

"THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRODUCTIONS OF BROADCASTING ORGANISATIONS, THE SOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF AUDIENCES AND THE MEANING ATTACHED TO PROGRAMMES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO RECENT INSTITUTIONAL AND TECHNICAL CHANGES IN MASS COMMUNICATIONS."

A thesis submitted to the University of London (London School of Economics) by Patrick Brian Hughes for the degree of Ph.D.

March 1993

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that by the late 1980s, investigations of relationships between the audiences and programmes of broadcasting had been flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses: a focus of inquiry which expressed an unresolved dualism between atomistic and deterministic models of society; assumptions about the relationships between knowledge and its circumstances of production which expressed an unresolved dualism between materialism and idealism; and a disregard for the particular significance of socio-historically-specific cultural forms and institutions. Consequently, it argues that for an investigation of audience-programme relationships to be judged satisfactory, it must meet these three aims:

1. *Pose a clear, non-atomistic model of society and thus resolve the individual-society dualism into a new, historically-specific focus of inquiry;*
2. *Resolve the materialism-idealism dualism into a new model of knowledge-production;*
3. *Explain the roles of particular cultural forms and of particular cultural and ideological institutions in social change, especially their roles in the commodification of culture.*

The arguments are based on an examination of pre-1980 broadcasting research projects within the "Media and the Individual" and "Media and Society" traditions, which showed that none had satisfactorily related programmes, audiences' understandings of them and audiences' social-material circumstances. Some influential theories of culture and of ideology were also examined for a means of relating those three elements, but without success.

The thesis includes a report on the author's 1981 research into audience-programme relationships, highlighting the practical and conceptual difficulties of meeting those three aims, and the final chapter argues that major 1980s broadcasting research projects also failed to meet the three aims. The thesis concludes by drawing on the lessons of the projects examined to outline a new programme of research explicitly oriented to those three aims, addressing broadcasting as a particular relationship between consciousness and circumstances.

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CHAPTER ONE

EPISTEMOLOGY AND POLITICS IN BROADCASTING STUDIES

1.1 Introduction

The first three chapters of this work present its theoretical problem: the inadequacy of the dominant paradigms of broadcasting research in the 1970s and early 1980s. In chapter one, I argue that by the early 1980s many media researchers had posed static relationships between knowledge and its circumstances of production due to their epistemological assumptions; hadn't integrated historically-specific individuals, social groupings and institutions in explaining meaning-production, due to their foci of inquiry; and had undertheorised distinctions between meaning-production and -consumption. I argue that a new discourse of meaning-production around broadcasting should resolve the materialism-idealism and individual-society dualisms, and should integrate particular programmes with particular programme-makers or viewers (described according to class, gender and race) in explaining the production and consumption of meaning. In chapter two I show that by the early 1980s, projects within six contemporary categories of broadcasting research were unable to resolve the materialism-idealism and individual-society dualisms due to their epistemological assumptions and foci of inquiry. I assess the implications of including in each category a substantive consideration of relationships between programme-makers and audiences and between the production and consumption of meaning. In chapter three I conclude that three approaches to researching culture and two approaches to ideology can contribute little to a new discourse in broadcasting research. Their failure to explain how membership of social groups influences individuals' understandings of the world, and how ideologies constrain them, precluded resolving the materialism-idealism dualism; their separation of 'society' from individuals' everyday lives precluded resolving the individual-society dualism; and they underplayed the significance of cultural forms and institutions.

The final two chapters assess more contemporary broadcasting research. Chapter four presents the results of my own investigation into whether people's experiences of their social-material

circumstances affect how they understand television programmes. Despite failing to show how individuals' experiences of everyday life 'translate' into ways of watching television, the investigation linked television viewing and social-material circumstances - unusual then, and still uncommon a decade later - and showed that understandings don't just reflect shared experiences. In chapter five, I synthesise a new 'draft discourse' from the results of some major 1980s research projects, show its inadequacy, and speculate on forms of research which could adequately explain meaning-production in broadcasting.

In summary: My thesis is that broadcasting research in the 1970s and 1980s was conducted within discourses which have proved inadequate means of explaining how meanings are produced around programmes, and I propose three aims for any new discourse to meet.

