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New Perspectives on Media and Culture

Media studies were born in the 1930s and 1940s with the popular assumption that film and broadcasting have enormous power to sway voters, shape the minds of children and direct public opinion. By the late 1950s, however, the cumulative research showed that the media, in themselves, are rarely the sole cause of aggressive behaviour, conversions or other personal changes. Media are definitely somehow influential, but media effects are a complex process mingled with the influence of family, friend groups, and the broader socio-cultural environment.

In the search for more nuanced explanations of media influence during the 1960s and 1970s, researchers suggested the need to examine not just specific attitudinal effects but the role of media in the development of the total cultural environment. A new CULTURAL STUDIES approach argued that media reproduce the national myths of aggression, racial supremacy, male patriarchy or models of family that set the agenda of values not just for some individuals but for everybody who lives in the culture.

Ironically, early cultural studies analysis retained much of the 'powerful media' assumption and simply added a 'powerful culture' perspective. McLuhan, for example, proposed that print and electronic media produce a particular cultural world view and influence whole cultural epochs. Some Marxists maintained that the cultural industries were almost totally dominated by elite ideologies and that media ideology so formed the mentalities of subordinate groups such as women, minorities or the working classes that these groups were duped into support of unjust power structures.

These 'powerful culture', 'powerful ideology' theories are now also being questioned. With methods of 'audience ethnography', researchers are discovering how audiences interpret media messages from their own local perspectives or resist media content they disagree with. This issue of *Communication Research Trends* reviews research on how audiences participate in the creation of cultures.

REVIEW ARTICLE

I: Schools of Thought About Media and Culture

Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran and Janet Woollacott (eds.) *Culture, Society and the Media*. London and New York: Methuen, 1982.
Richard Collins, et al. (eds.) *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader*. London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1986.

These authors describe the often fierce debates regarding media and culture that have produced, since the 1940s, some four or five distinctive schools. At the heart of the differences are questions of the cultural 'rights' of the less powerful: minority cultural traditions, women, racial and ethnic groups, or the beleaguered defenders of the high culture values of civilization. For example, the *cultural pluralist* position, more typical of American cultural studies, would argue that the media are an open 'marketplace of ideas' where competing cultural traditions meet to build a national cultural consensus. Concentration of social power is less of a problem because each cultural interest group has a power base that counterbalances other groups. In contrast, for the critical, neo-Marxist school, found more often in European and Third World contexts, the concentration of social power and elite control of media are key cultural issues. There are major differences, however, in the critical tradition. The *structuralists* argue that elite control is exercised through false ideologies embedded in the thought structure of language, myth and the forms of media audio-visual expression. The *political economy* school of

Marxist thought, on the other hand, argues that economic institutions, such as the forces of the market and capital accumulation are much more fundamental factors of cultural control than thought structures.

Current debates questioning the 'powerful media' and 'powerful ideology' theses become clearer with an examination of the socio-political background and historical development of these different cultural studies approaches.

European Origins of the Cultural Concern: The Frankfurt School

Early media studies in the USA during the 1930s and 1940s tended to adopt the pragmatic, quantitative, social engineering emphasis of the American scientific tradition.¹ This media research was often a service to the broadcasting and advertising industries, reporting the impact of transmitted messages on personal behaviour and opinions. Research used the tools of behavioural psychology, attitude measurement and statistical surveys. Culture was dealt with

largely at the level of individual attitudes and perceptions. Research aimed at a positivistic ideal, supposedly value-free and apolitical. Initially, at least, media research had relatively little contact with American traditions of literary-artistic criticism, cultural anthropology or the then flourishing sociological study of ethnic and community subcultures.

A much broader perspective relating media to cultural history was introduced into American media studies by the move of the best-known members of the Frankfurt school, T. Adorno, M. Horkheimer and L. Lowenthal, from Nazi Germany in the late 1930s. In New York, Adorno found employment in the Office of Radio Research, headed by Lazarsfeld, a leading protagonist of empiricist media research. But Adorno resisted the pressure to transform cultural phenomena such as aesthetic appreciation of music into measurable, quantitative behaviourism, terming it 'equivalent to squaring the circle'.²

The founders of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt in 1923 had been influenced by the view of many literary and cultural leaders in Europe that the rise of the populist democracies in the nineteenth century and the spread of a mass, popular culture through the cheap sensationalist press, the sentimental pulp novel, pop music, etc. was not only a threat to the values of artistic genius in Western Civilization but a vulgar dehumanisation and slavery to consumerism.³ Members of the Frankfurt School felt that the great artistic cultural achievements of the Enlightenment, in the crucible of Nazi nationalist demagoguery, had degenerated into totalitarian fascism.⁴ These views of cultural history mixed with Marxist hopes for socio-political and cultural emancipation in Europe typical of young intellectuals in the 1920s, and inspired a commitment to a type of Marxist cultural humanism. Adorno, for example, felt that, although nineteenth century bourgeois culture was elite, the artistic dimension expressed in philosophy, music and literature tended to have a life of its own apart from the pragmatic commercial world of the bourgeois and was a source of critical, subversive opposition to the dehumanising exploitation of advancing capitalism. This critical artistic voice was being silenced, however, as the market-oriented institutions of industrial capitalism extended into the cultural sphere and imposed its capacity for mass producing culture. The Frankfurt school coined the pejorative term, 'the culture industries' to describe this harnessing of artistic talent to the goals of capitalist accumulation.

In America, where a flourishing pop culture was best exemplified in the Hollywood film, people such as Adorno were repulsed by such vulgarisations as the adaptation of a Beethoven symphony as a film score and the garbling of a Tolstoy novel in a film script. Art

was being degraded and instrumentalised for the purposes of commercial exploitation and for the centralised control of human motivation by the dominant capitalist class. The sentimental escapism of American media did not invite audiences to enter into a deeper artistic insight and critical evaluation of culture. Marcuse, another Frankfurt School emigré, was particularly incisive in showing that the American media reflected the self-justifying consumerism of capitalism – the argument that only the capitalist industrial machine provided a car and a kitchen for everyone – and masked the subjection to this same industrial order. As the era of American McCarthyism set in during the late 1940s, Adorno produced his influential book, *The Authoritarian Personality*, and warned the American public that the media-induced decline in autonomous critical thinking was a step toward the demagogic totalitarianism he had experienced in Nazi Germany.

The Mass-Media, Mass Culture Perspective

Many of the writings of the Frankfurt School were not translated into English until the 1960s, and it was only then that some of their most important work, such as Walter Benjamin's interpretation of artistic culture, began to be influential in the thinking of young neo-Marxists. Nevertheless, in the 1950s, many American scholars, such as David Riesman and Dwight McDonald, picked up the theme of the Frankfurt School of mass media as a threat to the autonomy of the individual.⁵ They moved away from the Marxist interpretation, however, to a more traditional American concern of the still influential 'Progressive Era': the decline of the family, the local community and other intermediate local institutions such as the school, the church and occupational organisations in the face of the large corporation and an impersonal urban society. The mass media, controlled by large corporations, went over the heads of the traditional American local institutions and tended to isolate the individual, causing social anomie and psychological alienation. The mass media discouraged direct participation in the production of culture.

This view of the role of the media in creating a mass society was hotly disputed by media research which showed that, in fact, the influence of the media was filtered through beliefs that stemmed from local primary groups.⁶ But popular books such as Vance Packard's *Hidden Persuaders*, a 1957 analysis of subliminal advertising, fuelled a general public perception of the commercial media as self-serving and manipulative.⁷ In the 1960s this sparked a movement for public service broadcasting in order to stimulate higher quality TV. It also encouraged movements for direct local cultural participation in community TV, in community radio and in community-access cable channels.

The Optimism of Cultural Pluralism

Many American media pundits in the 1950s felt that the pessimism of the Frankfurt School regarding the popular media was unwarranted and that the insistence on 'high culture' as the norm for public media could lead to an elitist authoritarianism of another kind.⁸ They argued that the mass media, though apparently trivial and occasionally degrading, are a democratic reflection of many different grass-roots cultural traditions. The media should be a free, open marketplace for the exchange and debate of all political ideas, social movements and cultural traditions so that the public can sort out and take what it wants. The mass media, imperfect as they may be, are a forum for bringing together different regional or ethnic subcultures and building a national consensus. Power is generally

not so concentrated in a society so that any one group can control the content of media for long. Media studies of the late 1950s, such as the influential book of Klapper, tended to discount the direct power of the media over behaviour. If public regulatory agencies would insist on norms of social responsibility in the media and prevent concentration of media control, then the ideal of cultural pluralism could be maintained. Encouraging investment in new media technologies would provide a variety of media channels – press, radio, film, television and, later, cable, VCRs and direct satellite broadcasting – , and there would be a cultural menu for everybody's tastes: high culture, pop culture, regional and ethnic cultures.

The Critical Perspective: Culture as Elite Ideology

The cultural pluralism-consensus conception of media and culture was widely challenged by the socio-political movements of the 1960s among racial minorities, feminists, countercultural and peace groups and other lower-status sectors. These movements argued that the media often do not represent objectively the injustices suffered by minorities, but are dominated by a falsifying, distorting ideology favouring the interests of more powerful groups (white, male, financial-managerial classes, etc.). What appears to be a free debate is, in fact, a debate among elites that allows little real access to the less powerful. A new generation of media scholars, influenced by the spirit of the 1960s movements, identified themselves with a tradition of 'critical' research, distinguishing themselves from 'administrative' media research supporting the objectives of existing media institutions. This critical perspective argued that the cultural pluralism stance was at best naïve about an equitable distribution of social power and the freedom of the media.⁹ The critical perspective was also adopted by media researchers in the developing world, arguing that the conception of development as the transfer of the technological and socio-cultural model of the North Atlantic nations was a new form of cultural imperialism that would keep countries of the periphery in a state of perpetual dependency.

