COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS

Audience "Interpretation" of Media: Emerging Perspectives

Robert A. White, S.J.
Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Communication
Gregorian University, Rome

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

In the early days of mass media research there was a tendency for scholars to treat media messages as if they were some kind of "cargo", manufactured for a specific purpose, loaded on a ship, train or truck -- the medium -- then unloaded on the doorstep of the audience, which would use it for the designated purpose. Later -- and we still see a little of this tendency today -- the media were often treated as "all-powerful", determining the ways audiences think and act -- like robots responding to electronic impulses from their controllers.

Such tendencies -- and they were always only tendencies, not an adequate description of knowledgeable research -- have largely disappeared as research theories and methods have become more sophisticated. Part of this sophistication has involved paying greater attention to the activity of the audience, itself, in its reception of messages. The study of the ways audiences interpret their media experiences has become one of the most important areas of communication research.

In this issue of *Trends*, Robert White describes the development of "reception analysis", or the study of "audience interpretation", and the major current research approaches to it.

-- The Editor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

** SPECIAL NOTICE **

Effective in late October, 1994 *Communication Research Trends* and the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture (CSCC) will have new telephone and FAX numbers. The new numbers will be:

    Telephone: +1-314-977-7290

    FAX: +1-314-977-7296

Audience "Interpretation" of Media:
Emerging Perspectives

During the 1970's, the study of media audiences moved from an emphasis on media effects to a focus on how audiences select media programs according to their "uses and gratifications". Since the mid 1980's there has been yet another move toward an analysis of how audiences actively construct the meaning of media. Studies have shown, for example, that the audiences of *Dallas* in Israel and audiences of the same episode of *Dallas* in the USA had quite different interpretations. British audiences of the popular BBC series, *East Enders*, varied enormously in their perceptions and interpretations of the same episode. This move from a "powerful media" to an "active audience" perspective has sparked some of the liveliest debates in the history of media studies. The term, "reception theory" has been used by many to characterize the new approach to audience study, but "audience interpretation" theory may be a more accurate term.

Four Approaches to Audience "Reception/Interpretation" Theory

"Audience interpretation theory" has developed in recent years largely within the cultural studies tradition of media research and reflects the debates and differing schools of thought of that tradition. Common to all the different approaches, however, is the premise that media use and effects should be studied in terms of the subjective constructions of *meaning* placed on media or the meanings that are developed in response to media. The typical research methodology, working toward interpretative theories of reception, is some form of "audience ethnography" which demands that the researcher reconstruct the meaning of media from the subject's perspective. Although the term "reception theory" is widely used in the field of media studies, it may be more accurate to refer to this as "interpretative theory" because it focuses on audience interpretation of the meaning of media texts rather than the behavioral effects of media as stimuli.

In part, moves toward audience interpretation theory are a result of the failure to verify empirically the "source predicted" and "source-directed" effects of media whether these predictions are premised on the power of psychological persuasion or on ideological coercion. When audiences are tested regarding how much effect a particular message has had, some of the expected effects always turn up in questionnaire responses, but when respondents are free they gave an immense variety of interpretations that are quite unpredictable on the basis of psychological or social systems theory. Secondly, interpretation theory is a product of socio-political values of theorists who believe that audiences **should** actively participate in the construction of culture and think that a research priority is to provide an understanding of audience activity as a basis of a policy of democratization of the media. Thirdly, national development policies, which have been premised on the use of centrally-controlled media to "re-educate" the populace and rapidly integrate citizens into a single national system have often been a notorious failure no matter how idealistic the conception of society. This has led to policy proposals based on less rationalistic conceptions of audience interests and constructions of cultural meaning. Finally, those whose interests in media have been more aesthetic and open to the pleasure and playfulness of popular culture and popular entertainment have found the social engineering conceptions of media simply repugnant, inhuman, pompous and, ultimately, irrelevant. They would argue that if we are dealing with an entertainment medium why not start with the questions of why and how people find pleasure in the media.

Granted these broad commonalities in the development of interpretation theory, one can point out four different approaches that have their origins in different disciplinary traditions or in the influences of

different socio-political and cultural contexts:

1) *The Anglo-American critical cultural studies tradition* with a neo-Marxist orientation and considerable borrowing from structuralist/analysis (French cultural theorists such as Bourdieu (1977, 1979), Foucault (1979), De Certeau (1984) and Baudrillard (1983,1988) are among important influences);

2) *an American symbolic interactionist tradition* much closer to functionalist approaches;

3) *the consensual cultural studies tradition* with strong roots in the cognitive cultural anthropology of people as varied as Clifford Geertz, Claude Levi-Strauss and Victor Turner; and

4) *an approach coming out of interests in popular culture*, popular movements, people's media, the democratization of communication and research on media and the development of national cultures.

This latter tradition not only moves from a focus on the media agency as the main source of meaning construction of audiences, but also leaves behind the media as text and the reading of media texts in order to focus on the construction of meaning by interpretative communities and how these communities take some elements of meaning from media to construct their culture. That is, the research "starts" with an analysis of the definition of the meaning of the situation being constructed by particular groups, networks of social interaction, loose reference groups and other types of interpretative communities. Research then focuses on the areas and processes of negotiation-- a kind of "no-man's-land" of aggression, resistance, seduction, boycott, debate and complicity--between the logics of production and hegemony and the logics of consumption and identity construction in everyday life.

This space of negotiated construction of meaning has been referred to by the Latin American media scholar, J. Martín-Barbero, as the area of **mediations** (Martín-Barbero and Muñoz, 1992). The interpretative communities may take a given media text as a starting point, but these interpretative communities are actively creating still another text which will itself be reworked in the ongoing cultural, historical process of making sense out of situations. This emphasis on "mediations" incorporates many aspects of the other three approaches and it avoids focusing exclusively on one agency in the mediation process such as source or text or technology (channel) or audience. Instead it brings all of the actors together into a field of dynamic interaction and focuses on the continually changing definition of the situation that all are creating and recreating.

In the following pages I shall attempt to trace the development and particular emphases of the four approaches to audience interpretation theory.

I. The Anglo-American Critical Cultural Studies Approach.

Graeme Turner. *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1990.

The British cultural studies tradition is a convenient starting point because virtually all varieties of interpretation theory acknowledge some intellectual indebtedness to people such as Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson and Richard Hoggart.

Williams was one of the first to speak of the media not in terms of transport of information but as a text which reveals the cultural meanings we are creating in any given historical period (1958, 1961, 1966, 1974). This shifts the key questions one asks about media from some exterior, "objective" behavioristic "impact" defined by persuasive intentions or by personality systems theory to subjective interpretation of meaning.

Also implied is the perspective that the meaning of media is not created by some invisible, impersonal "message source" but by the people who are involved in the public debate about historical directions of a culture. Williams came from the field of drama and literary criticism, and he brought with him a series of analytic methodologies from the humanistic tradition that provided the foundations for the qualitative methods of reception theory. These included hermeneutic textual interpretation which tries to understand the meaning of a "text" in terms of the socio-cultural and historical context of both the "reader" and the "writer"; the capacity of "readers" to

rework the meaning of a text in terms of their own peculiar context; and an enduring concern for the problematic of popular resistance to ideology and hegemonic forces.

E. P. Thompson (1963) and Richard Hoggart (1958) were likewise important in that their studies of the working class culture presented that culture from the "inside", the way it appeared to the working class people themselves, and because it presented the working class not simply as a passively exploited group, but as people who create their own parallel tradition in spite of modernization, mass media and the incorporation into mass culture. Thompson and Hoggart looked at the way the working classes, just becoming literate, reworked written or other forms of mediated texts to express their own cultural context and aspirations. But they also opened up the problem of how the texts and meanings produced by the working class could later be co-opted and transformed by the mass media into capitalist mechanisms of mass marketing and massive accumulations of profit.

Thus, Williams (1958, 1974), Thompson (1963) and Hoggart (1958) defined in an initial way the key question for the critical theory of media interpretation: how can subaltern classes contest, subvert, transform and otherwise liberate themselves from the dominant preferred reading encoded into the mass media message? Media must be analyzed in terms of social power and processes of political struggle.

Hoggart was the first director of the institution which was to become one of the major propagators of the issues and methodologies of critical interpretation theory, the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham. Hoggart set the CCCS on the path of studying how different subcultures use media and other sources of textual symbols to dramatize their interpretation of their situation. But it was Stuart Hall who faced most directly the need for an acceptable intellectual explanation of the paradox that particular groups among the working class seem to be free in liberal, democratic societies to protest and produce their often antagonistic subcultures but at the same time they remain so impotent in shaping the dominant culture and political history of a country.

For Stuart Hall, director of the CCCS from 1968 to 1979, and for others associated with or influenced by the CCCS, three questions became central to communication research:

1) How do powerful allies in liberal, capitalistic societies such as Britain, with institutions of democratic debate and consensus formation, still succeed in maintaining ideological control and in gaining the apparently willing consent of subordinated groups to this ideology?

2) How could it be true that media institutions are, at the same time, free of direct coercion and constraint and yet, freely articulate themselves systematically around definitions of the situation which favor the hegemony of the powerful?

3) How can the cultural signifying practices in clothing, music and language inversions such as "black is beautiful" utilized by movements among working-class youth, women and racial minorities counteract dominant ideologies and introduce a "cultural justice"?

Underlying this research was a deeper questioning of the classical Marxist theory of culture which argued that by changing the base of economic institutions and relations of social power, changes in the cultural superstructure would *automatically* follow. In practice, minority movements were concerned not just with jobs and investment policy but also with the politics of cultural symbols in racial identification or gender language which gave cultural and political legitimacy to the social power of subordinate groups. In short, cultural meanings and ideology in themselves constituted a relatively autonomous field of political struggle.

Fundamental to the structuralist analysis of culture is the principle that the words and grammar of language are not simply an objective reproduction of things and events in the real world but are relatively selective and arbitrary social constructions. A crucial premise in the critical tradition is that a particular world view gains the dominant credibility, legitimacy and taken-for-grantedness while other interpretations of reality of less powerful groups are downgraded or excluded.

This conception of the dominant ideology or "preferred reading" built into the media is central for critical reception theory, but it also creates a dilemma. On the one hand, democratic liberationists such as Hall have been concerned with how exploitative ideologies are allowed to come into existence and are accepted, but, on the other hand, they are also concerned with

explaining how such ideologies can be subverted and "dethroned".

The CCCS and Stuart Hall were important in borrowing theoretical conceptions from linguistics, semiotics and structuralism to explain how the signifying practices of language and the formation of world views could become an arena of class struggle. Hall (1982) suggested work with three basic characteristics of signification which enabled the oppressed to liberate themselves from the dominant, preferred reading:

1) the insight, from Volosinov (1973), that the polysemic nature of language permits the same word to have multiple meanings and that liberating meanings are often latent in a cultural tradition ready to be brought forward through awareness of the importance of language;
2) the fact that meanings tend to derive a natural, sacred, rigidly univocal character from their broader mythic context and that language must be relativized through processes of demythologizing and relativizing of the meaning of the words;
3) that dominant ideologies enter, especially, into the connotative, associative meanings of words and that it is easier to change the connotative sense of words, for example, the association of the word, "black" with the alliterative, "beautiful".

Hall was simply explaining what had been the age old practices of movements such as the Mexican peasant movement that transformed the meaning of peasant, Indian and rural into the image of the liberating heroes of the nation. But he was attempting to address the fallacies of the powerful media, powerful ideology arguments then holding sway in media studies.

How to Conceptualize Audience "Active Interpretation"

David Morley. *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Shaun Moores. *Interpreting Audiences: The Ethnography of Media Consumption.* London: Sage Publications, 1993.

By the mid-1970's, the cultural studies tradition had developed a strong and fairly coherent body of theoretical explanation of the role of mass media in the development of ideologies and dissident subcultures, but the explanation of the supposed interpretative activities of the audience was still incipient. David Morley has been central in developing audience theory in the critical cultural perspective. His recent book not only summarizes the development of his own views but provides one of the most comprehensive summaries of the current debated issues in reception research.

Freeing the Audience from the Imposition of the Text

Morley was one of the first to challenge the psychoanalytic explanations of ideological definitions of audience response proposed by French theorists such as Lacan and Althusser and adopted by the school of film theory centered around the British journal, *Screen.* According to this view, in a capitalist industrial cultural system the family/school socialization processes, which develop audience tastes and perceptions, and the logic of mass popular film and television are two sides of the same coin. The system imposes its ideology in determining how the personality will develop through accepted child rearing practices and then determines the way a film "addresses" (interpellates) and "channels" the audience responses toward the expected ideological conclusions.

For example, the Hollywood "realist" mode of film making presents the dominant ideology of capitalism, patriarchy, etc. as simply the "natural" way the world is. The text raises no questions, implies no criticism and leaves nothing undecided for the audience. Given the ideological definition of psychoanalytic desires of the audience, this kind of realist film, not surprisingly, gives great pleasure and enjoys great popularity.

Following this model, much critical research was thought to be able to explain audience behavior simply by doing a semiotic analysis of the media content and then deducing both authorial intentions and the audience response directly from the media content.

Morley, reflecting the thinking of Stuart Hall and the research of the CCCS, argued that this was far too simplistic. The various studies of youth subcultures in Britain carried out by the CCCS, showed how working class youth, far from being simply manipulated by the mass media, developed a counter cultural and resistive subculture or "discourse" that enabled them to interpret

the mass media, at times, in agreement with the preferred reading, but also in various oppositional modes. The text is far more polysemic and more open to various interpretations than has been presupposed. It is necessary to analyze the subcultures in order to see how different groups in different socio-economic contexts develop different sets of codes and discourses for interpreting the mass culture.

The socio-economic context and realistic assessment of powerlessness may set parameters of interpretation, but classes do not have fixed, ascribed world views or cultural codes.

Rejecting the "Uses and Gratifications" Tradition

Morley records the fact that, in the early 1970's, Hall and the CCCS also made a radical break with the "uses and gratifications" explanation of audience activity largely because it goes to the opposite extreme of the powerful media-powerful ideology model and implies that people are relatively free to choose the media fare and the interpretation that they want. While media messages may have more than one connotative meaning and audiences may dwell upon one or other meaning, we must recognize that virtually all societies tend to impose their classifications of the world upon their members. Every culture has a dominant world view and ethos and this tends to express itself, consciously or unconsciously, in the "preferred reading" encoded in the media. In the classical formula, audiences are "free to select", but in determinate situations which are not of their choosing. Media consumption is determined more by the *availability* of content than by audience selection. Audiences tend to define their preferences according to what is available.

Secondly, uses and gratifications research tends to focus exclusively on the psychological states of individuals which are determined by the internal needs of personality functioning. There is a tendency to abstract from the social context of subcultures and discourses that shape choices. Uses and gratifications theory, according to Morley, sees the audience as an atomized mass much like the earlier stimulus-response theories. It also presumes an individual, privatized interpretation of the media. Morley argues that we need to see readings of media as part of a *social process and of cultural movements which tie individuals into a wider cultural sphere.*

How do Audiences Decode the Preferred Reading?

Between 1975 and 1979, David Morley and Charlotte Brunsdon attempted to test empirically the CCCS thesis that social class position and political interests will influence the way TV viewers are likely to decode a given television program. They wanted to steer a path between the psychological theories of ideological texts "determining" audience response and the view that individuals are free to give any form of response. In the attempt to avoid treating the audience as an undifferentiated mass of individuals, Morley and Brunsdon adapted to audience analysis the sociological theory of Frank Parkin that society is divided into determinate social classes and that members of these social classes inhabit a "meaning system" or ideological frameworks (Parkin, 1971).

Parkin further argued that we can usefully distinguish three major meaning systems, each promoting a different moral interpretation of class inequality:

1) the dominant value system which promotes the endorsement of existing social class inequality in deferential "agreeing" terms, especially among those who clearly benefit from such inequality;

2) the subordinate value system, the social source or generating milieu of which is the local working-class community, a framework which promotes a "forced" accommodative response to the facts of inequality and low status; and

3) the radical value-system, the source of which is the mass political party based on the working class, a framework which promotes an oppositional interpretation of class inequalities.

Morley and Brunsdon, like most critical media analysis of the time, adapted this explanation of social power structure and ideology by assuming, at least implicitly, that the "preferred reading", which organizes the polysemic material of the program around a central message, would reflect the dominant value system supporting class inequalities. From this sociological framework also came the assumption that audiences are typically divided into managerial levels in agreement with the dominant ideology, ordinary working class people who will make negotiated interpretations and those identified with social movements seeking to transform society who will make oppositional

interpretations.

The study examined the responses to an early evening program of light current affairs commentary-cum-talk show, *Nationwide*, which was judged to be the most likely uncritical vehicle of dominant ideologies (Morley, 1980). The study then showed video program segments to selected groups which would be likely to reflect the three social class meaning systems -- bank managers, trade union officials, shop stewards, university arts students, black further education students, apprentices and teacher training students -- and set in motion a focused discussion structured to elicit opinions in favor of, or against the content of the program.

The analysis of results showed that the process of audience interpretations was far more complex than the "encoding-decoding" model suggested. Although the different social status groups tended to adopt agreeing, negotiated and oppositional decodings, it was clear that individuals were drawing upon a composite of often unrelated and even contradictory social and personal histories in their interpretations (Morley, 1980). Often it was not clear just what "preferred reading" was agreed with or opposed. Is the preferred reading the intended ideological argument of the author, or the unconscious use of certain "traditional" forms of news genres with its linguistic expression, or the particular reading that the sociologically skilled analyst makes, or the reading that the audiences make?

Morley's own critique of the research (1981) and the voluminous debates which followed were very influential in opening up a new phase of analysis of the relation of media texts and audience interpretations.

The main critique, coming from Morley himself, is that the analysis must take as its starting point, not just the hypothetical sociological constructions of the process of audience decodings but the observation of the practice of media use in its *context*. The interpretation that a shop steward makes in company with other shop stewards may be very different from his interpretation made in the normal home setting in conversation with his wife, family and mixture of neighborhood friends. The forced discussion of a program not normally chosen for viewing and considered irrelevant by many may not reveal the real interpretation of television news, and the interpretations of complex fiction drama programs may be even more difficult to decipher.

The Development of the Audience Ethnography Approach

The fallacy of making inferences about the meaning of media for audiences on the basis of the text or questionnaires that took the text as the sole measure of audience interpretation began to dawn on the field of media studies rapidly and massively in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Many began to comment that research should allow the members of the audience to define the meaning of programs from their own "inside" subjective frame of reference rather than the objective constructs imposed from the "outside" by social theorists. The cultural studies tradition had already been moving in this direction, but field research was still dominated by the presuppositions of hypothetical, normative explanation rather than entering fully into the subjective construction of meaning through the enthnographic methods of cultural anthropology.

Shaun Moores suggests that there were two pioneers in the use of methods of direct observation of media use within the "natural, undisturbed" rhythm of domestic life: James Lull in the USA, with his direct observation of how families interact with and around the television set (1980), and Dorothy Hobson in England, with her taped interviews and direct observations of the pleasures and interpretations of media within the routines of housework (Hobson, 1980, 1982).

The research of both Lull and Hobson revealed that television is not necessarily an isolating, individualistic activity, but, in many cases, is the glue that brings members of the family together in conversation. Hobson set out, in her research, to show that housewives live an isolated, subordinated existence dominated by the inconsequential and endless routines of trivial work. The media habits of housewives were expected to be part of this alienating dependency. The study confirmed much of this, but it also indicated that women identified with particular kinds of media and that this helped to affirm their distinct feminine identities and reinforced desires for freedom. The research of Lull and Hobson suggested a much more positive role of the media in the everyday lives of people and set in motion a reappraisal of the value of many denigrated genres such as women's daytime soap operas.

