follows three principal lines. A

sociological tendency applies both sociological theory and empirical research methods to communication questions. Another stream, influenced by theories of communication depends more on theory and speculation than on empirical studies. A third approach is inter-isciplinary, drawing especially on

legal studies to enrich the first two approaches.

Sociological Contributions

Scholars in the sociological tradition are concerned with the social roots of political violence, with the symbolic nature of terrorist groups and of their acts and of the news treatment which communicates word of those acts to the public, and finally with the influence of the media on the evolution of public opinion.

Amando de Miguel (1982) affirms that terrorism is a special variety of general contemporary social violence, including that exercised by the State, in its armies and police. Contemporary society is so complex that it is especially vulnerable to disruptions caused by a relatively low level of violence. The high visibility given their acts by the media makes it easy for terrorists to instill generalized fear in a wide population. Terrorism arises out of certain fanatical, religious or quasi-religious social conceptions and individual psychological narcissism. Finally, according to de Miguel, terrorism develops in support of causes which possess little or no negotiability and which translate a depth of injustice and frustration in some sector of society.

Although he acknowledges that television news about terrorist acts conditions public opinion, de Miguel thinks this works against the interests of the terrorists, since it consolidates in the public mind the legitimacy of State institutions and their use of legal violence.

Alejandro Muñoz Alonso (1985) regards publicity from the communications media as one of the principal characteristics of both guerrillas in Latin America and terrorists in Spain. In his view, publicity is as essential to their cause as are the two other indispensable elements, which it publicizes: an advanced technological level of violence and the brutal and indiscriminant character of its employment.

Manuel Fernandez Monzon (1984) agrees with Muñoz about the role of the mass media, saying that terrorism is, before all, 'symbolic violence', which needs to impact on public opinion through the media and opinion leaders in order to accomplish its purpose. But Fernandez holds that terrorist violence is purposeful and selective, not indiscriminant. The terrorists wish to seize from the State its 'monopoly on the use of violence'. Terrorist action becomes, for him, a 'war' between two forces founded on violence--the State and the terrorists--to convince the public that one can use violence more efficiently than the other.

Fernandez also gives to newspapers a role equal and complementary to that of television in the terrorist strategy. Newspapers give, more effectively than television, the detailed arguments the terrorists are anxious to communicate. Local radio and opinion leaders also are important media channels for them, since they bring the argument down to the local, personal level.

However, war and terrorism cannot be equated, since the latter depends heavily on the threat of violence, because the terrorists lack the ability to employ actual violence at the sustained level necessary to carry on a war. But the violence, too, is important for the terrorists, although their inability to escalate it is an admission of weakness. News does not create terrorism, although it can influence its course of action, nor could news silence do away with it. [This paragraph is an insertion of Calduch Cervera's own view, supplementing those of the previously-cited authors. --Editor.]

José Luis Piñuel (1986) carried out an intensive study of Spanish terrorism during the period 1972-1982. He feels that communication is an important dimension of the terrorist agenda, because the terrorist's goals are essentially in the realm of broad social interaction, where the mass media are the chief mediating agents between individuals and groups. As the phenomenon of terrorism is ritualized, along with its own symbolic code, it chooses the actions to take within the area of expression and a narration within the format of the menage it wants to portray, in carrying out certain actions a definite myth is created.

The Debate among Professors, Journalists and Politicians

Any interdisciplinary approach to a topic is subject to communication problems of its own, due to differing definitions, points of view, and even to different conceptions of the validity and reliability of evidence. This is especially true of communication studies, which attempt to synthesize the diverse perspectives of university professors, practising journalists, politicians, and others. Carlos Soria (1990) has assembled contributions from several Spanish scholars who have tried to develop a general approach which will help integrate these differing outlooks into a theoretically and methodologically productive framework. In that volume, Gomez Anton discusses the long-term effects of the constant diet of violence served up by the mass media, while Desantes Guanter sees a positive, progressive role the mass media can play. Both these views of the media--negative and positive--have some validity and must be brought into any consideration of the ethical aspects of the media/terrorism discussion.