The critical school has generally identified four main tasks for media research:

1. The analysis of how dominant groups in society not only secure control of the media, but also succeed in bringing subordinate minorities to give an apparently willing consent to this hegemony.
2. The analysis of how the processes of media production and genres of news, drama and documentary systematically cover up unjust social relations under a facade of impartiality and ideological neutrality.
3. Rather than assume an intentional, conscious conspiracy among the captains of the culture industries, critical analysis has focussed on the logical premises and organic interrelationships between economic institutions of advanced capitalism, the political decision-making of the state and the formation of cultural ideologies. Thus, in any given major political decision about media policy such as the deregulation of the media, critical analysis would expose as false the argument that deregulation is for the public good. In reality it is just another form of the logic of capitalist economic institutions which transform all goods, including information and culture, into marketable commodities for capital accumulation purposes.
4. Finally, since critical research aims at a more just organisation of the media, study has been focussed on forms of democratisation of communication: greater respect for the information needs of the less powerful, more widespread access to the media and greater participation in the formulation of media policy, provision for alternative and decentralised minority media expression and forms of media ownership that prevent concentration of control by powerful economic and political groups.

Marxist Theories of Culture

Many who identify with the critical school have found Marxist and neo-Marxist conceptions of communication and culture helpful in explaining both the hegemonic control of the culture industries and how dissident social movements can bring about a more equitable order of social communication. Most Marxist theories of culture work within some version of the classical Marxist base/superstructure metaphor where cultural practices, identified as superstructure, are possible insofar as productive capacity generates sufficient material surplus beyond physical survival. In societies with capitalist economic institutions and power relations, the labour surplus passes into the hands of the capitalist classes, a process which gives them leisure, wealth, education and other resources for con-

trolling the direction of cultural activities.

Classical Marxist theories of media and culture have looked for a direct relationship between productive relations, class position and forms of media institutions and content. Grossberg cites Dorfman and Mattelart's *How to Read Donald Duck*, an analysis of capitalistic ideology in American comic books, as an example of research which detects ideology in media content, and then reads this content back into the intentions of the authors and forward into the interpretations of the public.¹⁰ Most neo-Marxists would see this as simplistic economic reductionism and another exaggerated form of the powerful media thesis. As Grossberg notes, such a self-colonization of the mind leaves no space for emancipatory resistance to dominant ideologies. Much of the history of Marxist cultural studies over the last thirty years has been a search for explanations that grant culture and processes of media production an autonomous logic. As is noted below, there is continuing debate between the political economy and structuralist schools of Marxist thought as to how much autonomy culture has vis-a-vis economic institutions.

The Influence of British Cultural Studies

Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart and E P Thompson, analysts of the profound cultural changes occurring in post World War II Britain, are widely credited with a major role in introducing a distinctive cultural studies approach, especially within the English-speaking world.¹¹ Williams, a professor of drama at Cambridge with a Welsh working-class childhood and a leader in the British New Left movement in the early 1960s, interpreted literature and media in general as a representative 'text' revealing the deeper structure of culture and society. Following the Marxist conception of society as an organic totality influenced fundamentally by the class structure and political-economic institutions, Williams analysed the media as expressions of the 'structure of feeling' pervading a cultural epoch. For example, the experience of television, 'waiting inside the home for the outside world to be "transmitted" into one's private life' is an embodiment of the 'mobile privatisation' typical of the contemporary structure of feeling.¹²

A significant innovation of Williams and other early British leaders in cultural studies was to approach media, not as a 'cause' of culture, but as a rich 'text', summarizing and indicating the emerging cultural values and meanings of a given historical period. By applying methods of textual analysis to media, it is possible to recognize and critically evaluate the kind of culture we are creating.

Introducing Linguistic and Cultural Structuralism

During the 1970s British media scholars and especially the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham continued to extend and revise the cultural studies perspective. They took media as one among various 'textual' expressions of a culture along with literature, pop music, and the 'styles' of punk or other contemporary subculture. For Stuart Hall, director of the CCCS from 1968 to 1979, and for others associated with or influenced by the CCCS, three questions became central to communication research: 1) How do powerful elites in liberal, capitalistic societies such as Britain, with institutions of democratic debate and consensus formation, still succeed in maintaining ideological control and in gaining the apparently willing consent of subordinated groups to this ideology? 2) How could it be true that media institutions are, at the same time, free of direct compulsion and constraint and yet freely articulate themselves systematically around definitions of the situation which favour the hegemony of the powerful? 3) How can the cultural signifying practices in clothing, music and language inversions such as 'black is beautiful' utilized by movements among working-class youth, women and racial minorities counteract dominant ideologies and introduce a 'cultural justice'? Underlying this research was a deeper questioning

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

These questions led cultural studies approaches to borrow from semiotics and linguistic anthropology theories which explain how the patterns of meaning imbedded in the grammatical structure of language and in the selective organisation of cultural world views automatically limit and influence the range of thought and expression. Thus, media news and drama might carry an unconscious racist, sexist or classist ideology simply because these biased patterns of thought have been incorporated into the structure of language, cultural world views and practices of audio-visual expression in media.

The Language 'Speaks' Us

Underlying structuralist analysis of culture is the principle that the words and grammar of language are not simply an objective reproduction of things and events in the real world but are relatively selective, arbitrary, social constructions. Different cultures see the world differently, and language is open to the influence of social power and historical events. A crucial question, then, is how a particular meaning gains the dominant credibility, legitimacy and taken-for-grantedness while other interpretations of reality of less powerful groups are downgraded or excluded.

In the view of Stuart Hall, a second important principle of critical structuralist analysis was contributed by the anthropologist, Levi-Strauss, based on his comparative study of myth in various cultures. Levi-Strauss has argued that the choice and configuration of images and symbols in a mythic story are not happenstance but are combined according to a universal grammar or logic for resolving conflicts of meaning in a culture and producing an orderly account of the universe.

Thus the story teller who is formulating a new myth or integrating new experiences into old myths tends to follow unconsciously the deeper logic and classification system which organises symbolic images into an internally consistent discourse. Stuart Hall suggests that ideologically distorted perceptions of reality operate at this deeper mythic level of classification embedded in language and world view so that they are reproduced as simply 'common sense' without conscious conspiracy to mislead. In contemporary capitalist societies, there may be competing historical conceptions of how a nation develops politically and economically 'with justice for all'. For example, perspectives of an entrepreneurial-financial class may be competing with that of the working class. Once the premises of each perspective are accepted as 'common sense', then this perspective seems to be a quite logical, internally consistent discourse for classifying and interpreting current events. Ideologies are not a set of messages, but rather a system of semantic rules for coding new information.

Ideology Defines Our Subjective Identity

The theory of 'overdetermination' proposed by the French structuralist, Louis Althusser, has also been influential in adapting structuralism to Marxist analysis of cultural history and in moving Marxist thought beyond explanation of cultural formation in terms of direct economic influence.¹³ Althusser argued that ideologies are sustained and reproduced by the 'ideological state apparatuses' (ISAs), key social institutions which touch on socialisation and social control such as the family, education, language and government. These ISAs are linked by a common set of ideological presuppositions that represent common interests of social power and

control so that the ideology embedded in the institution of, for example, the family, is 'overdetermined' by similar presuppositions in education, the media, etc.

These ISAs also define our identity as subjects in culture, that is, my conception of 'Who I am'. Media and language play an important role in defining subjective perceptions of reality by 'addressing' or 'interpellating' (in the terminology of Althusser) the subject in terms of a specific social position of dominance or subordination. Thus, an action-adventure TV programme may address its audience as male, dominant ethnic or racial position, interested in strong police action, etc. and direct the audience to see the world in terms of these ideological definitions of reality. Althusser's theories helped to explain the subjective internalisation of ideology, but in the opinion of some, such as Stuart Hall, this led to an overly powerful conception of ideology that left the subject little opportunity for alternative, resistant interpretations.

The Struggle Over Meaning

The structuralist interpretation of language as 'polysemic' with multiple connotative meanings was also important for explaining how emancipatory movements could transform the meaning of ideologically loaded words in terms of their own oppositional universe of discourse. Language is not necessarily dominated in all aspects by the ideologies of ruling elites, as some over-simplified Marxist versions suggested, but is an area of social struggle. Terms such as 'democracy' or 'the people' could be dissociated from one discourse and given a different meaning in an alternative system of discourse. This also suggested that one should not attempt to predict the ideological position of a social group or individual from class position since a person might be part of many different universes of discourse, for example, higher status but also female, part of a youth subculture, and identified with a racial, ethnic or regional minority. This made assumptions of direct and unqualified ideological effects in media analysis much more problematic.