By the mid-1980's, there were a number of

landmark studies that invited members of the audience to explain the pleasure and identification that came from mass popular media: Hobson's further study of women's subjective interpretation of the British soap opera, *Crossroads* (1982); Ien Ang's study of viewers pleasures in *Dallas* (1985); Janice Radway's analysis of why women enjoy reading sentimental romance novels (1984); Morley's study of family "domestic politics" centering around media technology in the home (1986); and Hodge and Tripp's observations of children's interpretations of television in Australia (1986).

Are the "Popularity" and "Pleasure" of Media Politically Good or Bad?

One of the most significant lines of audience interpretation research is a move away from the classical Marxist view that the pleasure of the working classes is simply a strategy for inducing political quiescence. The fact that television is so popular and widely enjoyed has made researchers ask more seriously **why it makes sense to so many people.**

One line of research is exploring the sense of power that people get by in the pleasure of playfully entering into roles or plots to see what it is like to explore another identity (Ang, 1985). The television viewer can then look more "objectively" at the identity given or imposed by society.

Many critical media researchers have taken the view that subordinated groups have seized upon the element of vulgar pleasure and relish it as a symbol of their independence precisely because it appears to be subversive to dominant groups (Hebdige, 1979; Morley, 1989). Grossberg (1984) has pointed out that rock music is such a symbol to the young. Mary Ellen Brown shows that fans of women's daytime soap opera seize upon precisely the "trashiness" and low production qualities as a defiant symbol of their in-group solidarity (1990, 1994). Martin-Barbero argues that in Latin America the beginning of political subversion is in melodrama (1993). The subversiveness and liberation lies in the in-group's raucous pleasure in a genre they claim as their own, overturning the boundary lines of "prim decency" and parodying the straight-laced rationality of those who can't understand why such a genre is pleasurable and who see it as alienating.

The Thesis of the "Active Audience"

In 1987, John Fiske took the results of many of these studies and, in his provocative book, *Television Culture*, brought together a series of theses about the "active audience":

1. that the mass audience is quite heterogenous and makes widely varying interpretations of the same program;
2. That individual interpretations of television are not textually determined but emerge from complex social histories, the alternative information of subcultures and the opposition views of informal social networks;
3. That the polysemy of television -- the verbal/visual irony, the parody, satire, continually new variations of genres and obvious intertextual comparison -- invites resistive, alternative, and skeptical responses from the audience;
4. That television, in order to appeal to heterogenous pluralist audiences and foreign cultures, employs much more open narratives.

By the late 1980's the new theoretical perspective of the "audience's active construction of meaning" and methodology of "audience ethnography" was beginning to be a major current of audience research. The more orthodox Marxist critical tradition has responded with a barrage of journal articles against this retreat from the study of the ideological power of the media. For many the emphasis on the active audience is a kind of "populist ideology of the empowered audience". Fiske's 1987 textbook has been attacked as the epitome of excesses in conceding to the audience almost unlimited freedom to construct the meaning of the television programming as it wishes. Morley summarizes well most of the often caricatured theses of the "active audience" research that transforms the audience from "passive, manipulated consumers" into protagonists of "living-room guerilla warfare against the dominant ideologies", but he seeks a balance between the extremes.

How "Empowered" is the Audience?

A first caricatured thesis of "active audience-ism" is that "whatever the encoded message, media domination is weak and ineffectual since the people make their own meanings and pleasures. Far from being 'cultural

dopes', the people not only are naturally critical, put pick and choose elements to construct an oppositional opinion and 'empower themselves' to fight against the political-economic ideological forces attempting to influence the media".

Some macro evidence in favor of the power of the media is that broadcasters have been able to successfully "target" an audience with a particular genre such as women's daytime soap opera", attract large audiences to this, "sell" these audiences to advertisers, and "advertisers" (whether commercial, political or religious) find that they can market their product alongside the entertainment. The mass media are without question one of the most important agenda setters of our societies.

On the other hand, the macro evidence in favor of the power of the audience is that for every *Dallas* there are dozens of television programs which are rejected by audiences. Dozens of governments around the world that have had complete ideological control over the media have been rejected and toppled precisely because of their efforts to control the media. Virtually, all studies of the audience that allow respondents to freely indicate their construction of the meaning of a program, show an immense variety and divergence of interpretations among members of the audience and by the same individuals in different moments. It is often difficult to determine precisely what is the preferred reading of a program even by skilled semiotic analysis, especially in the political sense, and certainly there is little consensus among members of the audience as to what it is.

To argue, however, that the divergent readings automatically imply that people routinely develop readings in opposition to the clear denotative preferred message is much more questionable. Even more doubtful is that people rather easily move from doubts or even strong oppositional feelings to more overt political action. Morley suggests that Fiske has generalized too quickly from isolated studies of groups that are clearly oppositional subcultures such as Australian aboriginal interpretations of dominant Australian TV or Western imports.

There is evidence that, *under certain political circumstances*, types of mass media can become the emotional nurturing and public symbolism for strong oppositional movements. For example, certain types of rock music and music events such as "Woodstock"

were a symbolic catalyst in the counter-culture political movements of the late 1960's and early 1970's -- especially in the youth wing of the movement against the war in Vietnam (Martin, 1981). But, the complex set of factors such as the generation of an oppositional discourse that is able to seize upon and translate the meaning of public symbols into the language of private or semi-private discourses must be carefully studied.

Mary Ellen Brown has argued that daytime soap opera, a genre for women, generates a kind of oppositional discourse, but this builds upon an existing oppositional discourse that has come out of the internal oral "gossip" networks among women in a strongly patriarchal family structure.

Toward a Semiotic Democracy?

Fiske has argued strongly that most television producers, especially in the case of prime time programming aimed at mass audiences and for potential export audiences, attempt to make the text much more open to diverse interpretations (1987: 84-148). Not only is the text built around open, connotative metaphors, irony, double entendre, subplots and ambiguous characters that permit a wide range of interpretations and pleasures, but the "meaning" is spread out beyond the programming itself into fan magazines, planted newspaper articles about the cast, and the invited comments of critics. The text is constructed in a way that invites the audience to enter into the "writing of the script", playing with and restructuring plots in the discussions during and after popular programs. The audience involvement so typical of fan networks is the basis of audience pleasure and is what makes a program really successful. The audience has to feel part of the program to promote it with friends and neighbors. Fiske invokes the position of semiotician Roland Barthes that a text has "meaning" only when it is "read" and given a meaning by its audience. Fiske thus seems to call into question the whole idea of a "preferred" reading.

Morley suggests that Fiske has become so fixed on rejecting the argument of the closed text that he forgets that texts exist within a hegemonic system that gains assent not directly but through many indirect points of limited negotiation that seem open but which reproduce the system. Fiske recently has been using the thought of French cultural analyst, Michel de Certeau (1984), to argue that people use the "tactics of the weak" to

"poach" bits and pieces of the meaning of the system to create, in the margins of the cultural system, their own meaning constructions. Morley points out, however, that most people are not really using the open text to create an oppositional culture, much less an oppositional movement, but simply to passively disagree and protect their identity in the privacy of their own consciousness and within the circle of their friends.

An Uncritical Celebration of Popular Culture

One reaction to the disdain of mass, popular media by Frankfurt School members such as Adorno and Horkheimer -- or by the left with its negative pessimism regarding any mass media -- has been to celebrate popular culture as one way to respect the poor and the working class. Their tastes are not necessarily worse, just different, given the different cultural context of their lives. If the mass of people find enjoyment in the soap opera or continuous adventure genre, then they have a right to their own culture. The media are a leisure-time, entertainment activity in which pleasure is the key element in the experience. The left is saddled with the dualist, rationalist legacy of the Enlightenment and fails to see any value in enjoyment unless it is connected with utopian political movements.

Many in the critical tradition consider that this is simply selling out to consumerism and accepting cultural relativism and a vacuum of social values. It is said to be giving in indirectly to the false claim of the deregulators who argue that they are finally giving the people "what they want", etc. The cultural critic has a crucially important role in the formation of cultures and the research as critic must always maintain a certain distance from the culture industries and the majority tastes. Morley points out, however,

that the critical (or political) judgement which we might wish to make on the popularity of any commercial project is a quite different matter from the need to understand its popularity. The functioning of taste, and indeed of ideology, has to be understood as a process in which the commercial world succeeds in producing objects, programs (and consumer goods) which do connect with the lived desires of popular audiences...To fail to understand exactly how this

works is, in my view, not only academically retrograde but also politically suicidal (1992: 35)

Rejoining the Text, the Reader and the Context

In summarizing these debates about the ambiguous nature of audience interpretations, Morley quotes Martín-Barbero regarding the dangers of an "either-or" position.

The hegemonic does not dominate us from without, but rather penetrates us' and the popular should not be identified with a corresponding form of intrinsic or spontaneous resistance. Rather, the question is how to understand the *'texture of hegemony/subalternity, the interlacing of resistance and submission, opposition and complicity.'* (p. 36) (emphasis added)

A major argument of Morley in this book is that the various elements of the mass media process must be considered an interrelated, interacting system of factors. To point out the polysemy of the text is quite justified, but this should not be separated from the procedures of cultural production and socio-political agency of which it is a part. And to think that the "intentions" of socio-political agency can be separated from the structure of language or negotiation with audiences, as if these intentions are all powerful, is equally fallacious. Nor can we separate audience interpretations from the influences of the social context in which they occur. Morley argues well that we can understand both hegemony and freedom in the mass media process only if we bring together political agency, commercial market forces, the texts and the cultural traditions they are part of, the technologies, the audiences and their pleasures, the micro level of the home and the macro level of the social system, and other factors, into one interrelated set of factors, all revealing simultaneously "resistance and submission, opposition and complicity".

Morley indicates several traditions of mass media research which are particularly useful "windows" into the "negotiation" process that constitutes hegemony in the mass media: study of media genres, the domestic context of media use, and the way that new media technologies are introduced into the rhythms of everyday life.

Media Genres as a Point of "Negotiation" Between Hegemony and Audiences

For various reasons, Morley suggests that the best framework for research on audience interpretation is that of *media genres* because genre theory directs research toward the actual practices of media production and media use.

Genres such as the soap opera, types of popular music, sports, types of news, etc. are a "negotiated" text which represents an intersection of often contradictory discourses and which cannot be simply reduced to a support of class, race or gender subordination. For example, women's daytime soap opera has appealed to women by incorporating some of their contestatory, anti-patriarchal discourse so that women will identify with it. But at the same time, soap opera sells domestic products which imply that the women's place is in the home, the faithful "servant" of her husband and family. As many studies of soap opera audiences indicate, one of the most entertaining aspects of the text is the contradictory, ironic presentation of the sentimentality: so emotionally engrossing, but at the same time so excessive that it evokes in the female audience laughter and a sense of pity/power regarding the suffering heroine.

Secondly, genre theory sees programs not simply as political indoctrination but as popular art and entertainment. By examining how particular genres have built up a negotiated rapport with their audiences, it is possible to move beyond the artificial analysis of audience-program relation in terms of acceptance or rejection of ideologies to questions of how well programs link with the cultural competencies (comprehension), the interests (relevance), cultural identities. Research must first ask producers what cultural competencies they presuppose for their audiences and how they "aim" a program to engage those cultural competencies, and then the research turns to audience understanding of its cultural competency. For example, women followers of soap opera ridicule the inability of men to understand and appreciate the intricacies of the plots. Teenagers glory in the fact that their parents -- or even their older brothers and sisters -- cannot understand the latest styles of popular music.

Thirdly, genres tend to address particular groups -- women, men, youth, children, the elderly, etc. -- in their natural media use context (the home, the times available), in their particular emotional moods, in their collective sense-making groups and networks (seeking the opinion of other women, other peers, etc.).

Most genre users are at least members of publics, or even fans, who have chosen to follow this program or genre and who have built up considerable critical knowledge about its production decisions, the level of performance of its major actors, etc. These publics are often aware of their struggle with the ideological, addictive characteristics.

Fourthly, genres have particular rules of meaning construction visible at the level of production decisions and the negotiation of ideological content is more visible and open to analysis. Each genre represents a particular type of ideological negotiation at a particular historical moment.

The Politics of Media Use in the Home

After his critique of his work with the *Nationwide* study (1981), Morley directed his research toward the study of media use in the most typical **context** of media use, the family in its domestic surroundings. A major objective of Morley is to preserve and integrate the critical project with its continued analysis of power and ideology in media with the new ethnological study of the media in the context of practice.

This research revealed the *struggle* in the home between husbands and wives, parents and children over the choices of media use and the interpretation of the meaning of the content. In many ways, the home is a microcosm of the cultural and social power struggles going on at the societal level. The issues are not abstract sociological ones, but very concrete issues of subordination of women to the patriarchal demands of husbands, of youth with new ideals to an older generation, debate of political options, the choice to preserve or leave behind one's ethnic/religious identity. The media are the window and the link between the microcosm of struggle over personal decisions and identity choices in the domestic context and national/international movements that are reference points for these identities. Critical media research now recognizes that structures are being constituted in the practices of everyday life, and this research is turning to theories of cultural formation in everyday life such as those proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1979) and Michel de Certeau (1984).

Morley identifies with Giddens (1979), Gledhill (1988) and others who would substitute the term

"negotiated hegemony" (a continually changing, unstable process) for "dominant ideology" (a stable, given and guaranteed effect). The societal power structure is constituted by myriad struggles for cultural identity and cultural definition going on in homes, in friendship groups, in subcultures, and in organizations as varied as the Church and music production organizations.

Andrea Press' study (1991) of women's perception of *Dynasty* supports the view that television exercises its hegemonic control over viewers in very mixed, paradoxical, negotiated fashion. At times women resisted the hegemonic view, and at other moments they seemed to accept it. For example, working class women rejected identification with the female roles in *Dynasty*, but tended to accept the values, attitudes and the world view as quite a good portrayal of the world. Middle-class women had a generally resistive, negative attitude toward television, but still identified with the female roles in *Dynasty*.

A Focus on the Social Interaction and Discourse Networks of Audiences

Mary Ellen Brown. *Soap Opera and Women's Talk: The Pleasures of Resistance.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994.

Recent critical audience research is reinforcing Morley's observation that the political dimension of audience interpretation is to be located in the **social** context of media use. Mary Ellen Brown's recent publication argues that the view that television de-politicizes or controls the political orientation of audiences is often based on the assumption that audiences are interpreting media in personal isolation or in a dialogue principally with the television text.

Her ethnographic study of women's conversations about soap opera shows that women view their favorite genre as part of a discourse network and that the meaning remains undefined until it has been discussed and debated with other women who follow soap opera.

This discussion activates the subcultural identity of women (their feelings expressed in gossip, complaining about life in patriarchal families, etc., with other women), insider knowledge about soap opera and how women view the world in general. Soap opera attracts them by taking its discourse style from the way women communicate among themselves, and holds their interest by presenting issues and role models of specific interest to women. This sets in motion a continual discussion among women about their condition.

The discussions also activate the sense of pleasure in resistance to the impositions of a patriarchal society and accentuates this resistance. The discussions may also bring to the surface disagreement with the text and stimulate different kinds of indirect and direct pressures against the program producers to change the text to fit audience values. Brown thinks that although discourse networks may not lead directly to feminist political action, they do create an independent and critical attitude that encourages women to assume greater power in the routines of everyday life of the family and workplace and support gradual changes in the role of women in society.

II. The Symbolic Interactionist Approach

Thomas Lindlof (Ed.) *Natural Audiences: Qualitative Research of Media Uses and Effects.* Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Company, 1987.

Howard S. Becker and Michal M. McCall (Eds.) *Symbolic Interaction and Cultural Studies.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

This approach to the analysis of audience interpretation is based on the premise that producers and users of media are interacting in the production of meaning analogous to the way that meaning is created in interpersonal interaction. This is essentially a social psychological approach which traces back to theories of George Herbert Mead regarding the development of the self-concept and to the sociologists of the "Chicago

School" in the 1930's and 1940's -- Robert Park, Herbert Blumer, and others. The symbolic interactionist tradition has drawn heavily on the theories of social psychology. This has entered the world of communication theory in recent years largely through the work of Erving Goffman (1959), Howard Becker and Michal McCall (1990), David Altheide and Robert Snow (1979). Thomas Lindlof's book, *Natural Audiences* (1987), reports examples of audience interpretation studies in the symbolic interactionist tradition.

In contrast to more deterministic psychological models,

> Symbolic interaction views the individual as a creature of voluntary action, who in the process of action creates meaning in concert with others and through a symbolic system we call language....People act to establish, maintain, and defend their sense of self, as fundamentally 'self' is the most important meaning or set of meanings that a person has.... [Thus] *identity establishment and maintenance is the nexus of all social relations whether they occur through overt interpersonal relations or a mass medium.* (Snow, 1983: 237-238)

The foundation of this theory of the audience is that both media producers and users are negotiating with each other to obtain responses that coincide with the intentions of the respective actors. People creating the media seek to establish identities through favorable responses from their professional peers and from the audience in such direct forms as letters, telephone calls and casual comments on the street or in more indirect ways such as awards, rating points, product sales, and circulation figures.

Audience members may take identity models directly from the media or media may supply the identity achievement strategies and the sources for validation of identities. Regardless of whether one starts from the side of media production or from the side of the user, it is taken for granted that, given the pervasiveness of media in people's lives today, the logic of negotiation in mediated communication is setting the standards for identity definition, achievement and validation in contemporary culture. All cultures have found ways to inculcate identities through story telling or other means, and today we do this largely through the mass

popular media.

More specifically, the presupposition in much research in this perspective is that media is a source of information, situations and strategies for playing out identities. People learn how to perceive, define and deal with their environment through media logic. *Most importantly, people become highly familiar with the formulas of media logic, for example, the predictable, formulaic nature of certain program genres, and learn how to negotiate with those constructions of meaning in order to establish, achieve and validate their personal identities.* (Traudt and Lont, 1987: 139-160)

Some of the most interesting lines of research following this approach (although these may not be specifically premised on the symbolic interactionist social psychological approach) are studies of how people use television programs they have seen "the night before" as the "medium" of discourse networks among particular groups of people and, specifically, as the medium for defining and validating identities. For example, Dorothy Hobson analyses how women, talking in spare moments during work hours, "had used television to its and their best advantage, to advance their understanding of themselves and the world in which they live". (1990: 70)

Another line of research is how the selection of particular television programs within the family viewing situation defines personal masculine/feminine identities, intra-family power and status relations, and leisure identities. (Lull, 1980, 1988; Morley, 1986)

Media Audiences as Interpretative Communities

Thomas R. Lindlof. "Media Audiences as Interpretative Communities" in *Communication Yearbook, 11*, Ed. by James A. Anderson. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1988. pp. 81-107.

Klaus Bruhn Jensen. "When is Meaning? Communication Theory, Pragmatism and Mass Media Reception" in *Communication Yearbook, 14*, Ed. by James A. Anderson. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1991. pp. 3-47.

Lindlof, Jensen and others in this tradition think that one of the shortcomings of much analysis of audience interpretation is that the audience is taken as an aggregate of isolated individuals each constructing a personal reading with no reference to others. There is

increasing evidence, however, that individuals perceive, use and interpret media in direct interaction with others or are influenced by the fact that they are members of pre-existing interpretive communities with patterns of interaction and a subculture that provides shared criteria, rules and codes of interpretation. Thus, one would expect that the more individuals are integrated into an interpretive community and the more solidary this community is, the more the members of the community will have similar interpretations of the media.

Lindlof stresses that interpretive communities are not constituted primarily by ties of kinship, formal organization, occupation, social class or other "natural" bases for collectivity but by sharing common practices of media use. For example, husbands, wives, and adolescent children may have very different media use practices even though from time to time they may view television together. The peak viewing experience of the different members of the family is shared with others of the same interpretive community.

The concept of interpretive community helps to overcome the fallacy of expecting those who belong to the same social class or the same demographic status group (age, occupation, income, gender) to have similar media interpretations. These may be predisposing factors, but dispositions to share tastes and interpretations are an intersection of many different social status factors.