1.2 Theorising Audiences.

The 1970s and 1980s saw great changes in the UK communications arena. Technological innovations such as videocassette and videodisc systems, satellite broadcasting and high-capacity cable systems made it increasingly difficult to restrict the phrase "the media" to press, radio and television; and the election in 1979 of a Conservative government committed to 'market principles' posed a radical threat to the tradition of 'public service' in radio and television. Researchers and commentators thought and wrote about the media - and especially about audiences - in ways expressing the great changes in the 'intellectual climate' of the times, principally the decline of structuralism and the rise of poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives. However, despite their increasing dissatisfaction with the dominant paradigm in broadcasting studies, I think they failed to find an adequate replacement.

The long-standing social, political and academic debate about the nature of relationships between communications media and their audiences

was reinvigorated in the late 1970s and early 1980s by the appearance of communications technologies which, while new, evoked concerns echoing those expressed through the ages about the potential bad effects on 'the masses' of innovations in communications. For instance, in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries there was concern that the new popular songs too often presented criminals as heroes; and Victorians were concerned about the likely bad effects of the new 'penny dreadful' comics. (Pearson, 1984) Current concerns about the media are also redolent of the concern evoked in the Nineteenth Century English bourgeoisie by the boisterous and undisciplined forms of leisure undertaken by the working class, and by the growing separation of spheres of working class and middle class leisure. (Bennett, 1981) Then, the response was to establish 'rational recreation' of an improving kind, such as public parks, libraries and museums; now, the response is to institute 'quality channels'. (For example, BBC2 and Channel 4 in the UK; CBS's short-lived "Culture" cable channel in the USA.)

Within those long-standing debates about communications media, television has been specifically criticised from two broad approaches: 'cultural' and 'political'. 'Cultural' critics have argued that the poor quality and narrow range of material available through the communications media - especially television - have caused a decline in cultural standards. 'Political' critics have come from two camps: the 'right' accuses television of bias against virtue, morality and patriotism, and thus of undermining society; the 'left' accuses the media of bias against the labour movement, women, and ethnic minorities, and thus of reinforcing the political status quo. Those critics' concerns may differ, but they share an assumption that the media manipulates, dominates and controls audiences, who are thus literally enthralled - a thralldom which, however, the critics have managed to avoid ! Such critiques of the media imply that most people are at the mercy of their circumstances, with only a select few in command of them: audiences appear as a duped, passive 'mass' at the mercy of the media, and critics appear as an anguished elite disdainful of the media's charms.

Clearly, such apparently specific concerns about the media may express more general concerns about how we relate to the world. The apparently simple issue of how we listen to radio and watch television implies major questions of knowledge and the human condition; and concerns which seem exclusive to the media often express much broader ontological and epistemological questions. To ask - as this present work does - whether audiences' social and material circumstances influence their understandings of programmes is to ask whether and how our circumstances affect our ways of thinking: Do we control our circumstances, or do they control us? Those broad 'philosophical' issues take on practical immediacy in debates about media ownership. For proponents of the view that we control our circumstances, media ownership and control is a non sequitur; for opponents of such a view, the media influence our behaviour - possibly more than anything else.

Questions of how in practical terms specific, individual members of an audience made sense of programmes, and how - if at all - they were influenced in this by their circumstances, had not been explicitly addressed in the broad debates about the media to which I have already referred, or in the media research projects of the 1970s and early 1980s which were the particular background to my own investigation in 1981. Instead, for many media researchers at that time the precise nature of the relationship between programmes and audiences was 'given' in the assumptions about people which underpinned their research and by the focus of their inquiry on the media's relationships either with 'the individual' or with 'society'.

1.3 Underlying Assumptions.

Controversy about relationships between programmes and audiences has generated a plethora of theories of the media, with diverse detailed explanations. Despite that diversity, many theories of the media share

assumptions about people which are drawn from the debate between the philosophical schools of materialism and idealism. This isn't to say that each theory's underlying assumptions slot neatly into one school or another; it is to say that each theory *tends towards* a materialist or idealist view of the world, and thus of the media's role in it. Materialists and idealists hold opposing views about relationships between our circumstances and how we think about them. For materialists, how we think about the world and act in it depends on our social and material circumstances; for idealists, the concepts, ideas and theories with which we think about the world exist independently of our circumstances.