The Spanish Interior Ministry sponsored a study (Ministry of the Interior, 1984) comparing approaches to freedom of information about terrorism in various countries (UK, USA, West Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain). It concluded that laws to ban information of this kind in the media would be constitutionally unacceptable, but that a definite, consistent information policy in each country concerning the reporting of violence would solve some of the problems connected with it.

Balanced reporting of terrorism is extremely problematic, and drawing accurate distinctions among the different groups and interests involved is especially difficult. For example, Ubeda (1988) analyzed editorials in the highly respected newspaper *El País* to study their treatment of the Basque separatist movement for the period 1976-1987. He found considerable differences between the newspaper's views of the association between the ETA and Basque nationalism, as well as the interactions between both and the government, and the actual events and alignments in the Basque country, as the latter were revealed in political changes which took place there during that period.

The authors in Soria's volume (1990) recommend several principles which journalists should follow to help guarantee accurate and unbiased reporting about terrorism:

1. They should use as many diverse sources as possible and check them against each other.
2. Dramatic and spectacular aspects should be avoided if they are unnecessary to the rigorous presentation of the facts.
3. Journalists assigned to cover terrorism should be professionally trained specifically for that task.
4. The language used in their reports should be precise and should avoid repeating mere propaganda statements.
5. The journalists and their editors should practice self-control.

War and the Media

If terrorism poses problems for accurate, unbiased reporting, war compounds them.

V. The Popularisation of Semiotics

a. Semiology in Spain

by Carmen Boves

Introduction

Semiology--the general science of signs and

Alejandro Pizarroso (1991) has carried out a probing analysis of information manipulation--by Spanish media, as well as by the protagonists and by foreign media--during the Gulf War. He says that the interactions between the media and the military during the Vietnam, Malvinas [Falklands], Granada and Panama conflicts created the attitudes and control mechanisms which have been so criticized in the Gulf situation.

Conclusion

Studies on violence and the media have generated so much interest and independent work in Spain that for almost the first time there are signs of an independent stream of communication research developing in the country, which heretofore has been heavily reliant on Anglo-American theory and research. Empirical research has been especially weak. However, now resources and trained research personnel are becoming more numerous, and the decade of the 90s should see substantial improvement.

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symbols--emerged from humanistic research in Europe combining streams from analytical

philosophy, Russian formalism, linguistic structuralism, and the directly semiological studies of Charles Peirce, in North America. Although some distinguish semiology from semiotics, the latter being a more philosophical approach, Spanish semiologists tend to equate the two.

A shift in modern epistemology has been the realization that everything has meanings, especially things made by people. Natural phenomena are hard facts, symbolic only when and if they come into human awareness. But cultural phenomena have both fact and meaning as essential components, because they have been created as symbols and, according to Roland Barthes, are interpreted as functions of symbols in relation to their creator, the period in time at which they were created, their meaning to different social classes, the prevailing ideology, etc. The semiologist studies both natural objects, insofar as they have been given symbolic meaning, and manmade objects, which are intrinsically symbolic.

Growth, Diversification and Ambiguities

In Spanish universities, for at least thirty years, semiology has been in an ambiguous region between philosophy and the study of language and literature. Today, some semiologists in the language/literature tradition espouse a positivist approach, which would limit itself to analysis and description, without theory, leaving the latter to philosophers. But, little-by-little, a broadly conceived semiology is making its way into Spanish Universities, even though there still is no professorship in the subject in any Spanish university.

Semiology flourishes in many areas, including cinema, speech, literature, theatre, art, and the study of non-verbal symbols (Bobes, 1973).

An important contribution was made five years ago by J. Romera Castillo (1988) when he published his bibliographic collection of semiotic work on literature and theatre in Spain. It provides a solid bibliographic base for ongoing research in the field.

