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A Dialogue on Children's Television

Valerio Fuenzalida, Ulrika Sjöberg, Katharine Heintz and Ellen
Wartella, and David Kleeman

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A Dialogue on Children's Television

Editor's Introduction

This issue of *TRENDS* returns to the theme of children's television, but rather than publishing a review of current research, it seeks to engage in a dialogue among researchers around the world and encourage a similar dialogue with its readers. What kinds of recommendations for children's television might come out of what researchers have learned about children and television? What should governments do, for example, to enrich the educational experience of children?

Valerio Fuenzalida, a professor in the Faculty of Communications at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago prompted this dialogue with the paper, "The Cultural Opportunity of Children's Television: Public Policies in Digital Television," reprinted here as the first effort in our dialogue. He first presented this text at the Seminar on "Culture, Development and Diversity from the Perspective of Public Policy" organized by UNESCO in November 2010 in Montevideo, Uruguay. A print version appeared in Portuguese under the title "Políticas Públicas no ambiente televisivo digital" in *Revista Matrizes* (Vol. 4, No. 2, 2011, pp. 141-163), *Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação da Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil* (see <http://www.matrizes.usp.br/ojs/index.php/matrizes>).

Fuenzalida argues that Latin American governments should take advantage of new developments in digital broadcasting to offer children's television programs, particularly those programs that take advantage of new research into how children learn. Much recent work has explored emotional learning, which Fuenzalida discusses under the heading of the "ludic imagination." He sees this kind of learning as especially important for young children (under 10 years of age) and for children from disadvantaged homes. He argues that well developed programming, delivered on digital broadcast channels would benefit young students as a supplement to their formal schools. The use of open channels would make such programs readily available.

Professor Ulrika Sjöberg serves as an Associate professor of Media and Communications at The School of Arts and Communication of Malmö University, Sweden. In her response she argues that television (and by extension various screen technologies for children) can play a role in social change. However, she points

out the need for more context-based research. In addition to the work cited by Fuenzalida, children's advocates need to study how children actually interact with children's media—what she terms the "everyday life" approach. This kind of research demands much more closer observation of children in naturalistic settings.

Sjöberg continues her response by examining the case of children's programming on Swedish public service channels. The kind of convergence approach practiced there offers a tested model for what could develop in Latin America.

Katharine Heintz, a member of the faculty of the Communication Department at Santa Clara University, has served as guest editor for the 2009 *TRENDS* issue on "Children's Rights and the Media." A long-time researcher on children and television, she joins with Ellen Wartella in offering a U.S. response to Fuenzalida. Wartella is Al-Thani Professor of Communication, Professor of Psychology, Professor of Human Development and Social Policy and Director of the Center on Media and Human Development at Northwestern University. She is a leading scholar of the role of media in children's development and serves on a variety of national and international boards and committees on children's issues. Heintz and Wartella supplement the discussion by more explicitly examining screen media—the whole digital world now open to children, pointing out the surprising number of children with access to mobile devices. They also review some of the literature on children's interaction with media and reinforce Fuenzalida's discussion of children's emotion needs and the ways in which young children can learn from the media.

David Kleeman presents a final response in the dialogue. Kleeman is President of the American Center for Children and Media, a Chicago-based Executive Roundtable of industry leaders seeking solutions that are good for kids and sustainable. He reminds us of the riches of children's media currently available and introduces several industry prizes that help to encourage program developers.

The dialogue concludes with a summary of the English language issue of *Television*, addressing TV as a learning environment, which we fortuitously received as we prepared this issue of *TRENDS*.

The Cultural Opportunity of Children's Television

Public Policies in Digital Television

Valerio Fuenzalida

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Introduction

This paper asks whether there are technological convergence opportunities in the current multimedia process, and whether this process could become a key place to think about development, combating poverty, and working for equity. Would it be possible to make conceptual, political, and strategic links in order to design cultural policies in the audiovisual industry, which contribute to development, to equity, and to both humanistic and public (or citizenship) values?

My answer will seek to show the political and cultural opportunity presented to Latin America to articulate digital television technology (as stated in the Japanese-Brazilian standard) with a “peculiarly educational” children’s programming (that aims at other than formal schooling). I will argue towards the opportunity of generating public policies for digital television in order to create channels segmented for the children’s audience. I will also highlight the cultural potential of the “educational” contribution that some children’s television programs can make, particularly those targeted at children from birth to 10 years old, that is, the pre-school and elementary school stages. The text presents quantitative and qualitative information that points to a complex interface between audiovisual language with its semiotic-cultural forms of edu-entertainment (education and entertainment) and the viewing situation at home in interaction with the receiver’s neurobiology.

Indeed, the choice of most Latin American countries for the Japanese-Brazilian standard for digital Television (ISDB-T with MPEG 4) offers the possibility for increasing the number of television channels available on terrestrial digital television, that is, more channels that the audience can get without paying for cable or satellite delivery. This technological standard will allow a station to broadcast two high definition signals (HD) and up to seven signals in standard definition (SD) on the same physical 6 MHz channel. With this technique, a condition that provides a greater abundance of television channels appears as a valuable socio-cultural opportunity: Public broadcasters can operate a segmented digital channel aimed at children’s audience. I propose, therefore, a public policy in television to embrace this digital opportunity and create a children’s channel with specific educational programming; education different from that which occurs in formal schooling and education targeted to a audience that should have social priority. Children’s television must be understood as a way of segmented programming produced and broadcast for a children’s audience; segmentation is therefore by audience rather than by thematic grouping, as in other television genres. Current children’s television requires abandoning the traditional demonizing of television and weighting more reasonably the “educational” specificity that children’s television can offer, as well as its limitations.

1. Changes in the Children’s Television Landscape

A. “Baby TV”

Baby television channels (that is, those developed for and aimed at infants) have been created in the 21st century, with special programs. Israel created The Baby TV Channel in 2003 in a partnership between

Fox and other participants (www.babytvchannel.com). The Baby First TV Channel appeared in the United States in 2006 (www.babyfirsttv.com). Fox Life’s cable network has transmitted some programs of the Israeli channel to Latin America on Saturday and

Sunday mornings; DirecTV offers Baby First TV by satellite. Both are channels free of commercial advertising. These segmented Baby Television channels target babies from 0-2 years and differ thematically from children's channels aimed at the 2-6 year-old audience, which were created mostly in the early '90s.

Limitations of Baby TV. No programming or television program has the potential to substitute for the irreplaceable triple stimulation of the family for babies from 0-2 years (toddlers): auditory stimulation, visual stimulation, and tactile-kinetic stimulation. In fact, at birth a baby's brain and perceptual potential have a significant degree of immaturity. The sense of sight requires visual stimulation from the environment in order to achieve the qualities of a mature sight. Although the sense of hearing is highly developed, since the baby hears the voices in the womb, oral language acquisition requires verbal and gestural interaction. The baby develops language when others address it with words it perceives as gestural addressed to it; a controlled environment with voices, sounds, and music stimulates both culture and hearing. A baby's brain immaturity and neuronal plasticity require, then, gestural, verbal, and affective interaction with parents and siblings to achieve harmonious development and maturity; neither television nor other media can substitute for family interaction (Céspedes, 2008; Singer & Singer, 2007).

It is precisely the irreplaceable family interaction that led to the Superior Audiovisual Council of France (CSA, by its French acronym) on July 22, 2008 to prohibit national channels from broadcasting programs for children under three years, even programs specifically designed for them, mostly taken from Baby TV channels: "Pas d'écran avant trois ans" ("No screen before three years") was the motto of the awareness campaigns to parents (www.csa.f; www.cntv.cl). The French measure arose out of a fear that family stimulation to babies would be dropped, with parents and caregivers relying rather on the supposed potential of a permanent "television companion." The lack of interaction would provoke a delay in the acquisition of native language; television overexposure might cause overstimulation leading to sleeping difficulties, hyperactivity, and lack of concentration. Some even fear an overstimulation merely of technological stimulus that could create monstrously unbalanced brain developments. Such fears rest on the idea that children's stimulation by television is

two-fold: first, from the semantic content designed for a program; and, second, from the specific stimulation of language and audiovisual technology, what McLuhan called "the medium is the message"—mere sensory stimulation without semantic understanding of the contents. People feared that immature brains could develop hypertrophy when faced with no decodable semantic technological stimulation or with an ongoing technological encounter for many hours.

The CSA decision has attracted much controversy. The CSA announced its decision to the British regulator OFCOM, which made a public statement on July 23, 2008, indicating that it would study the background provided, adding that Baby First TV provided information to parents about the best way to use the programming. OFCOM advised against exposure for long periods of time; it added (not without a touch of sarcasm) that OFCOM made decisions based on evidence and so far they had no evidence that the contents offered were harmful for babies. Juan Enrique Huerta examines the six arguments on which the French Council decision rested and evaluates them negatively according to other background research (Huerta, 2010). From a practical point of view, the drastic nature of the measure recommended by CSA in France is likely to increase the viewing of foreign channels available on cable and by satellite in that country. These aren't forbidden to provide the Baby TV programs, but must only publish a warning regarding the alleged damage they could cause. Another likely practical result of the measure will be an increase of the viewing of programs created for older children (by babies alone or possibly with their siblings); this way, kids supposedly "protected" by the censor will probably end up watching programs designed for older children and finally be exposed to much more visual stimulation. In addition to the likely ineffectiveness of the French measure, there is another consideration of a different nature: Children and babies currently live in multimedia environments—not just with television at home.

Reception studies with young children highlight the ability to understand the semantic content appropriate to the maturity of the viewer, reducing and delimiting the influence of mere audiovisual sensorial stimulation without understanding semantics. The content does matter, and from a very young age, conclude the studies on *Sesame Street* (Fisch & Truglio, 2001; Murray, Pecora, & Wartella, 2007) and on other educational programs with multidisciplinary consultancies (Linebarger & Walker, 2005). Behavioral problems

were attributable to viewing programs that were not produced with audiovisual forms particularly suitable for children (Schmidt, Pempek, Kirkorian, Frankensfield, & Anderson, 2008). Turning on television as a background companion for babies, without adults' discrimination of the appropriate programs for them, differs from viewing television as foreground, where there is a selection of appropriate programs, precisely for a child to learn from.

In March 2009 the Center on Media and Child Research, School of Medicine, Harvard University (www.cmch.harvard.edu) published a report where short-term measurements showed no positive or negative influence on the exposure of children under 3 years to television programs. There is, thus, significant disagreement about the influence of television viewing on children's development, particularly the youngest ones. Areas of agreement, on the other hand, include that:

- Unlimited time consumption is clearly not recommended,
- Television should not be used as background audiovisual company,
- Consumption should be selected with appropriate programs,
- It should be mediated by the family/school.

Potential of Baby TV. Baby TV channels that target infants between birth and two years of age could aid Latin American families who wish to encourage their children, but who do not know how to do so or who have major limitations for doing so. I should stress that this would be a limited support but can be valuable if it is framed, in my opinion, on three conditions: (1) programs designed to stimulate sensory development of hearing and sight—pleasant sounds without shrillness, soft music, colors, shapes, and movements; (2) the requirement of controlled exposure times; and (3) the requirement of effective adult mediation. The potential utility, then, relates not only to the quality of programs but also to the conditions of viewing.

Recent years have seen the appearance of available data, especially generated by public television stations and by specialists in television reception studies, about audiovisual characteristics of useful programs in Baby TV:

- **Visual stimulation** with figures, movements, and colors; different landscapes, sea and mountains, snow and rain; moving leaves, flying birds, various animals, movements, and colorful fish in aquariums, etc.

- **Auditory stimulation** with soft music and sounds without shrillness.
- **Voices** with loving expressions of moms and dads (not professional broadcasters or entertainers).
- Segments of **short duration** (between 1-5 minutes).
- Slow and calm **rhythm**.

While it may help auditory and visual stimulation, television does not allow direct action on the tactile-corporal relationship between family and babies, but only acts very indirectly through motivation. But actually the visual quality of some television programs can be an important stimulus for the maturation of the sense of sight; here there is a double level of stimulation: a basic one, where the mere visual stimulation (without semantic understanding) with figures, movements, and colors is a contribution to the visual-perceptual development; and a second level where—as the maturation of perceptual ability grows (and progress occurs in semantic understanding)—it is necessary to enrich the programming with different visual representations that would extend the smallness and limitations of visual-cultural environment in which the baby is living.

A public children's digital television channel, with a schedule to display segmented Baby TV programs can be an important help for nurseries and kindergartens in Latin America, a space where the last two abovementioned conditions can be achieved: controlled time exposure and adult mediation. It may also be a valuable aid to households living in material and cultural deprivations; in fact, it is quite unreal to ask for early infant stimulation and the availability of a cultural stimulating environment from illiterate Latin-American parents, or from families whose poverty leads them to entrust their children's care to a neighbor, or to relegate them on the status of "box babies." (This Chilean expression describes babies who are put to sleep and rest in plastic, wood, or cardboard boxes, as their parents do various tasks; it describes a situation of extreme lack of parental stimulation in environments of great poverty.) Poverty affects 34.1% of Latin-American households, that is, about 189 million people; 76 million of whom live in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.25 daily (CEPAL, 2009). Baby TV programs transmitted on a digital public channel can provide an important aid for the future of the existing babies born in poverty and highly unequal envi-

ronments, with serious socio-cultural immobility (UNDP, 2010). High-quality Baby TV programming, well dosed and encouraging family interaction is better than a deprived home without stimulation for the babies. It could supply an important support for women who increasingly work outside the home and need help available at home to encourage their children, who have often no access to a nursery and kindergarten. According to UNESCO, in 2007 the average schooling of children younger than 5 year old was 61.9% in Latin America, with only 27.3% in Guatemala, a country with less coverage. In Chile, preschool attendance is 37.4% (CASEN, 2009), disaggregating to 32.3% in the poorest quintile and 52.6% in the highest income quintile. As for the 4-5 year old group, those attending pre-kindergarten and kindergarten rises to 74.1% in Chile, which is low compared to Cuba (99.4%), Mexico (96.9%), or Ecuador (83.3%). At this time no regional assessment exists on the quality of nursery education. For Chilean parents, the concept of the kindergarten as a “nursery” still dominates, rather than the kindergarten as a place of educational stimulation (Treviño, Toledo, & Cortinez, 2010).

A segmented public channel for infants and preschoolers can thus help educationally with a specific double influence: sensorial perceptual development and the audio visual enrichment of the cultural environment, contributing to a better performance in further education.

B. Programs specially designed for preschool age and older children

But other changes have appeared in children’s television and these point to another “educational” specificity.

Recognition of the Children’s Audience on Cable.

First, according to Ibope regional quantitative measurements, there is an important shift towards the consumption of children’s channels on cable television by the Latin-American child audience; in fact, the trend in the annual ranking among all cable channels has for years been that the first four to five places constantly belong to children’s channels (Discovery Kids, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Disney Channel, etc.).

Qualitative reception studies among children help explain this high consumption of children’s cable. Children recognize themselves as the receivers of these cable children’s channels; they perceive these

channels as specifically designed for them, with specially appealing continuity voices and images; and they know that the channels transmit 24 hours a day, seven days a week just for them. Some of those cable channels have been segmented into a younger children’s audience (Discovery Kids, Nick Jr., Disney Jr.) and others towards older ages (Cartoon, Disney XD). Other channels follow the strategy of programing for younger children in the morning and, as the day goes on, exhibiting programs for older children (Nickelodeon). Thus, when children have the choice of picking cable television they choose these channels. While on broadcast television there are times slots with programs for children, on cable television there are channels specifically for children. They, as an audience, build in their minds and in their affections the perception that the “children’s television niche” lies on cable. This high consumption of children’s cable channels is very striking since only one third of households (on average) subscribe to pay or cable television in Latin America.

Television Consumption Motivations.

Second, information coming from the ethnography of children’s television viewing at home shows their motivations in the consumption of programs. School children return home from school psycho-somatically tired (performance status) because of the long day of study; sometimes frustrated and humiliated by their inadequate performance, by peer bullying at schools or from teachers; with a fatigue that certainly is accentuated in poor and malnourished children. When returning home from school, the existential-situational mood of children watching television is primarily to rest and relax both physically and psychologically. During this time, mothers feed their schoolchildren who eat and rest watching television. Sometimes, they simultaneously play, fight, read, do homework, or do similar things.