Materialists seek to link the particular ideas, values, etc. expressed by the media in a particular society with the social and material circumstances within which they were produced and transmitted. For materialists, the relationship between the structure and operation of the media in a society and its output is more than mere coincidence: programmes, newspapers, magazines, etc. are indicative of how that society runs itself. In practice, this means that materialists study, for instance, the forms of media organisation and their ownership and control; the technologies employed; political and economic links between the media and other social institutions; and the media's contribution to the balance of power in that society. Materialists argue that 'the physical world' of objects exists despite us and irrespective of how we think about it, and so they explain a society's 'behaviour' in terms of physical or material factors such as climate, terrain, distribution of wealth, population density, or distribution of weapons, and regard people's ideas and attitudes as dependent *in some way* on material factors. This isn't to say that materialists necessarily regard 'the mental world' (consciousness, ideas etc.) as reflecting 'the physical world' or as determined by it; it is to say that their explanations rest primarily on material factors, rather than on abstractions such as chance, destiny or 'the human spirit'.

In contrast, idealists explain the particular ideas, values, etc. produced and transmitted by the media by situating them within more general

ideas such as the 'spirit of the age', or the 'character of a society'. They seek in the particular contents of programmes, newspapers, etc. some general ideas or 'general truths' about humanity which aren't rooted in the particular society under scrutiny - for example morality, loyalty, fulfilment, destiny and romance. In practice, idealists study, for instance, the content of particular programmes or programme series; the ideas expressed in different genres; and relationships between programmes and the 'spirit of the age'. For example, much recent coverage by 'Western' media of events in 'the Soviet bloc' has been idealist, in that "freedom" and "democracy" have been presented as transcendent (almost eternal) ideas, rather than as particular ways of organising social, economic and political institutions. Idealists argue that 'the physical world' of objects has no existence independent of us - it is we who judge objects' significance. Consequently, they explain a society's 'behaviour' in terms of its distinctive 'state of mind' - its characteristic collection of ideas, thoughts and feelings. For idealists, ideas are the motor of change, expressed, for example, in the notion of "an idea whose time has come". Again, in commenting on the collapse of the communist regimes, many 'Western' commentators have talked almost anthropomorphically of the triumphant re-emergence of "freedom" and "democracy".

Media researchers posed static rather than dynamic relationships between knowledge and the historically-specific circumstances of its production, irrespective of whether their underlying assumptions were materialist or idealist. For materialists, knowledge is linked with the social and material conditions of its production, so the emergence of new forms of knowledge - new ideas - depends in some way on changes in those conditions, and ideas can appear to be propelled by events. For idealists, in contrast, it is ideas that propel events, partly because they are independent of particular circumstances. However, this means that ideas don't really change because they are, after all, held to be *transcendent*.

The materialism-idealism debate can be summarised thus:

| | MATERIALISTS | IDEALISTS |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Our thoughts and actions. | Depend on our circumstances. | Independent of our circumstances. |
| The physical world. | Exists independent of us. | Exists only in our terms. |
| Investigate ... | Structure and operation of social institutions. | 'Spirit of the age'; 'an idea whose time has come'. |
| Explain via ... | Specific material facts. | Transcendent ideas. |
| Media analyses. | Emphasise production and transmission. | Emphasise content. |

In summary. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, media researchers' underlying assumptions - whether materialist or idealist - precluded dynamic explanations of knowledge-production around programmes.

1.4 Foci of Inquiry.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, broadcasting research tended to occur within one of two traditions: the "Media and Society" tradition, in which the focus of inquiry was the media's relationships with society as a whole; or the "Media and the Individual" tradition, in which the focus of inquiry was the media's relationships with individual audience-members. In my view, the two traditions represented a false dichotomy which prevented researchers from asking whether membership of particular social groups - indeed, of a particular society - influences how people make sense of programmes and, if it does, how that happens.