Studies and publications have increased due to the organization of the Spanish Association of Semiotics, in June 1983. A founding conference was held in Toledo the following year, and biennial conferences have met since then at different universities. Publications from these meetings have greatly stimulated the growth of Spanish semiology.

Various universities have specialized in different aspects of semiology, with Oviedo

concentrating on three literary genres, Barcelona stressing mass communications, etc. (Gonzalez, 1977 and 1980-81; Ylera, 1979; Romera, 1977 and 1988).

Journals representing different approaches or regions include *Discurso*, published by the Andalusian Semiotic Association, which emphasises speech, *Revista Internacional de Estudios Semioticos* (International Review of Semiotic Studies), the Association of Semiotic Studies of Barcelona, which publishes a review of semiotic studies, and the Basques, who organize some symposiums, almost always with a French orientation.

In its early stages, semiology centred on studies of syntax and took a form close to and parallel with structuralism and textual grammar. Much overlap with linguistics also was experienced. Under French influence, it passed through a period which stressed the structure of the mind and psychological or social analysis to arrive at a broader interest in the semiotics of literature and some aspects of philosophical Pragmatism and aesthetics, with interest in the role of the reader and in the social effects of literature.

Some confusion in the field is caused by writers, both foreign and Spanish, who claim to be doing artistic or literary semiotics from the very beginning of their studies, picking up definitions from semiology, but without much methodological rigor or consistency. But there are legitimate differences of approaches within semiology, especially when they deal with different genres of literature or different forms of artistic expression. Poetry, for example, is seen as a form of expression, while novels are discussed as communication and theatre as an interactive process. Verification of a particular analysis often can be obtained only according to its historical results (Bobes, 1989: 115ff.).

Characteristics of Spanish Semiology

As has been noted, Spanish semiologists do not make some of the distinctions stressed by their French and Italian colleagues. For example, 'semiology' and 'semiotics' are used interchangeably. Unlike most French semiologists, a sign need not be intentional to include it among the interests of Spanish semiologists. Also, unlike the Italians, they do not demand that a sign be part of a formed system. This greater inclusiveness of Spanish semiology allows the literary text, or art in general, to be studied in a semiotic way, with respect for the narrative unity or holistic functioning of the text. Greater attention can be paid to analysis of the changing meaning of the sign, as its context changes.

The contrast between static and dynamic conceptions of the sign/symbol marks the boundary

between structuralism and semiology. This is especially emphasized by Spanish semiologists.

Unlike classical, Saussurean semiotics, they want to include the subject along with meaning and significance in their analysis of the text, giving it an essentially dynamic quality lacking in either classical semiotics or structuralism.

In their analysis of sign systems, Spanish semiologists generally follow the three-level model of Charles Morris: 1) the syntax, or study of the formal relationships among signs, which involves segmenting the text to identify paradigmatic units and to establish its syntagmatic framework; 2) semantics, or the study of the signifying values of the signs; and 3) pragmatics, which establishes the relationship the text has with its users.

Starting with this three-fold framework, analyses can be carried out which are able to grasp more of the dynamic and contextual aspects of a symbolic system than could an approach which limited its analysis to the text alone.

The influence of structural linguistics on this semiotic model has been acknowledged by Albadalejo (1986), saying explicitly that 'literary semiotics is a discipline which from its linguistic foundation examines the literary text from a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic viewpoint.' He goes on to say that this is inevitable, because the symbolic system of the literary text is constructed from the material of the linguistic sign/symbol system. But the analysis must transcend the merely linguistic system to grasp the text's specifically literary values.

b. Semiotics in Latin America From Academic Practice to Popularization

By Armando Silva, National University of Colombia

Introduction

The study of semiotics not only explores how humans communicate but helps us think about ourselves as if from outside, and gain a more exact knowledge of who we are. Semiotics is especially valuable in Latin America, a continent with an identity crisis. Change and development in the discipline are rapid, but keeping up with them is worthwhile.