Exercising Hegemony Through Cultural Leadership

The much more nuanced analysis of the relationship between the political-economic power structure and ideological formation in liberal, capitalistic societies has ruled out theories of ideological influence through authoritarian indoctrination or police coercion. The concept of hegemony formation proposed by the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, has been enormously influential not only in British cultural studies but throughout the world for explaining how liberal societies allow a great deal of free debate and oppositional subcultures but still succeed in building a dominant ideological consensus. In this view, social power is not secured once and for all by a unified ruling social class but is the result of shifting historical coalitions of changing elites. Dominant ideologies gain wide acceptance precisely through the mechanisms of parliamentary debate, a libertarian 'free press' and public opinion formation. Through these consensus mechanisms the interests of dominant groups are universalised into the general 'will of the nation' and are able to incorporate even opposition movements such as trade unions in a competitive but finally supportive role. Stuart Hall shows how the neo-conservative coalition of Thatcherism gained acceptance for its ideology of 'rugged British individualism' and shifted public investment away from broader social welfare goals by appealing to British nationalistic sentiments among the working classes.¹⁴

Hall points out three interrelated processes whereby dominant coalitions gain a free consent to their cultural leadership: 1) the distorting ideology *masks* unequal power relations with a discourse of free market exchange and free opportunity; 2) it *fragments* society in the school, workplace and other major institutions under the banner of free competition; and 3) it then imposes an *imaginary unity* in terms of 'public opinion', the 'general interest', etc., terms which do not represent the real common interests of dominated sectors.¹⁵

The Political-Economy School

In contrast to the structuralist focus on the ideological content and impact of media messages, this group gives primacy to research on how capitalist economic institutions of marketing, capital accumulation and public investment policy influence the development of the culture industries and, ultimately, media content.¹⁶ For example, British researchers, such as Nicholas Garnham at the Polytechnic of Central London or Peter Golding and Graham Murdock at the University of Leicester, argue that the capitalist economies tend toward increasing concentration of social power, transforming all areas of culture into a marketable commodity and a means of amassing private fortunes. In the Third World, this perspective traces the ideological force of the media back to the creation of economic dependence on First World economies, the expansion of multinational marketing and advertising systems and the increasing dependence of the media on multinational advertising and investment resources. The political-economy school readily

admits the ideological content of the media, but they argue that the structuralist preoccupation with ideology as a form of power distracts attention from the fact that social power lies in the political economic sphere. Whether the dominant elites gain control of the subordinate through ideology may not be as important as control through availability of jobs or the high-handed conditions of risk capital. Struggle over meaning in popular movements is important, but more fundamental are policy issues such as privatisation of the media, control over labour processes in the cultural industries that were once more humane, the race for economic leadership in the new technologies and the use of the state to finance private ventures in new technologies with tax-payers' money. Research should reveal how the inexorable logic of the capitalist economic system extends its control into all areas of cultural creativity of individuals and intermediate groups, with a dehumanising and depersonalising force.

The Anthropological School

A significant group of media researchers see political ideology as only one facet of a culture and prefer to approach culture with the more classical perspective of the cultural anthropologist as a system of meanings and values shared by a whole community. American cultural studies, led by James Carey, argue that the main tradition of American media research—heavily positivistic, behaviouristic, quantitative and effects-oriented—must be complemented by a more qualitative, humanistic analysis of the meanings that the community is creating in and through the media. Carey has suggested, with his ritual, communion model of communication, that research should be concerned with the ways that cultural

meanings are created, changed, celebrated and evaluated by all segments of society.¹⁷ This approach to media and culture comes close to media criticism and, like British media studies, is open to hermeneutic methods of literary criticism, aesthetics, cultural history and structuralist analysis. The popular culture variety of this approach takes any cultural practice—cemetery tombstones, science-fiction, hillbilly music, etc.—as a medium uncovering strands of contemporary culture. This 'anthropological school' has effectively applied to media studies conceptions such as myth, ritual and folktale drawn from the anthropology of pre-industrial societies. (Cf. CRT Vol8 No1).

II: New Emphasis on 'The Active Audience'

John Fiske. *Television Culture*. London and New York: Methuen & Co., 1987.

The movement away from the 'powerful media', 'powerful ideology' perspective of cultural studies has been very much influenced by recent studies of how TV viewers actively select elements of TV to construct their own world of meaning. These studies have avoided a quantitative fixed-choice questionnaire method, which often tells us more about what researchers want to hear. They also question the uses and gratifications' approaches, which focus on individual, psychological motivations prescinding from the socio-cultural contexts of media users. Instead, a method of 'audience ethnography'—open, unstructured, in-depth interviews; life histories; or participant observation of families viewing TV—has allowed viewers to define the categories of interpretation from their own socio-cultural perspectives.

The Diversity of Audience Interpretations

A study that Hall, Fiske and others consider path-breaking was an analysis of audience interpretations of *Nationwide*, an early evening BBC news programme with a lighter, regional human interest orientation, carried out by David Morley and associates at the CCCS in Birmingham from 1976-1978.¹⁸ Morley took as his theoretical point of departure the thesis of Stuart Hall that TV viewers tend to accept, reject or negotiate (a decoding process) the 'preferred', encoded ideological message according to their social class

status and their socio-political interests. Morley interviewed twenty-eight representative *groups* (not as individuals): bank and print managers, teacher trainees and university students, trade unionists, working-class apprentices and black students from a lower-status background.

The research confirmed that viewers from subcultures in opposition to the dominant socio-political power structure—for example, trade union shop stewards—easily detect a preferred reading in the *Nationwide* news programme and resist that reading with their own reconstruction of events. On the whole, however, contrary to Stuart Hall's early views, decodings did not correlate with social class position. The research suggested that individual viewers draw upon a composite of often unrelated and even contradictory social and personal histories. As Morley comments in his 1986 study of viewing in family contexts, 'the same man may be simultaneously a productive worker, a trade unionist, a supporter of the (centrist) Social Democratic Party, a consumer, a racist, a home owner, a wife beater and a Christian.'¹⁹

By the mid-1980s, the accumulating audience ethnography studies dealing with different kinds of audiences (women, children, residents of Latin American poor neighbourhoods, etc.), different genres of programmes, in different parts of the world began to suggest more sophisticated theories of how audiences are aware of and negotiate with the ideological discourses of TV.

TV Audiences Create Culture

Fiske's latest book comes close to being a textbook summary of the current thinking in cultural studies which draws upon semiotics, post-structuralism, Marxist studies of media and hegemony, and especially the recent audience ethnography research. Fiske shares the critical argument that TV tends to build into its programmes a 'preferred reading' reflecting the dominant capitalistic, male, racial or other power relations. Nevertheless, like Stuart Hall, he questions whether audiences are 'cultural dopes' unable to perceive the differences between their interests and those of the TV producer. Following Morley and others, Fiske challenges the view that production techniques such as Hollywood realism not only absorb oppositional discourses into a seamless replica of dominant ideologies but position (interpellate) viewers so that they cannot perceive a film or TV in any terms but those of the hegemonic culture. Studies showing the quite unpredictable and oppositional meaning that viewers place upon popular series such as *Dallas* suggest that, although the programme may frame the topic and provide materials for reaction, TV is more of a 'provoker' of independent meanings than a determinative influence. Programmes such as *Dallas* achieve popularity with a great variety of viewers in different cultural contexts precisely because of the combination of widely understood folk tale genres with a polysemy based on a complex set of colourful characters, incorporation of new, conflictive cultural issues, and the ambiguous symbols of a heterogeneous, urbane society – a combination which stimulates immensely varied interpretations and identifications. Fiske characterises the TV text as the site of tensions between the forces of social control tending to narrow the potential of meaning to a preferred one and the forces of openness to multiple popular subdiscourses which enable the variety of viewers to negotiate an appropriate variety of meanings. Fiske suggests that TV research will better explain why so many people find TV enjoyable if this research focusses less on the textual strategies of preferred ideological reading and more on the gaps and contradictions that open TV to meanings arising out of the social experience of the viewer.

Fiske also reflects a growing research interest in the 'cultural competence' of audiences for critical understanding of the conventions of TV such as genre and the pleasure derived from resisting or 'playing with' the conventional genres. For Fiske, human pleasure requires control over meaning and making sense out of life. Some of the major pleasures of TV viewing, he argues, are the reworking of the meaning of the programme and the sense of power and creativity that comes from this participation in the cultural process.

How TV Stimulates Oppositional Readings

Much of the book is an inventory of the ways audiences exploit the polysemy of TV and negotiate between the preferred reading and their own readings.

1. To be novel and entertaining, TV uses a language of verbal and iconic irony, metaphor, joking parody and satire, all of which distance the surface statement from the intended meaning and leave the viewer with an explosion of ambivalent meaning that ideology cannot control.
2. Much popular TV exaggerates super heroes or family conflicts with such an *excess of hyperbole* that viewers easily catch the tongue in cheek attitude or question the dominant message as simply exotic.
3. While the avant-garde film may be a *writerly text* which demands that the audience enter into the writer's unique, countercultural construction on the terms of the writer, mass-marketed TV is a more *producerly text*, a semiotic democracy that responds to the well-known discursive competencies and popular narrative memory of audiences. This permits diverse audiences to participate imaginatively in the resolution of the story in terms of their multiple cultural contexts.