Neurobiology states that the transition from a performance situation to a rest situation is accompanied by a biochemical change made by the nervous-motor autonomic parasympathetic system. The system stops secreting adrenaline, dopamine, and other neurotransmitters related to attention and tension inherent to performance activities, and instead secretes endorphins and serotonin—neurotransmitters related to psychosomatic situations of relaxation and rest. The motivation to watch television at home is attached, then, with the need for rest. Home observation indicates that when schoolchildren (especially girls from modest homes) are alone and without adult

company, they watch more children's programming; they prefer cartoons, comedies, or series like "*El Chavo del Ocho*" (Televisa), allowing them to relax through laughter and to re-energize to resume their school work and homework.

The beneficial influence of humor for rest and revitalization is nowadays commonplace. It is a beneficent influence for which researchers have found a biochemical basis in the brain's potential to generate endorphins under the action of laughter. In general, adults appreciate humor programs as a contribution to their own rest; Avner Ziv (1988) has proven the utility of humor for the development of creative thinking in children. But teachers and adults in general have enormous difficulty to value humorous television programs for children, under the prejudice that humor would be a useless and irrelevant distraction and therefore a waste of time. That time will be better spent studying, doing tasks, and ultimately watching formal educational programs on television.

Ethnographies of the children's viewing situation at home shows different consumption patterns depending on the school time (morning or afternoon), on school time or holidays, and on social stratum.

- In the consumption situation of programs by children back from school, alone or with siblings of similar age: the children choose programs to watch.
- In the consumption situation of family programs, by a child with the mother and older siblings: the children submit to what older ones want to watch.
- In the consumption situation with parents at prime time: the child watches information and programs for adults, while accompanying parents in their viewing. The adults make the viewing decisions. Children often fall asleep during this viewing. In general, the child's motivation is not so much the semantic understanding of programs but, in a powerful way, the affective-somatic experience of "being together."
- In the consumption situation of programs viewed in the children's bedrooms with their own television sets.
- A different consumption situation occurs between weekdays and weekends.
- In popular sectors, the consumption of television doubles and triples in comparison to children of the upper stratum.

Children's viewing of programs *produced for children* forms a minor part of children's television consumption. The greater part of consumption (60-70%) consists of programs watched along with the family, older siblings, and adults. Children more typically consume programs targeted towards children when the children are alone and can make their own decisions about what they want to watch (the back from school situation, Saturday and Sunday morning, television viewing in their rooms). Television programs increasingly compete with multimedia presence in homes: DVD, VOD, video games, Internet, and others (Roberts & Foehr, 2008; Vandewater et al., 2007).

Semiotic Representation. A third aspect to consider is the change in the semiotic representation of children and adults within the children's television text. The first structural scheme of enunciation, produced in the early infant television, where an adult (present on screen or with a voiceover) leads the children's television program has run its course. Those television programs depicted the leading adult as "the teacher" or "uncle/aunt" (the representation of an presenter inspired by a school situation and kindergarten); the programs further depicted the child as a pupil, who should learn passively from adult wisdom. The "Ding Dong School" television program (1952-1956 on the NBC network in the USA) provides a classic example of this scheme.

(a) Instead, new programs symbolically represent children in an active and leading role, undertaking activities and tasks, exhibiting initiative, and showing themselves capable of creative and intelligent problem resolution. The cartoon series "Bob the Builder" (UK, 1999) and "Dora the Explorer" (USA, 2000) are emblematic of these changes of presentation. Another significant case manifesting this change occurred with the animated series "Blue's Clues" (USA, 1996), originally led by young live presenters-animators. In its sequel "Blue's Room" (2007), the leading adult disappears and Blue the little dog takes over conducting/presenting the episodes, and these episodes stay interactive for development of imagination and other skills. This change from adult-presenter to a symbolically represented child-presenter (little dog), allows (NOT causally determines) identification with the ludic protagonist and the represented skills.

The leading role of children has been inserted into the narrative form that the television text has assumed. The television text has evolved into a story

telling, which was initially ruled out on children's television, under the idea that child was not able to understand a story until a later age. The new finding that children can understand a story from a younger age led to the construction of narrative television texts, with different lengths suited to the children's ages. The television narrative story is very consistent with the audiovisual semiotics of dynamic signs that unfold over time. But besides the semiotic consistency, the story presents a "narrative epistemology" in which the human subjects understand themselves in terms of story, which gives unity to the story of their lives in biographical time (identity as *idem*) and in terms of an acting agent-protagonist of their lives too, different from others (identity as *ipse*); that is, identity which takes on an active aspect and not just a passive one as a memorizer or repeater of inherited cultural practices (cf. Ricoeur, 1996).

The adult's representation has shifted away from the initial role of a teacher but appears as other forms of expression, for example, as a minimal presence in programs with the children's leading role ("Dora the Explorer," "Backyardigans"); as an adult presence through only a friendly voice, confirming the child ("Pocoyo"); as motivators where adults encourage the children's leading role ("Sid the Science Kid"); as adults portrayed as clumsy, with values opposed to the children ("SpongeBob"). In many television texts leadership has moved towards the child with the adult represented in an assisting or support role. The representation of the children's leading role in television stories is consistent with the evolution of early childhood education towards environments and methodologies focused on a child conceived as active, capable, with diverse abilities that motivate the child toward personal choices (Morrison, 2005; Peralta, 2002).

The conception of the child as an active subject has led to various experiences that seek interactivity with the viewer at home, trying to overcome the limitations of current television. The new approach tries not only to maintain the child's attention on the screen (seen first on "Sesame Street") but also to evoke from the screen oral and gestural activity in the child at home. The activity increasingly spreads to other operational activities, made possible at home through Internet sites (drawings, games, music, dance, etc).

(b) The analysis of various children's programs, particularly cartoons, shows two other recurring struc-

tural representation patterns. Many television programs have ludic-dramatic patterns that serve as models for the narrative ideation of programs, in the sense that they are the creative basis of the programs. These patterns offer ludic-symbolic ways of representing or placing the child within the text (Fuenzalida, 2005).

Producers build many children's programs watched with joy by children with the basic interpellation scheme of the skilled child/clumsy adult: the clumsy adult character performs some activities poorly which an adult should do well. The scheme is eloquent because it represents, by contrast, skillful children's characters who perform what clumsy adults cannot. The scheme appears in contemporary television series such as "Inspector Gadget" (whose success moved it into a film): the adult, the very bungling inspector, despite all his amazing gadgets, depends on his little niece (Penny) with her puppy (Brain the dog) to solve the police cases.

This scheme appears in many cartoons such as "Yogi Bear," in the parents in "The Simpsons," in series such as "Ruff and Reddy," and "Foghorn Leghorn" (who boasts of teaching the young), and others. The movie industry has used this pattern with great success and to an enthusiastic reception by children in the "Home Alone" films (1990). These clumsy adults appear along with apparently weak and clumsy children such as El Chavo, Quico, or La Chilindrina in the series "El Chavo del Ocho." The ludic contrast scheme is very old: It appears in the comic carnival couple based on the opposition of a fat and a thin character or an old and a young one, or a large and a small one. It recurs in many humor shows, as for example, the hit show "31 Minutos" in Chile, which irreverently mocks a television newscast.

Children have fun with this representation/enunciation/interpellation because they live in a culture that requires them to acquire skills at home and at school (McGhee, 1988). This skill acquisition requires a long process with trials, errors, and frustrations; so, programs like these would cause relief and a lot of fun as children see incompetent adults who fail to do what they should skillfully do. The identification with children's characters, symbolically enunciated, which are able to successfully accomplish what adult characters fail to do causes even more joy and provides more confirmation of the children's capacities. This ludic scheme entertains children but it can also satisfy the emotional need to neutralize the fear of failure in a child under stress to

achieve certain skills, especially at school. Explicitly incorporating children's fears, the scheme appears in Charlie Brown and other "fearful" characters such as Scooby Doo, or Hardy Har Har; Courage the Cowardly Dog solves problems despite its fear; little Scrappy-Doo is the one who faces the ghosts, unlike his fearful uncle Scooby. Oscar Wilde used this humorous reversal scheme in his story "The Canterville Ghost" (1887) where the twin Otis boys terrorize the ghost of the castle.

Other basic generative patterns, remarkably attractive for children, appear in many cartoons. The scheme of the struggle between the weak and the strong provides the traditional scheme of "Tom and Jerry," of the series "Sheep in the Big City," of the incessant attempts of Sylvester the cat to catch Tweety Bird, of the clever Little Lulu and the boys, of Tubby against the West Side Boys, of Mickey against Big Bad Pete, of the Road Runner in order to elude Wile E. Coyote, and so on. In some epic cartoons the struggle has the added dramatic component of fighting against Evil, as in "The Powerpuff Girls," where child heroines face, with ability and skill, monsters and villains in the city of Townsville. The scheme also appears in the Russian folktale "Peter and the Wolf." The scheme has a role in cartoons featuring sports competition where the weakest kids face stronger ones that often cheat. Chaplin took this scheme with circus clowns and applied it to his short films, where he appears as a weak man struggling with a giant or other physically enormous characters. The same scheme appears in the relation of the weak-naive with the strong, such as Barney Rubble and Fred Flintstone, or the opportunist character, such as Abbott and Costello, Laurel and Hardy, and other texts.

In cartoons, the dramatic situation of the cat and mouse provides very attractive and very entertaining programming for children. Studies show that children usually identify with the weak mouse. According to Rydin and Schyller (1990), the cat symbolically represents the adult, with their monopoly of power and with their condescending attitudes, while the mouse represents the child—fast, playful and witty—who is smarter than the cat. Children's attraction for these cartoons arises because the scheme represents a primary process: It expresses fears and deep desires in a ludic language of symbols (Rydin & Schyller, 1990).

This interpretation of children's deep identification with ludic-dramatic patterns of representation/

enunciation/interpellation in cartoons closely relates, in my opinion, to the re-appreciation of traditional fairy tales made by the psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim. The fairy tales attract children because they confirm the weak child's ability to survive facing a world—complex, adverse, and violent—whose hostility can extend even to abandonment by parents or the peril of being eaten by ogres and witches (traditional tales have been condemned as "violent" according to the traditional criteria).

During storytelling the child enters a fantasy world, but the story could serve as symbolic confirmation of the child's capacities for growth. For Bettelheim, ludic narrative allows children to understand their emotions, to strengthen their selves by suggesting positive reactions to their fear in adverse and violent situations, and to overcome their anxieties, feelings of helplessness and weakness, indifference, and insecurity (Bettelheim, 1980). These motivations would explain the appeal of television stories about neglected children such as "Heidi," "Marco," and "Candy."

According to this interpretation, the identification of the children's audience with ludic-dramatic representation permits an emotional suggestion that opens new possibilities for self-understanding and action. Cartoons would no longer constitute "mere" entertainment but would serve as metaphorical fictions, with a ludic-affective enunciation confirming the ability of a weak child to survive in the face of an apparently stronger world of adversity. This formative-affective identification/utility would motivate the child to want to watch on television or hear with joy the same storytelling over and over again.

Ludic Imagination. In recent years the neurobiology of the ontogenetic evolution of the human brain has discovered that approximately between the second and fifth year an important synaptic development of the right cerebral hemisphere occurs. While the brain itself integrates both hemispheres, during this age period the child considerably develops his or her ludic capacities, manifest in free associations triggered from the imagination and fantasy (internal or external), in divergent thinking and visions of synthesis, and in capacities of the right cerebral hemisphere.

So the characteristic processing of the right hemisphere starts: fast perceptual decoding, perceptual integration in the form of images, mental development from the memory images file recovery (fantasy), movement associated with

rhythm and melody, domain of dynamic space, and elaboration of free formats without rules, which originates the game and the magic.

Human beings will never be more creative than in this period of life, the only time when he is socially allowed to let his imaginative strength flow without limit, his thirst for discovery and play, and endless imagination. (Céspedes, 2008, p. 27-28; cf. 36-39, 109-115).

Writers conceptualized the ludic game theme in various ways and from various points of view in the 20th century. Huizinga in *Homo Ludens* (1990) traced the origins of the game in classical Greek culture and presented a broad conceptualization as representation and as competition, which contrasted with a reduction of the ludic concept to children's games. Huizinga shows the broad ludic concept persists in several important cultural manifestations in Western history: the fact that in English and German the verbs "play" and "spiel" allude to dance, theater, and music works; in addition the substantives "player" and "spieler" allude to the performers of those plays. Both of these associations show the old connections between play and other cultural activities. The same happens with the root "jouer" in French. Piaget stressed the importance of playing for the cognitive and intellectual development of children, through exploration and manipulation in a free environment more than in a task performance. Maria Montessori built her educational system where children's play serves as a cornerstone; Dewey and Vygotsky include in the ludic game concept a child's personal activity and social interaction (Morrison, 2005). We have seen that Bettelheim stressed the importance of ludic fiction for the symbolic experience of primary fears and as a way to direct children to self-strengthening suggestions.

Studies by the child psychiatrist Winnicott (1971/1992) highlighted the mother's role in children's playing in a double dimension. On one hand, ludic interaction is basic to generate a safety relationship for the baby—of joy, of feeling loved; for the baby and child to enjoy the game with the mother is to enjoy their own reality: "la jouissance de sa propre existence soutenue et suscitée par le sentiment d'être avec l'autre" ["the joy of its own existence sustained and provoked by the feeling of being with the other"] (Flahault & Heinich, 2005).

Moreover, by sharing the game—and accepting the game of "as if"—the adult helps the child to rec-

ognize and distinguish reality, introducing boundaries. The spoon is and is not the little plane during lunch. In the game children learn to recognize reality; but before cognitive recognition, the relationship of joy and the sharing with the other, through the game, should be established.

In this conceptualization of ludic relationship, the game becomes a transitional space necessary to construct a "self," with the separation of the self and its limits ("I am I, you are you"), to build autonomy and independence from others, to connect with reality distinguishing childish fantasy from what exists with self-independence. For the child, to play and to imagine is not to abandon reality, but the way to recognize reality. If this process of self-recognition and recognition of reality does not occur, nor the construction of autonomy and acceptance of limitation, infantile narcissism will not be elaborated and will continue in the adult with delusions of personal omnipotence and mythomany.

Current studies on the ontogenetic development of the baby's brain show an ontogenetically programmed emergence towards the ludic game; this provides a neurobiological basis for the re-conceptualization of the ludic game as the competence to build emotional ties important for the generation of self, to provide an impulse towards world exploration through making and experimentation, and to give a creative basis for art and fiction.

Such ludic-imaginative competence provides a foundation for children's enjoyment of fictional television programs with fantasy themes, like animals and machines talking and interacting as playmates of the children, or undertaking ludic-fantasy activities and trips (Singer & Singer, 2007; Singer, 2003). But this will also explain the child's appreciation for a figurative animation aesthetic (but one remaining non-realistic to the Euclidean mode) with fantastic body deformations, graphics influenced by abstract painting and cubism, imaginary spaces, inconsistencies, expressive sounds, humor, and so on. The thematic and aesthetic success with the child audience of shows like "SpongeBob SquarePants" (Nickelodeon, 1999) and "Backyardigans" (Canada-USA, 2004) is incomprehensible, and even threatening, for a rationalist epistemology that does not understand or appreciate the ludic-imaginative ability of children for visual fictional texts.

2. Specific Autonomy of Children's Television's "Educational" Potential Regarding School Education

This section highlights the specificity of the potential "educational" contribution that these television shows can make. We should understand specificity as a peculiar influence that is potentially "educational" (not as an effect or a deterministic power), a typical peculiarity of television language in interaction with its viewers, existentially located in Latin America homes. This specificity makes the "educational" influence of television autonomous regarding the functions of formal education, in particular in school.

The traditional view of what people considered "educational" in a children's television program was defined by adults and was associated with competences taught at school. Television programs that improved children's cognitive and scholarly performance (pre-school readiness, reading, math, scientific information, etc.), and that stimulated them to acquire certain habits and socially desirable values were considered as "educational and quality" programs.

(a) Unlike school instructional practices, the contents of the television programs already mentioned relate to children's needs and affective motivations. The educational potential of this kind of television has separated itself from the cognitive approaches and contents of formal school education (and therefore even of television representation of the "professor" as a symbolic figure), and has assumed a specific positioning in social and emotional aspects, such as the children's role as protagonists, as the promoter of self-esteem and confidence in the children's own internal capabilities to face the challenges of growth, and as a force for overcoming frustrations and adversity (empowerment and resilience).

In the entertainment programs that provide psycho-somatic rest through humorous pleasures of recognition and ludic identification, children can emotionally enjoy and feel their positionings for attitudes of joy and gain strength to grow in the world. These television programs try, then, to strengthen the very affective and attitudinal areas that are underserved in formal school education.