Some Current Developments

Semiotics in recent years has been going through a period of conflict among different schools of thought, with no single school yet dominating. Structuralism, so prominent in academia a few years ago, has lost much of its following, partly because, although it was concerned with

There is no 'Spanish school' of semiology, because every Spanish semiologist has his or her own style of analysis or theoretical position. Similarly, the wide range of interests among Spanish semiologists demands great flexibility of methods. But precisely this variety gives promise for vigorous future growth of the discipline in Spain.

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structures that produce meaning, it was unable to deal with meaning as such and the communication process.

In the post-structuralist period, several perspectives seem dominant.

Descriptive semiotics (better known as semiology) refers to the application to particular systems of terms that belong to a general metalanguage of the theory of signs. In this perspective, attempts are made to decipher the meanings not only of verbal texts but also of non-verbal objects using linguistic parameters.

Theoretical Semiotics deals with the formulation of a metalanguage and with the definition of the terms with which to discuss the sign situation of meaningful texts.

Interpretative Semiotics refers to the encounter

with epistemology, where the problems of knowledge and of comprehension of meaning are fundamental. It tries to describe not only the production but also the interpretation of meaning. Although its more radical proponents--such as Derrida and Lyotard--have gone to the limits of deconstructionism and postmodernism, the interpretative stream bears a close resemblance to the more traditional field of hermeneutics, especially in dealing with cultural interpretations.

Semiotic Analysis

Interpretative semiotics may be summarized in three basic trends, defined by their object of study and by the type of practice chosen. They are discourse, spaces and figures, and interactions.

'Discourse' includes those tendencies deriving from discourse analysis, its modalities (after Greimas), its narrative structure (after Genette), or its enunciation conditions (after Bakhtine and Ducrot). There is a strong tendency towards this type of work in many Latin American countries. This trend in discourse analysis has stimulated linguists, many of whom have become specialists in what is now widely known as narrative semiotics.

'Spaces and figures' is a trend which groups a much broader spectrum of options and proposals related to proxemic and iconic analysis of film and mass media, of visual arts, advertising and city life--generally, of visual systems and their aesthetic manifestations. Although many scholars work in this area, there are no dominant theories, such as were found in the discourse trend.

'Interactions' refers to semiotics as an object of mediation of social practices. 'Mediation', here from a Peircean perspective, 'can be defined as any process in which two elements are brought into articulation by means of or through the intervention of some third element that serves as the vehicle or medium of communication', according to Elizabeth Mertz and Richard Parmentier, in their book, *Semiotic Mediation*. It involves essentially cultural research using applied semiotics in which anthropologists, communication experts and sociologists can collaborate. It is one of the richest and most fully developed areas of semiotics.

These three perspectives are not, of course, mutually exclusive and, in fact, are interwoven with each other in most contemporary work.

Any survey of worldwide semiotic tendencies must mention the influence of Lacan and

especially of some of his followers who have made the semiotic dimension more explicit. In the Spanish-speaking world, the work of Jorge Aleman and Sergio Labrera, with its stress on the relationship between body and language and on the unconscious as knowledge, is especially noteworthy.

Perspectives on Latin American Semiotics

Semiotics in Latin America has passed through three historical periods. In the first, we find structuralist models which, in those countries where they attained greatest prominence--Argentina and Chile--were linked with Marxist concerns and class analysis, and, at the same time, with media studies (for example, Veron, 1963; and Dorfman and Mattelart, 1972).

A second period, in the seventies, is marked by the globalizing semiological trend proposed most notably by L. Prieto (1967). In academic circles, this period marked the inclusion of semiotics in curricula as a core subject, but under diverse forms, and without a well-defined epistemology. (For discussions, see Ballon, 1974, Blanco, 1985, and Quezada, 1988--in Peru--Gimate-Welsh, 1987--in Mexico--Escudero, 1987, and Haroldo, 1976--in Argentina--Pessoa, 1987--in Brazil--Torres, 1987--in Chile--Fuenmayor, 1987--in Venezuela--and Silva, 1987--in Colombia.)