4. The text of TV is experienced as a chaotic flow of unconnected, even contradictory *segments* of drama, news and commercials, etc. this tends to subordinate perception of logically coherent cause and effect to unpredictable free association and makes ideological closure more difficult.
5. Unlike high art, which tends to emphasise the unique meaning of each work, TV is a popular art, read and written from an *inter-textual* perspective. Firstly, the meaning of a given TV programme depends on *horizontal* reference to conventions of the genre (*other* cop shows, soap operas, etc.) and to the film, stage play, novel or newspaper account of the same story. Secondly, the primary text of the TV programme itself is also interpreted *vertically* in terms of the *secondary* texts of promotion (fan magazines, TV guides, press releases about TV actors and programmes) and the *tertiary* text of family viewing or the 'day-after-gossip' about both the programme and the promotional material. Although genres may tend to standardise and control meaning toward a preferred reading, the interplay between all of the textual references and the continual appeal of actors and producers to these other texts enhance the meaning and provide multiple references for reading the text from an alternative or oppositional perspective.
6. The appeal of TV to popular traditions of imagination, romantic and physical pleasure, to carnivalesque excess, and to exotic style (the music videos of Madonna are but the most recent example) are often a form of popular protest against dominant power structures.

Television and Social Change

Fiske argues that the polysemy of the TV text and the diverse cultural competencies of audiences prevents popular TV from being a factor of either rigid social control or radical social change. Social change in industrial democracies with heterogeneous subcultures rarely occurs through revolution, but rather as a result of negotiated tensions between those with social power and subordinate groups trying to gain more power so as to shift social values toward their own interests. Fiske doubts the social change value of 'radical' TV or film, which attempts to deliberately break the mythic, naturalising illusion and emotional identifications, because such TV overestimates the power of the TV text, underestimates the unpredictability of audience interpretations, and rarely gains wide popular comprehension. More effective is a 'progressive TV' which inserts an oppositional discourse, such as strong female leadership in a genre of action-adventure presupposing patriarchal male domination, because it places new values in an interactive tension with the common sense framework of everyday, popular culture.

Fiske also questions whether the principle of diversity in programming necessarily stimulates the general audience to consider a wide variety of cultural issues because it usually implies a series of programmes with a relatively narrow, homogenous discourse that reinforces the meaning systems of selected audience segments. Paradoxically, a widely distributed single programme such as *Dallas* may not be such an agent of homogenisation as it appears because, to reach its multitude of diverse audiences, it must allow for a great deal of cultural diversity in its readings. Such programmes provide considerable semiotic excess for the receiving subcultures to negotiate with in order to produce *their* meanings, rather than the ones preferred by the broadcasters.

Fiske further questions whether the economic dominance of certain countries in the international marketing of TV, film and other cultural products necessarily translates into cultural dominance. He cites the research of Katz and Liebes which shows that recent Russian Jewish immigrants interpreted *Dallas* as capitalism's self-criticism; consuming the programme did not involve consuming the ideology.²⁰ Too often, the attempts to produce or defend

a national culture have been dominated by middle-class tastes and definitions of culture which have revealed remarkably little understanding of popular pleasures. In the 1950s, many British working class youths quickly identified with American popular culture because they could identify neither with the restrained BBC-produced inflections of popular culture nor with the then current romantic British image of working class youth.

Fiske's potentially controversial conclusion is that 'In a mass society the materials and meaning systems out of which cultures are made will almost inevitably be produced by the culture industries: but the making of these materials into culture, that is, into the meanings of self and of social relations, and the exchange of these materials for pleasure is a process that can only be performed by their consumer-users, not by their producers.'²¹

Latin America: New Confidence in the Resources of Popular Culture

Jesus Martin-Barbero. *De los medios a las mediaciones: Comunicación, cultura y hegemonía (From the Media to Mediations: Communication, Culture, and Hegemony)*. Barcelona and Mexico: Ediciones G. Gili, 1987. 300 pp.

In this book, widely regarded as one of the most important contributions to media studies in Latin America in recent years, the Colombian, Jesus Martin-Barbero, summarises well the Latin American version of the shift away from the powerful media, powerful ideology thesis. An indigenous tradition of media research in Latin America began in the 1960s with a rejection of the North American modernisation and behaviourist effects perspective and the adoption of a structuralist, cultural studies approach. With the assumptions of cultural imperialism and dependency theory, researchers carried out extensive analysis of the influence of international capitalistic ideology in media content and studied the increasing control of Latin American culture industries by transnational corporate expansion. Researchers tended to assume that the ideology discovered in media did manipulate consciousness and culture, but there was little field study of cultural changes. Based on this instrumentalist conception of media influence, media policy experts hoped that through their coalitions with progressive presidential executives and implementation of elaborate media policy planning through government legislation, progressive cultural leadership could exert control over media content and support movements for political and socio-cultural transformation in Latin America.

Shift to a New Research Perspective

As Martin-Barbero explains, the political and socio-cultural experiences in the 1970s and early 1980s turned research in new directions: 1) The rise of brutally repressive, neo-conservative military-industrial coalitions crushed hopes for media reforms through progressive governments and often drove media researchers and policy experts closer to movements of popular resistance. 2) The widespread development of alternative, grass roots media, popular radio, community theatre, use of slide-sound or video for group level conscientisation, etc.-demonstrated the independent capacity of the popular classes for cultural creativity and resistance to transnational culture. Although some of these movements have had an economic base (labour and peasant organisations), as classical Marxist theory would assume, important new political actors have been appearing: urban neighbourhood (*barrio*) organisations, women's movements, the basic Christian communities with their culture of liberation theology, youth expressing generational protest, human rights groups and progressive journalists. These movements have opened a new arena of political action which is largely cultural: communication strategies for the redefinition of the *meaning* of social development and the meaning of Latin American identity in terms of everyday life, and lived experience of oppression.²² This suggested that media reform might come not just from centralised expert planning,

but from the new models of communication and cultural identity at the grass roots level. 3) the vigorous development of the Latin American commercial culture industries, especially in larger countries such as Brazil and Mexico, showed the wide popularity of specifically Latin American media genres such as the *telenovela*. Research began to focus much more on the humour, melodrama and narrative tradition of the popular classes presented in the commercial media. 4) With massive urban migration, the creation of huge semi-urban settlements encircling Latin American cities and the urbanisation of rural areas, mass culture and the mass media have become an integral part of popular culture. The popular classes recognise in the *telenovela*, for example, the melodrama of their own life context, but they also resist and reinterpret transnational culture in terms of their own life context.

Focus Not On Media But On Mediations

The new perspective on media and culture suggests, in the view of Martin-Barbero, that the development of media structure and content comes not only from the introduction of new media technologies or new media policies, but from the way media are appropriated in the daily life of the family and the *barrio*. The starting point for research should not be the disjunction of media as hegemonic control and passive reception, but the *mediations*, the points of articulation between the processes of media production on the one hand and the daily routine of media use in the context of family, community and nation on the other. Mediations imply a process in which the narrative discourse of media adapts to the popular narrative tradition of myth and melodrama, and audiences learn to *recognise* their collective cultural identity in the media discourse. Mediations foster a circular process of production of cultural meanings: 1) starting in celebrations of the extended family or in the annual neighbourhood religio-civic festivals, 2) dramatisation of this meaning in the media, and 3) reintegration of the media dramatisation into the popular narrative memory.

Martin-Barbero sees the mediation practices associated with TV today as the product of a long historical development of popular narrative memory in Latin America. This socio-historical analysis of the cultural competence of audiences differs somewhat from that of Fiske and other structuralists. While Fiske sees audience interpretations as a type of 'tertiary text' reflecting personal pleasures and the oral culture of gossip about TV – revealed by the interviews and reports of audience ethnography – Martin-Barbero locates the cultural competence of the popular classes in a much broader socio-cultural, economic and political history of specific countries or regions of Latin America.

For example, the incipient Mexican film industry from 1920-1950 played an important cooperative role in the formation of

Mexico's nationalist populism following the nationalist peasant revolution of 1910–1920. In the sentimental film portrayal of the epic myths of Zapata or Pancho Villa, the creation of popular macho heroes and the dramatisation of family or *barrio* sagas, the Mexican people, for the first time, recognised themselves as a nation. Likewise in the Argentina of 1920–1950, the *radionovela* incorporated many of the narrative formats of the 'circuses' travelling in the provinces with their collections of minstrels recounting gaucho mythology and theatre troupes dramatising the sentimental melodramas of newspaper serials. The *radionovela* built upon the long-standing mediations of folk drama and popular sentiments, but unified and channelled popular culture toward the Peronist political populism that made possible an 'Evita', herself a 'star' of *radionovelas*. The music industry of Brazil, especially the ritual-based African samba rhythms, and the yellow press of Chile played similar roles in the formation of populist national culture.

The Mediations of Television

Television in the 1960s introduced a much more North American, transnational and commercial format of media than the nationalistic film, radio, music and press of an earlier populist era. TV was geared to a new era of rapid quantitative growth of production and consumption, and TV tended to create a homogenised national or Latin American culture more out of phase with the local rhythms of family and community life. Nevertheless, Martin-Barbero notes the evolution of at least three types of mediations that enable Latin Americans to appropriate the new mass culture of TV.

1. *Daily family life*. The TV style of colloquial intimacy and personal immediacy is directed to the daily routine and closeness of the family circle. Among the popular classes where TV is viewed as a family group, the family appropriates TV as another member that not only facilitates the emotional unity of the family but links the family to the larger cultural world.
2. *Linking of temporal rhythms*. The temporal rhythm of TV with its very standardised programming schedule and efforts to fill space often does not fit the emotional time rhythm of audiences. Yet TV does adapt to the sentiments associated with the seasons,

sports and holidays of the year. More important, audiences have learned to find in TV some fragmentary moments of an emotional meeting point when a particular song catches a mood, there is deep identification with a TV character, or the plot action synchronises with the real-life drama of persons, families or the community.