In both traditions, society was rarely explicitly theorised, appearing instead as a mere aggregation of individuals. This had three methodological implications. Firstly, it made it impossible to ask whether one society differed from another and, if it did, whether this influenced how members of different societies watched television. Secondly, it made it impossible to ask whether in a particular society membership of particular social groups such as class, gender or age influenced how people watched television programmes and, if so, how. Thirdly, it prevented researchers from asking whether relationships between programmes and audiences are influenced by particular forms of media ownership and organisation, thus precluding distinctions between programmes produced for profit and those produced for 'public service' motives such as education or edification, despite that distinction being a major structural feature of many countries' broadcasting systems.

In "Media and Society" theories, the behaviour of media audiences (for example, their responses to those programmes) appeared as dependent on, or determined by social institutions, but such institutions were defined as a media organisation such as a company, not a set of social relationships between a media company and the audiences of its programmes. In contrast, "Media and the Individual" theories had no specific view on relationships between individuals and society as a whole: audience-members appeared as anonymous people with little common experience and only limited interactions with each other, and in whom characteristics such as class, gender, race, occupation, age, income, etc. have no linking significance. In short, audience-members constitute an atomised society. "Media and the Individual" theories ignored differences of power and status, and presented relationships between individual audience-members and media companies as uniform relationships between abstract, idealised and equal 'units'.

In some cases, researchers' assumptions about 'individuals' and 'masses' were compounded by their use of a linear model of communication in which a 'transmitter' sends a 'message' to a 'receiver'. The model is

problematic in two ways. First, it ignores differences of status and power between different individuals, groups and organisations which affect their status as a 'transmitter' and the status of their 'message'. For example, the 'reception' of 'a message' that war had been declared would be totally different if it was 'transmitted' by a gardener rather than by, say, a national television network, but a unidirectional model of communication can't easily account for such differences. Second, in broadcasting research, the model is internally contradictory: 'the receiver' is both an isolated, abstract entity - "the individual" and part of an agglomerated mass - "the audience".

Despite those weaknesses, the linear model of communication has dominated much of the discussion about relationships between programmes and audiences, especially in the USA. For 'Effects' theorists (e.g. Lasswell, 1948), for 'Reinforcement' theorists (e.g. Klapper, 1960) and for 'Agenda-Setting' theorists (e.g. Shaw & McCombs, 1977), individuals have passive, unidirectional relationships with the media - we sit there and are zapped by them ! That general approach is applied with varying degrees of sophistication: while Lasswell posed people as mere puppets of the media who jerk to every message, Klapper suggested that we only jerk to a message if we're predisposed to it, and Shaw & McCombs suggested that the only 'effect' the media has on us is to tell us what we should be concerned and thinking about - the rest is up to us. Those differences are significant: Lasswell implied that we have little control over our actions, while Klapper and Shaw & McCombs implied different degrees of control. In each case, however, a puppeteer still pulls the strings !

In summary: The false dichotomy between "Media and Society" and "Media and Individual" led researchers to aggregate abstract 'individuals' into an abstract 'mass', rather than investigating concrete relationships between programmes and audience-members defined by, say, gender, class or age. Secondly, each tradition presented viewing as just 'responding' to programmes, instead of integrating programmes

with concrete individuals with historically-specific social characteristics (e.g. class, gender, age) who watch them and the historically-specific social institutions (e.g. television companies) which produce them.

1.5 Sites of Meaning-Production.

By the early 1980s, much broadcasting research embodied a distinction between two 'sites' of meaning-production: the 'production' of a programme, e.g. on videotape; and audience-members' 'consumption' of it. The distinction between the two 'sites' of meaning-production is significant because an audience-member's understanding of a particular programme may be quite different from that intended by the maker(s) of that programme. I'm unaware of any research by the early 1980s which explicitly integrated programme-production and 'consumption' as two sites of the same process of meaning-production.