Lindlof proposes that the development of shared media interpretation practices is influenced by media genres seen from three different perspectives: genres of content, genres of interpretation and genres of social action. The most common notion of genre is that of content, namely, a set of standard conventions of presentation which separates one type of media from another. They are conventions which are known to be able to attract a certain kind of taste public. Genre content serves to draw together a particular potential interpretive community, and, to some degree, the conventions of genre presentation include built-in cues about how the community should, ideally, interpret this type of content.

The content, however, does not determine how this community will in fact construct the content's meaning. Interpretive communities share similar "genres of interpretation", common codes or intersubjective agreements that are instantiated in

ordinary acts of media content selection, decoding and application. The shared genres of interpretation arise from a previous shared discourse (women's gossip groups as a predisposition toward understanding the discourse of women's daytime soap opera), from a tradition of interpretation of media (women's socialization includes orientation toward certain types of interpretation), and from the discourse network which builds up around a particular genre (women's discussions about the soap opera serials they follow).

The third dimension, genres of social action, comes from the way the community of interpretation uses the shared conventions of interpretation to cope with their situation. For example, women's loyalty to a media genre which is considered "trash" by others or young people's attraction to rock stars becomes a symbol of in-group solidarity. A community of interpretation will share similar heroes and a similar conception of their mythic history which are the basis under certain conditions for transforming the interpretive community into a social movement.

The Social Action Consequences of a Community of Interpretation

Klaus Jensen suggests that the concept of interpretive community helps to move the analysis of audience interpretation from the preoccupation with the meaning of a text for the individual and from the aesthetic pleasure as an end it itself to an understanding of the social purposes and social transformations emerging from interpretation. Mass communication has been concerned with the public service of the media and with the social responsibility of both the producers and consumers of media. Jensen argues that the semiological conceptions of Saussure have reinforced this tendency to see interpretation as a private matter. He proposes that the semiotics of Charles Sanders Pierce provides a foundation for linking individual perception and interpretation of media to the public process of the community and for locating interpretation in pragmatic social action processes.

Uniting Cultural Studies and Social Psychology in the Analysis of Audience Interpretation

Sonia M. Livingstone. *Making Sense of Television: The Psychology of Audience Interpretation*. Oxford: Pergamon

Press, 1990.

When the cultural studies tradition attempts to explain why people selectively construct their subjective interpretations of the same program differently, the explanations generally fall back on demographic social positionings such as age, gender, education and social status. More recent explanations refine social positions analysis with theories of differing cultural identities and cultural competencies of viewers or theories about the strategies of power, conflict and solidarity in the family or other domestic viewing groups.

As a social psychologist, Sonia Livingstone has applied psychological theories of how people organize their perceptions of social reality to explain how TV viewers construct interpretations of characters in television fiction drama. But, instead of taking the perceptual field as "behavioral stimuli" she began with questions that are typically asked by cultural studies, namely, how do viewers "read" or "decode" "texts". Meaning, not stimuli, becomes the central fact to be explained: that is, meaning organized in "coded texts" and meaning constructed in the "decoding" process of the viewers.

Livingstone thinks that the interpretative tradition of studying the text-reader relationship has much to contribute to how social psychology understands people's organization of social knowledge.

Although this research takes the British critical cultural studies tradition as its reference point, the approach is closer to the symbolic interactionist tradition because it is concerned with people's social construction of reality and explains action not in terms of behavioral response to stimuli but in terms of response to "meanings". To understand patterns of human action, we must understand patterns in meaning, beliefs and motivation, that is, the social construction of reality. Livingstone links up with the critical tradition of cultural studies, but processes of meaning construction -- not social power and alienation -- are her central concern.

The central questions in Livingstone's research transcend the powerful text/powerful audience dichotomy to examine the **interrelation** between the two:

-- how do people actively make sense of structured texts and events?

-- how do texts guide and restrict interpretations?
-- how do TV viewers integrate "new" program information into existing social knowledge?
-- what subjective criteria do viewers use to judge the truth value of messages and differentiate among messages?

Specifically, she asked viewers of two British soap operas (*Coronation Street* and *East Enders*) and an American prime-time melodrama, *Dallas*, to indicate the degree of similarity and dissimilarity between the main characters. The research then examined the manifest program portrayal of characters clustered together by viewers as similar on the basis of purely subjective, unspecified criteria of the viewers. For example, viewers of *Dallas* perceived "Miss Ellie" (the warm, conciliating mother of the clan), "Bobby" (loving concerned husband), and "Clayton" (wise, gentle friend) to be similar types of characters. "J.R." (unscrupulous, tyrannical, businessman) was the center of another cluster of characteristics judged similar. "Sue Ellen" (woman emotionally torn between the various clusters) was in the center of the space, similar and dissimilar to the various other clusters. The manifest reading of the program was that "Miss Ellie", "Bobby" and other characters in this cluster were "good people", while "J.R." etc. were the "bad people. Livingstone therefore concluded that the viewers were distinguishing characters as morally good and morally bad.

In general, Livingstone found that by far the most salient construction of the meaning of characters in all of these fiction-drama programs was along a moral-immoral axis. This accorded with the "mythic" interpretation of social reality, in which persons are evaluated in terms of whether they contribute to the way society "should be" if that society is to realize its mythic destiny. The second most important dimension was the "masculine-feminine" interpretation of characters, with masculine being associated with strong, dominant, independent characters (both male and female) involved with the professional economic "running of society" while feminine was associated more with nurturing, conciliating, socio-emotional leadership. A third important cluster was organized around strong, active characters who exercise social power and directive leadership, at times ruthlessly. Intellectual abilities and social class positioning were

apparently not important in the interpretation of the meaning of characters.

The research also analyzed how viewer interpretations and evaluation of the narrative action diverge among themselves and from what might be considered the "preferred reading" built into the text. Livingstone asked a sample of female and male viewers to give detailed personal opinions about an episode in the British soap opera *Coronation Street* in which a father opposed the marriage of his daughter to a young man who had had an affair with the father's second wife. The responses tended to diverge into two groups: those who were "cynical" about the motives of the daughter and doubtful about the success of such a marriage (mostly male respondents), those who were "romantic" about giving the daughter freedom and hopeful about the marriage, and those who had "negotiated cynicism" or "negotiated romanticism". Livingstone suggests that the cynical interpretation was arguably the "preferred reading", but that most, especially the women, were swayed by the mythic romanticism that envelopes courtship and marriage and leads people to believe that romantic love will somehow solve all problems.

Livingstone meshed together the textual interpretation tradition of cultural studies with theories of psychological perception. For example, she took as her starting point the more current theory of text-reading as an "interactive, negotiation process" in which the text has "meaning" only when it is "read" or "decoded". The "decoding" can happen only when the reader can match her or his reading with what the text presents. This presupposes that the text is generally giving "suggestions" or "rough guides" for interpretation, but it may vary in its "openness or closedness" to alternative aberrant (contrary to denotative preferred reading) or oppositional (contrary to a preferred ideological reading) readings.

Also, Livingstone called upon textual analysis in the decision to focus on "characters" of fiction-drama:

Theoretically, the characters in a program are held to mediate a range of television effects, through the processes of imitation, identification, role modelling and parasocial interaction...Characters can be seen to carry the narrative, such that narrative or genre themes will be reflected in the construction and representation of the characters...the openness of soap

opera, where the role of the reader is maximized is located especially in the characters. (p. 113)

In fiction drama the meaning definition comes more by the symbolic, paradigmatic quality of characters than by the syntagmatic narrative structure. The choice of focus on characters suggested by textual analysis "maps neatly on to" the social psychological theory/methodology of "person perception research" explaining how people organize their social knowledge of people. Person perception theories are also based on broader social psychological theories of "Stereotyping", "Gender Schema" and "Implicit Personality Theory".

The Family/Home as the Context of Media Interpretation

Roger Silverstone and Eric Hirsh (Eds.) *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Since the late 1980's groups of communication researchers in Britain have been studying how new information technologies are being incorporated into the rhythm of life in the home. The research has focused especially on computers, video recorders, video games, interactive information retrieval, types of desktop publishing and the telephone linked technologies. Much of this has been sponsored by the Program on Information and Communication Technologies (PICT) of the British Economic and Social Research Council. The Centre for Research into Innovation Culture and Technology at Brunel University near London, under the direction of Roger Silverstone, was the site of much of the research reported in this volume.

The research largely rejected the "impact of technologies" approach which sees technologies as a determining factor in contemporary culture. Instead, a guiding concept in the interpretative framework of the research is that as new technologies cross the threshold from the public sphere into the home, the original meaning imposed on domestic appliances by the production and marketing agents is *redefined* in accordance with the values and interests of different kinds of households. The typical methodology is ethnographic description of how families negotiate and transform the meaning of technologies such as home

computers according to the demands of "family culture". The authors refer to this family culture as a "moral economy" because it involves transactions between the public economy of production and exchange of commodities and the moral values that emerge as a group of persons create a home (whether they form a biological family or not).

For example, a cultural anthropologist on the Brunel team, Eric Hirsch, did an extended ethnographic study of an upper middle class north London family (£60.000 annual income) which showed how the dominant values of this family -- interest in the active development of the talents of the children, strong emphasis on family togetherness and cultivation of artistic, "spiritual" activities -- transformed the original meaning "built into" technologies brought into the home. They replaced the original competitive programming of the video game with a game that promoted family unity, parents and children decided to all learn how to use the PC computer to share a common discourse, they installed an electronic intercom system in order to be in easy contact with each other, and the parents severely restricted the television use so that the children would have more time for the local drama club and family talk.

Other studies suggest that working class families impose their quite different routines and norms on technology.

The chapter by Graham Murdock, Paul Hartmann and Peggy Gray cautions that families are not entirely free to reject the macroeconomic conditions of marketing, financing and designing of domestic technologies. They argue that,

...the British home computer market was divided, almost from the outset, into a 'serious' sector based around relatively powerful machines of the type being introduced into schools and offices, and a games-playing sector in which cheap computers became another extension of screen-based entertainment, often literally, since many families used a television set as a monitor. There is every sign that this bifurcation will continue. The recent *rapprochement* between the two leading personal computer companies, Apple and IBM, looks likely to consolidate their control over the market for 'serious' machines, whilst the Japanese companies, Nintendo and Sega, have revivified the market for dedicated games consoles, selling half a million units by he middle of 1991.

The (British) Midlands data suggest that this industrial segmentation will be mapped onto social divisions, and that self-determined computing will remain concentrated in the relatively affluent and well-educated households of the professional and managerial strata, whilst the rest of the population are largely confined to participating in professionally crafted fantasies. They will have interactivity without power (p. 159).

III. The Consensual Cultural Studies Tradition

James W. Carey. *Communication as Culture*. Boston: Unwin and Hyman, 1989.

James Carey, Horace Newcomb (1983), Michael Real (1989), Joli Jensen (1990), and David Thorburn (1987) acknowledge the strong influence of the critical cultural studies tradition that goes back to Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, but they have created a quite different approach to media and culture much more directly rooted in cultural anthropology, especially in the analysis of the cognitive structure of cultures. I have chosen to call it a consensual tradition because it is concerned with the integration of consistent meaning systems both at the macro-cultural level and the level of the personality. Carey's ritual communion model, which has strong links to Clifford Geertz' analysis of integrated cultural systems, tends to be almost normative for this tradition. While the critical tradition takes the dialectic of hegemonic ideology/personal alienation/popular resistance as its starting point for audience interpretation theory, many who could be identified with the consensual tradition think that the creation and maintenance of a shared culture is a prior and more important problematic (Silverstone, 1981: 1-25; Newcomb and Alley, 1983: 3-45). At the level of whole societies, this tradition borrows from anthropologists such as Claude Levy-Straus and Victor Turner to understand the role of mass media in achieving and maintaining a harmonious integration of

meaning and values.

At the level of the person, the focus is often on the life history of the person and how a person gradually achieves a greater personal integration and balance through time. Thus, one of the methodologies used in audience interpretation is the account of the life history, focusing on how the interaction with the media brought greater personal focus, conversion, and integration (Hoover, 1988).

The central concern of this tradition of media analysis is "cultural criticism": "What kind of culture are we (of a particular culture) creating in the forum of the media?" "Is this the kind of culture we **want** to create, or, are there alternatives?" and "Who is influential in the creation of this culture?" (the question of power and agency). As Carey points out in his seminal article, the role of the media researcher comes close to that of the media critic. To draw out different aspects of this role of cultural critic, Carey and others have borrowed metaphors of cultural construction from cultural anthropologists.

The Ritual, Communion Model of Carey

James Carey. "Mass Communication and Cultural Studies: An American View", in *Mass Communication and Society*. Ed. by James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Wollacott. London: Edward Arnold in association with Opem University Press. 1977. pp. 409-426.

Carey originally proposed the ritual, communion model as an alternative to the "transport" model that until then (1977) had dominated media studies, especially in the United States. Carey argued that the American positivistic tradition, in its effort to be "scientific" and justify its existence in terms of social engineering benefits, has tended to impose its analytic constructions of reality on the audience and on society. The social engineering approach, whether the concern was the harmful, antisocial effects of the media or the desire to use the media for pro-social effects, presupposed that the meanings in the media were created by the script writers, producers and financiers of the media.

Carey argued that the media are part of the collective effort of all people in the society to make sense out its situation and create some sort of acceptable interpretation of the meanings. To emphasize the collective, dialogical and celebratory aspects of this process of construction of meaning, Carey used the metaphor of ritual and communion. The metaphor emphasizes, too, that *all* have the right to participafe in this fundamental *community* action and all have the solemn responsibility to make the media respond to the needs of the community.

In a 1978 article, Newcomb challenged much more explicitly the methodology of the linear, transport model in an article analyzing Gerbner's methodology for studying the harmful effects of violence in American media and American culture. Newcomb had no intention of condoning the portrayal of violence in the media, but he argued that the results of Gerbner's studies and the interpretation of the data were fundamentally irrelevant because Gerbner had simply imposed his own arbitrary conception of violence. This is not necessarily the conception of violence of the American public.

Newcomb suggested a three step approach that reveals the audience interpretation theory of consensual cultural studies. The first step is to recognize that symbols such as violence have not simply originated in television but have a long cultural history which demands that we first study the complex meaning that a set of symbols such as violence would have in American cultural history. A second step is to examine the meaning of these symbols in contemporary television, especially in the typical formulaic genres of television. A third step is a type of audience ethnography which will pick up the different meanings that symbols of violence have for different groups and the same group in different connotational contexts.

What Newcomb is stressing is that to draw accurate conclusions about the good or bad implications of the media, the study of audience interpretations cannot be done in isolation from the broader historical, collective effort to construct a culture. The morality of the media lies in this collective conception of the kind of society we are creating or want to create and who has the right to participate in this process of creation.

Willard Rowland's study of the unfortunate history of American attempts to use the results of an effects analysis as the basis of a legislated "social engineering" campaign against media violence illustrates that the basis of moral judgements and legislation must be the collective construction of a culture. In the end, the American courts judged all efforts to legislate norms

against media content, including violence, as unconstitutional. The judgement of whether a certain content will or will not be tolerated depends on the consensus of the society about what a certain media portrayal means and the consensus about the kind of culture the collectivity wants. Liberal societies consider that the freedom of expression in the market place of ideas is a more clear and fundamental value. At present violence in the media has, at best, a very ambiguous meaning.

Media as a Forum for Cultural Exploration

Horace Newcomb and Paul Hirsch, "Television as a Cultural Forum: Implications for Research" in W. Rowland and B. Watkins (Eds.) *Interpreting Television* (pp. 58-73). Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1984.

Consensual cultural studies tend to see the mass media as a *forum*, a public space where cultural meanings that have a long history in a particular culture are presented to be re-examined and debated by different cultural sectors. The media are a leisure time activity somewhat apart from the "real", "pragmatic" world where decisions are binding. The media present a constructed, narrative world that invites the audience to try out another possible way to think of things, another scenario for life. Thus, for Newcomb, the media are an important factor for social change, especially for breaking down social prejudices and resistances to cultural worlds that seem strange and opposite to one's own subculture. In fact, there is evidence that one of the major audience attractions to mass media is to know cultural worlds beyond one's own.

Newcomb also compares television to the Greek chorus which attempts to articulate what the public thinks about a particular action on the stage. The success of television is its ability to articulate the common view of things so that a broad cross-section of people can recognize their identities in the media. Both Newcomb and Thorburn (1987) would question whether highly idiosyncratic personal expressions that do not articulate a very wide consensus can, in fact, be classed as higher quality popular art.

Television as Myth

Roger Silverstone. *The Message of Television: Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Culture*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981.

Silverstone has applied the conception of myth of Claude Levy-Straus to explain, at a deeper cultural level, the persistent attractiveness of television and how audiences make sense out of television. According to Levy-Straus, the role of myths is to resolve contradictions of meaning in a culture in the way that a tailor mends a tear in a cloth. The myth represents persistent contradictions of meaning through the symbolic form of antagonistic animals or the struggles of legendary personalities. In the process of the mythic narrative the opposed symbols are transformed and reconciled.

Silverstone has presented examples of the same process in television fiction drama, science documentaries and news programs. Television functions like myth in that it takes the new, the highly specialized esoteric information, the irrational, the mysterious and weaves it into everyday common sense frameworks that make this information understandable to the general public.

As noted above, Sonia Livingstone in her recent studies of how audiences make sense out of fiction drama found that the most salient characteristics of television characters are their moral goodness and badness and how the narratives develop characters to resolve moral contradictions. "The importance of morality similarly suggests viewers' receptiveness to the mythic functions of soap opera as a forum for cultural debate" (1990: 140-141).

Television as an Experience of Liminal *Communitas*

Horace Newcomb and Robert S. Alley. *The Producer's Medium: Conversations With Creators of American TV*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Victor Turner's conception of ritual, theater, and, in a sense, television, as an experience of ideal community has been frequently applied to explain the audience experience of media. Turner suggests that ritual is essentially a symbolic form of leaving behind the everyday, pragmatic world of *societas*, a world where hierarchy, concentration of power and inequality are considered inevitable, to enter into a world of an

ideal *communitas*, characterized by symbolic equality, sharing, and disinterested service. Turner called this experience of being symbolically between a pragmatic world and a utopian world a "liminal", threshold experience. Turner took his idea of liminality from initiation rites where young people or chieftains were taught to balance their sense of service to the community with the pragmatic demands of adult leadership roles. Turner felt that liminal experiences are of crucial importance for cultures in order to *balance and integrate the pragmatic and utopian dimensions present in all cultures* (Turner 1969; 1974; 1982).

Stewart Hoover (1988), in his study of the life histories of people who had become loyal followers of the televangelist, Pat Robertson, found that one of the strongest attractions of the television evangelist was the sense of community that it afforded. Many of the followers of Pat Robertson, before discovering this religious movement, had a sense of lonely drifting. The electronic church provided a community for them that transcended, through their identification with the television personality, the local church and neighborhood.

Virtually all of the current ethnographic audience studies suggest that the major experience of media is becoming part of an interpretive community of fans (Lindlof, 1988; Jenkins, 1992; Brown, 1994).

The Celebration of a Popular Aesthetic

David Thorburn. "Television as an Aesthetic Medium", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 4 (1987), 161-173.

The insistence of the consensual tradition of cultural studies that the media are an integral part of the collective, ongoing process of a whole community or a whole society to make sense out of its situation has oriented this tradition toward an appreciation of the aesthetics of the common people. Although the great philosophers may articulate the meanings of a culture particularly well, a culture is based not only its specialist discourses but upon the "common sense language" that **everybody** understands, that **everybody** has helped to create, and that everybody **enjoys**. Thus the consensual tradition has an unselfconscious popular base, a confidence in the good judgement, values, and

taste of the "ordinary people".