3. *Television genres*. The continual replay of genres such as the *telenovela* is the mediating point of interaction between the drive of mass, commercial competitive TV and the pleasurable experience of recognising cultural identity or of resistive interpretation. The *telenovela* is perhaps the most typical and uniquely Latin American genre, according to Martin-Barbero, because it is an extension of the melodramatic tone of Latin American popular culture. In melodrama, with its polarised, symbolic characterisations, the sense of popular justice, the accentuation of conflict, the subtle ridicule of the powerful and the pretentious, there is an active recognition of the life of the *barrio*, the extended family and the city. For example, in Lima, Peru, when a strike of taxi drivers prevented the participation of some actors in shooting an episode of a popular *telenovela*, it seemed quite natural to simply incorporate the fact of the strike into the narrative of the *telenovela*.

The Political Significance of the Melodramatic

Martin-Barbero questions the assumption of both the progressive left and the educational protagonists of 'high-culture' that mass culture is a purely manipulative, alienating factor. The left's communicative language of rationalistic utopianism may strike a sympathetic chord in some political activists, but for the great majority political motivations have their first expression, not in policy proposals, but in comedy, in satirical music and in melodramatic portrayals of conflict and injustice as these are experienced in daily life. Radio and TV comedy in Lima gains its popularity through its ridicule of bourgeois life styles and jokes about the bad city services. The Sandinista movement in Nicaragua cast its appeal in the language of popular music, religious hymns, melodramatic forms of political protest and the legends of Sandino.

Television, Leisure and Privatised Culture

Conrad Lodziak. *The Power of Television: A Critical Appraisal*. London: Frances Pinter (Publishers), 1986. 217pp.

Lodziak also argues that media researchers have vastly overemphasised the power of TV to influence patterns of consciousness and culture because the media-centred approach prevents them from seeing that TV is only *one* among many factors in a complex pattern of political-economic power. Critical theories of media, in particular, have attributed to media too much power to induce subordinate groups to give *willing* consent to dominant ideologies of capitalism or patriarchy. The available research evidence suggests that working class sectors do not accept as their own normative values the myths of elite ideology, such as the belief that poverty is due to laziness or lack of aspirations, nor do they accept policy proposals such as reduction of spending for education and health. The most typical attitude is one of helpless indifference to elite ideologies largely because of their sense of powerlessness. Many working class people do hold oppositional attitudes toward specific political proposals, but they are hesitant to move to active mobilization for fear of jeopardising employment, or for fear of other reprisals of the economically powerful. Lodziak suggests that the emphasis on ideological influence tends to direct political action toward struggles *within* individual consciousness and discourages a grappling with the objective conditions of powerlessness and socio-political fragmentation.

Diverting Leisure Toward Effortless Entertainment

Lodziak goes back to the arguments of Adorno and Horkheimer that the direct ideological manipulation of media is a less important factor in depoliticisation than the ways mass media channel the use of leisure time. In the idealistic dream of those who proposed shorter work periods and more leisure for the working class, people would have more free time to take possession of their talents, use critical-reflective capacities, exercise personal autonomy and become socially involved. In fact, the culture of the present industrial order pushes people harder to attain higher consumption styles, and people return from work too weary for anything but effortless relaxation. The culture industries which were created in this political-economic system respond to these working conditions by making the major leisure-time activity a type of TV use that wafts people into a world of hour-upon-hour of trivial entertainment. TV soaks up time that might otherwise be available for critical discussion and activities in oppositional movements.

Lodziak suggests that the role of TV in reducing active autonomy in leisure time is especially noticeable in early childhood socialisation practices. In the cramped quarters of the typical working class home, watching hours of TV brings the child back into the home under the surveillance of parents and draws children away from

outside activities which foster habits of greater initiative, autonomy and involvement in social activities.

TV Encourages a Privatised Society

The centralisation and bureaucratisation of social decision making and the increasing professional mobility typical of contemporary societies has reduced the significance of the local community and local intermediate organisations such as the trade union and the church, for direct social participation. The resolution of social issues has been turned over to the 'experts' of political parties and the welfare bureaucracies. TV is part of this social fragmentation and reduction of the public sphere in so far as it reinforces the tendency toward domestic privatisation. Virtually the only 'common' activity in a neighbourhood is the separate use of the same social services and the same media within the home. Even this area of commonality is being split up by the multiplication of media channels geared to often superficial information gathering from the media, a type of

specialised interests. Political activity is reduced to passive use of information that is often little more than political image making. People may have more information, but this is never brought to the stage of action-oriented opinion by associations in which common needs might be recognised and alternative proposals formulated. Instead, many seek individualised solutions to problems. Given the general perception of powerlessness, people retreat into a self-maintaining private sphere of personal and family satisfactions based in no small part on media entertainment, and they simply watch the passing world from a safe, non-committal distance.

Lodziak does not discount the oppositional interpretations of TV such as those stressed by Stuart Hall, Fiske and Martin-Barbero, but he questions whether this necessarily leads to political interaction between individuals or social groups. The site of this 'struggle over meaning' is *within* the subject rather than *between* subjects conceived as organised moral, political agents.

III: Media as Indicators of Cultural Change

G. Melischek, K. E. Rosengren and J. Stappers (eds.). *Cultural Indicators: An International Symposium*. Vienna: Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984. 565 pp.

The changing images of family, minorities or national heroes portrayed by the media have long been considered observable, objective indicators of deeper cultural changes. Swedish scholar, Karl Erik Rosengren, traces the roots of cultural indicators to earlier interest in economic and social indicators in the 1930s. The economic crisis of the 1930s sparked the development of the science of economic indicators as a means of predicting future crises in order to control or reduce their effects. Also in the 1930s an American presidential commission directed by the sociologist, W. F. Ogburn, began a large-scale effort to measure 'recent social trends' as indicators of shifts in public opinion and cultural values.

During the 1960s Lasswell stimulated interest in quantitative measures of intangible culture with his 'value dictionary' designed for text analysis, and Rokeach's methods of measuring values were also a forerunner of cultural indicators research. The term 'cultural indicators' was first introduced by George Gerbner, and, with associates at the University of Pennsylvania, Gerbner began to develop quantitative methods of analysing trends in TV content as one of the best indicators of cultural changes. Gerbner also set in motion the international co-operative study of media as cultural indicators in Europe, Australia, Latin America and other parts of the world. Cultural indicators research represents still another school of thought about media and culture. As Rosengren notes, the cultural indicators approach differs from the qualitative, impressionistic, case study method of the Frankfurt school or the British cultural studies perspective in that it insists on sophisticated quantitative techniques to ensure representativeness, reliability and validity of data.²³

Why is TV a Good Indicator of our Culture

Underlying Gerbner's approach to cultural indicators is his general conception of TV as the arm of cultural control in late capitalist industrial societies. He has questioned the tradition of media research which focusses on specific media effects on isolated individuals, and he argues that we must see TV as reflecting and affecting whole cultures. As a form of social control, TV defines the roles of power in the areas of class, gender, race, occupation and religion. Gerbner's method of cultural indicators research has been innovative in that he not only carefully codes the content of TV over period of years to determine the world view of TV but also surveys audiences to see whether the attitudes and values of TV viewers, especially heavy viewers, reflect the same TV world view.

Much of Gerbner's research in the 1970s focussed on TV

violence, very much a preoccupation of the American public and US government funding for media research at that time. Gerbner and his associates concluded that permeating virtually all American TV programming is a world view of violence and conflict – much more violent than in actual life – and that the TV was much more likely to portray the powerless of society – women, racial minorities, the elderly – as the victims of violence. The audience surveys also seemed to show that heavy viewers of TV were much more likely to have attitudes of fearfulness and dependency on police or other authority figures regardless of levels of education, income or degree of actual violence in their neighbourhoods. Gerbner concluded that American TV acts as a form of social control in that the constant portrayal of violence and victimisation induces dependency on powerful authority – a conclusion that in some ways echoes views of Adorno.

More recently, Gerbner et al have formulated their theories of the relationship of media and culture in terms of two major hypotheses: *mainstreaming* and *resonance*.²⁴ 'Mainstreaming' argues that TV, in its appeal to a broad cross section of national societies, tends to present a homogenised, central trend of values, and heavy TV viewers tend to shift their cultural views to this central tendency. 'Resonance' proposes that if the local life circumstances of viewers are similar to that portrayed in TV, for example, actually living in a violent neighbourhood, then this direct experience interacts with and reinforces the TV portrayal of the world. Research of Gerbner seems to support these hypotheses. For example, heavy viewers among the college educated, normally people with more progressive political views, tend to have more moderate, centrist political opinions.

Does TV 'Cause' Fear and Anxiety?

The fact that Gerbner's theories of cultural indicators have been widely debated and tested by researchers in many parts of the world is a tribute to the attractiveness of these theories, but many researchers now question both the 'powerful media' assumptions of Gerbner and the validity of his research conclusions. One conclusion that is especially questioned is that TV viewing somehow 'causes' states of fear and dependency. Because the data is only correlational, some researchers argue that it is also plausible that the line of 'causality' is much more complex. Wober and Gunter, researchers for the Independent Broadcasting Authority in Britain, cite evidence to show that people with higher states of anxiety tend to view more TV and to seek out programmes

depicting strong authority figures in order to reduce their anxiety.²⁵ People with fear of victimisation pay particular attention to news about crime and watch more crime drama programmes. Especially significant is the finding that people with more anxiety about victimisation tend to choose programmes that portray the triumph of justice, and they emerge from this TV viewing with lower levels of anxiety. This suggests that people select programmes and selectively interpret these programmes in order to confirm and clarify their beliefs about the world.