The third period in Latin American semiotics corresponds to what Greimas called the 'third semiotic revolution'. In it, semiotics began to address discourse and social practice. On a continent where demands for social commitment are so strong, this emphasis was more significant and optimistic than structuralism. It may also be helping Latin Americans meet social demands, such as understanding themselves as a cultural event.

Reduced concern for terminology, and more for real social situations, as well as the collapse of world Marxism, all have contributed to the increased popularity of semiotics as a way of approaching all symbolic production, in Latin American academic circles. The modernity of semiotic approaches also seems to match the new communications media which have changed our ways of life so quickly and so radically. Latin America seems only recently to have come fully to grips with its modernity, not only in terms of economics, but also of culture and aesthetics. (For discussions of these developments see Martin-Barbero, 1987, and Garcia Canclini, 1989.)

Analysis and Practice

The Latin American Semiotics group was formed by Latin Americans from a wide range of countries and disciplines who happened to be together in Paris, in 1986. In 1987, the 'Second Latin American Semiotics Conference' was held in Cordoba, Argentina. At it, a preference for discursive semiotics was dominant,

with concurrent interest in the work of J. A. Greimas. However, E. Veron's opening lecture at the Conference was on Charles Peirce, whose work was also greeted enthusiastically by participants.

In Brazil, Diana Pessoa de Barrios (1988 and 1990), has examined discursive syntax and meaning generation from the semiopragmatic perspective. In proxemics, Izidoro Blikstein (1990) has worked on image analysis, Eduardo Penuela (1987) on the application of psychoanalytic parameters to the imaginary in the media, Carlos Gardi of the University of São Paulo has contributed anthropological reflections on architecture, and Ivo Assad of the same university has done work on theatrical aspects of the literary referent, based on Peirce. Journals in Brazil include *Sinifcação*, published in São Paulo, which stresses the narrative in both literary texts and visual semiotics, and *Arte e Cultura da America Latina*, sponsored by the Sociedade Cientifica de Estudos da Arte of São Paulo University.

Mexico has the greatest production in Latin America of publications on the application of narrative semiotics to literature. José Pascual Buxo, known for his work on meaning configuration (1985), based on Hjelmslev and Greimas, founded the semiotics seminar at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). From it have come several books and the journal, *Acta Poetica*. Other important journals are *Morphe* and *Discursos*, both linked to masters' degree programmes at universities, and the recently founded *Acciones Textuales*, dealing with theoretical aspects of discourse in literature, power, advertising, therapy and testimonials. *Cuadernos de Trabajo* of the Semiolinguistic Circle at the Autonomous University of Puebla concentrates on art. *Semiosis*, published by the Centre for Linguistic and Literary Studies of Veracruz University specializes in non-verbal semiotics. It is edited by Renato Prada, author of a generative-based model for semiotic analysis of literary texts (1988), and José Luis Martínez.

No less than 74 institutions in Mexico offer degrees in Social Communications, and most of them evidence considerable interest in semiotics. Characterizing this relationship between semiotics and communication studies, A. Gimete-Welsh (1988) has said, 'text theory has teamed up with context theory: this is the semiotics which has developed alongside a theory of symbolic-ideological formations which establish the meaning of signs in the process of social

communication.'

Essays on Peirce's thought are beginning to appear in Mexico (e.g., Bruchot, 1991). Bakhtine's work is being translated by Tatiana Bubnova.

Several Argentinian groups are interested in narrative semiotics. An important centre is the communication studies programme at the University of Cordoba. The more philosophical orientation is represented by A. M. Ravera (1987 and 1988), who is interested in narrativity in both literature and art, and who works with E. Traficante on the translation of significant semiotic works from French and Italian.

Working in France, Latella (1985) and Bohorquez (1987) have used models from Greimas and Lacan, respectively, in analyzing major works of Argentinian literature. In Argentina itself, a strong psychoanalytic tradition, generally following Lacan, has been represented by Nicolas Rosas (1987) and the publications of the Grupo Cero, although most of its contributors now live in Spain.