Indeed, David Thorburn argues that the aesthetic of television is best described as "consensus narrative" in which society's central beliefs and values undergo continuous rehearsal, testing and revision.

Its assignment -- so to say -- is to articulate the culture's central mythologies, in a widely accessible language, an inheritance of shared stories, plots, character types, cultural symbols and narrative conventions. Such language is popular because it is legible to the common understanding of a majority of the culture... (1987)

Media as Part of a Cultural Revitalization Movement

Stewart Hoover. *Mass Media Religion: The Social Sources of the Electronic Church*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1988.

The consensual tradition of cultural studies generally locates media analysis within the broader processes of cultural change. Stewart Hoover has introduced a valuable methodology to study audience interpretation by analyzing the audience construction of the meaning of media in the context of life histories. The life histories, in turn, are analyzed as part of a much broader cultural process of a particular religious revitalization movement, the neo-evangelistic movement of Pat Robertson. Finally, the evangelistic movements, one of the strongest forms of religious movement in the world today, are located within the phenomenon of the formation of a new religious consciousness. Like so many of the consensual tradition, Hoover borrowed from cultural anthropology, in this case the concept of cultural revitalization movement of Anthony Wallace (1956) and the application of the concept of revitalization to evangelistic fundamentalism by McLoughlin (1978).

Hoover's qualitative analysis of the meaning of Pat Robertson's organization as a movement, not just as a series of television broadcasts, showed that the appeal of a less institutionalized "electronic church" such as Pat Robertson is part of a broad cultural shift in the United States and in the world. The importance of a media figure such as Robertson is not the transfer of information to an audience (many of his followers do

not watch his programs that much) or the conversion-like change of behavior, but rather the fact that he is a prophet-like symbol of a new cultural synthesis that people can identify with. Robertson symbolizes, for example, that one can be both fundamentalist (religious, political and cultural) and be part of the mainstream of the society.

IV. Audience Construction of Meaning as the Result of "Mediations" Between Logics of Production and Consumption.

J. Martín-Barbero. *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to the Mediations*. London: Sage Publications, 1993.

J. Martín-Barbero and Sonia Muñoz (Eds.). *Televisión y Melodrama*. Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1992.

There is increasing consensus that it is not possible to explain audience interpretation of media primarily in terms of the power of culture industries or primarily in terms of audience activity or any other one factor. Rather, audience construction of meaning is the result of the *confrontation* and *negotiation* of many different actors representing the logic of the culture industries, the logic of everyday life, the logic of social movements and many other logics. The Latin American scholar José Martín-Barbero has argued that media studies should focus on the sites or "places" where one can observe and understand the *interactions* between the logics of production and the logics of reception. He calls these processes of interaction, struggle, resistance and transformation the *"mediations"* because these "procedures" bring together and encourage negotiation between many different cultural logics.

Martín-Barbero argues that one cannot explain the role of the media in the construction of local cultures in terms of the information transmitted and effects on behavior. Rather, the media are the institutionalized procedures for bringing together the different actors, forcing them to confront each other, and arriving at some synthesis of meaning which is livable for the moment (but which continues to be debated). The mediations constitute a kind of "free zone" in which any kind of meaning construction is likely to happen, no cultural logic dominates the space of negotiation, and all logics can contribute to the meaning.

For example, discos are "places" which attract young people to be with other young people. The construction of meaning in this context is not solely or primarily the meaning ¹transmitted through the recorded music because the young people often cannot understand the lyrics (for example, Italian teenagers hearing English lyrics) nor are they really interested in "listening" to the lyrics. Young people come together to construct the meaning of the cultural identity of their age cohort. True, the logic of the popular music industry does impose itself on this context, as does the logic of a particular singer or musical group that surrounds itself with obvious symbols attempting to articulate the feelings of young people; but also imposing itself is the logic of the everyday life of the students in their schools and families -- and the institutions of church, politics and state which are behind the school and the family. The logic of social class, the logic of the uncertainties of life of young people, and the logic of their adolescence and post-adolescence are all seeking to dominate the space of meaning.

At the center of all these confrontations is the age-old personal and collective effort of young people to affirm their own personal value, to define the value of their identities, and to define an identity which is somewhat different from that of parents or older brothers and sisters. In this "place", these young people take bits and pieces of symbolism to attach to their own identity, often changing radically the original meaning of these symbols. For parents and teachers, the symbolism of a Madonna may be silly trash, morally dangerous or very "sick", but it enables young girls to use Madonna as a symbol of resistance and self-affirmation. This becomes an "in-group" language that is valued precisely because parents and teachers cannot and will not understand or appreciate it.

Mediations as Negotiated Hegemony

Martín-Barbero and others refer to the Gramscian

conceptions of hegemony to explain the formation of mediations. In this view hegemony is not once and for all secured by a single dominant class but is a field of struggle among many actors and constantly shifting alliances. Power is exercised not primarily by a police force but by maneuvers to define the dominant cultural symbols of the society. In this process, the hegemonic alliances such as the culture industries are quite willing, at a certain point, to incorporate elements of seemingly rebellious popular culture in order to allow the popular classes to see something of their own identity in the hegemonic culture and to compromise with this culture. A dominant hegemonic alliance may be able to establish its cultural capital as the basic "currency" and fundamental framing logic of the system, but it cannot eliminate other logics entirely. In this view, mediations arise out of a complex process of negotiated exchange of cultural capital which guarantees that all subcultures will win sufficient legitimacy to be allowed to continue to exist and all subcultures can recognize enough of their identity in the common culture to at least tolerate the hegemonic framework.

The Mexican anthropologist and media researcher, Jorge González (1987), also draws on Gramscian concepts to describe the context of mediations as a kind of "public cultural ritual". The "rules" of these rituals demand that all actors of the community be present, all dramatizing their identities to the maximum, but these are "popular" events in which the "popular culture" is allowed its greatest legitimacy.

The common symbols of the community, representing common elementary human needs are celebrated. The mood is playful and carefree, relaxing for a moment the more dogmatic, ideological lines. It is in this context of leisure, playfulness, expressiveness and indulgence toward the rebellious that mediating lines of interconnections and negotiation between competitive actors begin to be forged.

González suggests that if community fiestas in Latin America have been important public cultural rituals, today television--and, in particular, the telenovela, is one of the most important contexts that attracts all social classes, all ages and all subcultures to forge the mediations which underlie the national cultures.

Cultural Imperialism or Cultural Syncretism?

The analysis of audience construction of meaning in terms of mediations is based on a broader theoretical premise that the fundamental dynamic of cultural development is a form of *cultural syncretism*. Martín-Barbero .argues that the culture which is forming in Latin America is not just an invasion of North-Atlantic culture nor is it realistic to dream of preserving some indigenous or peasant past. He uses the metaphor of racial *mestizaje* to describe the entirely new cultural forms that are emerging from the confrontation and negotiation between cultural logics.

Mediations as Linkages Across Time, Space and Social Distance

Although the theory of mediations highlights the interactions and confrontations of major power holders such as culture industries and audiences as organized movements (women, ecologists, youth, etc.), there are a host of other "forces" intersecting in the "places" of mediation. Martín-Barbero emphasizes that a genre such as the Latin American telenovela has a history that can be traced back through the *radio teatro* and films of the 30's, 40's and 50's, to the newspaper serials and traveling circuses of the last century and still further back into the era of village festivals.

Social Groups and Social Movements as Mediations

Guillermo Orozco-Gomez, "Mediation Practices in TV's Reception Process: An Account of Mexican Families' Structuration of TV Reception Strategies at Home". Paper presented at the International Association for Mass Communication Research, Sao Paulo, Brazil, August 1992.

If mediations are the "places" in which we can find the interactions between the logics of different actors attempting to define the meaning of the media, then the family, the community, the peer group and social movements are particularly important places. Orozco has focused on how the family mediates the meaning of television for children. Orozco has discovered that different kinds of families develop different strategies for interpreting television. Orozco concludes that,

for a comparative TV news reception study it would not be enough to look only at some outcomes of the audience's interactions with TV news and compare them across cultures and countries. What should be compared is the structuration of specific *TV news*

reception strategies carried out by different types of audiences. (p. 24)

Mediations as the Cultural "Tactics" of Minorities

Henry Jenkins. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*. London: Routledge, 1992.

In his study of fans of popular television programs, Jenkins, like Martin-Barbero and other researchers in the mediations traditions, draws on the cultural analysis of Michel de Certeau (1984). De Certeau argues that while the powerful have the resources to map out "strategies", that is, to set goals and mobilize the means toward those goals at will, the weak are forced to use "tactics" at the margins of a hegemonic cultural frame. The metaphor of "textual poachers" suggests that although culture industries may define the "preferred reading" of the text legitimated by the dominant culture, fans are furtively "stealing" the text for their own uses.

The metaphor of bricolage also used by de Certeau compares the audience to the factory workers who pick up the discarded bits of iron from the shop floor to construct makeshift household utensils important in the everyday life of people. Like leftover scraps that have no meaning or use in the factory, many elements of television stories, such as minor actors that seem irrelevant to the preferred reading, gain an unexpected power of identification in the lives of ordinary people.

Jenkins' study of fanship explains many dimensions of the mediating interactions between the logics of production and the logics of use by the audience.

1. Motivating the alliances of multiple actors.

At the heart of the mediations is the ability of the cultural industries to construct a "text" which fascinates a "target audience" and enables that audience to discover their identity in that text. As Newcomb and Alley indicate (1983), the genius of the mass popular media is the *producer* who is able to *"bring together"* all of the different "components" of a media experience: a target audience, an established discourse of that target audience, an entertainment tradition built on the discourse of that audience and that the audience already knows; a new genre and format of that tradition; a medium available to that audience and adaptable to this genre; financial sources (advertisers)

interested in a particular audience; creation of particular dramatic personae with whom the audience can identify and that can advance a narrative with which the audience identifies; the discovery of "stars" who bring alive these dramatic personae; the links with hype, fanzines, etc. A "producer" represents mediations in action.

One of the classic cases is women's daytime soap opera which targeted a homebound female audience during the until then unused daytime broadcast hours. It appealed to the gossipy discourse of "resistance" by women in patriarchal families, the entertainment tradition of women's melodramatic romance novels and the advertising support of the soap and domestic product industries. It created personae of strong women and sensitive men as its anchoring points. It typically employed famous actors who defined the genre. It developed a style of rapid serial production. It attracted an enormously loyal fan following over generations which established networks of secondary discourse continually in contact with producers through letters suggesting how the narrative should develop.

As Mary Ellen Brown (1994) and other studies indicate, women's soap opera "works" because all the actors obtain something of what they are looking for, above all the female audience. Soap opera becomes incorporated into the discourse network of women who are struggling to affirm their identities and to bring about a change of women's status in society.

2. Providing words to the silenced minorities

When some new mediating genre is brought into existence it often builds up around some silenced cultural minority that is waiting to find someone to articulate its feelings. Often this cultural minority feels oppressed, marginal and excluded, but has no way to say this. For the dominant discourse these new genres are "trash", "alienating", the "epitome of bad taste", "morally degenerating", a source of violence and rebellion, etc. Rock music, women's soap opera, certain spectator sports, melodramatic telenovelas all began their careers as "trash". But for the cultural minorities who discover their identity in these new genres, the "trash" is liberating. The "trash", precisely because it is rejected by the dominant groups, becomes a symbol of resistance and a form of empowerment. This mediation is one of collusion in resistance to the dominant ideologies. Jenkins points out that, although

these genres are the language of marginal cultures, in this postmodern era in which the cultural "centers" are disappearing, marginality is the universal language.

3. *Shifting Alliances, Shifting Mediations, Shifting Meanings*

What the theory of mediations brings out especially well is that no one actor within the complex network of mediations can "control" the construction of meaning. As the actors change or the life context of any given actor changes so does the center of gravity of this field of forces. And with each such change the hegemonic frame changes as well. One cannot assume that all fans are progressively seeking "liberation" from alienations or that fans are forever loyal to one program or one genre. As de Certeau has emphasized, readers are roaming in nomadic fashion between loyalties and alliances. The popular media are made of fad and fashion which can change like the wind.

Perspective

The Ethical Implications of the "Creative Audience" Perspective

The research on audience interpretation is perhaps one of the most significant shifts in media theory in the short history of the field of communications. The "story" of how media researchers were gradually led into a new perspective on the audience reads something like the "paradigm shift" that Thomas Kuhn refers to in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970).

As in the case of the classical shift from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican conception of the planetary system, the existing valid observations of the "appearances" remain. Obviously, the audience experience of the media does not change...although the Heisenberg principle that new perspectives change the datum applies to cultural data in a powerful way. Many who read this synthesis of audience interpretation research may remark that processes such as audience identification are almost part of common sense. Or, is it really part of common sense? What changes is the *explanation* of what is occurring. The old explanation put blinders on our observation of the audience so that we could only ask certain research questions and "see" only certain processes. The new explanation supposedly enables us to *"see"* far more than our research designs would allow us to see before and to explore many new areas of the audience experience that tended to be ignored or glossed over.

What the audience interpretation perspective enables us to see is that the media not only have "behavioral effects" (relatively "automatic" responses of the motivational system), or that individuals choose programs on the basis of uses and gratifications, but also that media have a *subjective MEANING for persons and groups that make up an audience.* This does not deny that, in some degree, media have behavioral effects nor does it deny that motivations for uses and gratifications come into play, but these perspectives must now be *seen in the light of what we know about the audience's construction of the meaning that often is different and independent from the* interpretative meaning that the program producers may have placed on their product.

For example, violent portrayals on television do not translate directly into imitative aggressive behavior but are mediated through the *meanings* that the violence portrayal is given in the program and through the *meaning that this particular "meaning portrayal"* has in the culture or for specific individuals within specific subcultures (Newcomb, 1978). These layers of meaning can translate either into virtually no aggressive behavior or possibly far more psychopathically aggressive behavior than anyone would expect.

The fact that interpretations of producers or of the audience are subjective and vary from person to person does not mean that the program producers or audiences have no responsibility. Indeed, they may be consciously or unconsciously far more culpable than we realize because the actions they portray *carry powerful meanings that are linked to intricate structures of meaning that are linked to powerful interests.* "Behaviors" are relatively "neutral" and "instrumental". Behaviors can have many potential meanings. But meanings themselves are extremely

vulnerable to power and almost always are a field of ideological struggle. Thus, emotionally powerful violence and pornographic portrayals are directly used to promote, in the media, exploitative commercial, sexist, racist, and fascist meaning systems. In virtually all systems of ethics, "automatic behavioral responses" are considered to be of less culpability, but "meaning" implies consciousness, intentionality and human responsibility.

The Profile of the Creative Audience

Underlying the conceptions of the "powerful media" and "mass audience" upon which the field of media studies was initially founded is a large legacy of the Enlightenment: the inevitability of the evolutionary progress of a single kind of instrumental rationality, the power of economic productive forces and the state to modernize, the central role of the media to educate and incorporate the marginal irrationalities into the modernized national culture, and the central role of "technique" in resolving human ills. The drive toward universal literacy in terms of the single national language, universal education and universal exposure to media sought to remove the pockets of particularistic culture that might remain.

The profile of the "creative audience" throws much of that into question:

1. "Identities" and "identifications" are becoming increasingly central terms in this conception of the audience (Wilson: 1993). The audience is made up of persons who have an active sense of the meaning of their individual and collective identities, but at the same time are negotiating the definition of identities in terms of the possibilities offered by the culture. Every child soon is conscious of what she or he "likes", "finds pleasure in", "is good at" and "finds rewards from family and peers in". But whether one's initial fondness for animals will be fulfilled in terms of the occupational role of the farmer, the horse trainer or the pet shop owner will depend on cultural opportunities.

Identities are very much a matter of likes and dislikes and are sensitive to the aesthetic and the moment of leisure. Virtually all cultures assume or accept the fact that a person is the creator of her or his identity, but virtually all cultures expect that through a process of story telling and rituals the definition will finally follow lines of an offered set of values and

meanings.

These persons confront the larger culture in which they live directly but also through the media which presents possible identifications as part of an intricate cultural fabric. The media present the agenda of the larger society but also are extremely sensitive to the agendas that are emerging out of the sense of identity of new generations. The media are not just an agent of massification, but provide a context of struggle over the discrepancy between the meaning of the identifications offered and the meanings emerging from consciousness of identities that are interiorly experienced as what "I feel good with and *desire*".

*2. The more precise locus of struggle between identities felt and identifications offered is **media genre and format**.* Genres such as day time soap opera grow up around the typical identity struggles of women in typical patriarchal contexts and reveal the constant attempt of media to attract an audience by providing symbols of identification that articulate what women are feeling and what they like. Certain kinds of police adventure shows or sports may provide similar forms of identification for male audiences. Genres represent the meeting point of audiences and producers so that the audiences have a pretty good idea that they will get what they want and the producers are fairly certain of attracting an audience. But the particular format of the genre represents the best estimate of where the producers last had a sense of the moving identities of the audience. The success of a film producer such as Spielberg represents the uncanny ability of some format creators to know just where the "identity search" of the kids will be "this summer". The audience knows it is being pursued, and loves to take producers on a merry chase and to force producers to negotiate more on the audience's terms.

3. The audience is not an atomized mass of separated individuals but persons in interaction around the television set, in discussions about last night's show or today's editorial page among friends, sometimes even in the discourse of enormous fan networks tied together by fan magazines and fan organizations. This dense structure of discourse networks, social movements, and communities forms the space of "mediations" between the logic of the larger culture which is producing the media and the logics of consumption which are

centered around the likes and dislikes pertaining to a personal sense of identity. It is in this area of mediations that the meanings of identities are finally negotiated.

4. The discovery that the media provide the site for a kind of forum to debate identities and debate the kind of cultural identities we are holding up suggests another important dimension of this view of the audience: no one ever forms an identity in complete social isolation. From earliest consciousness, our identity is formed in the dialectical responses with significant others. Meaning is a social construction and culture a convergence of meanings. Bringing mutuality and dialogue back into the understanding of audience is a major contribution of the audience interpretation perspective.

5. One of the most striking lines of research is the study of the ways audiences use the media text as the starting point for their own "creative" reworking of this text into a new text. This is especially true when the research is more holistic and, like true ethnographical research (not just spot interviews), looks at media within the broader context of life histories and the many other activities of everyday life. This is much more marked in the case of youth or other fan groups that have more leisure time to make their own music, write their own version of the script for dramatization. But it is evident in the wry, ironic jokes people make in deriding media figures, in talking about the good or bad production quality or in writing letters to the directors of the media.

The research suggests that people "inhabit" genres as extensions of their own life, and few people today have not been fans of some genre or some author in some medium whether it be print or electronic. Part of the enjoyment is to become some kind of an "expert" in at least some small area of the media. And perhaps the greatest enjoyment of any author is to be in dialogue with fans and see how these fans are reworking the text in their own way.

6. Much of the negotiation and struggle that goes on in the space of the mediations is a tug of war between the sense of responsibility to identify with collective ritual/communion symbols of the common good that represent the most equitable contributive and distributive justice in the definition of identities and the resistance against the tendency to co-opt the common good for particular powerful ideological interests. So many popular genres -- soap opera, popular music, adventure stories -- are built around the agony of protagonists who long to construct a world of harmonious family or community, but who know that in this commitment to human love and service they will be exploited and taken advantage of. For many young people the latest format of "liberated" rock music stars may articulate their identities as a "new generation" different from parents and teachers, but if one keeps an ear close to the discourse of the mediations one will hear the bitter-sweet dawning consciousness of the fact that the music industry is exploiting their very search for identity.