Wober and Gunter also provide evidence that the thesis of TV as an instrument of social control cannot be easily generalised from the USA to other countries where there are different TV programming policies, different traditions of political culture and different styles of TV use. Researchers in the Netherlands and in Sweden cooperating in the international cultural indicators project suggest, for example, that they found little evidence of TV cultivating a 'mean world' attitude in their countries because there is more control over violence portrayals and because violence is often portrayed with a negative interpretation.

Other Approaches to Cultural Indicators Research

Europeans involved in the international cultural indicators research programme have tended to adopt an approach closer to the classical social indicators methodology, namely, detecting long term socio-cultural trends. Instead of treating media content as a form of a

causal, social control factor, Rosengren in Sweden, and others, have taken media content as a measurable indicator of broader socio-cultural, economic and political changes in society such as secularisation or urbanisation. In Sweden, for example, the analysis of the language and symbolism of newspaper obituaries over a period of decades showed fewer references to religion, and this was taken as an indication of types of secularisation in daily life. Analysis of the changes in advertising in Sweden from 1950 to 1975 indicated changing gender roles, greater awareness of environmental problems and a growing acceptance of socio-economic equality.

More recently, Rosengren is taking yearly measures of trends in values among a sample of individuals.²⁶ He then intends to compare these individual measures with social system indicators based on media content analysis such as secularisation to see if the macro (societal) and micro (individual) trends match. In addition to using media as an indicator, Rosengren will attempt to explain the interaction of individual values and media content using the accumulated research data and both 'effects' and 'active audience' theories. Finally, trends in individual values, media content and major social institutions will be related to still broader national and international economic and political conditions to determine how these factors match. This multi-level analysis of cultural trends should help to understand how changes in cultural values are associated with broad social change, and what is the role of the media in these changes.

IV: Trends in the Culturalist, Pluralist Perspective

Horace Newcomb (ed.). *Television the Critical View*, Fourth Ed. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Willard Rowland Jr. and Bruce Watkins (eds.). *Interpreting Television: Current Research Perspectives*. (Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research, Vol 12) Newbury Park, CA and London: Sage Publications, 1984. 293pp.

James Carey (ed.). *Media, Myths and Narratives: Television and the Press*. (Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research, Vol 15). Newbury Park, CA and London: Sage Publications, 1988. 264pp.

Over the last ten years James Carey's model of communication as a communalistic ritual for creating, celebrating and debating meaning has influenced a school of research which emphasises the role of TV in the formation of community. Much of this research questions the interpretation of TV as a powerful manipulative force which is at war with the 'real' culture of the people.

Television as a Cultural Forum

One of the most significant extensions of the anthropological, culturalist perspective is the argument of Newcomb and Hirsch that TV should be conceived of as a pluralist forum where a variety of ideological rhetorics are presented and debated. Newcomb began his career of media analysis as a TV critic for the Baltimore *Sun*, and he is interested in building a bridge between communication science, which has been primarily concerned with studying media effects, and the TV critics who approach TV as an aesthetic expression or are more concerned with the *quality* of the culture we are creating through a medium. The literary, artistic background of the critics makes it more difficult for them to see that TV, in its popular and even trivial expressions, is also a legitimate cultural expression.

Newcomb and Hirsch would argue that the interpretation of TV as dominated by a single, seamless ideological, political frame prevents researchers from seeing that within the parameters of a given cultural context there are various ideologies locked in debate. TV is not just an instrument of social control, but has a rhetorical form that invites the audience to enter the debate, consider various points of view and gradually change values and world views. Newcomb and Hirsch suggest that audiences are more culturally diverse than the TV critics and represent a broader spectrum of cultural appreciation than the critics.

While Fiske would emphasise the structuralist analysis of polysemy and Martin-Barbero stresses the complex cultural history of audiences, Newcomb focusses on the participation of a variety of producers each with a different rhetoric. Advertisers, production companies, writers and TV managers are sensitive to new cultural trends and quickly reach out to incorporate new tastes, styles and plots into established genres. Producers are 'hucksters of the symbol', cultural bricoleurs who are continually creating new combinations of cultural meaning or responding to new technological possibilities. Applying to TV Victor Turner's conception of ritual drama as a cultural space for exploring new values (cf. CRT, Vol 8, No. 1) Newcomb argues that TV does not present firm ideological conclusions but *comments* on ideological problems.

The emphasis of Newcomb and Hirsch on the analysis of the rhetoric of TV genres and the way producers persuasively present their points of view within a public forum also helps to build a bridge with the tradition of rhetorical research which, in America, has been carried on by the specialists in public speech and debate.

Newcomb and Hirsch agree with Raymond Williams that TV programming should be analysed as 'flow strips' of commercials, news, comedy, action-adventure, etc. which juxtapose very different rhetorics and ideologies. The unpredictable combinations invite audiences to enter into the cultural debate and participate in the producers' own art of cultural bricoleur.

TV as Expression of Community Wisdom and Aesthetics

In the research review edited by James Carey, David Thorburn develops another extension of the ritual model of communication: the conception of TV as 'consensus narrative'. Thorburn notes that while many forms of performance and story telling appeal to

specific subgroups, there are also types of ritual, choric and bardic narratives that operate as widely shared traditions, central to the life of a culture. Consensus narrative articulates the central mythologies of a culture through an inheritance of shared stories, plots, character types, proverbial wisdom and popular narrative conventions. It also uses a widely accessible, commonly understood language. Thorburn argues that, in American society and in many parts of the world, TV has achieved such a central role in cultural cohesiveness and continuity that it now has the status of a consensus narrative.

Thorburn would insist on an evaluative, humanistic distinction between art and entertainment, 'art having value for us not only as cultural artifact but also intrinsically because it is beautiful and wise'. Art, however, need not be identified with the esoteric, and Thorburn would not press too far a rigid distinction between art and entertainment. The artistic achievement of a Shakespeare or a Dickens – and Hollywood film, as many American critics belatedly discovered – has many of the characteristics of consensus narrative. These works of art draw on a complex network of artistic competence – singers, performers, writers, editors and producers – and depend on the aesthetic literacy of the community for their popularity. Indeed, the ability of consensus narrative to draw on the lore, inherited understandings and deceptions, myths and idealisations of a culture make it an ideal form for expressing the traditions of wisdom and beauty in the community. In short, Thorburn is asking media researchers to treat TV not just as political ideology

or moralistic effects but as an aesthetic expression.

TV Provides Symbols of Community Identification

Still another development of the ritual model of communication is the thesis of Stewart Hoover that TV, structured around iconic personalities, becomes a forum for prophetic figures leading cultural revitalisation movements and the formation of new cultural communities. Hoover found, in his study of the neo – evangelical movement in America, that the significance of the televangelists does not lie so much in the appropriation of the verbal content of their message, because so many followers do not watch televangelist programming very regularly and are often not able to reproduce the exact content of the verbal message.²⁷ Rather, for many people with rural, evangelical roots but with a life history of gradual loss of evangelical identification through geographical or upward socio-economic mobility, evangelical leaders such as Billy Graham or Pat Robertson, who have achieved 'prime time' fame, are living symbols that one can be both evangelical and mainstream America. The televangelists brought the neo – evangelical movement into the public forum and enabled many 'stranded' evangelicals to rebuild ties with their tradition once again. Hoover concludes that, in the perennial human search for community, TV personalities, with all of the symbolism of their programmes, provide points of identification for a new type of para-community which is compatible with the 'mobile privatisation' of contemporary mass culture.

V: The Study of Popular Culture

Jack Nachbar, Deborah Weiser, John L. Wright (eds.). *The Popular Culture Reader*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1978, 323pp.

Marshall W. Fishwick. *Seven Pillars of Popular Culture*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.

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

An area of cultural studies that is rapidly gaining a place within the general field of communications is the study of the popular arts, the styles and forms of symbolism in subcultures, the hobbies of popular media forms and the multiple expressions of creativity by ordinary people in everyday life. Recent issues of the *Journal of Popular Culture* published in the USA have articles from authors from all parts of the world on the latest trends in detective novels; the rise and fall of video games; doll exhibits; children's 'Little League' baseball and football; jokes about the Spanish dictator, General Franco, and political cartoons in post-Franco Spain; sex, gender and fashion in medieval and early-modern Britain; images of men and women in country music; leftist Thai popular music in the 1970s; popular songs in India's Hindi films; reflections on Disney's ageless Mickey Mouse; the rising interest in the occult and science fiction; etc.