(b) From the symbolic-semiotic point of view, some producers design television programs with ludic-dramatic patterns for affective entertainment and learn-

ing. Patterns such as those featuring children in leading roles and those that highlight the skilled and clever child enable pleasurable recognition, emotional identification, humor, and anecdotal learning. These ludic-dramatic forms for entertainment and learning differ greatly from the analytical-rational ones associated with the systematic socialization agency of the school, such as inductive or deductive logic, dialectics, analytical comprehension, and techniques such as a systematic curriculum, memorization, and exams. The ludic television patterns contrast with the school scheme, where the adult-teacher teaches the child. This precisely shows the inconsistency between the school adult-child relationship and the feeling of superiority resulting in the child from the classic forms in the humor genesis—the "carnival opposition."

These programs are examples of a current trend in children's television production that seeks to represent the child's affect, making explicit the child's feelings and emotions, presenting symbolic fictions where children can recognize their positive and negative aspects, and showing personalized processes of change and mastery over errors and oversights. Thus, these television programs direct attention less to the cognitive learning area and more to the field of the children's own affective exploration. Through ludic identification they try to strengthen children's self-esteem and confidence in their internal abilities of achievement and growth. Unlike the alienating Freudian conception, Jauss (1982) conceptualizes cognitive-emotional identification to account for the process of involvement/distance of the viewer with fictional characters: the audience's experience of itself in the (fictional) other; the other symbolically represents the self, and the self with the opportunity to learn about itself from the fictional character.

New children's television programming approaches could contribute also to strengthening the capacities of resilience, which many today consider a very important factor to overcoming social adversity (Cyrulnik, 2003), which on average affects about 40% of children in Latin America. Again, the "educational" potential of these new programs for children is related more to the development of skills included under the

“emotional intelligence” concept (Goleman, 2001), now considered essential for personal, professional, and citizen-democratic development.

Here one should note the influence of new post-rationalists and post-Cartesian conceptions that highlight the value of emotion in anthropogenesis: “consciousness begins as feeling,” in Damasio’s (2000) formulation. According to Damasio, the human structure—ontogenetic and existentially—is bi-perceptual (emotional and rational); the mere rational-linguistic consciousness does not provide enough for learning to live in an appropriate human and social way. Without the emotional understanding of oneself and of others, and without learning emotional perception, personal, social, and professional life becomes much more difficult. James Heckman, the Nobel Laureate in Economics (2000), advocates for educational policies aimed at early childhood which strengthen the “soft skills” (that are already predictors of future performance of the person). He argues that both cognitive skills and emotional skills are equally important (Cf. *La Tercera*, Santiago, Chile, November 28, 2010, pg. 27). Here we stress that new children’s television programming successfully focuses on the field of emotive-attitudinal skills. Even in the adult the act of perceiving with linguistic consciousness remains a primary emotional perception at the base, valued as essential for the understanding of the environment and social relations. In current television we have two very interesting protagonists who manifest the contrast between their professional success and their poor emotional intelligence and ability to interact with others and lead a fuller life: *Dr. House* (Universal, USA, 2004) and *Doc Martin* (Film & Arts, ITV, UK, 2006).

A. Entertainment and education

The reception and understanding of these television programs require a redefinition of the relationship between ludic-fictional television entertainment and education. Both in Europe and Japan, television programs, particularly those carried on public television, were initially conceived as educational because they helped formal instruction in the schools, particularly in those countries devastated by World War II. The initial idea of schooling through television has today evolved into the most efficient model of instructional television, operated by specialized and segmented channels; other countries, because of the high cost and difficulties with formal instructional television, have moved their expecta-

tions onto the Internet, hoping to improve the quality of school education.

From the analysis of current children’s television programs there emerges, however, an “educational” potential which does not refer to the more cognitive subjects of the school curriculum, but to the emotional skills and attitudes to approach life. The generative patterns already mentioned constitute the formal structure of television entertainment; they are the ludic-dramatic semiotic forms in those children’s programs. Television entertainment has a formal ludic-dramatic structure of content, from whose fictional plots a useful learning for life can be acquired; this audio-visual learning at home come less from a rational conceptual analysis and more from the emotional recognition and identification with the representation. Education and entertainment are embedded, rather than dissociated, as rationalism typically does. These semiotic forms of entertainment allow us to understand the great attraction of cartoons, and the shift of the children’s audience to cable television, which exhibits more of these cartoons. Television entertainment does not appear, therefore, as external sugar added to a distasteful liquid, but as a visual semiotic form to express a different content.

These patterns thus recover (and audiovisually adapt) the ancient Greek *paideia* where the formation of values was proposed by and from Homeric fiction—a *paideia* which Plato opposed as he advocated for conceptual rationalism (Jaeger, 1992). The formative capacity of these ludic schemes provides a positive guidance for children’s television production, rather than focusing the discussion on children’s television in a more American thematic, such as violence in television programs. But these generative schemes do not alone guarantee the production of programs of great excellence; other factors, such as creativity, the degree of development of the television industry in each country, and the level of training of human resources, are involved in the success.

The iconic-indicial semiotic specificity of the audiovisual language, enables this particular “education.” The indicial language of specific signifiers—the main ones are the face and gestures in the “significant body” (Verón, 2001)—differ from those in reading and writing with their abstract signifiers that favor abstraction and conceptual/rational analysis. Audiovisual language recovers in a post-industrial era primary human communication (phylogenetically and ontogenetically) with an emphasis on gestural, facial, and bodily

signs. These inherently emotional signs involve the receiver and help to establish personal group cooperation and to develop relationships, even in work settings. In fact, the television viewers establish through their own perceptual capabilities privileged relations for decoding faces and emotions. The particular concrete indicial signifier and the human perceptual interest in faces, along with the audiovisual dynamism, tend to draw the viewer into audiovisual narratives that contain personal stories, as well as narratives with ludic stories. (Sponge Bob's case is remarkable because there is no analogous representation of the child, as in Dora the Explorer, nor specifically ludic elements, as in the animals in Backyardigans, but the embodiment in an inanimate being; children's identification occurs more likely with the personality of SpongeBob.) As with any other language, visual language involves some specific forms of viewing. From a semiotic point of view, it favors recognition processes and identification in the receiver, who actively interacts from the position of the existential situation

of the program viewing (cf. Fuenzalida, 2002). Television strictly linked to the school curriculum has an institutional position in specialized and segmented educational channels whose viewing takes place in the classroom; this programming has specific production rules aimed at contributing to school achievement. On the other hand, television viewed at home, in a reception situation characterized by entertainment for relaxation, can acquire value, according to this analysis, for its association with emotional skills and attitudes towards daily life, in edu-entertainment formats as mentioned above. Both these aspects of television programming have tended to be separated from institutional settings and to be disseminated through different channels with specialized content and with different reception situations. However, both types of channels can be complementary, one (or the material currently available on the Internet) to contribute to the educational curriculum of school and the other for edu-entertainment at home, and with formative potential in the affective domain.

3. Industrial-Cultural Policy in Digital Television

This proposal, based in the specific "educational" potential of an important set of television programs being currently broadcast, ends by proposing public policies towards enacting children's public channels in digital television. Latin American public television would then receive a cultural mission to positively contribute to child development, with the specific audiovisual potential described above.

This new approach does not seek to replace, extend, or remediate the cognitive task of the school. It stresses the semiotic-cultural forms of audiovisual language, recovering rather the influence of educational entertainment. The ethnographic analysis of children's home viewing and the understanding of the neurobiology of the viewer in rest situations allow the production of programs with semiotic forms of ludic entertainment, but also with educational aims in the affective-attitudinal field. These educational goals now find enhanced support in studies related to emotional intelligence. Years ago, Jesús Martín Barbero, in his book *De los medios a las mediaciones (From Media to Mediations, 1987)*, restored the cultural-communicational value of the Latin American emotional matrix,

discredited when compared with the European Enlightenment rationalist matrix. The present approach extends that reevaluation and focuses it on children's television programs, showing its importance for the cultural-emotional development of the child. In addition to developing perceptual stimulation and broadening the cultural environment by Baby TV, I propose here also a set of affective-attitudinal values proper to citizenship and humanism: autonomy and an active role, initiative and creative curiosity, tolerance and diversity, pleasant joy with ludic creativeness, and imaginative rest that may broaden cultural horizons. Thus, Latin American public television can leave its shameful and useless government propaganda practices and move towards a cultural mission for positive contributions to child development, using its own ludic-emotional and dramatic language. I do not intend this list as a closed repertoire of humanistic and citizenship values. It leaves a great deal of room for other subjects such as dealing with bullying, failure, pain and death, loss and accidents, new forms of poverty and discrimination, negative values, current diseases such as obesity and drugs, consumerism, global chal-

lenges, and information about emerging cultural areas such as Asia and Africa.

In my interpretation, we have the possibility (the necessity) of coordination through many different levels: digital technology that enables segmented channels; audiovisual content aimed at children, professionally produced with the significant semiotics of a narrative dynamic; ludic representation of characters that can induce emulation of values by identification; and attitudes needed to establish a more egalitarian, democratic, humane and fraternal culture. The conceptual-verbal language of the illustrated academy does not typically express these values but the values can reach a mass audience in televised ludic stories of educational entertainment. As the printing technology facilitated the mass spread of literacy, today digital-audiovisual technologies can

help—through visionary public policies—to create a humanistic and citizenship culture, one of cooperation, tolerance, entrepreneurship, equity, and solidarity. This is not impossible. Significant and successful television programs for toddlers and other children have been produced in USA since the '90s onwards, driven by a public policy enacted in the U.S. Senate Television Act. The '90s Television Act required television stations to broadcast at least three hours per week of educational content for children, produced with expert advice. On February 26, 2007, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) penalized Univisión—the USA's largest broadcast Spanish chain—with a \$24 million fine for having evaded the Act, having listed as “educational” its children's telenovelas. At that time, it was the largest fine imposed by the FCC on a company.

4. Production and Reception

The evaluation of many efforts, especially those from televised formal education programs aimed at educational institutions, shows that the weakest link in the system appears in viewing; it is relatively easier to put a television signal on the air, but large gaps occur in the reproduction and reception at school (often there are no receiving sets or they are damaged and there is no budget for replacement, or they are insufficient in quantity and quality, etc.); and even greater gaps appear in the proper management of television programs by educational staff.

The distribution of children's channels in the existing Latin American structures raises four issues that need some discussion:

- The national or regional physical distribution of the digital television channel. The ideal is to use one of the new digital channels that public stations will have. As already occurs in some children's channels, the channel need not broadcast 24 hours a day; it can schedule children's programming during daytime hours (0700-2100 hours, for example). The rest of the schedule could program material for parents and educators or else the station could feature late broadcasts for youth. Moreover, today television programs must have a complement in the growing possibilities of personalized interaction via the web.

- Provision of facilities with television sets for digital reception, with the right screen size. In addition to the availability of television sets, the facilities should have funds for their maintenance and replacement.
- The fluid integration of television programs with the regular daily work in the schools. Studies have shown that that school officials use television programs to fill in (for absent teachers, for example) or to replace interpersonal and group activities.
- The availability of material that complements the programs, to guide educational staff about the successful use of television programs; for example, a monthly brochure and a web page with the programs and the recommendations for proper use and mediation, both at the educational establishment and at home. Many providers today enrich complementary material with a huge variety of educational toys and marketing materials, which not only constitute a very important source of economic support but also offer tactile operative relationships that can make the audio-visually perceived symbolism real for children.

A children's thematic channel can address a greater audience than just children. Some television slots can be scheduled for training staff working in educational establishments, and other times reserved

for parents at home. The growing number of cable television programs targeted at parents about educational problems shows the demand for this content.

Viewers of a television channel targeted to toddlers and children may then be categorized in six concentric circles: babies at day care, toddlers at preschool, children at school, children at home, teachers of those institutions, and finally parents in their homes.

A. Operation and management

It is by no means advisable for an Education Secretary to take over the management and operation of a children's television channel such as the one proposed here. An Education Secretary could or perhaps should participate in the design of content for television programs (provided that there is an understanding of ludic-educational specificity here addressed), to insure adequate supervision in the viewing within educational establishments, and the provision of complementary material. Television signal distribution and programming operation should be managed by a specialized company, such as an efficient public channel with an updated administration. The channel should also be in charge of the production of programs, whether produced "in house" or purchased from domestic and international suppliers. Efficient television channels have, better than any other public agency, the knowhow for the operation and management of the channel, with flexibility and speed in decision making. To manage an educational children channel, the public station could be associated with other channels interested in airing programming of this nature (as is the case with Kinder Kanal in Germany), with public agencies related to television, universities, and even private foundations.

Finally, we must briefly refer to the financing of a children's public digital channel, especially if we desire that its programming air commercial-advertising free, or with very restricted commercials, both in time and in the subjects advertised. The channel should be integrated into a multi-operator company of several television channels, for cost savings; a children's channel should operate focused on screening programming, finding suppliers of independent external productions, which lowers cost and increases the creative base. The channel should receive contributions from government agencies related to early childhood education and school education; it should negotiate private contributions and those from international agencies. There is a large field for the development of program-related toys, which have not only a func-

tion of economic gain but of didactic pleasure in the children's play. Nowadays, the export of Latin American programs serve as a prerequisite for cultural-economic support, taking advantage of the "cultural complicity" and the Spanish language. Thus, public competitive funds should allocate more points to projects with export horizons.

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A response to “The Cultural Opportunity of Children’s TV: Public Policies in Digital Television”

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The political and cultural opportunities of children’s TV are without any doubt an important topic to look further into within media studies but, as much as I welcome Valerio Fuenzalida’s argumentation, I also find it to be a rather problematic one in our understanding of media usage and practices. In my response to the paper at hand I hope to make the relationship between media and the young audience a more complicated one, placing it in the context of everyday life and thus moving away from media-centrism. I will point out from my perspective—inspired by media anthropology and media ethnography—the missing links that, in my view, need to be added and reflected upon in any discussion on children, media, and social change.

A. Television and social change

In his paper Fuenzalida places the production and consumption of children’s TV within the discourse of social change, having a strong belief in the role of media to become a driving force for social transformation in today’s society (cf. Castells, 1996) with a specific concern for children in Latin America. “... today digital-audiovisual technologies can help—through visionary public policies—to create a humanistic and citizenship culture, one of cooperation, tolerance, entrepreneurship, equity, and solidarity” (p. 15). Thus, the transformational effects of educational children’s programming (combating poverty and promoting equity) are brought to the fore as a valuable socio-cultural

opportunity in addition to formal schooling. The discussions on how new technologies may be a vital link to strengthen democracy is not something new, which is also pointed out by Fuenzalida. Similar ways of reasoning as above could, for example, be seen in the '80s by Barber (1984) on the capabilities of cable television across America: "The capabilities of new technology can be used to strengthen civic education, guarantee equal access to information, and tie individuals and institutions into networks that will make real participatory discussion and debate possible across great distances" (p. 274).

Thoughts about children's television being a helping means to bridging the "the knowledge gap" in society could already be seen in the '60s and '70s (Rydin, 1996, p. 16). The reasoning of Fuenzalida and Barber can be compared with the optimistic thoughts of Tapscott in the late '90s on children's usage of digital media: becoming tools for empowerment and liberation. All statements above are embedded in the paradigm of technological determinism (cf. McLuhan, 1964) where technology is seen to fundamentally change not only our ways of living but also offer changes in terms of values and norms, which in turn has implications on how we perceive ourselves and others. By being involved with electronic and digital media young people are seen as gaining more knowledge compared to their parents, teachers, and other elders, which in turn may have consequences for educational and democratic participation (cf. Tapscott, 1998). Researchers like Postman, on the one hand, point out the "death of childhood," as the dividing line between childhood and adulthood has become blurred due to electronic media. Postman and those who follow him perceive media as powerful and influencing children in a negative way:

The new media environment that is emerging provides everyone, simultaneously, with the same information. Given the conditions I have described, electric media find it impossible to withhold any secrets. Without secrets, of course, there can be no such thing as childhood. (Postman, 1983, p. 80)

The abovementioned lines of thought exemplify two opposite standpoints concerning the role of media among children but both apply a technology-led theory of social change. These contrasting positions, however, have been criticized for their essentialist perception of childhood (conceived as either innocent/vulnerable or as media literate), of media, and of the

deterministic view on the relation between them (Buckingham, 2000).