7. These contradictions in the area of the mediations set the stage for a debate among those media researchers. On one side are those who see the media "empowering" audiences because it helps them articulate their identities. Their adversaries focus more on the alienation that media causes because the media is part of a broader socio-cultural-political system that represents an ideological construction. There may be no definitive resolution of this debate, but a redeeming fact may be that audiences are themselves aware of the contradictions between the affirmation of their identities and the fact that the media do not really articulate those identities. Perhaps the media never will "objectively" articulate identities and perhaps the media never should aspire to this. The deep awareness of these contradictions will help prevent people from blindly yielding their responsibility for constructing their identifications and their culture into the hands of supposedly "socially responsible" media "professionals". A person must never give up her or his own right to communicate based on the personal sense of identity and the responsibility to construct in society common cultural symbols that best articulate those identities.

As David Morley and others have pointed out, some research falls into a kind of uncritical populism when it argues that if lower-status groups find their identities affirmed in the media, this is a kind of political empowerment. Democratization must mean the redistribution of social power and the systematic defense of human rights. History is littered with the demagogues who managed to create enormously unjust concentrations of social power by affirming

superficially the lower-status cultural identities in the media and attracting the uncritical identification with this dictatorial violation of human rights.

Perhaps no one has analyzed this better than Paulo Freire who asked (after a lifetime of observing demagogic Brazilian rule), in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), why the oppressed so often quickly become the oppressor. Freire used the media as a text to be decoded in the process of a liberating education, but he understood that this could happen only in a context of participatory, dialogical communication which helped people discover what it means to be a person. Liberation is not simply a powerful identification, but the ability to critically assume the value of one's identity in dialogue with others who are free about their identities.

8. Finally, the audience interpretation perspective questions the classical base of media aesthetic in a "high culture". It is equally fallacious to argue that if some medium is popular, widely appreciated, gives pleasure to the masses, etc., then that is an adequate norm of media aesthetic. As John Cawelti has noted, (1985) the discovery of "the popular" has not yet been translated into criteria for the popular art critic. Criticism must begin to face up the task of establishing the canons of popular culture. If Matthew Arnold's definition of criticism as "the understanding of the best that has been thought and said" is valid -- as Cawelti thinks it is -- then we must start to work on how we define "the best that has been thought and said" in popular culture and mass media. Cawelti suggests that this cannot be solved by "weak-minded pluralism" or by ratings and sales figures. We must move beyond the total acceptance that has characterized the popular culture movement.

The development of common critical discourse about the mass popular media remains an unfinished task in media studies.

In short, the audience interpretation approach assumes that the central question in study of media is the *meaning* to the different major actors. To switch from a perspective of powerful media/passive audience to powerful audience/passive producers is obviously simplistic. As Thorburn (1987) has pointed out this is typically a communal activity. What is also evident is that the media are the focus of a great number of cultural fronts each struggling to impose its interpretation of the meaning of common elementary

human experiences. This widening of the scope of analysis of how meaning is being created in the locus of the media in a conflicting field of forces may point to a more satisfactory and comprehensive theory of the media than the model of linear flow of meaning from source to receiver that presently dominates the world view of communication sciences.

The Implications of "Audience Interpretation" Approaches for Media Policy

One can immediately think of a series of public policy debate issues that might be moved to more intelligent and profitable levels of discussion if the discourse is the meaning that the media have for the various actors.

One of these issues is the periodic debate about the anti-social content of the media -- violence, pornography, excessive commercialism, etc. -- and the harmful effects this may have. Frequently these periodic moral panics move toward a demand for some form of public censorship, a move which inevitably conflicts with the liberal principles of freedom of expression that are generally interpreted as founded in constitutional rights. The only evidence that will be accepted as indication of a moral wrong is whether the media is a major cause of *acts* which impinge on another's "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" (negative freedom). There may be broad acceptance of the fact that *the meaning and the intention is destructive to persons* and most would not want this kind of culture. But as long as the focus is on behavioral effects, then the meaning is considered purely subjective and not part of the sphere of public debate.

Media Education

Another area of policy which is changing in the light of this research is *media education*. Most programs of media education take as the starting point, not the way people use and enjoy media in everyday life, but the premise that the use of media must be "improved" according to criteria that the "teacher" not the users of media set. Most programs of media education set out to "inoculate" TV viewers against ideological or other antisocial content, or the programs try to introduce viewers to "higher level" content. Other educational perspectives assume that TV viewers must be trained in rather complex semiotic "media reading" skills.

Some people may be "scared into" these approaches

by periodic moral panics, but inquiry shows that relatively few people continue to use media in these ways once they finish the course. Also, such programs of media education quickly disappear once there is no strong promotion from outside agents.

An audience interpretation perspective assumes that virtually all people enjoy certain genres, have a latent sense of critical appraisal in terms of their own identities, and enjoy speaking about these media with others with similar interests. Media education would start with this "natural" way of using media that is going to be part of everyday life throughout one's life. It would enable people to explore and deepen the understanding of the genres that are immediately related to one's identity at this moment of life. This approach to media education would build on the tendency toward "creative reworking" of the text and the creation of new texts that the talents and interests permit. The discussion of this among people who "inhabit" these genres and formats naturally brings out different views and *enables TV viewers to see that this text is inherently SELECTIVELY CONSTRUCTED.*

From this point the discussion naturally leads toward an understanding of the implications of this construction for their own identities...with little or no moralistic preaching.

As people move through life, they will naturally move on to new dimensions of their identities and new media tastes. But if one has once experienced the pleasure of an opportunity to explore more deeply the genres one inhabits with peers and friends who share this enjoyment, this is likely to be part of the "natural" way that media are used in other life contexts. Media education then becomes part of the "mediations" that lead one toward being an active constructor of the culture.

-- Robert A. White, S.J.

REFERENCES

Ang, Ien. 1985. *Watching 'Dallas'*. London: Methuen.

Altheide, D.L. and R.P. Snow. 1979. *Media Logic*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Baudrillard, J. 1983. *Simulations*. New York: Semiotext(e).

Baudrillard, J. 1988. *Selected Writings*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Becker, Howard S. and Michal M. McCall. 1990. *Symbolic Interaction and Cultural Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1977. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage Publications.

Brown, Mary Ellen. 1990. "Motley Moments: Soap Opera, Carnival, Gossip and the Power of the Utterance" and "Consumption and Resistance--The Problem" in *Television and Women's Culture: Politics of the Popular*, edited by Mary Ellen Brown. London: Sage Publications. pp. 183-210.

Brown, Mary Ellen. 1994. *Soap Opera and Women's Talk: The Pleasure of Resistance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Brundson, Charlotte and David Morley. 1978. *Everyday Television: 'Nationwide'*. London: British Film Institute.

Carey, James. 1977. "Mass Communication and Cultural Studies: An American View", in *Mass Communication and Society*, edited by James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott. London: Edward Arnold in association with Open University Press. pp. 409-426.

Carey, James. 1989. *Communication as Culture*. Boston: Unwin and Hyman.

Cawelti, John G. 1985. "With the Benefit of Hindsight: Popular Culture Criticism" in *Critical Studies of Mass Communication*. Vol 2, No 4, pp. 363-379.

de Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fiske, John. 1987. *Television Culture*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. trans. Alan Sheridan. Harmondsworth: Peregrine.

Freire, Paulo. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* London: Sheed and Ward.

Giddens, Anthony. 1979. *Central Problems in Sociological Theory.* London: Hutchinson.

Gledhill, C. 1988. "Pleasurable Negotiations" in *Female Spectators,* edited by E. Pribram. London: Verso.

Goffman, E. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* New York: Doubleday.

Gonzalez, Jorge. 1987. "Frentes culturales", *Estudios Sobre Culturas Contemporareas.* Vol 2, No 4-5, pp. 41-100.

Gonzalez, Jorge. 1991. "Ferias, memorias urbanas y frentes culturales", *Estudios Sobre Culturas Contemporaneas,* Vol IV, No 12, pp. 11-46.

Grossberg, Lawrence. 1984. "Strategies of Marxist Cultural Interpretation" in *Critical Studies in Mass Communication,* Vol 1, No 4, pp. 392-421.

Hall, Stuart, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis. (Eds.) 1980. *Culture, Media, Language.* London: Hutchison University Library.

Hall, Stuart. 1982. "The rediscovery of 'ideology': return of the repressed in media studies", in *Culture, Society and the Media,* edited by Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran and Janet Woollacott. London: Routledge. pp. 56-90.

Hebdige, D. 1979. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style.* London: Methuen.

Hobson, Dorothy. 1980. "Housewives and the Mass Media", in *Culture, Media, Language,* edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis. pp. 105-114. London: Methuen.

Hobson, Dorothy. 1982. *Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera.* London: Methuen.

Hobson, Dorothy. 1990. "Women Audiences and the Workplace" in *Television and Women's Culture: The Politics of the Popular,* edited by Mary Ellen Brown. London: Sage Publications. pp. 61-74.

Hodge, Bob, and David Tripp. 1986. *Children and Television.* London: Polity Press.

Hoggart, Richard. 1957. *The Uses of Literacy.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Hoover, Stewart. 1988. *Mass-Media Religion: The Social Sources of the Electronic Church.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Jenkins, Henry. 1992. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture.* London: Routledge.

Jensen, Joli. 1991. *Redeeming Modernity: Contradictions in Media Criticisms.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Jensen, Klaus Bruhn. 1991. "When is Meaning? Communication Theory, Pragmatism and Mass Media Reception" in *Communication Yearbook 14,* edited by James A. Anderson. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Kuhn, Thomas. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolution.* rev. edn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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

Lindlof, Thomas R. (Ed.) 1987. *Natural Audiences: Qualitative Research of Media Uses and Effects.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company.

Lindlof, Thomas R. 1988. "Media Audiences as Interpretive Communities" in *Communication Yearbook 11,* edited by James A. Anderson. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Livingstone, Sonia M. 1990. *Making Sense of Television: The Psychology of Audience Interpretation.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Lull, James. (1980) "The Social Uses of Television," *Human Communication Research,* Vol 6, No 3, pp. 198-209.

Lull, James. 1988. *World Families Watching Television.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Lull, James. 1991. *Inside Family Viewing.* London: Routledge.

Martin, Bernice. 1981. *The Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Martín-Barbero, J. 1993. *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to the Mediations.* London: Sage Publications.

Martín-Barbero, J. and Sonia Muñoz. (Eds.) 1992. *Televisión y Melodrama: Géneros y lecturas de la telenovela en Colombia.* Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores.

McLoughlin, William G. 1978. *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Moores, Shawn. 1993. *Interpreting Audiences: The Ethnography of Media Consumption*. London: Sage Publications.

Morley, David. 1980. *The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding*. London: British Film Institute.

Morley, David. 1981. *"The 'Nationwide' Audience*: A Critical Postscript", *Screen Education*, p. 39.

Morley, David. 1986. *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*. London: Comedia.

Morley, David. 1989. "Changing Paradigms in Audience Studies" in *Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power*, edited by Ellen Seiter, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner, Eva-Maria Warth. London: Routledge. Pp. 16-43.

Morley, David. 1992. *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.

Newcomb, Horace. 1978. "Assessing the Violence Profile Studies of Gerbner and Gross: A Humanistic Critique and Suggestion", *Communication Research*, Vol 5, No 3, pp. 264-282.

Newcomb, Horace and Robert S. Alley. 1983. *The Producer's Medium: Conversations With Creators of American TV*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Newcomb, Horace and Paul M Hirsch. 1984. "Television as a Cultural Forum: Implications for Research". in *Interpreting Television: Current Research Perspectives*. Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research, Vol. 12, edited by Willard D. Rowland, Jr. and Bruce Watkins. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. pp. 58-73.

Orozco-Gomez, Guillermo. 1992. "Mediation Practices in TV's Reception Process: An Account of Mexican Families' Structuration of TV Reception Strategies at Home." Paper presented at the International Association for Mass Communication Research, San Paulo, Brazil.

Parkin, F. 1971. *Class Inequality and Political Order*. London: Paladin.

Press, Andrea L. 1991. *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class, and Generation in the American Television Experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Radway, Janice A. 1984. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Real, Michael. 1989. *Supermedia: A Cultural Studies Approach*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Seiter, Ellen, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner, Eva-Maria Warth. 1989. *Remote Control: Television, Audiences & Cultural Action*. London: Routledge.

Silverstone, Roger. 1981. *The Message of Television: Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Culture*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Silverstone, Roger, and Eric Hirsh (Eds.). 1992. *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*. London: Routledge.

Snow, Robert P. 1983. *Creating Media Culture*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Thompson, E.P. 1968. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Thorburn, David. 1987. "Television as an Aesthetic Medium" *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol 4, pp. 161-173.

Traudt, Paul J. and Cynthia M. Lont. 1987. "Media-Logic-In-Use: The Family as Locus of Study". in *Natural Audiences: Qualitative Research of Media Uses and Effects*, edited by Thomas R. Lindlof. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company. pp. 139-160.

Turner, Graeme. 1990. *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Turner, Victor, 1969. *The Ritual Process*. Chicago: Aldine.

Turner, Victor, 1974. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Turner, Victor, 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ (Performing Arts Journal) Publications.

Volosinov, V. N., 1973. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Seminar Press.

Wallace, Anthony F. C. 1956. "Revitalization Movements" in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 58, pp. 264-281.

White, Robert A. 1990. "Cultural Analysis in Communication for Development: The Role of Cultural Dramaturgy in the Creation of a Public Sphere", *Development*, Vol. 2, pp. 23-31.

Williams, Raymond. First published in 1958. *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. London: Penguin, 1966.

Williams, Raymond. First published in 1961. *The Long Revolution*. London: Penguin, 1975.

Williams, Raymond. 1974. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Fontana/Collins.

Wilson, Tony. 1993. *Watching Television: Hermeneutics, Reception and Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

AFTERWORD

By the Editor

All communicators, regardless of the medium they are using, must take account of the way the audience is receiving their message, if they hope to communicate effectively.

As Robert White's review article makes abundantly clear, recent research on the reception or interpretation of messages by audiences has shown an increasing awareness of the role of the "active audience" in any communication situation. Although much of that research has focused on television audiences, the same principles apply, in various ways and to varying degrees, to other forms of communication: radio, cinema, the press, and even public speaking. The preacher, in church, may have a perfect public address system and perfect acoustics, but they will do little good if the congregation is asleep or distracted. Because of prior personal experiences, memory contents, psychological orientations, etc., different members of the congregation may, in fact, be receiving very different "messages", even though the words they are hearing are the same.

The application to other media of what has been learned in the study of television audiences is difficult. Even the study of the audience of a single medium, such as television, is problematic, due to the complexity of the factors which might influence all or parts of the audience. The same individual also may react to the same message in entirely different ways at different times, depending on various internal and external factors.

Researchers have turned more and more to an ethnographic approach, often involving what anthropologists call "participant observation". The researcher tries to take the place and perspective of the viewer/listener/reader in a particular reception milieu, to learn, insofar as possible, how the message is being received and interpreted by people in that setting -- subjected, as they are, to particular physical, social and psychological influences. Those influences are important in determining the ways people "construct meanings" for themselves from the "raw material" offered to them by the communicator.

This stress on the ways audiences construct meanings does not mean that the researchers have neglected the media contents themselves. Although the "construction" process is real, it can only work on the "raw material" -- ideas, concepts, images, argumentation, etc. -- made available through the communication media. The "gatekeeping" role exercised by editors, producers, writers and directors allows some of this raw material to reach the audience, but it blocks much other material. As a contractor could not build a brick house if only wood were available, so too, a media "consumer" would find it difficult to respond in "liberal" ways if the only media contents available to him or her were "conservative" -- or, of course, vice versa.

The best scholars in the "cultural studies" tradition are aware of these two sides to the reception equation: the role of the communicator and the role of the audience. Many of the controversies in which they become embroiled have to do with disagreements about the weights to assign different factors in an effort to maintain the correct balance between the two sides. Some, writing from a more Marxist background, would want to give greater weight to socio-economic class or to dominant ideologies as influences. Others, typically those coming from a background of symbolic interactionist sociology, would want to place greater stress on the social-psychological development of the individual. Others, emphasizing the tradition of social and cultural anthropology, would concentrate on the

way culture influences both media and audience to reinforce the consensual meanings which give coherence to society. Some feel that the simple entertainment value of the mass media to audiences is sometimes underestimated by scholars looking for more hidden meanings.

All these approaches contain some truth and are worthwhile for exploring the many facets of the ways audiences interpret messages. At the same time, neither individually nor together can they be expected to give a "complete" picture, which would explain all possible audience responses. The communication practitioner would probably be best advised to sample writing from the whole range of these perspectives, in order to become alert to the many factors which might affect his or her own audience. The same procedure could be followed by policy-makers who wish to gain as complete an understanding as possible of how the mass media affect people.

As the increasing recourse to the ethnographic approach in this research testifies, there is no substitute for close contact with an audience to become aware of its environment and particular factors influencing it. Editors and broadcasters have long realized this in the attention they have paid to "feedback", in the form of letters or phone calls from readers and viewers. But sometimes these give only part of the picture -- perhaps representing segments of the audience with special "axes to grind". Audience studies, using methods as widely varied as possible, will help sketch the "big picture" and make possible more effective communication.

-- W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander, Alison. "Exploring Media in Everyday Life". *Communication Monographs*. Vol 60 (1993) No. 1, pp. 55-61.

Alfaro, Rosa Maria. *Usos sociales populares de la telenovela en el mundo urbano*. Lima, Peru: Calandria, 1987.

Ang, Ien. "Culture and Communication as an Ethnographic Critique of Consumption in the Transnational Media System". *European Journal of Communication*. Vol 7, 1990. pp. 239-260.

Ang, Ien. *Desperately Seeking the Audience*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Barrios, Leoncio. "El análisis cualitativo de la audiencia". *Comunicación*. Nos. 77-78 (1992), pp. 12-18.

Becker, Lee B. and Klaus Schoenbach. (Eds.) *Audience Responses to Media Diversification*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1989.

Bianchi, Jean and Henri Bourgeois. *Les médias côte public: Le jeu de la réception*. Paris: Éditions du Centurion, 1992.

Bryant, Jennings and Dolf Zillmann. (Eds.) *Responding to the Screen: Reception and Reaction Processes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1991.

Charlton, Michael and Klaus Neumann. *Medienkonsum und lebens-bewältigung in der Familie: Methode und Rezeptionsforschung--mit fünf Falldarstellungen*. München: Psychologie Verlag Union, 1986.

Charlton, Michael and Ben Bachmair. *Medienkommunikation im Alltag: Interpretative Studien zum Medienhandeln von Kindern und Jugendlichen*. München: K. G. Saur, 1990.

Cohen, Jodi R. "The 'Relevance' of Cultural Identity in Audiences' Interpretation of Mass Media". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. Vol 8 (1991), No 4. pp. 442-454.

Comer, John. "Meaning, Genre and Context: The Problematics of Public Knowledge in the New Media Studies." *Mass Media and Society*. Edited by James Curran and Michael Gurevitch. London: Edward Arnold, 1991.

Condit, C. "The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol 6 (1989), No. 2. pp. 103-122.

Condry, John. *The Psychology of Television*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1989.

Critical Studies in Mass Communication. "Designs for Knowing" , Vol 9, No 3 (September, 1992). Special issue on reception theory and audience ethnography.

Curran, James. "The New Revisionism in Mass Communication Research." *The European Journal of Communication*. Vol. 5 (June 1990) No. 2-3. pp. 135-165.

Drummond, Phillip, and Richard Patterson. (Eds.) *Television and Its Audiences*. London: British Film Institute, 1988.

Dufays, Jean-Louis. *Stéréotype et lecture. Essai sur la réception littéraire* (in the collection, "Philosophie et language"). Liége: Mardaga, 1994.

Evans, W. "The Interpretative Turn in Media Research: Innovation, Iteration or Illusion?". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. Vol 7 (1990), No 2. pp. 147-168.

Facultad de Comunicación Social, Universidad de Bucaramunga. *Exploración de habitos de recepción radial*. Bogotá: FELAFACS. Cuaderno no. 26, 1992.