Typically this line of research is less concerned with the political, ideological dimensions of popular culture and simply wants to understand and relish expressions of popular art. Studies in popular culture carry on the tradition of ethnographic description of the curious rituals, customs and art forms in primitive cultures but take everyday life and entertainment in mass, urban societies as its subject. The assumption in much of the research is that communication is not just limited to verbal, written or electronic media, but includes all the forms of human symbolic meaning. The *Popular Culture Reader* lists four major areas of interest: 1) *popular myths* such as the 'American myth of success'; 2) *popular icons* such as the pinball machine or cigarette ads and *popular stereotypes* of minority groups, women and foreigners; 3) the *popular arts* with an emphasis on formulaic genres in different media and the popular characterisations of heroes or other media figures; and 4) *popular rituals* such

as sports spectacles, holidays, and celebration of public figures. Recently, popular culture studies have been looking more at the historical continuities and roots of contemporary popular culture in earlier periods of a civilization. For example, Ray Browne and Marshall Fishwick's book, the *Hero in Transition*, notes the decline of heroic figures in contemporary consciousness, but argues that the persistence of heroic figures throughout history point to an imminent revival.²⁸ Heroes play too important a role in personifying a culture's ideals and aspirations to disappear. The most enduring heroes are fictional because they can be shaped by their creator to fit popular norms and aspirations.

Celebrating Cultural Democracy

A central question for popular culture studies is 'Why is this expression so popular?' Supposedly trivial popular arts or icons must have positive qualities if it is a commercial success judged by ratings and sales, if it becomes mainstream culture at least for a while, if it is consumed with pleasure by the millions in mass style. Vigorously rejected is the argument that popular culture is a debasing aberration born out of commercial greed and the public's ignorance or vulgar tastes. Also rejected is the view that high culture or the fine arts with their abstract canons of quality established largely by social elites must be normative culture. Nor is popular culture to be identified with folkloric remnants of the past, with rural areas untouched by modernity, or the subcultures of the poor and uneducated. Ray Browne suggests that because popular culture is less artful and less altered by the elitist subjective experience of the genius artist, it is often a more truthful window of what the people are thinking and doing at any given moment. Popular culture comes closer to expressing the people's sense of morality,

justice and human aspirations than high culture.

Herbert Gans, in his seminal study, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste*, argues that popular culture studies should accept the fact that in any given society there are different taste subcultures, each with its own art, literature, music and other symbolic expressions.²⁹ These subcultures differ mainly in their different aesthetic standards, and all are of equal worth. Gans proposes that if he had to choose between a policy of 'cultural mobility', which would provide every person with the economic and educational prerequisites for choosing high culture, and 'sub-cultural programming', which encourages all taste cultures, high or low, he would opt for the more democratic 'subcultural programming'. He would direct research and public policy toward ways that would help all taste cultures to grow, particularly in those sections of the public which are now poorly served by the mass media.

Developing Canons of Popular Aesthetics

A radically democratic and pluralistic view of popular culture is not shared by all students of popular culture, especially by the school of socio-political criticism and by media critics with the task of providing public cultural-aesthetic evaluation of mass communications. Nor does it provide criteria for those who have educational responsibilities.

John Cawelti recognises that the study of popular culture has contributed a number of new criteria for a humanistic tradition of popular art criticism:

1. The validity of a variety of aesthetic standards and the expression of these in mass marketing, commercially-oriented culture industries.
2. The validity of the conventional, the formulaic and the serial as a necessary even desirable characteristic of a truly popular art form.

3. The recognition that the deliberate centring of a work around the performance, persona principle – what has become known as 'hype' – is an important part of the artistic work as a whole. Indeed, the efforts to create stars and celebrities has become a major twentieth century art form.

4. Acceptance of the use of rather standard genres as an artistic expression and awareness of the creativity of film directors or TV producers in the use of genres (the study of directorial *auteurism*).

These contributions of popular culture studies are evident in virtually all of the moves away from a powerful media, powerful ideologically perspective, described above.

In Cawelti's view, however, this discovery of 'the popular' has not yet been translated into criteria for the popular art critic. Criticism must begin to face up to the task of establishing the canons of popular culture. If Matthew Arnold's definition of the function of criticism as 'the understanding of the best that has been thought and said in the world' is valid – as Cawelti thinks it is – , then we must start to work on how we define 'the best that has been thought and said' in popular culture and mass media. Cawelti suggests that this cannot be solved by 'weak-minded pluralism' or by ratings and sales figures. We must move beyond the total acceptance that has characterised the popular culture movement.

There are no easy formulas for developing the canons of criticism for popular art. It involves an ongoing dialogue of the socio-political critics, the defenders of the tradition of fine arts, those who are responsible for educational tasks and the more adventuresome, democratically-oriented students of popular culture. Most important are the questions around which this dialogue centres, namely: 'What kind of culture are we trying to create?' 'Who is to benefit from the fruits of this culture?' and 'What creations of popular art should become a lasting part of human culture?'

Cultural Policy and the Media

Huynh Cao Tri, Le Thanh, Roland Colin, and Luo Yuan-zheng. *Strategies for Endogenous Development*. Paris: UNESCO, 1986

The time is long past when national development could be considered only an economic and political matter without serious attention to cultural identity. Unfortunately, both governmental and intergovernmental agencies have been slow to take cultural questions into account. Perhaps the greatest official attention has been paid to culture in the Third World countries where there is a greater sense of threat to cultural traditions.

Out of this rising concern has come the perspective of 'endogenous development'. Since 1980, UNESCO has taken as one of its priority goals the defense of national cultures. The character of each culture is seen as a key criterion for the development of communication policy. According to the authors in this volume, more emphasis must be placed on the potential for development in each culture, and the outcome of the process must be expected to take different forms in each country.

Research in support of developing the cultural identity of nations must include not only ethnography but also the history of the culture and the long impact that world cultural influences have had. True participation by all the people in expressing their views about the development process demands a communication from the grassroots level of villages and neighbourhoods. Colin uses African case studies to illustrate the factors which must be taken into account if the delicate web of existing local communication patterns is to be integrated satisfactorily with the world communication system. For example, local leadership can work as a cultural check on the misuse of power by officials in many African societies. Only by ensuring the continuance of such traditional safeguards against abuses of trust can the willing participation of ordinary people in those African societies be encouraged.

**William Biernatzki and
Robert White**
Issue Editors

Footnotes

1. Willard D. Rowland, Jr. *The Politics of TV Violence: Policy Uses of Communication Research*. Newbury Park, CA, and London: Sage Publications, 1983.
2. Daniel J. Czitrom. *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982. p.144.
3. Tony Bennett. 'Theories of the Media, Theories of Society' pp.36-47, and Stuart Hall, 'The Rediscovery of 'Ideology': Return of the Repressed in Media Studies' pp.56-57, in *Culture, Society and the Media*. Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran and Janet Woollacott (eds.). London and New York: Methuen, 1982.
4. The attempts of Adorno and Horkheimer to link analysis of the media to discussion of the role of the Enlightenment in cultural history continues to be an important theme of debate. Foucault, currently much cited in critical studies of the media, shared the pessimistic view of Adorno and Horkheimer. Jurgen Habermas, who is regarded as one of the most direct descendants of the Frankfurt School tradition in Germany, defends modern institutions and the modes of communication which are produced by the Enlightenment against Foucault's perennial criticism. cf. Jurgen Habermas, 'Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present', Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, 'What is Maturity?' and Habermas and Foucault on 'What is Enlightenment?' in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. David Cousins Hoy (ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986. pp.103-108 and 109-121, respectively.
5. Czitrom. *Media and the American Mind*. pp.144-145.
6. Bennett in *Culture, Society and the Media*, p.39.
7. Vance Packard. *The Hidden Persuaders*. New York: David McKay, 1957; also, New York and London: Penguin Books, 1982.
8. Bennett. In *Culture, Society and the Media*, pp.36-41. One of the foremost apologists of a cultural pluralism perspective was Daniel Bell in his book, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the 1950s*. New York: The Free Press, 1960.
The American pluralist perspective is also maintained in discussions of normative criteria for media ethics and media policy which were originally developed in the 1960s. Cf. William L. Rivers, Wilbur Schramm and Clifford Christians. *Responsibility in Mass Communication*, 3rd ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1980. pp.220-268, Ch. on popular art.
9. For critical media scholars the definition of the media as consensus formation easily lent itself to centralised social control of mass media by the powerful. This, in fact, closed off minority dissent, representation of injustices and bringing social conflicts to the surface - all in the name of unity; Cf. Hall. 'Rediscovery of Ideology' in Durevitch et al. *Culture, Society and the Media*, 1982.
10. Lawrence Grossberg. 'Strategies of Marxist Cultural Interpretation' in *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol 1, No 4. (December, 1984), pp.394-395.
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12. Grossberg. 'Strategies of Marxist Cultural Interpretation' pp.400-402.
13. John Fiske. 'British Cultural Studies and Television' in *Channels of Discourse*. Robert C. Allen. New York and London: Methuen, 1987. pp.254-290.
14. Stuart Hall. 'The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among the Theorists', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.). London: Macmillan, 1988. pp.35-74.
15. Stuart Hall. 'Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect'' in *Mass Communication and Society*. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott (eds.). London: Edward Arnold in assoc. with the Open University Press, 1977. pp.315-349.
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24. George Gerbner, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan and Nancy Signorelli. 'The "Mainstreaming" of America: Violence Profile No 11', *Journal of Communication*, Vol 30, No 3 (Summer, 1980), pp.1-29.
25. Mallory Wober and Barrie Gunter. *Television and Social Control*. Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1988. pp.20-54.
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CURRENT RESEARCH ON MEDIA AND CULTURE

AUSTRALIA

John Fiske (Western Australian Institute of Technology, Kent St, Bentley, W. A. 6102) is general editor of the new international journal, *Cultural Studies*, which emphasizes popular culture.