South America's most important journal of aesthetic-semiotic reflection is *Revista Estetica*, published in Buenos Aires. It specializes in figurative analysis of visual and performing arts, using models from Lacan, Peirce, and others.

Literary narratology also has become popular in Peru. E. Ballon Aguirre whose analysis of the Peruvian poet Vallejo, based on Greimas' approach, has become a model for the analysis of classic Latin American poets and novelists (Ballon, 1981).

D. Blanco (1985) presented an overview of Peruvian semiotics, stressing its focus on narrative. He also has written on cinema and other mass media. A study by Blanco and R. Bueno (1980) provided a useful clarification of the narratological and discursive models. Bueno edits *Revista de Critica Literaria*, which seeks to disseminate semiotic analysis applied to literature.

A major academic centre for semiotic studies in Peru is the Catholic University of Peru, where the generative models of Greimas and Genette are popular. At the University of Lima, O. Quezada (1988) works on the language of the media, collaborating with Blanco, and R. Bendezu Untveros is interested in figurative semiotics and advertising (Bendezu, 1985).

Interest in discursive analysis based on narrative programmes also has taken a strong hold in Colombia. Juan Gomez, in the National University of Colombia, edits the journal, *Narratologicas*, and Fabio Jurado (1989) is active at Universidad del Valle, in Cali. Eduardo Serrano (1991) has been perfecting a narratological model for application to the work of Garcia Marquez. Postgraduate degrees in semiotics are available at the universities of Medellin, where discursive and narrative semiotics in history has been

popular, and Bucaramanga, where narratology applied to the theatrical aspects of daily life has been of special interest. In Bogota, the philological centre, Caro y Cuervo Institute, has published books on text linguistics (Bernal, 1986) and integral discourse analysis. Helen Pouliquen, of the National University in Bogota, is leading sociocritical research projects.

Jesús Martín-Barbero, now one of the most widely recognized mass media theorists in Latin America, is a pioneer of narrative semiotics studies in Colombia. A. Silva (1992) develops theories relating semiotics to social imagery, based on anthropo-psychoanalytic concepts. J. Xibille (1991) reflects on the postmodern city. Philosophical writing with semiotic relevance includes theses on St. Augustine and medieval thought (Rincon, 1990), Peirce (Restrepo, 1990), and the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur (Rubio, 1987).

Puerto Rico has been developing its bilingual advantage with a growing interest in discursive semiotics. Vaquero's (1987) work in semiopragmatics is noteworthy, as is Montoya's (1988) thesis on generative grammar, a broad-based study of the evolution of linguistics. Chomsky's influence is represented in Marc Schitzser's writings in the *Boletín de la Academia de Puerto Rico*.

In Venezuela, Ivan Avila (1987) has been encouraging analysis of the plastic arts in various universities, and is, with the help of A. Silva, in charge of organizing the Third Latin American Semiotics Conference, to be held at the University of Zulia, in Maracaibo, in November, 1993. Also in Venezuela, at the University of Valencia, R. Carrion-Wan is applying Greimas' model to legal semiotics. He is the founder of the journal, *Investigaciones Semioticas*.

In Uruguay, where Peirce's orientation is popular, Lisa Block (1987) has concentrated on literary analysis, as has J. Mondragon, both at Universidad de la Republica.

In Chile, the work of L. Torres (1987), on visual media and graphic design, and that of Rafael del Villar (1987), on video, brought semiotic analysis to such contemporary ways of seeing as the fragmentary vision of the video-clip.

Much Latin American interest in semiotics has been shifting, in recent years, to applications in the mass media. For these studies, not only application, but deeper analysis has been required than that of traditional media critics. For this new task, the interpretative vision of semiotics, based on a solid academic background, is in a position to lay down guidelines for prac-

tical discursive analysis of communication behaviour in Latin America.