Fadul, Anamaria. *Serial Fiction in TV: The Latin American Telenovelas. With an Annotated Bibliography of Brazilian Telenovela.* São Paulo: Escola de Comunicaçoes e Artes, Universidade de São Paulo, 1993.

Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Fiske, John. "Television: Polysemy and Popularity". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication.* Vol. 3, 1986.

Fiske, John. "British Cultural Studies and Television". in *Channels of Discourse: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, edited by Robert C. Allen. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987. pp. 254-289.

Fowles, Jib. *Why Viewers Watch: A Reappraisal of Television's Effects.* London: Sage Publications, 1992.

Fuenzalida, Valerio and Maria Elena Hermosilla. *Visiones y ambiciones del televidente: Estudios de recepción televisiva.* Santiago de Chile: CENECA, 1989.

Fuenzalida, Valerio and Maria Elena Hermosilla. *El televidente activo: Manual para la recepción activa de TV.* Santiago de Chile: CENECA, 1991.

García-Canclini, Néstor. *Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad.* México: Editorial Grijalbo, 1989.

Gripsrud, Jostein. "Toward a Flexible Methodology in Studying Media Meaning: *Dynasty* in Norway." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication.* Vol. 7 (1990) No. 2, pp. 1-15.

Grossberg, Lawrence. "Cultural Studies and/in New Worlds". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol 10, No 1 (March 1993), pp. 1-22.

Grossberg, Lawrence. *We Gotta Get Outa This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Gunter, Barrie and Michael Svennevig. *Behind and in Front of the Screen: Television's Involvement with Family Life.* London: John Libbey & Company Ltd, 1987.

Gunter, Barrie and Paul Winstone. *Television, the Public's View, 1992* (Independent Television Commission Television Research Monograph). London: John Libbey and Company, Ltd., 1993.

Gunter, Barrie and Mallory Wober. *The Reactive Viewer.* London: John Libbey & Company Ltd., 1992.

Hagen, Ingunn. "The 'Ugly Duckling' or the Emperor's New Clothes? On Better Understanding of Reception Theory." Paper given at the IAMCR Conference, Seoul, Korea, July 8-12, 1994.

Harris, Richard Jackson. *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates,

Publishers, 1989.

Hermès, Nos. 11-12 (1993) a special issue, "A la recherche du public. Réception, télévision, médias."

Höijer, B. "Från kunskapsförvärvande och begriplighet till upplevelser och reception" (From knowledge formation and comprehension to pleasant experiences and reception). In "Kommunikationens korsningar," edited by U. Carlsson, et al. *Nordikom-Sverige 4* (1994), pp. 97-108.

Höijer, B. *Genreförestdllningar och tolkningar av berdttande i TV* (Audiences' genre expectations and interpretations of television narratives). Stockholm: Stockholm University Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (in press, 1994).

Höijer, B. "Reception of television narration as a socio-cognitive process: A schema-theoretical outline." *Poetics.* Vol. 21 (1992), pp. 283-304.

Höijer, Birgitta. "Socio-cognitive structures and television reception". *Media, Culture and Society,* Vol. 14 (1992). pp. 503-603.

Höijer, Birgitta. "Studying Viewers' Reception of Television Programmes: Teoretical and Methodological Considerations." *European Journal of Communication.* Vol. 5 (1990) No 1, pp. 29-56.

Höijer, B., K. Nowak, and S. Ross. "Reception of Television as a Cognitive and Cultural Process (REKK)." *The Nordicom Review of Nordic Mass Communication Research.* Vol. 1 (1992), pp. 1-14.

Holub, R. C. *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction.* London: Methuen, 1984.

Institut de Recherches et d'Etude Publicitaires. *L'audience et les médias.* Paris: Les Éditions D'Organisation, 1989.

Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception.* Translated from the German (various articles) by Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Jensen, Klaus B. "The Politics of Polysemy: Television News, Everyday Consciousness and Political Action." *Media, Culture and Society.* Vol. 12 (1990) No. 1, pp. 57-77.

Jensen, Klaus B. "Qualitative Audience Research: Toward an Integrative Approach to Reception". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication,* Vol. 4 (1987), No. 1, pp. 21-36.

Jensen, Klaus B. "Television Futures: A Social Action Methodology for Studying Interpretative Communities". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication.* Vol 7 (1990), pp. 129-146.

Jensen, Klaus Bruhn and Nicholas W. Jankowski. (Eds.) *A Handbook of Qualitative Methologies for Mass Communication Research.* London: Routledge, 1991.

Jensen, Klaus B. and Karl Rosengren. "Five Traditions in Search of an Audience". *European Journal of Communications*, Vol. 5 (1990), No 2-3.

Lembo, Ronald and Kenneth H. Tucker, Jr. "Culture, Television and Opposition: Rethinking Cultural Studies". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. Vol. 7 (1990), pp. 97-116.

Lewis, Lisa A. (Ed.) *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Lippert, Heinrich. *Rezipienten-orienterte Medienwirkungsforschung*. Münster: Verlag Jose Lippert, 1987.

Livingstone, Sonia. "Interpreting a Television Narrative: How Different Viewers See a Story". *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 40 (1990) No 1, pp. 72-85.

Livingstone, Sonia. "The Rise and Fall of Audience Research: An Old Story with a New Ending". *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 43 (1993) No 4, pp. 5-13.

Livingstone, Sonia and Peter Lunt. *Talk on Television: Audience Participation and Public Debate*. London: Routledge, 1994.

McGuigan, Jim. *Cultural Populism*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Mancini, Paolo. *Guardando il Telegiornale*. Torino: Nuovo ERI. (RAI VQPT No 108) 1991.

Mata, Maria Cristina. "Recepción e identidad popular". *Comunicación*. Nos. 77-78 (1992), pp. 32-42.

Mayne, Judith. *Cinema and Spectatorship*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Mellencamp, Patricia. (Ed.) *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Mikos, Lothar. *Es wird dein Leben! Familienserien im Fernsehen und im Alltag der Zuschauer*. Munich: MAkS Publikationen, 1994.

Mikos, Lothar. *Fernsehen im Erleben der Zuschauer. Vom lustvollen Umgang mit einem populären Medium*. Berlin/Munich: Quintessenz, 1994.

Morganstern, Stephanie. "The Epistemic Autonomy of Mass Media Audiences". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. Vol. 9 (1992), No 3, pp. 293-310.

Morley, David. "Active Audience Theory: Pendulum and Pitfalls." *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 43 (1993) No. 4, pp. 13-20.

Neuman, W. Russell. *The Future of the Mass Audience*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. (Ed.) *La Comunicación desde las Prácticas Sociales*. Cuadernos de Comunicación y Prácticas Sociales, No 1. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1990.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. *Educación para la recepción*. México: Editorial Trillas, 1990.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. "Family Mediations in Mexican Children's Television Viewing Process". *Mexican Journal of Communication*, Vol. 1 (1993), No 1, pp. 37-54.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. (Ed.) *Hablan los Televidentes: Estudios de recepción en varios países*. Cuadernos de Comunicación y Prácticas Sociales. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1992.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. "El niño como aprediz y televidente en los estudios de audiencia en México (1968-1990)" in *La investigación de la comunicación en México: Tendencias y perspectvas para los noventa*. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1992.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. (Ed.) *Recepción Televisiva: Tres aproximaciones y una razón para su estudio*. Cuadernos de Comunicación y Prácticas Sociales, No 2. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1991.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. *Televisión y producción de significados*. Colección de Cuadernos de Comunicación y Sociedad Guadalajara, México: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1987.

Orozco-Gómez, Guillermo. *TV y producción de significados* (2da edición). CEIC, Universidad de Guadalajara, 1994.

Ortiz, Renato, Silvia Helena Simoes Borelli, José Mario Ortiz Ramos. *Telenovela: História e Produçao*. São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1991.

Pozzato, Maria Pia. *Dal "gentile pubblico" all'auditel: Quarant'anni di rappresentazione televisiva dello spettatore*. Torino: Nuovo ERI. (RAI VQPT n. 113), 1992.

Reimer, Bo. *The Most Common Practices: on Mass Media Use in Late Modernity*. Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell International, 1994.

Richardson, K. and J. Corner. "Reading Reception: Mediation and Transparency in Viewers' Accounts of a TV programme". *Media, Culture and Society*. Vol. 8 (1986), No 4. pp. 485-508.

Ross, Sven. "Television and interpretations of class: Some preliminary findings." A paper presented at the XI Nordic Conference on Mass Communication Research, 1993.

Rowland, Willard D., Jr. and Bruce Watkins (Eds.) *Interpreting Television: Current Research Perspectives*. Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research, Vol. 12. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1984.

Rubin, Alan M. "Audience Activity and Media Use". *Communication Monographs*. Vol. 60 (1993) No. 1, pp. 98-105.

Salvaggio, Jerry L. and Jennings Bryant (Eds.) *Media Use in the Information Age: Emerging Patterns of Adoption and Consumer Use*.

Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1989.

Schlesinger, Philip, R. Emerson Dobnash, Russell P. Dobash, C. Kay Weaver. *Women Viewing Violence*. London: British Film Institute, 1992.

Schneider, Cynthia and Brian Wallis (Eds.) *Global Television*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988.

Schwoch, James, Mimi White and Susan Reilly. *Media Knowledge: Readings in Popular Culture, Pedagogy and Critical Citizenship*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Seaman, William. "Active Audience Theory: Pointless Populism". *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol. 14 (1992), pp. 301-311.

Shearer, Ann. *Survivors and the Media*. London: John Libbey and Company Ltd. (Broadcasting Standards Council, Research Monograph: No. 2), 1991.

Signorelli, Nancy and Michael Morgan. (Eds.) *Cultivation Analysis: New Directions in Media Effects Research*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990.

Sillars, Malcom O. *Messages, Meanings, and Culture: Approaches to Communication Criticism*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991.

Skovmand, Michael and Kim Christian Schroeder. *Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Steiner, Linda. "Oppositional Decoding as an Act of Resistance". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 5 (1988), pp. 1-15.

Thompson, John B. *Ideology and Modern Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

Thompson, John B. *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

Tulloch, John. *Television Drama: Agency, Audience and Myth*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Turow, Joseph. *Media Systems in Society: Understanding Industries, Strategies, and Power*. New York: Longman, 1992.

Willis, Paul. *Common Culture: The Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990.

Wober, J. Mallory. *The Use and Abuse of Television: A Social Psychological Analysis of the Changing Screen*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1988.

Zillmann, Dolf and Jennings Bryant. (Eds.) *Selective Exposure to Communication*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1985.

Journals:

Medienwissenschaft; Zeitschrift für Rezensionen über Veröffentlichungen zu saemtlichen Medien. Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag. ISSN 0176-4241. Reviews books in all communication fields including audience reception/interpretation.

montage/av Zeitschrift für Theorie & Geschichte audiovisueller Kommunikation. ISSN 0942-4954. (no further information available at press time)

CURRENT RESEARCH

ARGENTINA
Maria Cristina Mata (Universidad de Córdoba, Facultad de Comunicación; personal address: Aldolfo Orma 1354, Barrio Parque Tablada, 5009 Córdoba; Tel. and FAX: +54 51 814 024) has just completed a study of women's "memories" of their experiences of radio theatre in Argentina from the 1930's to the present, focusing on how the "romantic" and "melodramatic" experience of radio theatre has changed with the changing condition of women in Argentina. She is now carrying out, with **Prof. Hector Schumucler** of Universidad de Córdoba, a study of the publics of and the patterns of consumption of the major genres of television in Argentina. The study is focusing on how the mass media organizes the daily life of audiences and provides a major factor in the socialization of children and youth.'

AUSTRALIA
Ien Ang (Communication Studies Program, School of Humanities, Murdoch University, Murdoch [Perth], Western Australia 6150. FAX: +61 9 310 6285; Tel.: +61 9 360 2482; E-mail: ienang@murdoch.edu.au) is preparing for publication a collection of essays, published in the last ten years, under the title, *Living Room Wars: Television Audiences and the Culture of Modernity*, scheduled for autumn publication in 1995, by Routledge. The focus of the book will be theorizing media reception and consumption in a more comprehensive manner in the conceptual context of contemporary cultural studies and social theory.

Albert Moran (Faculty of Humanities, Griffin University, Nathan, Brisbane, Australia 4111, FAX: +61 7 875 7965) is doing research on the international reception of Australian productions.

Virginia Nightingale (Faculty of Humanities, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, P.O. Box 10, Kingswood NSW, Australia 247, FAX: +61 47 360 714).

Tony Wilson (School of Literature and Journalism, Faculty of Arts, Deakin University, P.O. Box 43, Warrnambool, Victoria 3289, FAX: +61 55 633 534; Tel.: +61 55 633 557) is studying the responses of Chinese, Malaysian and other ethnic groups to Australian television, using a focus-group methodology and a phenomenological analysis of "identification". Prof. Wilson has been particularly interested in applying phenomenological and hermeneutic concepts ("life world", "horizons of understanding", "play") together with accounts of narrative as "indeterminte" and "parable-like".

BRAZIL
Prof. Nilda Jacks (Facultad de Comunicación, Universidade de Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, RG do Sul) is directing the reception studies research project for INTERCOM, The Brazilian Communication Association and journal (INTERCOM, São Paulo: FAX.: +55 11 815 3083 or 814 4764. The focus of her personal research has been cultural identity as a mediation in TV viewers' reception process.

CHILE
Claudio Avendaño (Escuela de Periodismo, Universidad Diego Portales, Ejército 141, Santiago) includes research in the program of the school.

Carlos Catalán (Consejo Nacional de Televisión, Moneda 1020 - Piso 4o, Santiago; FAX: +56 2 699 0031, Tel.: +56 2 698 2306 07) is directing a series of studies of preferences and habits of use of television (using focus groups and participatory observation) as the basis of a book on "Regulación Pública de la Televisión: Libertad de Expresión, Mercado y Moral".

José Joaquín Brunner, formerly with the Centro Latinoamericano de Social Sciences, CLACSO, is now the president of the National Council for Television and has set up a research program with **Carlos Catalán** the director of studies (Consejo Nacional de TV, Moneda 1020 - 4o piso; FAX: +56 2 699 00 31). A principal focus of this research has been areas of conflict of public opinion about TV content, carrying out studies of reception with both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Valerio Fuenzalida, formerly director of the independent research center, CENECA, and currently director of the department of Research, Televisión Nacional de Chile (Clasificador 16 104 - Correo 9, Santiago; FAX: +56 2 735 41 21; Tel.: +56 2 735 41 21), is preparing a book (based on qualitative research of the national public channel) which will show the relationships between genre, character presentation and conceptions of social development of both producers and audiences. A particular focus is the use of the playful-affective (ludico-affectivo) TV language which is, in fact, an educative language but avoids the classical didactic languages of television.

COLOMBIA
German Rey (Facultad de Comunicación, Universidad Javeriana, Cr. 7 nos. 40-76, Santa Fe de Bogotá; FAX: +57 1 287 1775; Tel.: +57 1 288 4700) is carrying on studies of the interpretation of television by children of low-income families, using methodologies of cognitive psychology and audience ethnography and examining in particular how children read news and how children comprehend the narrative structure of news and other genres of television using as a norm the traditional narrative forms of popular culture in Colombia

DENMARK
Klaus Bruhn Jensen (Dept. of Film and Media Studies, University of Copenhagen, 80 Njalsgade, DK 2300 Copenhagen; FAX: +45 35 32 81 10; Tel.: +45 35 32 81 00.) is coordinating with Paolo Manicini of the University of Perugia in Italy an eight-nation study of the reception and social uses of television news, a project sponsored by UNESCO and the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR). Forthcoming publications include *A New Theory of Social Semiotics: Mass Communication and Pragmatism* (tentative title), Sage Publications.

FRANCE
Claire Bélisle, Jean Bianchi, Robert Jourdan, and **Marie-France Kouloumdjian** (Institut de recherche en pédagogie de l'economie et en audiovisuel pour le communication dans les sciences-sociales - Centre National de la recherche scientifique [IRPEACS]), [CNRS], Lyon, Tel: +33 72 29 30 30; Fax: +33 78 33 33 70) have published a research report, *La réception médiatique* (CNRS: Lyon, 1993) exploring the experience of the televiewer and tying together social psychology with psychoanalytic theory, hermeneutics and the philosophy of language. They are continuing their research in this area of interest.

Jérome Boudon (Institut National de l'audiovisuel/Paris, Direction de la Recherche, Tel.: +33 16 1 49 83 2380) has studied political symbolism in relation to television.

Dominique Boullier (LARES, Rennes University, Rennes, Tel.: +33 99 51 75 76) has studied the daily conversations of televiewers, using an ethnological approach to the audience combined with "conversational analysis" techniques from contemporary linguistics. His earlier publications include *La conversation télé* (Rennes: LARES, 1987) and *Les téléspectateurs jugent la télévision* (Paris/Rennes: INA and Euristic Media, 1990).

Roger Chartier (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales-Paris, Tel.: +33 16 1 49 54 25 25) approaches the audience reception of books through the categories of "interpretative community" and of the "genealogy of public opinion." The most recent of his many books is *L'ordre des livres* (Alinea, 1992).

Rodolphe Ghiglione and **C. Kekenbosch** (CNRS/Groupe de recherche sur la parole Université Paris VIII, FAX: +33 16 1 49 40 64 94, Tel.: +33 16 1 49 40 64 80) have proposed a restatement of the practical relationship among the televiewer, the cognitive dimension of the treatment of information and the dimension of the social subject. They insist on a co-construction of messages. They have published their findings in a research report, *L'analyse de la réception* (CNRS: Paris, 1992).

The **Luciole Group** at the University of Provence (Université d'Aix-Marseille I, 3 place Victor Hugo, 13331 Marseille Cedex 3; University FAX: +33 91 50 1300, Tel.: +33 91 90 24 07) has been studying audience perceptions of political campaign posters.

GERMANY
Prof. Dr. Jo Groebel (now teaching in Univ. Utrecht, Heidelaerglaan 1, NL-3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands, personal address, An den Drei Brunnen 36, 60431 Frankfort/Main; FAX: +49 69 539 019).

Lothar Mikos (Visiting Professor of Theatre Studies, Freie Universität Berlin; Grunewaldstrasse 17, 10823 Berlin 62; Fax: +49 30 216 8481; Tel.: +49 30 215 6324) recently finished an ethnographic study on "Prime Time Family Serials and their Audiences in Germany", focussed on the role of the serials in the everyday life of the viewers. He also has finished a theoretical

framework on "Television as Experience of the Spectators", as well as doing theoretical research on intertextuality as part of spectator interpretations in media events, on genre conventions and viewer expectations in popular film and television, and on the idea of an aesthetic in reception theory. In addition, he is planning projects on game shows, on emotional aspects of the experience of suspense, and an ethnographic study on the use of popular films by adolescents.

ISRAEL
Tamar Liebes (The Louis Guttman Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, 19 George Washington St., P.O. Box 7150, Jerusalem 91070, FAX: +972 2 231 329, Tel.: +972 2 231 421) is publishing the analysis of Israeli TV viewers' interpretation of news as part of the forthcoming international study (*News Around the World*, edited by Klaus B. Jensen). She is also developing a general conceptualization of audience interpretation which will appear in the forthcoming book, *Toward a Comprehensive Theory of the Audience*, edited by Grossberg, Hay and Wartella. Liebes' chapter focuses on the often-used but taken for granted concept of identification, distinguishing between "liking", "being like", and "wanting to be like". Other research includes an examination of how film critics' decodings of Israeli films featuring Palestinian heroes point to the problematics of showing the "other" in a favorable light (making him like us), without co-opting his/her cultural identity (in *Jewishing Folklore and Ethnology Review*, 1994); media literacy; journalistic ethics; and an ethnographic approach to the interaction between genre (the soap opera) and culture.

ITALY
Paolo Mancini (Scuola di Giornalismo, Università di Perugia, FAX: +39 75 591 8298, Tel.: +39 75 591 8204) is finishing the Italian part of the international comparative study of how families interpret news (coordinated internationally by Klaus B. Jensen).