B. From text to context: Sites of meaning-making

Instead of taking an "either/or" stand between these positions, I advocate a more contextual approach in media research where we take into account the diversity of children's lives and ongoing changes in our media environment along with their linkages with children's learning processes, formations of identity, social relations, and general participation in society. Thus, with an "everyday life" perspective on media usage and the evolving meanings to mediated practices, we must reflect upon the social embeddedness of technologies in an attempt to gain insight into the potential of media in relation to the important issues raised by Fuenzalida. For each study at hand, the concept of context must of course be clarified as it is quite often applied in an unproblematic manner without any clarification on how the interplay between contexts as micro-settings and as macro-structures (including various power structures in society) operate in the meaning-making processes around media in day-to-day practices and experiences. With this as one's point of departure in research, narrowing down our understanding of the educational and even political and cultural potentials of children's television viewing to symbolic representation becomes problematic. Finding insight into these matters requires more than focusing on narrative structure, symbolic forms, and content within the framework of cognitive, neurobiology, and information-processing approaches. This main critique of mine touches upon a crucial question within media and communication studies—how do actually meanings emerge?

While Fuenzalida throughout his paper relates meanings to symbolic representation, I call for an "everyday life" perspective, moving away from a media-centered approach to a child-centered and constructivist approach (Gergen, 1985; Livingstone, 1998). This approach stresses the need to examine the media, and the meanings attached to these, on the basis of a young user's experiences and within specific contexts, i.e., the daily life of the child. Thus, any attempt to understand media usage and various mediated practices must include relevant social, political, and cultural contexts on macro as well as micro level and how these in turn are interlinked. For example, the issue of meaning appears here as central, highlighting a term that made its entrance to the field of media studies in the beginning of the 1970s. But despite its long histo-

ry, “meaning” remains a rather vague term, which has come to be associated with words such as comprehension, interpretation, activity, negotiating, sense-making, understanding, and decoding (Livingstone, 1990). No present consensus exists among researchers on the concept of meaning as it can be discussed and analyzed from several different theoretical perspectives like the psychoanalytical, cognitive (e.g., schema theory), or semiotic perspectives. When pointing out that a gradual shift has taken place in research, Alasuutari (1999) talks about the constructive view as the third generation of audience research within cultural studies: moving from an interest in those mental processes through which people perceive and interpret media content, to a focus on its effects, to the social embeddedness of the media user who belongs to a community with his or her interpersonal networks. In other words, a child’s media usage is not merely a question of physical access but also a matter of, for instance, psychological and social availability. It concerns his or her media skills, cognitive capacity, interests, and attitudes toward a medium, habits, group membership, and so forth. In addition to the abovementioned types of resources, we must include cultural accessibility, exemplified by those different discourses that the general public (like parents, teachers), the media industry, and governmental authorities provide concerning, for example, childhood/the view of a child and the potentials of a specific medium as already stated by Chaney (1972) in the beginning of the ’70s.

How social processes relate to psychological processes constitutes one of the main disputes among constructionist researchers (Gergen, 1998). With a social constructionist perspective I want to stress that cognitive pictures and representations do not work in isolation but are rather interwoven in those practices in which they are put into use, thus evolving in relation with others in certain daily settings. It is precisely these contextual links of children’s viewing and television programs and a critical reflection upon these that I miss in Fuenzalida’s argumentation on the political and cultural opportunities of children’s TV. Generating public policies for digital TV with the ambition of developing children’s channels and having social change on the agenda demands a wider research focus than merely examining the reception situation, and the viewers’ neurobiology and generative schemes. In addition, applying a contextual approach implies that anyone working with development communication, including policy-makers, must

make use of multiple means, as also advocated by Waisbord (2005). “Because social learning and decision-making are not limited to the consideration of media messages but also involve listening and exchanging opinions with a number of sources, interventions cannot solely resort to mass media” (p. 81). This approach diverges strongly from the rather stimulus-response thinking in effects research as can be seen in the many studies mentioned in Fuenzalida’s paper such as “Cartoons would no longer constitute ‘mere’ entertainment but would serve as metaphorical fictions, with a ludic-affective enunciation confirming the ability of a weak child to survive facing an apparently stronger world of adversity” (p. 10).

C. Children’s programming in a convergence culture: Swedish public service

While Fuenzalida initially raises the question about the technological convergence and its opportunities in the current multimedia process, he does not, unfortunately, discuss this further. Today much attention is turned to digital media, like the Internet, as its characteristics of interactivity, hypertext, and convergence of different media forms can involve its users differently in comparison to traditional media and thereby have implications for the relation between producer and user. A central concept in current media landscape is convergence which Jenkins (2006) describes as “a situation in which multiple media systems coexist and where media content flows fluidly across them” (p. 282). Media researchers, but also policy-makers, face new challenges with today’s media convergence, where previously separated mediated expressions and information combine and integrate, which in turn creates new patterns of media use and new identification with media content, thus challenging the previous rather top-down flow of communication from producers to the audience. As stated earlier, I claim that Fuenzalida’s desire to develop public policies for digital TV with an educational contribution, examining the reception situation linked to the symbolic representations of a program is not enough. We must also take into account producers’ perspectives on themselves, their knowledge, traditions, habits, daily practices, and organizationally established understanding of the young children, as well as the various formats of entertainment-education (as for the latter, see further Tufte, 2005).

Since Fuenzalida highlights the importance of developing public policies for digital television, I will

now turn attention to the license-fee financed Swedish public service (SVT) and their own children's channel (in Swedish: *Barnkanalen*). UNESCO clearly states the importance of public service (PSB) media as a facilitator for democratic development.

Through PSB citizens are informed, educated, and also entertained. When provided with pluralism, programming, diversity, editorial independence, appropriate funding, accountability and transparency, public service broadcasting can serve as a cornerstone of democracy. (UNESCO, 2010 qtd. in Carlsson, 2010, p. 18)

Despite deregulation of broadcasting markets in the 1980s and 1990s the Nordic public service media's in-house production for the young audience, compared to many other countries, stayed almost the same, reflecting its particular position and status (Rydin & Sjöberg, 2010). Swedish children, in the 3-6 year age group, spend about 101 minutes a day watching television; a figure that has stayed almost the same the last 15 years despite the introduction of the Internet. About 50% of 3-year olds in Sweden use the net; activities such as games and watching video dominate. As the children turn 6 to 7 years old about 90% use the Internet sometimes (Findahl, 2012). One of the most popular TV programs among children aged 4 to 9 is *Bolibompa*, which is produced by Sweden's public television broadcasting service; having social inclusion as one of its main aims, it competes with channels such as *Disney* and *Nickelodeon*. Besides being broadcast on a daily basis on the SVT's children's channel, it is closely linked to *Bolibompa's* webpage (www.svt.se) with TV programs, games, puzzles, etc.

A regulatory framework, decided by the parliament and government (in Swedish: *Sändningstillstånd*), sets the aims of Swedish television and has a specific paragraph devoted to children's programming. As can be seen below the mission is ambitious:

11§ SVT will offer a selection of high quality programming for and in collaboration with children and young people. The programs will be on the children's own terms, providing news and factual programming, as well as cultural and artistic experiences from different regions of Sweden and the rest of the world. SVT will develop an extensive range of both new and in-house programming in a variety of genres for children and young people. SVT will specifically develop program activities for older children and adolescents. SVT will pay particular attention to the language needs of children and young

people who belong to linguistic or ethnic minority groups, as well as children and young people who use sign language as a primary means of communication. (Author's translation)

The current research project "Organized producers of net culture," funded by the Swedish Knowledge Foundation, features the claim of merging media production studies with audience research. I and a colleague study 12 year-olds' Internet usage and, more specifically, their experiences of Swedish television and specific contents directed towards the young audience as well as the various strategies put in use for specific programs (involving both the traditional TV programs and digital media) by the producers (Sjöberg & Rydin, forthcoming).

In a convergence culture, such as depicted by Jenkins (2006), the need for "production with" the young audience becomes a necessity. In order to meet the logic of digital media such as collective intelligence, user-generated content, and networks (Flew, 2008), media production companies are forced both to re-evaluate their relations with the audience and also to develop new formats that better fit the young audience's tastes and preferences. Swedish television has introduced a wide range of online services since the mid-1990s; they have, at this time, committed many resources to develop a competitive site in order to survive in an increasingly commercial children's culture. One example of a new format to better fit the young audience in a convergence culture is transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2006), which has been tried out by the Swedish public service, where producers use various forms of media platforms to tell a story. Interactivity becomes a keyword where the aim is to involve the young audience in the creation process and, for example, to give them some influence on the story line,

with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best—so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels and comics . . . (Jenkins, 2006, p. 95)

The regulatory frameworks state that Swedish television should make programs for and in collaboration with children and young people, and here transmedia storytelling appears as a suitable format for this type of co-operation. Participation in media production and interaction with media content involve a new type of media logic, raising new questions on its potential for empowerment among the young. However, the

ideological struggle taking place within the “digital turn” between the professionals and amateurs must not be ignored (cf. Jenkins, 2006). These have consequences on the conditions for participation, which in the end might only turn out to be a simple means of creating audiences as commodity rather than citizens (Sjöberg & Rydin, forthcoming). Precisely these “struggles of meaning” and negotiations between young citizens and traditional producers need further attention and critical examination in the field of media and communication studies if we want to gain more knowledge about the social-cultural opportunities of television as stressed by Fuenzalida. Thus, the use of entertainment-education for development communication becomes in this context a matter of “Who participates in developing the content of the strategy and narrative?” (Tuftte, 2005, p. 162).

D. Methodological challenges and the young media audience

As much as I welcome Fuenzalida’s discussion on children’s educational TV programming and the possibilities of social change, I would argue that any attempt to gain more understanding on making “conceptual, political, and strategic links in order to design cultural policies in the audiovisual industry, which contribute to development, to equity, and to both humanistic and public (or citizenship) values” (p. 4) cannot merely consider or find its explanation within the framing of the semiotic-cultural forms of audiovisual language. Taking a constructivist stand, as advocated in this paper, implies that besides elaborating on contexts (including the production processes) and meaning-making processes, we must also ask ourselves what is actually meant by a children’s perspective and what methods media researchers have at their disposal to grasp the complexity of today’s media landscape with, for example, its emerging new formats like transmedia storytelling and its implications on the notions of education and social change. Communication scholars have not conducted much ethnographic research with younger children below six years old and we face several methodological challenges in letting these children have a say in research (for further discussions on these matters see Sjöberg, 2010; Kondo & Sjöberg, forthcoming). It is very easy to homogenize young people, simply referring to the categories of children, youth, etc., a mass that experiences the world in similar ways, neglecting the diversity behind these concepts due to, for instance, age, social class, gender, ethnicity, or geographical loca-

tion. In other words, we must develop new child-centered and user-generated methods and explore them in media and communication studies. We must allow the involvement of children in their everyday life in order to create well-informed data for any public policy recommendations on television programming in terms of children’s citizen-democratic development.

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Young Children's Learning from Screen Media

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Dr. Fuenzalida begins his article by asking if media can become “a key place to think about development, combating poverty, and working for equity” (Fuenzalida, p. 4). This question was famously addressed in the U.S. by the creators of the long-running program, *Sesame Street*, which began airing on U.S. public television stations in 1969. The success of this program to address both the academic and the socio-emotional needs of children has spurred more than 20 international co-productions of this program, as well as the creation of hundreds of educational children's series aired on broadcast and cable channels in the U.S. In fact, today there are more than a dozen national cable channels devoted exclusively to children's programming. The top three providers of children's content in the U.S.—the Public Broadcasting Service, Nickelodeon, and Disney—together currently offer nearly 100 educational programs for children.

But television is not the only electronic medium available to children in the U.S. The extent to which American children are growing up with all kinds of media in their homes is striking. From print media

through screen media (television, computers) to mobile technologies (iPods, tablets, cell phones), American children increasingly live in homes that enable them to have media as part of their lives during nearly all of their waking hours. According to a 2011 Common Sense Media study of a national sample of over 1300 parents of 0–8 year olds, American children live in homes with unprecedented access to media. Among the key findings:

- 98% have television in the home (68% with cable)
- 72% have a computer in the home (68% high speed Internet access)
- 52% have access to mobile devices at home
- 42% have TVs in their bedrooms (30% of children under age 2)

Children use screen media at very young ages, both as babies sitting on their parents' laps and as toddlers and preschoolers watching television and videos on their own. According to Rideout (2011), U.S. children begin using television around 9 months of age. Seventy-five percent of children under 8 use screen media on a typical day, and many use a variety of

screens. Focusing specifically on preschoolers (ages 2–4), the survey discovered that on a typical day, 73% watch television (average 77 minutes per day); 36% watch DVDs (average 36 minutes per day); 12% use a computer (average 12 minutes per day), and just under 10% play video games on a console or mobile device (average 13 minutes per day).

The researchers discovered relatively frequent use of educational media. About one in four children under 8 regularly watches educational shows on television, while 8% use computers to play educational games, and 7% access educational content via mobile media. Of particular import to this issue of *TRENDS*, the authors note a continuing—and widening—digital divide and “app gap.” While lower income children have the same access to broadcast television as their higher income peers, they have less access to cable television, computers, the Internet, and mobile devices. This disparity highlights the continuing importance of broadcast television as a provider of quality educational programming for children.

Fuenzalida’s call for the creation of public policies in Latin America to create digital television channels segmented for the child audience echo those of U.S. advocates beginning in the 1960s. One of the most active and influential groups that lobbied for policies to promote the positive uses of television was Action for Children’s Television (ACT). ACT’s founder, Peggy Charren had this to say about their motivation: “Television, viewed selectively and in moderation, can encourage children to discuss, wonder about, and even read about new things. Above all, it can lead them to ask questions” (Charren & Hays, 1982, p. 17). Never advocating for censorship, but always requesting rules for more quality content for children, ACT was instrumental in acquiring the passage of the only piece of legislation related to children’s programming in the U.S., the 1990 Children’s Television Act.

Key to the creation of any such policy is research evidence showing not only the need but the potential positive impact of implementation. The next sections will review research evidence of the potential of digital media for children’s education.

A. Special audience

The media audience comprised of young children, particularly children ages 0 to 6, has a unique set of issues related to learning from media, especially screen media. Young children’s cognitive abilities influence both attention to and comprehension of media messages. In this section we focus on how

young children make sense of media messages, highlighting the cognitive capabilities necessary for learning from screen media.

The Language of the Screen. Screen media use words, sounds, and images to communicate with viewers. In order to make sense of and learn from these messages, young viewers must attach some meaning to both the audio and the visual features of the medium. Research has indicated that children’s learning from screens is enhanced when the language and form are appropriate to the viewers’ cognitive abilities; conversely, learning is hindered by language and forms that are not comprehensible to the viewer.

Children’s attention to and comprehension of screen media change as children age. In infancy, perceptually salient features like movement and sound effects attract attention. With age and experience, however, children learn strategies for watching television and are less influenced by perceptual salience, instead using their knowledge of formal features to guide their attention to informative features such as dialogue and narrative (Huston & Wright, 1983; Anderson & Lorch, 1983).

Children learn through experience to associate certain features with certain content, and that features themselves convey information. For example, Huston and Wright (1983) discovered that preschool children associate child voices with child-directed material and adult male voices with content for adults, and thus direct their attention to content they perceive as relevant to them. As well, children learn from repeated exposure how to interpret the features themselves. They acquire the ability to effectively recognize and predict content when viewing specific production techniques (see Bickman, Wright, & Huston, 2001 for review). Anderson and Field (1983) demonstrated that comprehension of the filmic technique of *montage* was greater for 7 year olds than 4 year olds, but that children of both ages were able to infer some types of implied connections between discreet scenes in a televised narrative when exposed to this type of formal feature. The feature itself, then, was shown to be informative for young viewers.

From Screen to the Real World. For screen media to be effective educational tools, children must not only attend to and understand the messages, but they must see how the information can be applied to the real world. But when do they connect mediated representations to their real life counterparts and see the information as useful (rather than merely interesting)?

Research has shown that for children to apply mediated information to the real world, they need to develop two complementary skills: the capacity for symbolic understanding and the ability to imitate a model.

Symbolic Understanding. Children often cannot recognize that something that is very interesting in and of itself can be a source of information for an analogous, real world situation. In studies, children shown a toy Snoopy doll hidden in a model room do not look for the real Snoopy in the same place in the actual room without assistance until age 4 or 5 (DeLoache, 1995). With varying levels of assistance, however, children as young as 2½ searched for the real Snoopy doll in its correct place in the real room.