'Production'-oriented researchers suggested that meaning-production occurred autonomously of particular programme-makers, through the processes of programme-production in themselves. Such investigations had focussed mainly on television news (for example Altheide, 1976; Golding & Elliot, 1979; Hartley, 1982; Schlesinger, 1978; Tuchman, 1978), but some researchers examined the equivalent role of the production processes in television drama (for example: Alvarado & Buscombe, 1978). While interesting and informative, these studies' exclusive focus on production precluded asking whether producers and audiences understand programmes in the same way, and implicitly equated meaning-production with programme-production. On the other hand, 'consumption'-oriented researchers investigating meaning-production around programmes by audiences (for example Brunsdon & Morley, 1978; Piepe et al, 1979; Morley, 1980a, 1980b) regarded programme-makers' intentions as a 'given': the researchers weren't interested in the extent to which audiences' meanings around a particular programme corresponded with those of the programme-makers.

1.6 Conclusion: Seeking a New Discourse.

By the early 1980s, much media research was, in my view, unsatisfactory on three counts. Firstly, researchers could not account for the emergence of new ideas because their particular underlying assumptions had led them to pose static rather than dynamic relationships between knowledge-production and the historically-specific circumstances of its production; secondly, researchers' particular foci of inquiry had prevented them from integrating historically-specific individuals, social groupings and social institutions when explaining meaning-production around broadcasting; and thirdly, researchers' distinctions between the production and consumption of meaning were undertheorised. A new discourse in broadcasting research was required, embodying interactive relationships between three elements: particular television programmes; individual viewers with historically-specific social characteristics such as class, gender and age; and equally-specific programme-makers working in particular media organisations with historically-specific characteristics such as ownership, structure and technology, and producing socio-historically specific cultural forms. Such a new discourse would offer a greater chance of explaining relationships between knowledge and the social-material circumstances of its production in ways which would resolve the materialism-idealism dualism, and also resolve the dichotomy between the social atomism of the "Media and the Individual" tradition and the social determinism of the "Media and Society" tradition into a new, historically-specific focus of inquiry. Researchers could also ask whether the production of programmes and their consumption are autonomous processes, or merely different sites of the same process(es) of meaning-production.

CHAPTER TWO

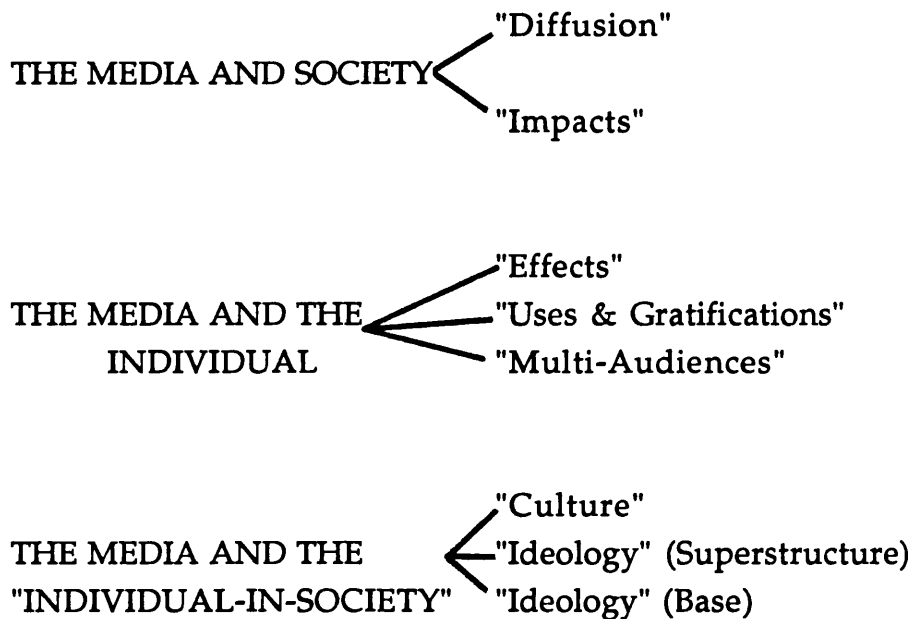
THE MEDIA, SOCIETY, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