MEXICO
Guillermo Orozco-Gómez (Facultad de Comunicación, Universidad Iberoamericana, Prol. Paseo de la Reforma 880, Lomas de Santa Fe, 01210 México D.F.; Office Fax: +52 5 292 1258; Home Fax: +52 5 689 7249; Tel.: +52 5 726 9048) and the team of professors at the Iberoamericana currently form one of the major centers of Latin America studying "mediations".

They are working on the following research projects:
1) A study of how Mexican families use TV news, comparing eight nations (under the coordination of Klaus B. Jensen). The research is on analysis of the content and then a qualitative, ethnographic study of the families.
2) Finishing a four-year project studying how parents intervene in their children's TV viewing. (Cf., recent publications of G. G. Orozco in the bibliography.)

Ines Cornejo (Facultad de Comunicación, Universidad Iberoamericana) uses the psychodrama method, inviting children to "dramatize" how they view television (instead of asking them to recount verbally).

Martha Renero. (Facultad de Comunicación, Universidad Iberoamericana). Analysis of different Mexican families' internal communication models as mediations of the TV reception process.

THE NETHERLANDS
Jo Groebel (Professor, University of Utrecht) is supervising several graduate students working on reception. One among his graduates who has been quite active is Lothar Mikos [see entry under "Germany"].

Joke Hermes (The University of Amsterdam, Vakgroep Communicatiewetenschap, Oude Hoogstraat 24, 1012 CE Amsterdam, FAX: +31 20 525 2446, personal address: Rustenburgerstraat 332-III, 1072 HC Amsterdam, Tel.: +31 20 673 6489) is beginning a research project on popular book genres that have been and are important to the women's movement in a political sense. The research will focus on what kind of genres (science fiction) mobilize women for feminist action; what kind of pleasure do these books offer; what are the interpretations by women and men not part of the feminist movement of genres that can be labeled "feminist". Hermes' book in press with Polity Press about readers of women's magazines is due out for publication in 1995.

NORWAY
Ingunn Hagen (College of Arts and Sciences, Dept. of Psychology, University of Trondheim, N-7055 Dragvoll, FAX: +47 73491920, Tel.: +47 73591960) is studying how the new multi-channel viewing context is changing the way people watch TV. The study will analyze the different viewers' experience among those who watch just the Norwegian national channels and those who have access to other channels; the analysis of how TV is integrated into people's everyday lives; and how the use of TV is part of the families sense of togetherness.

Anders Johansen (Dept. of Media Studies, University of Bergen. Fax: +47 55 54 91 49; Tel.: +47 55 54 91 15).

PERU
Rosa Maria Alfaro (Asociación de Comunicadores Sociales Calandria, Cahulde 752, Jesús María, Lima; Casilla 11-0496; FAX: +51 14 712553; Tel.: +51 14 716473) has participated in the recent multi-nation study of audiences of telenovelas coordinated by J. Martín-Barbero. More recently she has coordinated a qualitative and quantitative study of the role of television in the development of identities of children and an analysis of the mediation of the parents in this process.

SPAIN
Emili Prado (Dept. de Comunicación, Audiovisual i de Publicitat, Univeristat Autónoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona); FAX: +34 3 581 1588; Tel.: +34 3 581 1540) is directing a study of the different forms of relation of audiences with television as a form of consumption. The research is part of a larger project financed by the Dirección General de Investigación Científica y Tecnica (National Institute of Scientific and Technical Research).

SWEDEN
Birgitta Höijer and **Sven Ross** (Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, Box 27861, S-115 93 Stockholm; Fax: +46 8 661 03 04 [office], +46 18 504980 [home]; Tel.: +46 8 161790 [office]; +46 18 500233 [home]) are currently engaged in a project on "Reception of Television as a Cognitive and Cultural Process", comparing audience interpretations of different

television genres in Sweden and the United States. The project is divided into two sub-projects, with Höijer studying "Cognitive Structures and Reception of Television Genres", and Ross investigating "Sociocultural Experience, Ideology and Television Reception."

UNITED KINGDOM

Sonia Livingstone and **Peter Lunt** (Dept. of Social Psychology, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE; FAX: +44 71 955 7565; Tel.: +44 71 405 7686) are continuing their study of audience activity in regard to participatory and public "topical debate" programming, examining how and in what contexts audiences carry on debates that they vicariously experience through "citizen representatives" along with "experts" in genres of discussion and public debate programming. They recently published *Talk on Television: Audience Participation and Public Debate* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Sonia Livingstone is also beginning, with **Robert Reiner**, a research project studying the historical representation and audience reception of crime, law and order in the mass media, covering film, television and the press from 1946 to the present. The projects include research on how audiences interpret different aspects of mass media representation of crime and justice, analyzing group discussions of reactions to particular examples of crime presentation in the media.

Sonia Livingstone has collaborated with **Tamar Liebes** (Hebrew University and Louis Guttman Institute, Jerusalem) in research on representation of gender in the soap opera and they will have an article, "The structure of family and romantic ties in the soap opera: an ethnographic approach to the cultural framing of primordialtiy in *Communication Research*, forthcoming.

Shaun Moores (Queen Margaret College, Clerwood Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 8TS; FAX: +44 3 317 3256; Tel.: +44 3 317 3000) is preparing two books: *Satellite Television and Everyday Life: Articulating Technology* (John Libbey, forthcoming) which reports ethnographic research in eighteen South Wales households regarding the cultural significance of satellite TV; and *The Politics of Domestic Consumption: Critical Readings* (co-edited with Stevi Jackson), London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, forthcoming, a reader which brings together current research and theory on household media use with writings on other aspects of domestic consumption drawn from feminist sociology and cultural studies.

David Morley (Department of Media and Communications, Goldsmith College–University of London, New Cross, London SE14 6NW; Direct FAX: +44 81 692 7171; Tel.: +44 81 692 7171) is working with the Antennacinema Conference which is coordinating a group investigating the cultural impact of satellite television in different European countries (Italy, Spain, France, Germany, England). Dr. Morley as co-author is publishing with Routledge the following books: (with K. Robins) *The Geography of Communications: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Identities* (1994); and editing (with K. H. Chen) *Critical Dialogues: Cultural Studies, Marxism and Postmodernism in the Work of Stuart Hall*; (edited with J. Curran and V. Walkerdine) as well as *Cultural Studies: A Reader* (in planning stages with Edward Arnold and publication set for late 1995).

Chapters by Morley in other recent books include 'The geography

of Television' in *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of the Audience*. Edited by L. Grossberg, et al. Boulder, CO: Westview Press (forthcoming); "The Audience, the Ethnographer, the Postmodernist and Their Problems" in *The Construction of the Viewer*. Hojberg, Denmark: Intervention Press, 1994.

Philip Schlesinger (Media Research Institute, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA, Scotland) reports a research project of **Kay Weaver**, *Representations of Men's Violence Against Women: Audiovisual Texts and Their Reception*, research which grows out of earlier research coordinated by P. Schlesinger and a project of **Raymond Boyle**, *Football, the Media and Identities* which includes audience ethnographic experience based on interviews with fans.

Roger Silverstone (Media Studies, Arts Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QN; FAX: +44 273 678 466; Tel.: +44 273 606 755) is continuing the PICT (Programme on Information and Communication Technologies), studies which have as their major objective to investigate the ways in which information and communication technologies affect, or are affected by, the complex and constantly changing network of social relations both within the household and beyond it. The recent research has focused on teleworking households, one-parent households and households of the elderly.

An important theoretical book which summarizes the implications of this research, *Television and Everyday Life*, has just been published by Routledge. A large number of specific reports on the PICT project are available from Prof. Silverstone.

UNITED STATES

Mary Ellen Brown (Dept. of Communication, 115 Switzler Hall, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, Missouri 65211; Tel.:+1 314-882-4431) is continuing her research on female audiences in terms of resistive readings, desire, empowerment and disempowerment and the development of ethnographic methodologies in the study of women's genre in preparation for a book on television audiences, cultural studies, feminism and postmodernism. She is also collaborating on a book, *The Images of Hillary Rodham Clinton: Content and Cultural Politics* and collecting data on the use of the video format of the film *Thelma and Louise*.

John Fiske (Communication Arts, College of Letters and Science, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706; FAX: +1 608-262-9953; Tel.: +1 608-262-2543) is conceptualizing the audience, in his book *Power Plays Power Works* (1993), as a site where a variety of tactics for coping with imperializing power are deployed: evasion, resistance, inversion, and complicity. In his book, *Media Matters* (1994) he analyzes how media strives to constitute the audience according to different social interests, particularly economic, racial, youth and conservative "family values".

Henry Jenkins (Assistant Prof. of Literature, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA 02138) is currently finishing a book with **John Tulloch** *Science Fiction Audiences* (Routledge, 1995), which compares audience interpretations across generations and across national cultures. Other major research projects include the study of fan culture centering around "slash" and its relation to debates about sexuality and popular culture (the research allows fans to speak for themselves); the study of post-war American children's

culture (from *Dennis the Menace* to *Doctor Seuss*, and *Flipper*) as a way of analyzing the ongoing debates about "permissive" childrearing.

Finally, he is editing with **Tara McPhearson** and **Jane Shattuc** (9 Chapel St., Sommerville, MA 02144) an anthology which incorporates newer approachs to popular culture based on the argument that there is a significant shift in international cultural studies towards what may be called "popularism", a neologism designed to suggest both a political stance (with a commitment to a broader public dialogue about popular culture and a greater attentiveness to the local, contingent nature of modern politics) and an aesthetic stance (with writers displaying a close personal relationship to popular culture, writing in a more personal, less highly theoretical voice, and attentive to the particularity of specific works rather than searching for large-scale theoretical models.

James Lull (Dept. of Communication Studies, College of Social Science, San Jose State University, One Washington Square, San Jose, California 95192-0112; Tel.: +1 408-924-5360) is developing a theoretical perspective in which audience interpretation is conceived as a "cultural activity" and has forthcoming articles entitled "Meaning in Motion" to be published in Portuguese in the forthcoming book, *Critical Studies on Postmodernism and Communication*, edited by Monica Rector (Rio de Janeiro, FAPERJ, 1994), and "Symbolic Resources in the Struggle over Culture" [no further information. - Ed.]. In his forthcoming book, *Media, Communication, Culture: A Global Approach* (Cambridge: Polity Press) he is attempting a synthesis of current concepts of ideology, consciousness, hegemony, social rules, power, meaning and culture.

Thomas Lindlof (College of Communications, 107 Grehan Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0042; FAX: +1 (606) 257-7818; Tel.: +1 (606) 257- 4360) has published *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications) and is editing a book, *Constructing the Self in a Mediated World* (Sage Publications, 1995). This latter book will include a number of audience studies, examining how mediated communication contributes to the formation and articulation of self in postmodern conditions. Lindlof is also studying the controversy surrounding the 1988 film, "The Last Temptation of Christ", examining how and why a media text becomes the site for intensive symbolic conflict.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

Reviewers:
 Bruce Wayne Bassinger (BWB)
 John Blewett, S.J. (JB)
 Levada Brown (LB)
 W. E. Biernatzki, S.J. (WEB)

Abadal, Ernest, et al. *Communication, Culture and Society: Contributions from Catalonia to Contemporary Media Research.* (Monografies i Documents, 4). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992. Pp. 145. ISBN 84 393 2127 9 (pb.) n.p.

This volume makes available in the form of English abstracts some of the prolific output of Catalonian communication scholars, whose works in Catalan are not easily accessible to readers from outside Barcelona, the rest of Catalonia, the Balearic Islands or the smaller Catalan-speaking territories ("Valencian Community...the Aragonese strip [Franja d'Aragò], Andorra, North Catalonia [France], and Alguer [Italy]", according to Josep Gifreu and Maria Corominas [pg. 33]). Much of the flowering of Catalonian communication studies in recent years is due to the creation, in 1987, of the Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació (CEDIC), as an agency of the Catalan Autonomous Government (Generalitat de Catalunia), which sponsored the production of this volume.

The works abstracted in the book are quite varied, but several focus on print or electronic mass media in Europe, Spain and Catalonia, stressing the differences and degrees of integration at the various regional levels. Others deal with theory, symbolism, policy, film translation, and telecommunications. Daniel E. Jones' *Spanish Directory on Mass Communication Research*, published in Catalan, Spanish and English, in 1991, and abstracted on pages 77-80, may be of special value to those interested in the development of research in Spain. In a quantitative analysis of the listings in that directory, Jones notes that "Most centres [of communication research in Spain] are of recent creation and scholars are generally quite young." This reflects the growth of democracy in Spain and the country's progressive integration into European and international life. In addition, it suggests that Spain will play an increasingly important role in communication studies in the future.

An appendix, by Manuel Parès i Maicas of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, consists of a "Bibliography on Cultural Identity and Other Identities", citing works in

English, Spanish, Catalan, French, German, Italian, and Danish. WEB

Alvarado, Manuel, Edward Buscombe and Richard Collins (Eds.). *The Screen Education Reader: Cinema, Television, Culture.* Hounmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS and London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1993. Pp. 361. ISBN 0 333 54125 1 (hb.) £35.00, ISBN 033354126 X (pb.) £11.99.

Being a powerful tool for the transference of ideology, the mass media project visions of cultural reality to their audience. *Screen Education* was a journal dedicated to the study of television and cinema's power to shape the ideologies of race and sex, but due to financial constraints, the journal was discontinued after publishing 41 issues between 1971 and 1982. Since the mass media's influence on their audience's ideology is even more profound today, the editors of this work wanted to revisit the issues *Screen Education* began studying over two decades ago.

This volume discusses the mass media's effect on race and gender issues and cultural studies while providing several chapters describing the study of the mass media. The book's goal is to reveal the messages the mass media is sending about race and gender issues and to develop strategies to use the mass media as an educational tool to challenge prejudice. The mass media have great power to shape ideologies, and this volume alerts media educators and media consumers about the harms and benefits of mass media use. BWB

Barker, Martin and Anne Beezer (Eds.). *Reading Into Cultural Studies.* London/New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 200, ISBN 0-415-06377-9 (pb.) £10.99.

This book re-examines various texts out of which the discipline of cultural studies was born, focusing on texts which question issues of power, ideology and the possibilities and limits of resistance. As cultural studies evolves, its focus is moving away from questioning forms of power and ideology toward giving a voice to previously marginalized groups. By reflecting on past investigations into cultural studies, the editors hope to give historical perspective to cultural studies and reincorporate challenges to power and ideology into the discipline.

While attempting to give cultural studies a historical perspective may canonize the field that rejects the canonization of learning, the authors of each chapter not only explain the historical texts, but also critically evaluate each text and its impact upon the field. The editors believe that this critical evaluation will negate the negative aspects of canonization while providing a historical perspective that will guide the future of cultural studies. BWB

Berger, Arthur A. *Popular Culture Genres: Theories and Text, (Foundations of Popular Culture v. 2).* Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992. Pp. vii, 170. ISBN 0-8039-4442-x (hb.) £23.00, ISBN 0-8039-4443-8 (pb.) £11.50.

To supply the public with popular culture the entertainment industry must straddle the line between providing a sense of familiarity and providing new and exciting products. The public's sense of familiarity generates conventions that can be analyzed for the purpose of criticizing and improving entertainment formats. The study of genre attempts to classify the various conventions used in popular entertainment.

Genre studies give insight into the creation and function of popular culture and give insight into what the public expects from popular culture. Arthur Berger examines five genres (tough guy detective, classic detective, spy story, science fiction, and horror) in order to classify and explain the dominant genres in American popular culture. His book is divided into two sections, with the first explaining the theory of genre studies and the second examining a specific text from the five genres mentioned previously.

Berger's work is designed to be easily accessible to both the novice and the more expert in genre study because he uses familiar examples to explain the different types of genre, yet includes ample theory to explain the narrative structure of cultural texts. BWB

Boyarin, Jonathan (Ed). *The Ethnography of Reading.* Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1992. Pp. viii, 285. ISBN 0-520-07955-8 (hb.) $35.00, ISBN 0-520-08133-1, (pb.) $14.00.

The Western European view of reading as an isolated, private act is not consistent with most cultural reading traditions, where reading is a social activity. Reading is an oral activity in many cultures, used to share and inculcate cultural values. Therefore, the prevailing western distinction between orality and literacy does not exist. To focus only on the written texts of non-western cultures to evaluate their literacy and thought leaves many of the cultural dynamics of reading undiscovered.

It is precisely this undiscovered territory of anthropology and literary studies that this book attempts to chart. By analyzing how different cultures approach reading text rather than analyzing the texts themselves, a much deeper understanding of cultural transmission in non-western cultures can be evaluated. This work opens new perspectives into the study of anthropology, literature, history, and many other disciplines concerned with culture and literature.

The study evaluates the history of reading in many cultures, including: Israel, China, Japan, and many others. It does not distinguish non-western from western reading traditions, but also provides western examples of reading as a social activity. The interconnectedness of reading as a social activity throughout most cultures is demonstrated in this work, and it should generate increased research in this area. BWB

Condgon, Tim, Brian Sturgess, N.E.R.A. (National Economic Research Associates), William B. Shew, Andrew Graham, and Gavyn Davies. *Paying For Broadcasting: The Handbook.* London: Routledge, 1992. Pp. vii, 226, ISBN 0-415-08938-7 (pb.) £18.00.

This study commissioned by the BBC outlines the funding options open to broadcasters in Great Britain and explores potential revenue sources: advertising, sponsorship, subscription, program sales, co-production, and public funding. The book also seeks to define the future role of the BBC.

Part one of the book describes the various types of commercial funding available to television and radio broadcasters, focusing mainly on advertising while part two describes various methods of public funding, focusing on a move toward licensing fees.

With satellite, cable, subscription and digital technologies, British broadcasting must develop new funding sources to supply its customers with improved diversity and quality of programming. In the 1990's and beyond, the British public's demands on broadcasters will increase. The role of the BBC must expand and funding sources must improve if the broadcasters are to meet those demands. BWB

Conley, Thomas M. *Rhetoric in the European Tradition.* Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Pp. viii, 325. ISBN 0-226-11489-9 (pb.) $14.95.

The author attempts to fill a gap he perceives in the literature of rhetoric studies. He provides a comprehensive text that chronicles western rhetorical studies, overviews each subject covered, and provides detailed information about particular authors and texts.

The book gives historical context for the events that have shaped the study of rhetoric and describes how each rhetorician responded to his historical context to shape his philosophy. Conley also lists additional readings and outlines the works he reviews at the end of each chapter, providing a reference guide to beginning and advanced studies of rhetoric. BWB

Corner, John and Jeremy Hawthorn (Eds.). *Communication Studies: An Introductory Reader,* Revised Edition. London/New York/Melbourne/Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993. Pp. 281. ISBN 0-340-56500-4 (pb.) £12.99.

Communication studies concern the construction of meaning through the creation and reception of signs, and this text is meant to be a reader for undergraduates seeking an introduction to communication studies. The author first gives an introduction to the definitions and approaches of communication then studies various aspects of communication, including: socio-cultural relations of language, perception and interaction, and media form and cultural process.

The fourth edition has expanded the chapters of the third edition and has adapted them to societal changes. This edition retains the "classic" chapters from the third edition, but adds more chapters, which focus on the increased mediation of communication and influence of culture on communication. Specifically, the fourth edition's fourth section on media form and cultural process expands the third edition's section on mass communication by explaining the increased role of media and culture in shaping mass communication. Section three, Perception and Interaction, of the fourth edition removes the study of behavior found in section two of the third edition. Also, section two, the socio-cultural relations of language, expands the study of culture and language found in the third edition to include the influence of modernity on human communication. BWB

Curran, James, and Jean Seaton. *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting In Britain (4th edition).* London: Routledge, 1991. Pp. x, 429. ISBN 0-415-06450-3 (pb.) £10.99.