Based on the kind of assistance required for children to solve this task (e.g., using pictures instead of the model), it has been suggested that younger children's difficulty with the model room paradigm is that they cannot see the model room as a source of information because they are interested in the model itself (DeLoache, 1987, 1991). Some of the most compelling evidence for this hypothesis comes from an experiment in which children were convinced that the large room had been shrunk using a shrinking machine (DeLoache, Miller, & Rosengren, 1997). In this case, children as young as 2½ easily found the Snoopy in the life-sized room after seeing the toy Snoopy hidden in a smaller room that was then converted back to its real size "by magic."

Imitating Live Vs. Mediated Models. Other studies have examined the effectiveness of video representations at motivating children's actions. In one study, children demonstrated different search patterns when looking for a real toy in a real room after being shown a model toy hidden in a model room depending on how that information was conveyed to them. Children were more likely to search in the correct location for the toy if they were instructed by a live model rather than a videotaped model (Troseth, Saylor, & Archer, 2006). Research with babies and toddlers has found that the youngest viewers successfully imitated live demonstrations—even after a 24-hour delay—but were poor at imitating televised demonstrations (Barr & Hayne, 2000; Hayne, Herbert, & Simcock, 2003; Meltzoff, 1988).

This "video deficit" appears to persist until 30 months of age (Hayne, et al., 2003) and often requires as many as six repetitions of the procedure before children are able to imitate televised demonstrations

(Muentener, Price, Garcia, & Barr, 2004). One reason proposed to explain the "video deficit" is that children may initially view electronic media as inappropriate sources of information about the real world. This judgment about media, then, likely hinders transfer of information from one domain to another, *even when the cognitive abilities are present.*

Some research has supported this claim. Crawley, Anderson, Wilder, Williams, and Santomero (1999) explored how much information 3- to 5-year-old children learned from either one or five exposures to a *Blue's Clues* episode. They tested for learning of educational content and entertainment content, as well as whether children transferred concepts from games in the episode to different stimuli. They found that children performed worse on the transfer test than on the other learning tests, even after repeated exposures to the episode. Another study discovered that preschool children were less likely to transfer solutions after watching a video than after being read a book (Richert & Abrego, 2007).

The Role of Interactivity. Researchers have suggested that various aspects of interactivity may accelerate children's cognitive development (Calvert, 1999; Krendl & Lieberman, 1988; Papert, 1980). By allowing children to organize information, provide structure to the activity, adjust the material to suit children's needs and abilities, and receive feedback, interactive technologies may encourage processing that enhances children's learning and may increase their metacognitive abilities by prompting them to think about their cognitive strategies.

In summary, the above findings suggest that young children have unique perceptual and cognitive difficulties in learning from screen media when the content and formal features are developmentally inappropriate. In addition, children's difficulties in learning from screen media at a young age are exacerbated by problems transferring between the screen and the real world. But what about when the content and forms *are* developmentally appropriate? Can screen media be effective teachers?

B. Young children and learning from the media

A large body of research suggests that young children do learn from watching and interacting with screen media and that what children learn depends on the content presented. While there is substantial evidence of children's learning of anti-social behaviors

and attitudes from screen media that are excessively violent, sexual, sexist, racist, and promote unhealthy eating habits, this essay will focus on the evidence of prosocial effects of screen media use. We use the categories designated by the 1990 U.S. Children's Television Act to define educational content for children. Recognizing that children's educational needs are both academic and social, the Act specifies that every broadcaster in the U.S. must, as a condition of licensing, provide three hours per week of programming designed to "further the positive development of the child in any respect, including the child's cognitive/intellectual or social/emotional needs" (FCC, 1991, p. 2114). This Act, while unevenly applied across the television markets in the U.S., ensures that children who do not have home access to cable television, computers, or mobile devices still have access to age-specific planned educational content.

Addressing Children's Social/Emotional Needs.

Radio, television, film and other products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities, our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male and female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, or sexuality or "us" and "them." (Kellner, 1995, p. 5)

Socialization is the process of learning the values, beliefs, perspectives, and cultural norms of a society. Traditional agents of socialization include family, educational and religious institutions, and peers. As well, numerous studies have documented the powerful role of media in the socialization process (see Signorielli, 2001, for review), especially in the development of social role schemas. According to Berry and Asamen (2001), the concept of social roles is based on the principle that each individual tends to occupy or is perceived to be in a position in groups to which he or she belongs, and other people tend to behave and agree on certain expectations concerning his or her behavior. In other words, societies group individuals according to characteristics that have meaning in that society—that is, by race, sex, age, income—and develop expectations for people in different groups. These social roles are used by individuals in society to develop a self-image as well as expectations of others.

Media images can impact the development of schemas for social roles through the representation of different characters. Recent content analyses of content directed to children show a mixed picture. Larson

(2002) discovered that a majority of commercials during children's programs featured mixed race groups, and that children of different races were shown interacting together. However, just 1% of the commercials in her sample featured non-white children exclusively. She suggests this perpetuates the notion that ethnic minority children need the presence of white children to validate their presence. Bang and Reece (2003) also examined child-targeted television advertisements and found that "the symbolic world portrayed in children's advertising appears to be highly diverse with considerable minority representation." (p. 61). The authors do warn, however, that while representation *in number* has improved in recent years, there are still problematic patterns in *types* of representations. For example, the authors note that African American children are most often shown in advertisements for food products, and that ethnic minority children are rarely shown in family or domestic settings.

Davis (2003) examined the characters in commercials during breaks in children's cartoons and found a more equal representation of male and female characters; she also reports, however, that some stereotypes do endure: males were more likely to be shown in active roles and at work, while females were more likely to be shown as passive and in domestic settings. Baker and Raney (2007) examined 70 superhero characters in children's cartoons appearing in June 2003 and found that one third of these characters were female and shown as powerful and capable of fending for themselves. Compared to their male counterparts, however, female superheroes were portrayed as more emotional, excitable, attractive, and superficial.

These stereotyped representations can be powerful socialization agents when children identify with characters and imitate their appearance and behavior. As well, these representations can be used by young viewers to develop expectations about others, especially those with whom children have no real-world experience. According to Berry and Asamen (2001): "The possibility of children developing stereotypical ethnic, gender, class, and religious social views is ratcheted upward when the media frequently repeat these faulty portrayals using popular characters and when the values and behaviors in the child's home offer few, if any, competing positive images" (p. 365).

There is ample correlational evidence associating television viewing with children's stereotypic conceptions of sex- and race-roles, but often the direction of effects is unclear. Do media images cultivate stereo-

types in young viewers or do young viewers choose media representations that fit their social role perceptions? In an early study, children as young as three years old who watched more television were more likely than lighter viewing peers to stereotype occupational roles (Beuf, 1974). Other studies discovered significant positive relationships between frequency of television viewing and degree of sex- role stereotyping in children (see Huston et al., 1992).

The mechanisms by which children learn from stereotyped representations are the same ones they use to learn from non-stereotypical ones and there is evidence that racist and/or sexist attitudes can be reduced through exposure to counter-stereotyped images. For example, the positive interaction of different ethnic groups on *Sesame Street* was shown to positively influence preschool children's intergroup attitudes (Gorn, Goldberg, & Kanungo, 1976). Other research showed that prosocial interactions and non-stereotypical portrayals in children's programs could lead to reduction both in prejudice and traditional sex-role attitudes (Calvert & Huston, 1987; Johnston & Ettema, 1982).

Television's ability to influence other types of attitudes has been shown, as well. Bissell and Hays (2011) studied the impact of television viewing on children's perceptions of overweight and obese people, and found a negative relationship between exposure to positive portrayals of overweight television characters and children's scores on an anti-fat bias scale.

Addressing Children's Cognitive/Intellectual Needs.

Over the past 50 years, a number of planned educational television programs have demonstrated the power of television as an educational tool. In the United States, *Sesame Street* is the primary television show to demonstrate that well-planned, educational programs specifically targeted to the needs of children at specific ages can successfully teach a planned curriculum. According to the research presented below, children can learn their numbers, letters, science information, math information, and much about the social world from well-produced, educationally-oriented screen media.

Exposure in the preschool years to programs designed to be educational has been positively associated with increased vocabulary (Linebarger & Walker, 2005; Rice, Huston, Truglio, & Wright, 1990), higher scores on standardized measures of problem solving and flexible thinking (Anderson, Bryant, Wilder, Santomero, Williams, & Crawley, 2000), and higher

grades in school (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, & Wright, 2001). Much of this research has been conducted to examine the effects of *Sesame Street* on young (3- to 5-year-old) viewers. In a major longitudinal study, Rice et al. (1990) demonstrated that *Sesame Street* viewing at age 30 to 36 months predicted vocabulary scores at age 5, controlling for a variety of family factors including parents' education, family size, and parents' attitudes toward television. The authors argued that watching planned educational content as preschoolers set children on a positive trajectory for schooling and that the benefits could be attained even when parents did not co-view *Sesame Street* with their preschoolers.

Studies assessing the effectiveness of Nickelodeon's *Blue's Clues* also discovered immediate and potentially long-lasting effects of viewing this program on children's problem-solving skills, especially for regular viewers. A two-year longitudinal study of preschoolers found that regular viewers of *Blue's Clues* outperformed their non-viewing peers on measures of problem-solving and flexible thinking, and were more systematic and successful in their problem solving (Bryant et al., 1999). Repeated viewing of the program showed even greater learning effects, as children who viewed an episode five times showed better comprehension and higher levels of problem-solving skills than children who viewed the episode only once (Crawley et al., 1999).

Anderson et al. (2001) conducted an analysis of high school students' educational achievement and found that adolescents who were frequent viewers of *Sesame Street* at age 5 had significantly better grades in English, science, and mathematics and read more books for pleasure. These students also expressed less aggressive attitudes and reported higher levels of motivation to achieve. In other words, there is substantial evidence that well-produced, educationally-sound, and developmentally-appropriate screen media can positively impact children's immediate learning and set them on a life course of learning which persists at least through high school.

The recent proliferation of baby media and the positive response of parents to these media prompt us to ask about the effectiveness of these as teaching tools. Whether and what babies learn from these media is a topic of major interest as researchers examine the claims of baby media marketers about infant learning from baby videos. As the earlier discussion of the video deficit suggested, it is not clear

at all how much or what babies are learning from baby media.

In contrast to findings on the video deficit effect, however, even children younger than 2 have demonstrated learning from a televised model, especially when the modeled behavior is very simple, (e.g., Meltzoff, 1988). There is also some evidence from observing babies watching television in their homes that children around 2 years of age can learn new words from television (Lemish & Rice, 1986). These findings suggest that within certain facilitative contexts, young children can benefit from exposure to educationally-focused screen media. In short, children around two years old have demonstrated learning and transfer effects from screen media use if the content is very simple and developmentally-appropriate and if the exposure is repeated and occurs within a familiar environment. The extent to which babies (children under aged 2) learn from screen media is still not well understood.

C. Conclusions

There has been controversy surrounding children's exposure to and learning from screen media as long as these media have existed. This controversy has often centered on children's exposure to violent, sexist, and advertising content on television. However, current research suggests that screen media can also serve a positive role in educating young children, and this evidence supports Fuenzalida's proposal to use digital media strategically in Latin America to supplement and enhance young children's educational experiences. Despite the evidence of a deficit in learning from television at very young ages, much of the research reviewed above suggests that educationally-focused media targeted to the particular cognitive abilities of children at particular ages can be successful at teaching children.

One of the important implications of these findings is the potential usefulness of television as a means of educating children. Consider the case of children who are growing up in at-risk homes. Many children live in homes where they have less access to educational resources, like books or tutors. Providing these children with educationally-focused media may prove to be an important educational resource.

Thus, developers and parents interested in providing the most positive educational screen media to children should consider the perceptual and cognitive issues related to young children's learning and capitalize on those factors most likely to increase chil-

dren's learning and transfer, rather than developing and providing programs from which children are developmentally unable to learn. Here we briefly reiterate the characteristics of content that increase its educational value:

- *Formal features*—Production elements have been consistently shown in research to be informative for children in guiding their attention to age-appropriate content. Those features that successfully capture children's attention *at different ages* should be paired with informative content to maximize children's learning.
- *Synthesizing Narrative and Educational Content*—Since children's cognitive capacity is limited, narrative (story) and educational content (information) should be integrated. This avoids the trap of children allocating attention to one (usually the narrative) at the expense of the other (usually the information).
- *Repetition*—Literal repetition—viewing the same content over and over again—enhances comprehension and learning. With very young children, repetition does not decrease attentiveness, and has been shown to increase audience participation.
- *Interaction*—Children's active engagement with the content—video, video game, computer game/program—increases learning and facilitates metacognitive abilities and transfer of learning.
- *Co-viewing and mediation*—Co-viewing adults can direct children's attention to informative parts of the content, provide explanations of difficult content, and encourage active participation.

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Children's Television Programming Opportunities

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In his paper on opportunities by which children's TV can enrich a country or region, Valerio Fuenzalida addresses whether current policy and creative stars are aligned for a Latin American revolution in culture-specific, educational children's TV. In fact, this revolution is already well underway. Oddly enough, many of the movement's roots can be traced halfway around the world to Germany.

Since 1964, the international children's television festival, PRIX JEUNESSE, has taken place at the headquarters of Bavarian public broadcasting. For a week every other year, Munich becomes the world capital of children's television where 400 producers, writers, executives, researchers and others, from more than 50 countries, watch and discuss dozens of programs from around the world, created for kids from tots to teens. At the end of the week of screening and debate, participants vote and their results honor the most outstanding and innovative shows. The prizes are important, but the real benefit lies in the intensive exchange of experience and expertise that extends beyond the formal elements of the festival, into late nights in Munich's beer gardens. PRIX JEUNESSE has been called "a market of good ideas."

Many years ago, the festival organizers recognized the shortcomings of this structure. As the festival was held only every other year, much momentum was

lost in the intervening time. Moreover, only those fortunate enough to attend the festival benefitted from immersion in this master class environment.

Thus was born the PRIX JEUNESSE "Suitcase"—a traveling exhibition of the festival's best and most intriguing entries. The Suitcase could be packed with a wide range of shows, or with a hand-picked and highly-targeted collection aimed at specific needs or interests.

Latin America was among the first regions to see the power of the Suitcase, and the collection traveled from Mexico to Chile, in venues from high tech libraries to remote villages (where shows were projected on a sheet). The turnout for these screenings revealed a hidden regional resource—a collection of wildly creative but professionally isolated independent producers, writers, and storytellers. Of course, animation experts and festival organizers had known for some time that such artistry existed; however, without a nucleus around which to build—a market or broadcasters, in particular—the community remained atomized.

Latin American media leaders quickly recognized the inherent power in its creative community, and set up venues for professional exchange. The "TV de Calidad" conferences in Colombia—dating back to 2000—led directly to a "Compromiso Nacional de Televisión de Calidad para la Infancia," developed in

cooperation with broadcasters, producers, academics, and even Colombia's First Lady. This national pledge to improve the quality of children's television led to government investment in home-grown, carefully-researched program development and production.

Argentina, as well, offers a fine example of the energy and power that emerged from the growing Latin American network. In 2007, a children's block called "Paka Paka" launched on the Ministry of Education's television channel, devoted substantially to national or regional programming; by 2010, it had been spun off into its own channel.

Chile has hosted a number of pan-Latin conferences, too, often under the auspices of the *Consejo Nacional de Televisión* (CNTV). The Consejo offers competitive funding for children's programming, airs children's and educational shows on its Novasur service, and has adopted a special outreach program in media literacy.

Maybe no Latin American country has embodied the revolution in children's media more than Brazil. That country has been engaged in indigenous production with international reach for some time. It is interesting to note that TV Cultura produced the most iconic Suitcase program—the one that, by a huge margin, has been featured most often and widely. "The Boy, the Slum and the Pan Lids" is a five-minute story that invites viewers into a Sao Paulo favela and reveals the humanity, life, and humor within; it was made for a global exchange of short, culturally-rooted stories.

Brazil hosted the 2004 World Summit on Media for Children and Youth, and has since played host twice to the PRIX JEUNESSE IberoAmericano—a Spanish- and Portuguese-only competition modeled after the international children's TV festival. PJIA winners go on to compete in the global contest. The festival is the centerpiece of a multi-day conference and workshop on the nature of quality in children's programming, an exchange of expertise and experiences that leads to coproduction, program exchange and professional development. The festival is coordinated by Miodiativa, a Sao Paulo-based organization devoted to promoting excellence across South and Central America, via exchange among producers, telecasters, researchers and advocates.