Note: Further information on the Third Latin American Semiotics Conference, to be held in Maracaibo, Venezuela, in November 1993, can be obtained from Prof. Ivan Avila, Aptdo. Postal 526, Maracaibo, Venezuela.)

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To Father Pierre Babin, O.M.I., of the Centre International CREX AVEX, Lyons, France, whose work in religious audiovisual communication has been such a credit to his religious institute, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, but whom we inadvertently tried to claim for the Jesuits in our issue on Media Education (Vol. 13, No. 2, pg. 4).

Book Review

Chris Arthur (Ed.). *Religion and the Media: An Introductory Reader*. Cardiff: World Association for Christian Communication and University of Wales Press, 1993. Pp. xiii, 302. ISBN 0-7083-1221-7 (pb.), UK£12.95.

The number of books published each year about religion and the mass media, in all countries and all languages, is so limited that the appearance of a new and worthwhile one is an event to be celebrated. Arthur's book, containing twenty specially written essays by authors from a wide range of backgrounds, is certainly such an 'event'.

The perspectives represented include those of Anglicans, members of the Churches of Scotland and Wales, Methodists, Roman Catholics, and an effort to understand the mass media from an Islamic point of view. In terms of nationality, most of the authors are from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia.

Treatments of the topic are diverse, ranging from the anthropological to the theological. They represent the complexity and ambivalence of the relationship between religion and the mass media. Are the media the 'great white hope', which the televangelists think will at last bring the Gospel to every creature; or are they the voice and image of the Antichrist, destroying all the values Christians, Jews, Muslims, etc., hold dear? Maybe a little of both, or not much of either.

To deal with the media-saturated environment, religions and their believers must learn about the media, through solid research, then reflect about what they have learned from the vantage point of their own beliefs and theologies. This book offers a wide range of insights to help develop that reflective process.

--W. E. Biernatzki, S.J

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Dear *Trends* Reader,

This issue follows close upon the heels of the previous issue because the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture is moving from London to Saint Louis, Missouri, USA. It will take us some time to settle into our new offices; so we thought it best to send you all four issues of Volume Thirteen before leaving London. That ensures uniformity among all four issues, which might be difficult to guarantee if we changed to an American printer in the middle of the volume.

We informed you of the reasons for our move in the last issue, so there is no need to repeat them here. Although we are sorry to leave London, and have been assured we will be missed by our many British, European, and Commonwealth friends, we hope to be able to resume all the same activities, at Saint Louis University which we have developed over the fifteen years in Goldhurst Terrace. That definitely is true of *Trends*, and, although there will be a gap in its publication we hope it will brighten your mailbox again by April 1994. We plan to maintain the same continuity in the worldwide outlook of our activities.

Please note that, in all the rush of packing we made a mistake in the last issue concerning our new address. The zip-code is wrong, and will direct our mail to a post office in a distant corner of the city. So, to make sure we get your subscription renewals and other letters, please use the following address:

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From now on, please send all business mail, journals, etc., to that address. [In keeping with the enthusiasm for e-mail voiced in our last issue, we shall get 'networked' as soon as possible, and will let you know our e-mail address in the next issue of *Trends*.]

We should also take this opportunity to thank our London staff--Maria Way, Sr. Simone Donnelly, OP, Norah Curtin, and John Wise--who unfortunately will be unable to join us in Saint Louis. Their hard work for the CSCC and for *Trends* has been greatly appreciated and will be long remembered by the Jesuit staff members who are going. We also wish to thank the Provincials and members of the British Province of the Society of Jesus, who have helped us in so many brotherly ways over the last decade and a half. Thanks, too, to so many London friends who have collaborated in various ways. Among them, we might single out the Headquarters staff of the World Association for Christian Communication, with whom we have worked on many projects, and Roebuck Press, our faithful and long-suffering printer.

Although many may view our move with mixed emotions, one piece of unadulterated good news is that the subscription price for *Trends* will remain the same next year as it was this year!

Sincerely,

William E. Biernatzki, SJ
Editor