Curran and Seton describe the historical and contemporary interaction between the press, broadcasting, and politics in Great Britain. Developing the historical context of the press and broadcasting, the authors highlight significant battles for freedom from government control and the political effects of both media. The historical analysis concludes that the press and broadcasting have pervasively affected the political system of Great Britain.

Each section of the book has been modified and updated from the third edition. Significant modifications from the third edition include a substantial rewrite of chapter seven, on the post-war press. Part IV, covering politics and media, has been redone to account for governmental policy changes and public debate about the media. Chapter nineteen has been completely rewritten. The bibliography also has been updated and pruned.

The authors analyze current press and broadcasting

practices and their effects and conclude that neither medium is living up to its historical prowess. Economic pressures, technological advancement and the increase in mediated entertainment have diminished the media's role as a fourth estate to check governmental and corporate abuse of power. The authors demand government intervention within the British media industry to restore its power. BWB

Fowler, Roger. *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London/New York: Routledge, 1991. Pp. 254. ISBN 0-415-01418-2 (hb.) n.p., ISBN 0-415-014190 (pb.) £10.99.

News is not descriptive, rather it prescribes the ideologies, values, and beliefs the public "should" have about news items, according to the author. Claiming that there cannot be objective or "value-free" news, the author demands that the news media be conscious of the values and interpretations they prescribe.

A general overview is given to the power of language to shape people's perception of reality. The author then shows the power of the media to influence public perceptions of events, people, and groups. Focusing on four negative aspects of the media's power, Mr. Fowler demonstrates the damage the media can cause when they are not conscious of their power to influence the public's perception of reality. The author advocates teaching the public critical linguistic analysis, so that it will be aware of the latent biases and values in the news. BWB

Gesellschaft für Medienpädagogik und Kommunikationskultur. *Schriften zur Medienpädagogik*. Bielefeld, Germany: GMK Gesellschaftsstelle. 1990+

This series of booklets, "Writings on Media Education," published by the Society for Media Education and the Culture of Communication, provides current information in the form of monographic reports on media personalities, education and activities in Germany.

Volume 11, for example, surveyed children's television offerings in 1993. Volume 10 dealt with "Media and Culture Work with Older People," while Volume 12 focused on the middle-aged.

Annual reports of the Gesellschaft für Medienpädagogik und Kommunikationskultur (GMK) describe this and other series published by GMK, as well as its other activities, both on a nationwide and regional basis. GMK is a nationwide association of specialists in education, culture and the media, organized in 1984 to promote research, publication and other activities pertaining to the confluence of those fields of interest in Germany. Its editorial offices are at Körnerstraße

3, 33602 Bielefeld, Germany. JB

Gritti, Jules. *Feu sur les médias. Faits et symboles* (Media under fire: facts and symbols). Paris: Centurion (Collection Fréquences), 1992. Pp. 165. ISBN 2.227.434.01.5 (pb.) FF 99.-.

Jules Gritti, a sociologist at the University of Louvain, first provides an historical view of what used to shape the media during the early 1900's. He then compares techniques used in modern media such as rhetoric versus actual work done in research. He also discusses what kind of news makes *news* (sensationalization) and what does not (the common-place).

Gritti explores the use of "enigmas" in order to keep the reader hooked, especially in stories about murder cases. The idea that where news happens affects how it is covered -- e.g., sensationalism in the big city or a localized view in small towns -- also is discussed. He also suggests how the wording of headlines can lead to stereotypes in the media.

In covering aspects of "rumors", some of Gritti's main ideas include the view that rumors may have some significance and that they reflect the collective imagination of a particular time. He notes how power and authority affect the media. For example, persons who exude charm may have special influence on the media, while the not-so-charming cannot get media attention.

This leads to an examination of the "star system" -- the modern way of creating and maintaining star status. The star system "markets" celebrities in order for them to maintain their star status, especially in cinema and sports.

Gritti then analyzes the interrelation of substance and appearances in media usage. Failures of the star system exemplify its fragility. The pitfalls of media use are exemplified by cases from France and other parts of the world in which the symbolism used in the media became problematic.

Finally, Gritti discusses the Gulf War in detail. He begins by explaining that coverage of the war encompassed more than the war itself. There were "sub-wars", such as battles about characters, about locations, and about the morality of war. The body of the chapter presents the war as a drama in five acts. In conclusion, the author examines the fairness of the war and its post-war effects on those involved. LB

Gunter, Barrie and Carmel McLaughlin. *Television: The Public's View*. London/Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1992. Pp. vi, 70. ISBN 0-86196-348-2; ISSN 0962-7928 (hb.) £14.60 ($23.00).

This study details the results of the British Independent

Television Commission's 1991 survey of public opinion about the programs broadcast and attitudes and behaviors of those who watched them. The aims of the survey were to: (1) assess public opinion about television, and (2) indicate, through polling, current attitudes about television, comparing them to previous years and surveying topics such as: taste, decency, accuracy, impartiality, viewer's preferences and the quality and diversity of programs.

Studies of this kind, which are required of all the networks in Britain, allow the television networks to assess changes in the public's programming demands and its uses of television. They are also intended to make television more responsive to the public, rather than the programmers dictating the public's viewing choices.

The study breaks down the analysis into the uses of television and opinions about it. The results of the study show that most television viewers are supplementing their viewing choices with VCRs, teletext receivers, video games, and video cameras. The public opinion poll data showed that most viewers were satisfied with the programming of the established terrestrial TV channels and new channels provided by cable and satellite. The study also demonstrated that television is becoming the most trusted medium for world and local news, with most viewers believing that the coverage was impartial. A minority of viewers reported being offended by television's display of sex, violence, and bad language, but most viewers were satisfied with the regulation of television's content. BWB

Kasza, Gregory J. *The State and the Mass Media in Japan 1918-1945.* Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 335. ISBN 0-520-08273-7. (pb.) $14.00.

The amount of control the state should have over information is the focus of this study of Japan's mass-media. Kasza claims that, "The most distinctive political characteristic of the twentieth century is an unprecedented expansion of the power of states over their subjects," and his study attempts to discern the historical roots of this control through an empirical study of Japan between World War I and World War II. Kasza claims that the interwar period was the, "critical turning point in the development of modern state power," and he uses Japan as his case study because he believes Japan felt the profound effects of growing state power.

This study charts the evolution of the Japanese government from a democratic regime to a military-bureaucratic regime, and it analyzes the challenges to mass media freedom during that evolution. The book is divided into two halves, with the first half examining the influence of democracy on the media with studies examining the press,

film, and radio industries. The second half of the book looks at the influence of the military's rule from 1937-1945 on media freedom in those industries. BWB

Kinder, Marsha. *Playing With Power: In Movies, Television, and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.* Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1991. Pp. ix, 266. ISBN 0-520-07776-8, $12.00.

This study addresses the concerns about the effect of Saturday morning television and video games on children's ability to understand narrative and on their perceptions of gender relationships. Ms. Kinder uses intertextuality, the study of the influence of culture and language on linguistic significance, to describe how television and video game heros reinforce the patriarchal structure of American society.

The first chapter relates the author's methodology that draws heavily from the theories of Jean Piaget and Arthur Applebee. The next three chapters analyze the predominant cultural media for children (Saturday morning television, Nintendo Entertainment System, and children's movies that become video games) and relates how these media reinforce patriarchal gender roles and consumerism. In the final chapter Ms. Kinder predicts that technological advances in mass media will continue to affect American language and culture more pervasively. BWB

Lanigan, Richard L. *The Human Science of Communicology: A Phenomenology of Discourse in Foucault and Merleau-Ponty.* Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press. 1992. Pp. xv, 273. ISBN 0-8207-0242-0. $17.00.

This book outlines the new discipline of Communicology, an all-encompassing study of human discourse. The author gives an outline of this new discipline by tracing its historical roots through the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michel Foucault. The work also offers a qualitative research paradigm for the study of human communication.

In the work, the author provides a dictionary illustrating the theory and method of the human sciences and Communicology, and it also provides a definition of Foucault's method of archaeology and genealogy. The chapters cover topics such as: the challenge of postmodernism, the conflicts of feminism and humanism, and the struggle between aesthetics and science. BWB

Mueller, John. *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War.* Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 379. ISBN 0-226-54565-2. $22.95.

Mueller compiles and analyzes the public opinion poll data from the Gulf War and evaluates its effect on governmental policy. He chronicles the trends in public opinion from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to George Bush's defeat in the 1992 presidential election. The analysis of the polls is divided into three chronological categories: the months preceding the Gulf War, the war itself, and after the war until the 1992 presidential election. Nearly 300 tables charting public opinion through the Gulf crisis are given at the end of the book.

According to the author, George Bush was able to cajole an unsupportive public into war because of his image as a strong foreign policy leader and his fatalism about the war's inevitability. Mueller then claims that the overwhelming public support for President Bush began to dwindle as the public began focusing on domestic issues following the war. He concludes that despite George Bush's astronomical approval rating following the Gulf War, the war became a non-issue in the 1992 presidential election. BWB

Munch, Richard, and Smelser, Neil J. *Theory of Culture.* Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1992. Pp. ix, 410. ISBN 0-520-07599-4. $17.00.

A conference on the theory of culture held in Bremen, Germany 23-25 July 1988 gave rise to this book which is the second volume in the series *New Directions in Cultural Analysis.* It analyzes recent challenges to the theories of culture, deriving its empirical findings from case studies of contemporary German culture.

Part one of the book contains six chapters and is essentially theoretical, chronicling the traditional analyses of culture and the challenges made to them. Parts two and four examine culture's relationship to the polity, the stratification system, and the economic order. These chapters' theoretical nature is balanced by systematic empirical data, with part four focusing on contemporary cultural issues in West Germany. Part three provides a theoretical explanation for the reproduction and transformation of cultural norms.

The conference was established to catalog the explosion of studies done on the sociology of culture that has taken place in Europe and America over the past fifteen years or so. The book examines the revolution in the sociological explanations of culture, explains the movement away from Marxian explanations of culture, and highlights new fields of cultural studies. BWB

Neuman, W. Russell, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler. *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning.* Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1992. Pp. xiii, 172, ISBN 0-226-57440-7, £8.75.

The focus of this work bridging the gap between the news media and the public. The authors propose a research perspective, Constructionism, which focuses on the interaction between the message the media wants to convey and the understanding the public has of those messages. The study uses survey research, content analysis, in-depth interviews, and experiments on learning to develop a picture of the common knowledge the public gains from the news media.

The study evaluates how the public frames, learns and constructs meaning from the three most typical news media: television, news magazines, and newspapers. It concludes that news media professionals must assume that the public is active and engaged in the news it is given, but that the public has low attention levels, which demand that the news be creative to keep the public's attention. BWB

Pilati, Antonio (Ed.). -- *Mind -- Media Industry in Europe.* London: John Libby, 1993. Pp. 250. ISBN 0-86196-398-9. (pb.) £24.00.

As with other studies of the media industry in Europe, this study sponsored by the Instituto di Economia dei Media, in Milan, attempts to plot the course of the transformation of the European media in the 1990's. The study evaluates only 1991 and 1992, but examines the current impact of the technological advances of the late 1980's that are transforming the European media.

The work devotes most of its attention to an analysis of the European media's economic infrastructures but also covers the technological and legislative changes in the European media industry. The first section of the book provides a chronology of events that have shaped the audiovisual and publishing, technological, and legal sectors of the European media market. The final chapter of the book provides a bibliography of European research and monographs on media economics from 1991 to June 1992. The book aids the understanding of the direction of the chaotic European media, which are experiencing economic growth yet battling to keep up with technological innovation and governmental regulation. BWB

Raboy, Marc, and Bernard Dagenais (Eds). *Media, Crisis and Democracy: Mass Communication and the Disruption of Social Order.* London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. vi, 199. ISBN 0-8039-8640-8. £10.95.

Studying the media's increasing role as the main source of information, this book studies the media's use of crisis to highlight issues of public interest. The authors examine the problems and dangers of using "crisis" to label problems

such as: the Gulf War, the violence and political struggle in Eastern Europe, and the use of terrorism. When the media use crisis analysis, they often place sensationalism above understanding, and provoke the public and government to take action without a full understanding of the problems at hand.

The authors suggest that the media move away from reporting issues as "crises" and suggest that if the media were to analyze problems and suggest remedies from a more humanitarian approach, the political leadership and the people could solve problems with the best solution, rather than the most immediate one. If the American political leadership were able to make decisions slowly, rather than make them quickly to quell public outrage in response to a crisis, more level-headed and just solutions would be the result, claim the authors.

This book has special relevance to this issue of *Communication Research Trends* because it claims that when the media frame problems in terms of crisis, the audience is adversely affected. The authors claim that the crisis mentality draws the public's focus away from the costs -- human, social and economic -- of crisis policies and places it solely on the problem. This diminishes the ability of the audience and the media to check potentially undemocratic or destructive uses of power by the government, claim the authors. BWB

Silj, Alessandro. *The New Television in Europe.* London/Paris/Rome: John Libbey, 1992. Pp. 1,624. ISBN 0-86196-361X (hb.) £66.00 ($106.00).

This book addresses the changes and expansion of the television industry in Europe in recent years. Part one of the book has seven chapters addressing the general challenges faced by all the European countries coping with changes in the television industry and television technology. Parts two through seven investigate the specific challenges faced by each of the countries with major television industries, including: Italy, United Kingdom, Spain, France, Germany, and Eastern Europe.

The book focuses on the cultural and economic challenges of the television industry. Balancing cultural programming with programming that is economically productive is a challenge faced by each country. In part one the author outlines the general challenges of integrating cultural programming into the television industry while the remaining sections discuss how each country integrates cultural programming into its formats. The other major issue addressed in the book is how European governments are paying and going to pay for advancements in television technology. The author claims that the European television markets have matured and are ready for considerable growth.

Continuing that analysis, the author addresses the problems of funding that growth and gives examples of how each nation is preparing itself for the growth in its television market. BWB

Siune, Karen, and Wolfgang Truetzschler (Eds.). *Dynamics of Media Politics: Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe.* London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992. Pp. vii-206. ISBN 0-8039-8574-6. £11.95.

The Euromedia Research Group, a network of independent social scientists from Western Europe, produced this book to review and analyze the developments in media policy and structure. The book explores the effect of transnational multimedia corporations, commercialization, and privatization upon broadcasting and other electronic media in Western Europe. Western Europe is seeing a move away from monopolistic structures controlling the media toward a more market oriented philosophy, and this work studies the economic, political and social effects of that movement.

The book is divided into five parts. Part one establishes the challenges faced by electronic media in Western Europe and gives a framework for evaluating the changes therein. Parts two through four deal with the struggle between forces pushing for globalization of the electronic media and those which desire national and local control. Part five concludes that if the EC directive continues to gain support, then the leaders of the EC nations must coordinate media policy to form one collective information system, not allow each nation's system to develop independently with different levels of technology. BWB

Strinati, Dominic, and Stephen Wagg (Eds.). *Come on Down? Popular Culture In Post-War Britain.* London/New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 1,391. ISBN 0-415-06327-2 (pb.) £ 12.99.

Come on Down? evaluates the popular media culture in Britain since 1945, providing methods to study, understand and appreciate it. The essays try to demonstrate the importance of popular culture and show why popular culture is becoming a growing area of academic study. The study focuses on four areas: (1) the relationship between popular culture and social difference, (2) diversity of popular cultural forms, (3) cultural process -- consumption, Americanization, commercialization, etc., (4) historical contexts provided by post-war Britain society.

A discussion of the synergy between politics and culture is evident in each chapter, with the political discussions focusing on political movements and/or party/parliamentary

politics. The book focuses mainly upon the feminist movement as an advocate for political and cultural change to British society while the discussion of party/parliamentary politics revolves around the use of popular culture by political officials to gain rapport with their constituencies. Popular culture has developed from merely affecting issues of style to influencing most areas of an individual's thoughts and life, claim the editors, and this book provides understanding of the evolution of popular culture and plots the course of its continuing evolution. BWB

Traber, Michael, and Kaarle Nordenstreng (Eds.). *Few Voices, Many Worlds: Towards a Media Reform Movement*. London: World Association for Christian Communication, 1992. Pp. 79. ISBN 0-0508781-1-1.

The MacBride Report (1980) stated, "...in the communication industry there is a relatively small number of predominant corporations which integrate all aspects of production and distribution, which are based in the leading developed countries and which have become transnational in their operations. Concentration of resources and infrastructures is not only a growing trend, but also a worrying phenomenon which may adversely affect the freedom and democratization of communication." Although this statement was made in 1980, the continued movement of allowing media content to be governed by market forces has made the issue of concentration of media resources a greater concern. Promoting the New World Information and Communication Order's (NWICO) demand for greater democratization of media control and content is the focus of this book.

The book is a collection of documents discussed at the Third MacBride Round Table in Istanbul, Turkey, on 21

June 1991. The discussions in the work focus upon the NWICO. Part one of the book lists some of the activities that have promoted the values of NWICO, and it contains a biography of Seán MacBride. Part two contains social actors' and activists' statements about communication issues, concentrating on the international media reform movement in the 90's. Part three provides background readings on NWICO, and these readings provide a list of the goals NWICO tries to promote and implement. This part concludes with a select bibliography of NWICO. BWB

Turner, Patricia A. *I Heard It Through The Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993. Pp. ix, 227. ISBN 0-520-08936-7. $12.00.

Rumors develop when the government denies marginalized groups access to news and documentation of the events that surround them. Turner chronicles the rumors that have pervaded the African-American culture from slavery's inception to the present. She claims that knowledge gaps in the African-American culture have always led to the formulation of rumors to explain the degradation of the African-American people.

Turner analyzes rumors such as: white cannibalism, white rumors that disorganized and degraded African-Americans following the Civil War, and conspiracy theories targeting both corporations and governmental agencies. She concludes the book with more recent rumors that have surfaced and a plea to the educational establishment to incorporate the study of folklore and rumors into its curriculum. She claims that rumor study would help the media fill the information gaps that cause rumors. BWB

** SPECIAL NOTICE **

Effective in late October, 1994 *Communication Research Trends* and the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture (CSCC) will have new telephone and FAX numbers. The new numbers will be:

Telephone: +1-314-977-7290   FAX: +1-314-977-7296

Communication Research Trends Volume 15 (1995)

Subscription Rates:	Institutional/Individual	US $ 28
	Student	US $ 20
	Back Issues	US $ 7 each issue
	Set of Volumes 1-6	US $ 65
	Set of Volumes 7-14	US $115
	Complete set and Volume 15	US $175

Add US $2 for invoicing. **Please add the equivalent of $10 per check if paying in non-US currency.** For advance orders, multiply the annual subscription by the total number of years.

Please enter my subscription to *Communication Research Trends* Volume 15 (1995).
My payment is by (please check one):

[ ] credit card   [ ] check*
[ ] wire transfer*   [ ] international money order*

in the amount of: .... to cover my subscription for .... years.

Name:...

Address...

....

City...................................State/Country......................................Postal Code.................

Payment by credit card (Preferred Method of Payment):
CSCC accepts payment by Master Card or Visa. Please fill out information below:

Master Card   Visa   Name on card: _____
    (circle one)
      Account # _ _ _ _-_ _ _ _-_ _ _ _-_ _ _ _   Expiration date:_____

      Authorized Signature: _____

*Payment by check, International Money order or Wire Transfer:
Checks drawn on USA Banks or branches (please add the equivalent of $10 for non-USA bank checks) and International Money Orders (please add the equivalent of $10 for non-USA bank money orders) should be payable to CSCC and sent to the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, 321 N. Spring, P.O. Box 56907, St. Louis, MO 63156-0907, USA. Transfers by wire should be directed to "Mercantile Bank in St. Louis, N.A., ABA #081000210 for credit to Saint Louis University, Account Number 100-14-75456, Attention: Mary Bradbury (CSCC)."