Not only is the stage set for a Golden Age in Latin American children's media; the actors are on that stage and honing their craft. If asked to say why the region has come so far, so fast, I would cite seven "C's" that, in the experience of the American Center for Children

and Media, are necessary to establishing a healthy children's media environment. They are:

- **Cash**—While money can't rescue a bad idea, lack of it keeps good ideas from ever getting off the ground. Many innovative and emerging Latin American children's projects have gotten initial funding via government and broadcaster targeted funds or competitions.
- **Clout**—Because adult audiences are larger and more profitable, children can become an underserved audience unless they have an advocate at the highest levels. In Latin America, the various festivals, conferences, and professional networks have done an outstanding job of inviting and engaging allies at very high levels in media and government, such as the Colombian First Lady.
- **Commitment**—Especially as children's attention is increasingly scattered across devices and platforms, telecasters need to have patience and faith that their programming will find and engage its audience. The children's media business requires long-term strategy, not a reliance on quick hits. That's why it's been gratifying to see stand-alone, highly-promoted children's services emerge in Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, and elsewhere.
- **Competence and Connections**—Children's media producers need the skills and motivation to do their best work, and they need a network of experts (in child development and learning, but also in best practices in entertainment and educational media) to guide them. These elements have been key to Latin America's regional development. No part of the world has hosted more national, regional and global convenings about pathways to children's media excellence. The hunger to learn and improve has been evident in the choices made in organizing those events: they commonly include international experts, educators, and researchers, and hands-on workshops in addition to panels and screenings.
- **Creativity**—Tracking Latin American children's programming over the past decade of festivals, exchanges, and Summits, it's been possible to see unmistakable and unique styles and strategies emerge. The two most apparent signature elements are broad humor in animation and puppets, and a strong commitment to showing children's real world and reflecting their interests in live action.

This last attribute speaks to the seventh "C."

- **Children**—Throughout Latin America, content creators are developing ideas that speak to a terrifically important philosophy for smaller or developing countries, voiced long ago by the head of

children’s programming at the Danish public broadcaster: “How does a child who wakes up in the morning and turns on the television know where he or she is, in the world?”

TV as a Learning Environment

As we prepared this issue of COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS, we received No. 25 (2012) of *Television*, published by the Internationales Zentralinstitut für das Jugend- und Bildungsf Fernsehen (IZI) in Munich, addressing the topic of television as a learning environment. This yearly special English language edition of the journal offered a fortuitous coincidence that allows TRENDS to introduce *Television* to our readers and to provide a brief summary of the work of our German colleagues.

Burkhard Fuhs, Maya Götz, Leonie Herwartz-Emden, Elke Schlote, and Angelika Speck-Hamdan (2012, pp. 4–10) examine the learning environments in children’s television from a pedagogical perspective. They identify five findings in the literature: (1) learning is a process of appropriation; (2) learning is always bound up in processes of identity formation; (3) learning gains happen where there is free space; (4) every person learns differently; and (5) girls learn differently, as do boys. Within the acknowledgment of different learning styles, they point out several approaches, well known to teachers: learning numbers and facts, learning context through narrative, learning logic, learning through existential questions, learning through aesthetics, learning through relationships, and learning through action. Several of these approaches tie in with Professor Fuenzalida’s proposals for specific children’s channels in Latin America.

Fuhs and his colleagues then draw from the 2011–2012 “Quality in Children’s TV Worldwide” pool to indicate some best practices among knowledge-themed programs: programs that let children explain what matters to them, project-oriented programs (on gardening, for example), and aesthetic and poetic programs.

Another research group, consisting of Andrea Holler, Maya Götz, Anne Egerer, Veronika Geiger, Diana Nastasia, Sorin Nastasia, Kristen McGregor, Meryl Alper, Lynn Whitaker, Alexandra Swann,

Aldana Duhalde, Alejandra Rabuini, and Pablo Ramos Rivero, present the results of an international study that polled over 1,400 children (aged 7–10 years) in five countries about their learning experiences from television (pp. 11–13). Children in the USA, Cuba, and Argentina identified cartoons while those in Germany and the UK pointed to educational programs and documentaries. The children told the researchers that they felt they learned facts, models for behavior, skills, and the perception of dangers. Some of this clearly overlaps with the social content that Professor Fuenzalida emphasizes, in which the televised learning spaces allow children to gain relational skills.

Another study of over 1,500 children in Southeast Asia, reported by Götz and Judith Schwarz, examines children’s (ages 7–16) perceived learning from the program “I Got It!” (pp. 23–25). Here they found that children said that knowledge with “particular and novelty value” was easiest to remember as was “information which gives a more complex understanding of something . . . well known and taken for granted” (p. 24). The children also reported that they liked programs that showed a topic in several ways and that allowed them to engage with a topic as agents of their own learning.

Professor Götz also offers a helpful summary of current brain research (pp. 20–22). Here she goes into greater detail than does Professor Fuenzalida by presenting research on perception, attention, various kinds of memory (explicit memory, procedural memory, emotional memory), the processes of forgetting and remembering, and the use of mental images. As more of this research becomes available to designers of children’s television, they in turn recast the programming. Götz concludes, “Children’s programs which see things from a child’s point of view, and which know children’s ways of appropriating the world and take them seriously, can facilitate important positive experiences of learning—and can supplement or provide a counterweight to learning at school” (p. 22).

Schlote (pp. 26–29) presents the results of another reception study—of which elements of children’s television fostered metacognitive skills. This study recruited 165 German children (9–13 years old) and asked them about learning not just facts but also methods to learn. The children liked programs that featured experiments that they could copy at home as well as programs that teach them how to build things by step-by-step instructions. However, it is not enough to simply demonstrate; for metacognitive learning the shows need to help the children determine what to do when an experiment fails, to guide them to a number of strategies, and to work out their own solution finding process. Schlote concludes “Children closely follow the visuals in knowledge programs, and can understand and reconstruct processes and sequences if they are engaging and well-presented. . . . Children differ widely, however, in terms of both prior knowledge and interest in problem-solving processes” (p. 29). Clearly those with more experience do better at discovering new strategies. Therefore, Schlote recommends that children’s programs can improve in two areas: “they may diversify problem-solving strategies and they may actively spark metacognitive reflection, so that children become more aware of how to plan and implement strategies” (p. 29).

The issue of *Television* also gives the results of studies on the kinds of presenters children prefer (same gender, young adult, normal weight, people who looked like themselves) (pp. 30-31) and on the incorporation of learning into everyday life (pp. 33-37).

Finally, and particularly relevant to the issues discussed by Heintz and Wartella in this issue of *TRENDS*, *Television* No. 25 addresses cross-platform learning. Shalom Fisch, Richard Lesh, Elizabeth Motoki, Sandra Crespo, and Vincent Melfi (pp. 42-45) report on a three-year study of cross-platform learning of mathematics among 8–11 year olds in the U.S. The 672 children divided into different experimental groups used either no media, a single medium, or a combination of DVD and Web-based tools. The children preferred the multi-platform approaches and those who did so showed greater learning. The researchers suggest that the use of multiple media enables children to transfer skills more easily and thus to cement their knowledge. In addition, the design of the programs and websites provided scaffolding and used narrative as supports for learning. In fact, they conclude, convergent media approaches may well provide better learning outcomes; designers should actively incorporate them.

The Internationales Zentralinstitut für das Jugend- und Bildungsf Fernsehen offers excellent resources in German and English on “children’s, youth, and educational television.” Their website may be accessed at <http://www.br-online.de/jugend/izi/english/home.htm>.

Book Reviews

Gray, Jonathan. *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. New York: New York University Press, 2010. Pp. xi; 247. ISBN 978-0-8147-3194-9 (cloth) \$75.00; 978-0-8147-3195-6 (paper) \$23.00.

In Chapter 3 of *Show Sold Separately*, Jonathan Gray argues that paratexts are often seen as “crass consumerism” that are both annoying and detestable to audiences (p. 82). He contends that this distastefulness has also probably turned off media scholars. However, paratexts enrich source texts as a sort of glue that holds fragmented textual experiences together. These paratexts and related phenomena are Gray’s focus. A couple of recent examples offer some scene-setting. Disney’s summer 2012 major release *Brave* is accompanied by a host of paratexts that enrich (detract from?) the film as the source text. A visit to the promotional web site offers an opportunity to view the theatrical trailer and to buy lunch boxes, backpacks, and Halloween costumes, and to sign up for a sweepstakes for a trip to Scotland. Reviews of the movie draw from other texts such as *Beauty and The Beast*, Pixar shorts, and *Cars 2* as intertextual points of reference. Similarly, on July 3, 2012, *The Amazing Spider Man* opened in theaters across America. Its hype occurred weeks earlier with significant tie-ins with Burger King and Target. These paratexts exist alongside the films but, Gray argues, are as significant as texts themselves in understanding socially-constructed meaning in a media-saturated world. As Gray himself puts it, “I call for a screen studies that focuses on paratexts’ constitutive role in creating textuality, rather than simply consigning paratexts to the also-ran category . . .” (p. 7).

Gray first addresses the nature of paratexts in “From Spoilers to Spinoffs: A Short History of Paratexts.” Simply put, a paratext is a peripheral text that is part of a larger source text. These paratexts could be studied as texts themselves, but their synergy is a major focus of Gray’s book. In a short section on the terminol-

ogy (pp. 6–7), Gray draws on the *Oxford English Dictionary* for definitions of numerous terms, notably “hype” (“over the top” or above and beyond the ordinary); “synergy” (drawing for the Greek word “sunergos” or “working together”); and the prefix “para,” which means “beside, adjacent to” or “beyond or distinct from, but analogous to.” The author discusses the process of transference that occurs as the messages that are created as paratexts “borrow” meanings from cultural ideas in order to co-opt those meanings resulting in cultural reabsorption of the now-changed original message. While Gray draws from advertisements to exemplify how sponsors of television programs can associate themselves with cultural attributes, one may consider the recent Olympic sponsorships as an example of products that borrow Olympic values and then see the sponsored products and services reinserted into the culture laying side-by-side, so to speak, with those values.

Chapter 2 takes the notion of paratext further where Gray discusses the origins of the meaning of a text. One would normally think of meaning derived from a text as occurring as a reaction to the textual experience, a sort of cause and effect relationship among text, audience, and meaning. Gray argues that the meaning of a text begins to develop well before the actual public experience of a source text. The author examines two cases to exhibit the phenomenon of the origins of a text: a promotional campaign on the New York subway for ABC Television’s “Six Degrees” and two trailers for the film *The Sweet Hereafter*. Each type of paratext serves to frame the text or perhaps to define a genre of text. A current parallel example is a pair of recent teaser trailers for *Man of Steel*, one of which includes the voiceover of Russell Crowe who plays Clark Kent’s biological father who advises his son that

You will give the people an ideal to strive towards. They will race behind you. They will stumble. They will fall. But in time, they will join you in the sun. In time, you will help them accomplish wonders (Clark, n.d.).

Thus, the textual journey of the new *Superman* movie to be released at least a full 10 months from now has begun as fans everywhere examine the trailer on YouTube and develop its potential meanings and discuss its differences from other *Superman* films. Gray also discusses the semiology of movie posters as precursors to meanings of films (texts) that they advertise.

Paratexts also serve to infuse value as a function of the texts. In Chapter 3 Gray draws on examples from

reality television, notably NBC television’s “The Biggest Loser,” to illustrate how the array of paratexts is essential in taking the television program itself from a simple source text to a highly valued public resource. “The Biggest Loser” is about people who meet personal challenges of losing weight, but accompanying paratexts such as phone applications, websites, fitness personalities, and exercise videos comprise the entire textual meaning for audiences. Another example of paratexts is the bonus materials that come with DVDs, which comprise a self-contained set of texts, intertexts, and paratexts—a self-promotional perfect storm. The chapter goes on to review bonus material of *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*.

Chapter 4 develops the relationship of intertextuality (the inevitable use of antecedent textual elements as part of making meaning) and paratextuality. As one example, Gray and colleague Bertha Chin recorded and coded responses on fan discussion boards to examine the genesis of meanings in the pre-release phase of *Lord of the Rings* in 2001. Many fans reported worrying about how the film would play out; they shared unfavorable past experiences with animated Tolkien adaptations; and they made specific references to Tolkien’s books. The paratexts of numerous films are examined or referenced here including *King Kong*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Batman Begins*.

Chapter 5 shifts from industry-created paratexts to those created by audiences. Here, Gray focuses on fans of various intensities, producers of ancillary materials, and critics as producers of paratexts. Gray argues that this generation of responses from audiences extends and shapes or reshapes the meanings of texts. As examples, he draws from “vids” or audience-generated videos that combine various artistic elements related to texts to create a new text, and also from television programs. He collects responses from viewers of ABC television’s “Lost” and their reactions to spoilers of narrative content. In many cases, viewers received spoilers as favorable, eschewing the notion that spoilers “ruin” a text and instead allow viewers to focus on aesthetic qualities such as character development and narrative trajectory. The program “Friday Night Lights” serves as an example of critics’ responses serving as paratexts that shaped the program as more than a football show, introducing viewers to elements of small town life, middle-American values, and the challenges of high school life from the perspectives of diverse characters. These readings of critics influence viewers to frame the episodes a certain way thus creat-

ing new meanings through paratextuality. These audience-generated paratexts do not have the same influence as the powerful marketing arms of television and film production companies, but certainly provide insight into how paratexts shape meaning.

Gray completes his study of the space between texts with an analysis of toys and games that are outgrowths of film and television. He argues that *Star Wars* products, notably action figures, are perhaps the most influential paratextual toy or game ever produced. Toys and games allow fans to extend themes that are established in but limited to the films; whereas films typically initiate, develop, and close a story (though interpretations continue), action figures and other toys allow for infinite and complex arrangements of character interactions and plot lines that can exist outside of the constraints of source texts. Coincidentally, the cover of Gray's book (text) displays a lunch box with lettering that mimics the *Stars Wars* movie posters.

This book provides an examination of what visual artists might call the negative space between the images on a canvas. Like color, form, and scale in a painting, a text is a composite of many symbolic elements. Yet, a painting also presents symbolic potential through space that is not used, and the role of that space is part of negotiated meaning with viewers. Paratexts seem to function similarly, operating adjacent to and between form and image to allow audiences opportunities to take up and make up meanings for themselves. Such meanings are inevitable and constitutive, often incredibly satisfying, amusing, or infuriating, and likely extremely profitable for media companies.

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Global Memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age is an edited volume of case studies about public memory in India, Russia, Serbia, The Czech Republic, The United States, South Africa,

Chile, and what once was the Ottoman Empire. Editors Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes offer this collection of cases as a complement to the 2004 book edited by Kendall R. Phillips, *Framing Public Memory*, wherein United States memory played the central role. Phillips and Reyes's aim is not to arrive at a rhetorical theory of global memoryscapes, "as if such a theory were even possible" (p. 3). Their goal is to interrogate the intersection of public memory and globalization. They use the following construct of globalization:

the movement of people, ideas, technologies, and messages across national boundaries and the emergence of new, transnational social structures ranging from international non-governmental organizations to transnational religious communities to broad cultural movements that are not bound by national borders or identities. (p. 2)

Recognizing that public memory is part of movement, the editors offer *memoryscape* as a conceptualization that builds on Arjun Appadurai's globalization scholarship. As many who study public memory are aware, memory studies carries with it topics of forgetting, silence, nostalgia, reconciliation, as well as insight into major historical events. In the introduction Phillips and Reyes write,

[a]ny given instance of public memory—the restoration of a church, the construction of a monument, the remembrance of a fallen leader—occurs within specific local/national parameters, but it is our contention that many of these instances will be more intelligible when rendered within a framework of global memory than if understood solely in relation to local and national forces. (p. 18)

Global Memoryscapes is part of the Rhetoric, Culture and Social Critique series edited by John Louis Lucaites. The introductory chapter contextualizes national and global public memory studies and points to the tendency in memory studies to cast memory and identity as stable categories. Together, the well-written cases provide a sense of the literature and its potentialities. Four cases (detailed below) align with the global memoryscape goals as described by the editors, and lay the groundwork for the scholar or teacher who is interested in exploring the local to global struggles inherent in global public memory practices: Haskins' case of a Russian Cathedral, Lavrence's case of the ritual of a Youth Day Parade for Serbians, Mack's case about South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

hearings, and Sorensen's case about Chilean memory and new media technologies.