AUSTRIA

The International Institute for Audio-visual Communication and Cultural Development, or MEDIACULT (Internationales Institut für audio-visuelle Kommunikation und kulturelle Entwicklung, Metternichgasse 12, A-1030 Vienna) is engaged in a research programme devoted to 'The Impact of New Technologies on Cultural Creation and on the Status of Creative Workers and Artists', with special emphasis on music. Other recent projects include an evaluation of Austrian cultural

policy and compilation, for UNESCO, of a bibliography of cultural industries in third world countries.

CANADA

Gertrude Robinson (McGill University, Montreal) has been a leader in cultural studies in Canada.

CHILE

Maria de la Luz Hurtado (CENECA, Santa Beatriz 106, Santiago), **Giselle Munizaga** and others of CENECA have been studying melodrama and other forms of popular culture in Chilean media.

CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF

Ming An-Xiang (Institute of Journalism, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2, Jintai Xilu, Beijing) is interested in communication policy.

COLOMBIA

Amparo Cadavid (Centro de Investigacion y educacion popular, Apdo Aéreo 25916, Bogotá) is one of a network of Latin American researchers studying audience interpretations of the melodramatic in *telenovelas*.

FINLAND

Terhi Rantanen (Department of Communication, Univ of Helsinki, Aleksanterinkatu 7A7, Helsinki) has done a study of the relation between government, journalism and culture, in reference to the telegraph agencies of Imperial Russia.

FRANCE

Yvonne Mignot-Lefebvre (Cecod - CNRS, Univ of Paris, 1 162 rue Saint Charles, Paris 75740 Cedex 15) has been studying the relationship of social and cultural patterns to technological transfers.

HUNGARY

The Institute for Culture (8 Corvin ter, Budapest) cooperates closely with the research activities of the International Institute for Audio-visual Communication and Cultural Development (MEDIACULT), Vienna, in studies of cultural policy and cultural creation.

INDIA

Pradeep Krishnatray (Communication and Journalism Department, Univ of Sagar, Sagar 470 003) is interested in tradition, culture and communication in India.

T. Tanwar (Faculty of Communication and Extension, IIFM ES-120 Arera Colony, Bhopal 462 016) deals with factors affecting preferences for cinema or television in India from the perspective of political economy.

JAPAN

Hideo Kitamura (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Doshisha Univ, Karasuma Imadegawa, Kamikyo-Ku, Kyoto 602) continues his interest in the Japanese television viewer as an active observer influenced by particular cultural configurations.

KOREA

Hong Ki-son (Dept of Mass Communication, Korea Univ, 1 5-ka, Anam Dong, Sungbuk Ku, Seoul) is studying the anthropology of communication.

Kang Hyeon-dew (Dept of Mass Communication, Seoul National Univ, Sinlim Dong, Gwang Ku, Seoul 151) is involved in research on broadcasting and mass culture.

Kim Hak-su (Mass Communication Dept, Sogang Univ, 1, Sinsu Dong, Mapo Ku, Seoul 121) is interested in the theory of accuracy in communication.

Kim Young-sup (Dept of Mass Communication, Yonsei Univ, 134 Shinchon Dong, Seodaemun Ku, Seoul 120) is studying public interest campaigns in the mass media.

MEXICO

Jorge Gonzales (Programa Cultural, Univ de Colima, Apdo Postal 294, Colima, 2800) and **Gabriel G. Molina** (Dept of Comm Studies, Univ de las Americas, Apdo 100, Puebla 72820) are progressing in a study of the expression of popular culture themes in *telenovelas* of TELEVISIA, with plans for research on how different audience segments interpret the meaning of *telenovelas* in terms of their local cultures.

NETHERLANDS

At the **Instituut voor Massacommunicatie**, Katholieke Universiteit, Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen, Postbus 9108, 6500 HK Nijmegen). **Paul Rutten** is studying lyrics of songs popular in the Netherlands in the period 1959-1985, using methods integrating the cultural indicators approaches of Gerbner and Rosengren. They also are studying processes which gave an Anglo-American character to Dutch popular music. James Stappers and **Uta Meier** are following up a ten-year study on 'Television as Creator of Culture' using cultivation-analysis and group discussion methods to focus on power structures in sex-roles as portrayed on Dutch television dramas and talk shows in 1980 and 1985.

NORWAY

S. A. Lund and **Asle Rolland** (Norsk Riksringkasting, Bjornstjerne Bjornsons Plass 1, Oslo 3) have been studying the role of television in Norwegian cultural policy.

SPAIN

Josep Gifreu (Univ Autònoma de Barcelona and the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Carrer Carme 47, Barcelona 08001) has been working on the relationship between Spanish national communication policy and the reconstruction of Catalan cultural identity.

Miguel de Moragas Spa (Univ Autònoma de Barcelona, Campus Universitari, Bellaterra, Barcelona) studies the semiology of mass communication and is especially interested in the symbols being developed for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, particularly as they reflect Catalan, as well as Spanish, cultural identity.

SWEDEN

At the **Centre for Mass Communication Research, Univ of Stockholm** (Universitetsvägen 10, S-10691 Stockholm), **Kjell Nowak** is studying social stratification and social differences on television and is collaborating with **Gunnar Andren** in a study of ideology and rhetoric in Swedish advertising 1935-1984. Andren is also working on moral judgments and arguments on television. **Cecilia von Feilitzen** is studying the depiction of children on television, **Hans Strand** is researching linguistic communication and interaction on television, and **Johan Fornas** is doing popular culture research, all at the same Centre. The Centre's staff is doing a collective project on the demographic structure of the television world.

Karl Erik Rosengren (Dept. of Sociology, PO Box 114, S-22100 Lund) heads a research program on 'internalized culture' to develop cultural indicators and cultivation research more strongly in the area of values and value orientations than has hitherto been done.

UNITED KINGDOM

Richard Johnson, director of the **Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Univ of Birmingham** (PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2T) is working on narrative and social identity in relation to national identity, and on British educational policy and practice. The Centre's media group currently is working on various issues dealing with the family and television from the critical perspective, using ethnographic methods.

Anthony Giddens (Professor of Sociology, Kings College, Univ of Cambridge CB2 1ST) is involved in a theoretical project, dating from *New Rules* in 1976, which locates and reinterprets media and culture within a broader understanding of the major forces shaping social life.

Stuart Hall's work (Dept of Sociology, Open Univ, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA) on ideological shifts deals with media amplification and spirals of signification understood in relation to agenda setting and its materialisation by powerful groups.

At the **Centre for Mass Communication Research of the Univ of Leicester** (104 Regent Road, Leicester 1), **Peggy Gray**, **James D. Halloran**, **Paul Hartmann** and **Graham Murdock** are involved in the second stage of a three stage longitudinal study of the economic and social implications of technological, institutional and organizational changes in communications in the East Midlands. **Graham Murdock** recently completed a book with the provisional title, *The New Television Industries*, examining factors influencing the introduction of new electronic and communication technologies.

Conrad Lodziak (School of Modern Studies, Trent Polytechnic, Clifton Lane, Nottingham NG11 8NS) centres his research on the consequences of changes in economic and state practices for social life and individuals, with emphasis on the privatisation of social life.

Philip Schlesinger (formerly at Thames Polytechnic and moving to the University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA) has been doing research on national cultural identity.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

James W. Carey (Dean, College of Communications, Univ of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801) is reformulating the assumptions of pragmatism as the basis of a theory of communications, technology and culture, in

terms of two empirical issues: the relations of ideology and culture, and the effect of electronic technology on space, time and memory. **The Institute of Communications Research** of the University (222B Armory Bldg, 505 East Armory Ave, Champaign, IL 61820) has maintained a continuing interest in media and culture studies. **Lawrence Grossberg** (Speech Communication Department) continues research on Marxist Theories of culture.

East-West Center's Institute of Culture and Communication (1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, HI 96848) has been established to promote an essentially cross-cultural set of programmes focussing on the cultural implications of communication in the Pacific region.

George Gerbner (The Annenberg School of Communication, Univ of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104) has three major current projects. Firstly, summarizing research on violence and terror for a publication by UNESCO. Secondly, working on a synthesis of studies on tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs in the mass media for a government agency. Third, helping launch a comparative analysis of American, Soviet and Hungarian TV, a two-year project which began in late 1987. In addition, he continues to work with the Cultural Indicators project of the

Annenberg School on TV content and its relationship to viewers' conceptions of reality. A book summarizing the findings of this project is in draft stage.

Bruce Gronbeck (Dept of Speech and Dramatic Art, Univ of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242) is editing a Festschrift for Walter Ong.

James Lull (Dept of Theater Arts, San Jose State Univ, San Jose, CA 95182) is writing a book on how families in different cultures watch TV.

Michael Real (Dept of Telecommunications and Film, College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts, San Diego State Univ, San Diego, CA 92182) is writing a book, *Supermedia: Transnational Culture in Everyday Life*, which deals with the ways in which media collapse the experience of space and time to create a new form of cultural experience.

John Robinson (Univ of Maryland, College Pk, MD 20742) is working on TV and leisure-time use.

VENEZUELA

Fausto Izcaray (Instituto Universitario Pedagogica Experimental de Barquisimeto, Barquisimeto) has been studying the trend towards more active audiences and their selective use of the media in Venezuela.

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON MEDIA AND CULTURE

Audience Ethnography Research

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