Ekaterina V. Haskins traces decisions and controversies about the Cathedral of Christ the Savior as a commemorative project related to national identity in postcommunist Russia. Haskins writes, "the postcommunist debate over the appropriateness of the rebuilding project offers us a glimpse of a much broader, albeit oblique, controversy about reckoning with a country's totalitarian past" (p. 48). By following the construction and demolition of the Cathedral over time and through different senses of nationalism, we see in a material sense the effects of different regimes of power on a nation's official narratives. Haskins' case also analyzes the rhetorical choices and frameworks at play and the competing narratives among the different publics.

Christine Lavrence's case, "Making up for Lost Time," accomplishes the editors' goals through a discussion of nostalgia and the ritual of a Youth Day Parade for Serbians who are struggling with memory and public collective identity in former Yugoslavia's postcommunist and postwar era. Lavrence writes, "[n]ostalgia for Titoism has in some cases supplemented and intersected with nationalist discourse. However, its growing appearance in cultural acts of memory in public spaces and commercial venues signals a shift in Serbia's relationship to its socialist past" (p. 82). Interviews with people about their memories and experience of the parade enable Lavrence to discuss the functions of nostalgia for those with direct experiences and the youth who have none. This gives rise to some generative questions about nostalgia, memory, history, and the way a people might actualize a future together.

Katherine Mack explores the influence of public memory on South Africa's attempt to craft official memory. Her focus is on Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings about apartheid. Winnie was allegedly responsible for violent actions against four boys during apartheid. In public hearings (at Winnie's insistence), she explained her actions in collective and historical terms. Mack extends her forensic rhetorical analysis with a novel about the hearings called *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* (2003) by Njabulo Ndebele, that opened a way for the public to play with the political possibilities through its popular culture. In *Cry*, Winnie could "speak differently within the imagined sphere" (p. 148). According to Mack, this functioned to support a different understanding of Winnie's actions during apartheid. "Accurate or not, *Cry* certainly troubles the boundaries separating the

real from the imagined" (p. 149). Further, Mack incorporates Wayne Booth's ideas and states, "we are all rhetorical subjects—the product of intersubjective and sociocultural relations for which the ideology of liberal individualism fails to account" (p. 150). Her discussion clarifies the dynamics of "the web of relations connecting the political, legal, and economic components of transitional justice reforms" (p. 153), and what is at stake generally in neoliberal economic projects during times of transition. In this way, Mack's case helps render a global memoryscape. Mack's case is clear about rhetoric, culture, and social critique, and would be useful in courses about peace and conflict studies because of its emphasis on healing, restorative justice, and what is involved in truth and memory.

Chilean people suffered together under Pinochet's oppressive regime. Outcomes of such a milieu include a national media system that does not "counter hegemonic historical narratives" (p. 161) and a people without the resources to produce their own, until now. New media technologies, as Kristin Sorensen's case about Chilean memory, media coverage, and human rights discourses reveals, are helping Chileans to heal, to reclaim their public memories, and to move forward. Sorensen writes:

In our modern world, we can no longer distinguish between our "authentic" memories and those offered through our media. Whether we are conscious of it or not, our sense of ourselves, our nation, and our history are intertwined with the images and words offered to us through our media. (p. 163)

Using Steve Stern's (2004) concept of "memory knots" and Elizabeth Jelin's (2003) work on historical memory, Sorensen explores the Chilean mediated memoryscape and asks questions that would structure a globally significant discussion such as "[w]hat do these conflicting emblems of national memory suggest regarding the appropriate actions for the nation's leaders activists, and governing bodies to take in the process of addressing its traumatic recent past?" (p. 163). The case ends by showing what is possible when people have access to alternative media and the resources to widely share their own stories. Sorensen's work is contemporary, global, rhetorical in its analysis of media coverage, and solution-oriented.

The cases that do little in the final analysis to cross borders and make explicit the global connections meant to widen perspective are Turan's case about

material objects, Butalia's case about visiting places of memory, Lindauer's case on the Mayrau Mining Museum in Czechoslovakia, and Cervantez's case about a Japanese internment camp. This is not to say these cases are not worthwhile; each is a useful exploration of memory and trauma.

Zeynep Turan interviewed people who experienced the trauma of being displaced during the Ottoman Empire's decline, Greeks through population exchanges and Armenians through deportation. Turan's case describes the struggle each group endured as they adjusted to new communities in "host" countries and narratives about their objects. Turan shows how objects become part of personal identity, provide a link with the past, and serve as tangible generational connections. The case illuminates how each group has a different relationship with, and sense of urgency about, their cultural artifacts. Oddly, none of the interviewees' material objects were connected with trauma. For example, nobody showed Turan objects directing the removal of people, or a satchel that held all worldly belongings. Materially speaking, this absence seems strange considering the scope of personal and collective ordeal.

Butalia's case is a "journey of friendship and reconciliation" (p. 28). Bir Bahadur recounts his traumatic experience of the violent tactics families resorted to during the partition of India and Pakistan. Butalia accompanies Bir 40 years later as they journey back through his memories to actual places he knew as a child prior to Partition. Readers accompany him as he stops to talk with people or to climb a remembered tree. Through these bits of memory and place, Butalia integrates her experience as a spectator. For example, "[h]ow must people have felt to see, thousands of attackers coming over these gentle, almost sleepy, slopes?" (p. 33). Butalia's case begins like a lion, recounting violent individual memories of the horrors of splitting a nation. It ends lamb-like with Bir sharing food and company with people who share his past. Therefore, it could also be useful in a peace and conflict studies course. Or it could be useful in an intercultural class in the service of building empathy for others' experiences through exposure to historical events.

Margaret A. Lindauer's case in museum studies and heritage tourism offers an autobiographical and textual analysis of her visit to and experience with the Mayrau Mining Museum in Czechoslovakia. She uses the lens of the museum as a liminal space—that which simultaneously offers stable and unstable collective

identity. The end of the case details the contemporary art exhibit that now accompanies the mining museum.

The global aspects of Butalia's, Turan's, and Lindauer's cases are in the historical accounts of the trauma of political and national reorganizing. They are globally implicit since the bulk of each case is local and personal. For example, Lindauer writes, "[i]magining the gradual suffocation brought on by black lung disease, I bereaved the lives lost to the mine, and I surreptitiously celebrated what I thought I was meant to mourn" (p. 103). With imagination one could connect these local instances into the global memory frameworks envisioned by the editors. In this way, these cases could be an appealing intellectual challenge or a rigorous, perhaps fruitful graduate class assignment.

Cynthia D. Cervantez's case is about the memorial of a special Japanese internment camp located in the United States of America called Tule Lake. Unlike the nine other interment camps, Tule Lake prisoners protested and resisted their internment. Cervantez details the history of Japanese internment camps, as well as Japanese American involvement with World War II. She finds the two are severed in American memory, which does nothing to advance shared, productive understandings of history. According to Cervantez, "[a]s memory tourists experience the significant sites of their society, they have rhetorical encounters with that society" (p. 120). As a memorial, Tule Lake is hard to find and selectively misleading in its account. Cervantez locates and analyzes this ineffective memorial. Oddly, she does not include a photograph, further supporting the invisibility of the Tule Lake Memorial. Images are available on the Internet, however.

Beyond the various ways the cases function in light of the editors' goals for this collection, there are other, wonderful ways to use this text. In terms of rhetoric, the book does not include a culminating chapter showing how rhetoric functions in the global memoscape framework developed in the introduction. Therefore, it would be hard to use as a main text in a course on rhetoric. The introduction, however, has a section on rhetoric and public memory and a review of rhetoric-based scholarship, and Cervantez's, Mack's, and Haskins' cases are rhetorical analyses and could be useful supplements in an undergraduate or graduate rhetoric course. Sorensen's case about Chilean memory could help frame a global discussion in an undergraduate or graduate course on media literacy or new media. Mack's case and Turan's case would be useful

in intercultural communication courses because of the necessity to build empathy and better understand the experiences of other cultures. Finally, beyond the male editors who write the introduction, all of the cases are female-authored, which could be useful for scholars and teachers interested in thinking and talking about gender and research.

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Antonio Spadaro, S.J., is the editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the sometimes controversial Jesuit journal. Here, he attempts to address what he sees as a lacuna in literature on the Internet: the relationship between the Internet and theology. He considers that theology is, according to a “classical” (although there is no designation of its origin) definition: “intelligence of the faith, and we know well how intelligence, understood as critical and reflexive knowledge, is not extraneous to cultural changes that are underway” (p. 11, all translations are mine). This book’s genesis was a request that he speak on the Internet and faith at an Italian Bishops’ Council, Office of Social Communications’ conference on digital witnessing. No doubt he was asked because of a number of articles he had written in *Civiltà Cattolica* and his two previous books: *Connessioni: Nuove forme della cultura* [Connections: New Forms of Culture] (2006) and *Web 2.0: Reti di relazione* [Web 2.0: Webs of relationships] (2010).

Spadaro notes that this request had him at a disadvantage, since the Bishops neither wanted a discussion of the Internet mechanisms used, nor something on the sociology of web religiosity, since neither seemed individually sufficient. This realization caused something that all of us who write will recognize: He sat in front of a blank screen, not knowing where to start, knowing only that he would have to write something on the topic’s theology when the Internet’s logic is a sign of the way we now think, understand, communicate, and, indeed, live. This viewpoint is easy to hold in countries where Internet penetration is high (the Italian government embarked on a project to wire Italy completely some years ago), but perhaps less easy in countries with low penetration. His exploratory territory was, he believes, “still wild, little occupied” (p. 6). He felt he needed to explain the phenomenon from a systematic theology viewpoint, thus having two questions:

What impact has the net had on the way we understand the Church and the ecclesial communion?

What impact has it had on the ways in which we think about Revelation, grace, liturgy, the sacraments and classical theological themes?

The talk was a first step towards answering these questions, answers he is still working to supply. He began, as anyone working from a Catholic viewpoint would, by looking at Church documents on communication, specifically mentioning Benedict XVI’s 2011 talk to the Pontifical Council for Social Communication in which he mentioned *Aetatis Novae* (1992). Spadaro notes (p. 7) that “if Christians reflect on the ’net, it is not only to learn to use it well, but because they are called to help humanity and to understand the profound significance of the web itself in God’s project, not as an instrument to use, but as an ambience to inhabit” (p. 7). On page 11, he quotes John Paul II’s 2005 apostolic letter *Rapid Development*: “[The Church] . . . alerts [us] to the need to offer its own contribution for a better comprehension of the perspectives and responsibilities connected to present developments in social communications” (n.10).

We often forget that the Catholic Church has used the available means of communication for its main purpose—evangelization—since it began. Electronic communication methods are just another of these means. Spadaro says he is neither sociologist, nor technician, but trained in theology, philosophy, and literature. He believes that this formation has informed his views and

interests on the web. Amongst influences mentioned are Marshall McLuhan, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Flannery O'Connor, Walt Whitman, St. Thomas Aquinas, T. S. Elliott, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Karol Wojtyla. He also notes the encouragement of Archbishop Claudio Celli, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications (PCCS) and Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi of the Pontifical Council for Culture (PCC).

To develop the project further he opened his blog "Cyberteologia" on January 1, 2011, then his Facebook page "cybertheology," a twitter account (@antoniospadaro) and "The CyberTheology Daily" at <http://www.cyber-theology.net> which offers content curation and other initiatives. By starting these sites he hoped to make his reflection on cybertheology social. Since April, 2011, he has edited a monthly column on Cybertheology in the journal *Jesus*.

Spadaro notes that the Church's task, like that of all individual ecclesial communities, is to accompany man on his path, and the Web is now an irreversible and integral part of this path (p. 10).

In the first chapter, Spadaro notes that every new technology since the wheel has been considered not just as a new technology but also as a revolution. He particularly mentions the coming of the railways and states his desire to disprove the myth that the Internet offers something that was not previously offered—a novelty of our age. It is merely a means to transmit, transport, and replicate what other technologies have already offered. As he underlines, new technologies always provoke surprise and disquiet and, often, a desire to return to a more innocent age (p. 12). This is probably because technologies correspond to ancient desires and fears (p. 13). Spadaro asks those of us who are not "digital natives" to realise that the Internet does not present an alternative reality, but is rooted in our normal everyday world, which the Internet can enrich and which can help us to keep up with our personal contacts. New equipment, like the iPhone or android cellular telephone, the iPad or tablet, with haptic technology, have altered both the time available to us for web access and the means by which we enter its space and connections. He underlines the added push that such technologies offer us, e.g., a message notification, to enter the Web. To an extent, as he says on page 18, such technologies (Skype, Instant Messaging) have removed the need to be in a certain place at a certain time, yet humankind still has the same needs: to eat, live, socialize, die. Technology, although it comes from

humanity, changes the society in which it is used. Technologies give form to reality itself (p. 21) but must be looked at critically and used responsibly and wisely (ibid). As part of this world, the Church(es) must be affected by the Web and its possible uses for transmission of faith and the information about that faith. The author highlights that any technology, whatever its inventors' original intent, can be used for evil and/or good (p. 19). While Spadaro notes John Paul II's and Benedict XVI's statements on opportunities offered by the Internet, he also asks (p. 20) whether it affects the way we think, even about faith and belief. This is a very valid question.

Spadaro suggests that recent work on the Church and the Internet can mainly be categorized under several headings (p. 23), but in this book he considers only the last two:

- a. The study of communication as a context for theology.
- b. The use of communication structures to modulate theological reflection.

Here, theology and communication really intersect, and this is what interests him. He notes that when using computers one finds oneself using language familiar with theological study. We use words like "saving," "converting," and "justifying" in regard to files. These terms relate to computers, but are also tied to a way of saying or talking about the faith and, perhaps, to thinking about it today. He explains the differences in usage of these words in theology and digital technology. "Saving" in theological terms means the slate is wiped clean; in digital terminology it means that the file is saved, faults and all. Our net voyaging can always be traced—our sins are never left behind us, however much we try to change our ways. Together with the voyage trail, many new forms of religiosity are born on the 'net. He notes (p. 30) that reflection space must be found there, and if this is true in general, it is possibly even more true for the "digital native." While they already have the Internet as part of what he calls their "daily bread," for "natives" and others it is necessary to take up a new task in the ways we formulate and hear a symbolic public language that speaks to us of possibilities and signs of transcendence in our lives (p. 28). He attempts to clarify just what it is that he means by the term cybertheology, using the work of Herring, George, and Formenti, amongst others, to help him.

In his next chapter, Spadaro discusses the increasing use of personal music players (iPods, etc.) which have changed many lives, since they provide a sort of

soundtrack to everything. As part of this metaphor, he talks of the need to listen (about which Benedict XVI has also spoken) in our search for God. Listing things related to religion and spirituality which can be accomplished on the web, he warns (p. 36) against the illusion that religion is available at a mouse click, a sort of religious supermarket, where everything is available to the religious consumer. The seeker must decode the information that surrounds him and can take up a classic publicity mechanism, offering answers to as yet unformulated questions. Religious questions are changed into a confrontation between plausible responses and subjectively significant ones (p. 38). He suggests we use “discernment,” in the choices we make. In our search for God, we must find a strong, personal spiritual center, able to unite the fragmented messages which profoundly affect us (p. 39). It is, of course, possible that the Gospel, as one message among many, will be put aside (p. 44). Far from comforting, the Word may disquiet us. In an English Google search for “God,” he says that what first comes up in the list offered are “Godaddy,” God of War, and God of Metal—a commercial company, a videogame, and a heavy metal festival! As he notes, finding God in a Google Instant age has, ironically, been made difficult (p. 46). On asking whether God exists (p. 47), one is answered: “I’m sorry, but a poor computational knowledge engine, no matter how powerful, is not capable of providing a simple answer to that question” (<http://www.wolframalpha.com>).

Web 2.0, as David Gauntlett always says, is a collegial space. We no longer seek individual pages, but can access sites, like Wikipedia, which are communally formed. Spadaro (p. 50) quotes Benedict XVI, who said that it is a shame if the ability to make “virtual friends” stops us forming more traditional relationships (pp. 50-51). Web relationships can be kept up without letting our egocentrism go. This has profoundly changed our spatial sense. He notes that the Gospel says it is easy to love those who love us, more difficult to love our enemies. Spadaro draws parallels here with the rise of the videogame, noting that many of us live in an increasingly isolated world. Often our relationships are formed through some form of technology or transportation. As a result of today’s society, the Church is more “liquid,” like the society of which she forms a part, and he quotes Brewin (2007), who says that the Church is now “organic, interconnected, decentralized, constructed from the bottom up, flexible, and always in evolution” (p. 58). The author (pp.

58ff.) discusses how the Web may have changed the view of “Church” and its make-up, perhaps particularly in view of the social network(s) found on the web, to which he gives attention. The Internet can be understood as a social network in God’s service (p. 65). The Church, he suggests, is central and through the Internet we are able to reach that center directly without visible means—a phrase that particularly struck me was: “It (both web and Church, I have supposed) is not about transmitting abstract notions, but about offering an experience to share” (p. 66). While this is, to a certain extent, true, I found it interesting that, despite the previous notion of a bottom-up structure, Spadaro is still talking about a central hierarchy and authority here that we can reach. The Vatican website, for example, is one of the better ones I have accessed (www.vatican.va) and has many things on it that are not just written documents (e.g., a virtual tour of the Vatican Museums) but it is still not really interactive, although there are some church sites that are. Spadaro quotes McLuhan (*The Medium and the Light: Reflections on Religion*, Toronto: Stoddart, 1999):

In regard to the Magisterium, it is as if the whole world population is present in a little room in which a perpetual dialogue is possible. (Thus) the Magisterium is simultaneously tried in all the visible Church. (p. 147)

Spadaro does, however, note problems associated with a hierarchical organization on the Web, which is by its nature a non-hierarchical structure—perhaps one of Luhmann’s social systems par excellence. He notes that the Church has another logic than the Internet; it has a received and given message that breaks through the horizontal from above. It lives by its own witness, tradition, by the Magisterium whose mission is to safeguard the people of God so they can profess the authentic faith. That Magisterium must watch over those people until they can remain within the truth that liberates (p. 68). These two logics of being may seem to be irreconcilable. Spadaro notes that on the Web, the hierarchy may be invisible and so become even more “occult” than before.

Thirdly, he notes the most decisive point, one that is critical in his horizontal situation and in the habit of doing something that is less than transcendent—the weakening of the capacity to return to an overarching reality and alterity in favor of a flattening out into immediacy and self-referencing (p. 69). All Internet links are connected with all others and

this, with the development of Web 2.0 has brought about an internal web hierarchy, one which is mobile and whose knowledge, Spadaro believes, is part of an open system. Here, I would perhaps disagree with him. While there is information (which sometimes may even be correct) on the Web, information is not the same as knowledge. Knowledge is available to an individual only if and when he/she has processed information personally and retained it in that processed form. This is perhaps pedantic on my part, but does have some relevance. Faith is not something we can find on the Internet. Faith is, to use Spadaro's terms in regard to the Magisterum, a form of truth. It is something that may come to us with time through processing information, or it may arrive unexpectedly as a gift. He notes that the un-hierarchical nature of the Web does not mean that there is disorder there—there is a certain grammar to it. Within this grammar are the social networks and here he quotes de Kerckhove (from Bertani, C., 2007, p. 158, *Dal Brainframe visivo al santo elettronico. Intervista a Derrick de Kerckhove* [From the visible brainframe to the electronic saint. An Interview with Derrick de Kerckhove]), who has written on the aura that may develop around somebody immersed in the digital world and in social networking sites, forming “a dimension of sanctity around a saintly person which has a therapeutic value. The contact with this saint confers health” (p. 70). However, aura, I would propose, can also surround those who are less than saintly. One thinks here, perhaps of Julian Assange, the Wikileaks instigator, who has been taken up by some as a form of digital guerilla, doing good work, despite the harm that it is possible that he has done. This leads us to the following chapter, which deals with the hacker.

While he points out that “to hack” means to break into pieces, among other meanings, he begins by putting quite a positive spin on hacking. The hacker is, he writes, one who has: “a sort of life philosophy, an existential attitude, playful and driven, who pushes towards creativity and sharing, opposing models of control, competition, and personal property” (p. 75) and quotes from Steven Levy's (1984) work on what a hacker should be. He differentiates between hackers and crackers (who are those who break things up). Briefly outlining the birth of the personal computer age, he puts forward the idea that “the hacker has a precise perception of the importance of giving a personal and original contribution

to knowledge” (ibid) and it is here that he ties the hacker to Christianity, quoting Pittman who wrote that he “as a Christian thought I could feel something of the satisfaction that God must have felt when he created the world” (<http://www.ittybittycomputers.com/Truth/GodOfTruth.htm>). For Spadaro this suggests that Pittman sees his creative work as part of God's work in the creation. I leave the reader to draw their own conclusions on this.

Spadaro quotes from Raymond, who suggested that “the world is full of fascinating problems that are waiting to be solved” (p. 76). Theology tries to solve some of those problems that relate to religion and religious belief, but I am perhaps less happy with the hacker than Spadaro seems to be, since many hack solely to cause problems of one sort or another. As a university teacher, I am also less enthusiastic about Wikipedia than Spadaro. While some Wikipedia pages are accredited to an author, there are many opportunities for people to put in false information and there is no academic backup for the pages. However, the author does manage to tie in the open source and the knowledge (or, as I would have it, information) on the web to religious organizations. His question, “Aren't the ethics of the hacker en route to a collision with the Catholic mind and its vision of authority and tradition?” (p. 84) which he asks after a section on “open source theology” and its problems, is one that is interesting. He suggests that the form of collaboration that the web engenders is something that the Catholic Church has increasingly to contend with and that this will inevitably lead to a mutation in the ways in which we look at the world. Here, I will take his lead in relation to connecting the web to religious organisation. Surely, contact with religious thinkers around the world has always led to changes in thought. Are we here perhaps forgetting the history of media of various sorts? The speed of exchange may increase. The amount of information available may be greater, but there is always a limited number of people who are interested in theology as a discipline. The medium has changed, but not necessarily the message, to paraphrase McLuhan. Spadaro suggests that the web is the site of a “gift culture” through peer-to-peer sharing and here he does see problems, since the Church has more of a client-server basis, due to its revelatory nature, than peer-to-peer basis (p. 87). The nature of p2p is not wrong, he opines but is in itself valuable (p. 89). His answer to the earlier question seems to be that “The Church is not and never will be

simply a ‘cognitive society,’ and the logic of grace is different from that of information” and he notes that the reflections here are those that the Catholic vision of authority should turn to critically in the hacker culture (p. 92).

His fifth chapter considers “Liturgy, Sacraments and the Virtual Presence.” He asks on page 95 if it is possible to imagine liturgical and sacramental forms on the web, following Marshal and Eric McLuhan’s questioning (in 1973) of the ways that media might change liturgy, although he notes that these questions are ones that have already been asked in regard to other media. In the Catholic Church the question has been posed as to whether somebody hearing a papal blessing on the radio, or seeing it on television, actually receives that blessing. The decision was that if you saw or heard it live, you got the blessing. Recordings don’t count! For those who are housebound or infirm, liturgy on radio and television has been a boon. On the web, we can watch or listen anywhere in the world, but satellite technology has been providing this service for years, and radio before that. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church, as Spadaro notes (p. 99), is firm in saying that virtual reality can never replace “real” reality. One of the Catholic television channels in Italy had, and may still have, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for a period of time. No comment, no music, just a monstrosity displayed on the screen. I pointed out that “being in the real presence” meant that you were there, not watching on tv at home (for information about this see, for example, <http://www.nccbuscc.org/liturgy/innews/699.shtml>). By relating Internet games played with avatars, in *Second Life*, for example to the document on The Church and the Internet (see www.vatican.va/.../pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-Internet_en.html), in which the Church notes that it is possible, through the grace of God, to talk about religious experiences, even on the web, Spadaro has managed to make a neat connection. He notes also the problems that new technologies may cause with this doctrinal problem.

Spadaro’s final chapter links thinkers, both theological and media scholars, whose work he considers relevant to his thesis. These are not only Catholic or Christian thinkers, but references are made to Islamic scholars also.

This is an interesting book which will, I hope, be translated into English to give it a larger audience. There is an extensive bibliography which contains,

although I am sure he is too modest to draw them to your attention, three entries from the Managing Editor of this journal. The bibliography in itself will be useful in approaching a relatively new topic which will, I am sure, run and run.

—Maria Way
Independent Researcher, London

Reference

Levy, S. (1984). *Hackers: Heroes of the computer revolution*. New York: Anchor Doubleday.

Briefly Noted

Balabanova, Ekaterina. *Media, Wars, and Politics: Comparing the Incomparable in Western and Eastern Europe*. Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xviii, 172. ISBN 978-0-7546-7069-8 (cloth) \$114.95.

Prompted by and focused on the Kosovo crisis during the Balkan wars, this book examines the link between media coverage and national foreign policies, particularly as those policies shifted away from the “no intervention in the internal affairs of countries” rule. Balabanova sets out several objectives for the study. First, she seeks “to assess the interaction between the print media coverage of the conflict and the governments’ foreign policy in Bulgaria and Britain by looking at what matters were emphasized and what attitudes were adopted” (p. xv). Second, she tests the Western assumption “regarding media’s influence on foreign policy-making” (p. xvi). Finally, she applies the “policy-media interaction model developed by Robinson” (p. xvi) in the United States, in order to test its generalizability.

The first chapter of the book provides a background on media and war, examining various theories, including the ideas of manufacturing consent and of media power as manifest in the CNN phenomenon. Next, Balabanova reviews the changing nature of war and the changing media responses. In the third chapter she gives the history of the Kosovo crisis. The final three chapters examine the media in Bulgaria (a history and an overview) and the press/foreign policy interactions in Bulgaria as contrasted with that in Britain.

The book contains a substantial number of tables, illustrating the content analysis of the study; a extensive bibliography; and an index.

Bang, Henrik P. and Anders Esmark (Eds.). *New Public with/out Democracy*. Frederiksberg, Denmark: Samfundslitteratur Press and NORDICOM, 2007. Pp. 380. ISBN 978-87-593-1149-3 (paper) \$64.00, €47.

This volume forms one of a series produced by the Danish research program, “Media and Democracy in the Network Society.” Each of the volumes addresses an aspect of politics and the media, with politics defined broadly as “what people practice in a range of social contexts where they conceive of themselves as citizens, consumers, and co-creators of culture” (p. 7). These activities take place more and more through communication media. Organized across disciplines, the series involves media researchers, political scientists, and others across the lines of academia. This particular volume “aims to explore the development of the public sphere in an increasingly globalized, regionalized, and localized network society” (p. 9). One idea driving the project is to examine ways in which Habermas’ idea of the public sphere still has value and, on the other hand, has succumbed to historical and technological events.

The book’s three sections offer several entry points: “Regime anchorage,” “Culture anchorage,” and “Journalist and media between regime and culture.” The first part features essays on an ideological renewal, finding a way between the traditional right and traditional left in European politics; the role of the public sphere in public services; public discourse in the case of software patents in the European Union, and the “Europeanization” of the public sphere. The second part (on culture) considers expert citizens in a celebrity culture, commercial branding in the case study of LEGO, and the Internet as a force in youth culture. The third part examines the mediating roles played by old and new media. Essays discuss public service institutions, the shift of journalists between emotion and objectivity, the “rationality of journalism” in mediated politics, and the Internet as a new set of tools for both surveillance and insurgency.

Each essay features its own reference list. The books does not have an index.

Berko, Roy, Joan E. Aitken, and Andrew Wolvin. *Icomm: Interpersonal Concepts and Competencies: Foundations of Interpersonal Communication*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010. Pp. xxi, 433. ISBN 978-0-7425-9962-8 (paper) \$65.00.

This substantial interpersonal communication textbook aims for accessibility for students. The authors begin with an address to the students: “This text is written in a personal and friendly manner, stressing concepts that should be important in your daily life. . . . [Y]ou will find that interpersonal communication is very important to you” (p. xv). In keeping with this approach, each chapter includes from four to 10 activities that both demonstrate the importance of interpersonal communication and give the students practice in one or another aspect of it.

The book’s 12 chapters present the major areas of communication in the generally accepted order for a semester-length class: 1. foundations of communication (models, noise, definitions, ethics); 2. the self and intrapersonal communication; 3. listening skills; 4. verbal language; 5. non-verbal communication; 6. principles of relational communication; 7. beginning, maintaining, and ending relationships; 8. conflict resolution; 9. family communication; 10. electronically mediated interpersonal communication; 11. interpersonal communication skills; and 12. workplace communication. The chapter on electronically mediated interpersonal communication presents the freshest material, including online relationships, cyber stalking, cyber bullying, and other negative behaviors.

The book is well documented, with extensive endnotes, so that students can follow up with the relevant literature. It also features an index.

Domenici, Kathy and Stephen W. Littlejohn. *Facework: Bridging Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006. Pp. xviii, 225. ISBN 978-1-4129-1404-8 (cloth) \$85.00; 978-1-4129-1405-1 (paper) \$54.00.

This volume, organized for teaching, builds on the metaphor of face and the efforts people put into maintaining it. The authors define these efforts as “facework,” “a set of coordinated practices in which communicators build, maintain, protect, or threaten personal dignity, honor, and respect” (p. ix). The authors’ goals in the book include providing students an introduction to the academic literature on the topic, giving them practical knowledge—how to act and understand what occurs in daily interactions—and offering “useful examples” (p. ix). They organize the book in four sections. The first provides an overview of “the social construction of face,” that is, the theoretical background on the metaphor and its study, and a prac-

tical perspective on “creating an environment of constructive facework.” The second section examines different realms in which facework takes place: the personal and the relational. Part 3 expands the perspective to take into account systemic areas of facework—the community and cultural or global sites. Finally, the last section of the book presents practice: seeing facework in different cultures and locations, hearing about facework from expert practitioners.

In keeping with the textbook approach, this volume features a series of sidebars, reflection situations and questions, and exercises in each chapter. One can easily imagine a teacher making use of these to check students’ understanding and to prompt discussion. The book concludes with a substantial bibliography and an index.

Kellett, Peter M. *Conflict Dialogue: Working with layers of Meaning for Productive Relationships*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007. Pp. xiii, 287. ISBN 978-1-4129-0930-3 (cloth) \$119.00; 978-1-4129-0931-7 (paper) \$66.00.

This volume offers a story-telling approach to interpersonal communication, particularly conflict management. In addition to examining conflict dialogue, the book also offers “lessons from the field,” a feature in each chapter with exercises and suggestions for field work. Individual chapters address stories and the meaning of conflicts, dialogic negotiation (or moving to new meanings), characteristics of language, how people negotiate relationship dynamics through stories, identifying and negotiating “crossroads moments,” the psychodynamics of conflict—displacement and projection—, how to use stories as negotiating strategies, and how to recognize the conflict cycle and move to new meanings. Chapters present commentary on stories to illustrate the themes, provide a theoretical background, and suggest which skills can help readers through attention to self-reflection. The book contains an extensive reference list and an index.

Stein, M. L., Susan F. Paterno, and R. Christopher Burnett. *Newswriter’s Handbook: An Introduction to Journalism* (2nd ed.). Ames, IA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Pp. xii, 322. ISBN 978-0-8138-2721-6 (paper) \$64.95.

An introductory journalism textbook, *Newswriter’s Handbook*, frames its treatment with a

chapter defining news and a chapter on preparing for a media career. In between the book presents guides for the beginner: how to find stories, doing basic reporting, organizing a story, and writing the story. The book also offers direction for more complex topics: reporting meetings, covering the police and the criminal justice system, and writing a feature story or other specialized stories. Two chapters address what reporters need to know about the law and about ethics, while another two describe the workings of a newsroom and identify particular issues (public journalism, tabloid papers). Surprisingly the book only briefly mentions online reporting.

Each chapter includes a number of published stories and examples; each also concludes with a list of “suggested assignments.” The book features a glossary, a list of recommended reading, and an index.

Von Feilitzen, Cecilia. *Influences of Mediated Violence: A Brief Research Summary*. Göteborg: NORDICOM, 2009. Pp. 63. ISBN 978-91-89471-81-8 (paper) \$5.00, €5.00.

In recognition of the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, NORDICOM issued this brief summary of the state of the research on media violence. Having to draw some limits, von Feilitzen chose to say little “about research on other possible offensive or harmful influences—or the plentiful research on the media’s potentially positive and desired influences” (p. 7). The main headings include Film and Television, Video and Computer Games, the Internet, and Mobile Phones. Sections typically include some background, followed by more specific discussion of imitation, aggression, different kinds of violence, fear and uneasiness, and other fears. Not surprisingly, more research exists on violence in film and television. With the newer media, the survey also covers research methods and the debates about various kinds of harms (for example, overuse or addiction). The report concludes with an attempt to sketch a “broader definition of media violence”: “every mediated act intended to hurt or the consequences of such an act” (p. 55). Von Feilitzen then proposes a matrix of user roles and forms of communication related to the Internet to show this definition at work in the online world.

The reports features extensive end notes, but no separate bibliography.