EPISTEMOLOGY & BROADCASTING STUDIES: AN ANALYTICAL GRID

| | IDEALISM | 'HALF-WAY' | MATERIALISM |
|---|--|--|---|
| THE MEDIA AND SOCIETY | "KANTIANISM" E.g. Local Radio Workshop | "DIFFUSION" E.g. Lazarsfeld | "IMPACTS" E.g. McLuhan |
| Society Human Agency Problems | 'Communities' Yes Internally contradictory & a-contextual | Pyramidal Yes Media subordinate to already-existing social relations | Atomistic No Technology determines society |
| THE MEDIA & THE INDIVIDUAL | "EFFECTS" E.g. Glasgow Media Group | "USES & GRATIFICATIONS" E.g. Blumler | "MULTI-AUDIENCES" E.g. Piepe et al |
| Society Human Agency Problems | Atomistic No Audience-critic irreconcilable | Atomistic Yes Ignores factors which limit choice | Class-based Yes Splits media from other factors |
| THE MEDIA AND THE 'INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY' | | | |
| CULTURE | "PROCESS" E.g. Hoggart | "CULTURAL STUDIES" E.g. Hall/CCCS | "IMAGES OF SOCIETY" E.g. Lockwood |
| Society Human Agency Problems | Segmented Yes A-historical | Segmented Yes Neglects competing understandings | Segmented No Focus too narrow |
| IDEOLOGY | "Ideas generally"* | "SUPERSTRUCTURAL" E.g. Althusser | "BASE" E.g. Lukacs |
| Society Human Agency Problems | | Segmented Yes Slides towards "culture" | Dominated Limited Econ'y determinist |

* "Ideas generally" summarises an idealist view that ideology is the general process of producing ideas. As "Base" and "Superstructural" are specific versions of that view, it isn't examined separately.

In this chapter, I will examine particular media research projects from the late 1970s and early 1980s to assess the significance of the relationship between their foci of inquiry and their underlying assumptions. In the next chapter, I assess the extent to which theories of culture and of ideology might inform media research and form a new focus of inquiry - "The Media and the 'Individual-in-Society'". The three foci of inquiry, with examples of each, can be represented thus:



The analyses in this chapter and the next are summarised in an 'analytical grid' in which a specific research project, or a particular approach to culture or to ideology, expresses a match between a particular focus of inquiry and particular underlying assumptions. The 'grid' appears on page 19.

2.1 The Media and Society.

In the first part of this chapter, I will examine three media research projects which share "Media and Society" as their focus of inquiry, but which rest on different assumptions about the production of knowledge - idealist, materialist or 'halfway' between the two.

2.1.1 Idealist Analysis: Local Radio Workshop's "Kantianism".

"Local Radio in London" was a report produced in 1982 by the Local Radio Workshop. It accused the three local radio stations in London at that time (BBC Radio London and the two commercial stations Capital Radio and London Broadcasting Company [LBC]) of failing to provide listeners with a satisfactory service. In particular, it argued that the stations were insufficiently locally-oriented, that their news and current affairs programmes were biased in favour of 'establishment' views, and that their music programmes did nothing to encourage critical appreciation in their listeners.

In "Local Radio in London", idealist assumptions were linked with a Media and Society focus of inquiry (as summarised in my Analytical Grid, p19). While not necessarily mutually-reinforcing, these two characteristics were certainly closely related in this report. It is hard to distinguish between the aspects of the report which reflected its idealist assumptions and those which reflected its "Media and Society" focus of inquiry, partly because each was implicated in the authors' view of the audience which, in turn, was crucial to much of their critique of the stations' operations. "Local Radio in London" regarded listeners as a formless 'mass', in which the actions of individuals were determined by their identity as part of the mass, placing it firmly in the socially determinist "Media and Society" research tradition. While the report's empiricist orientation towards listeners' experience should have provided a 'down-to-earth' counterbalance to its idealist reliance on transcendent ideas, its view of listeners as an abstract 'mass' prevented this from occurring.

In my view, their idealist assumptions led the authors of "Local Radio In London" to produce an analysis of London's local radio stations which was Kantian in two respects. (N.B. I am not claiming that Kantianism is the only outcome of a conjunction of idealism and "Media and Society", just that in this report the outcome took a Kantian form.) Firstly, it rested on privileged concepts, corresponding to Kant's "categories" (but, unlike them, not innate) which presupposed certain phenomena in the world. Its "categories" were Good Practice, Community and Programme Form, and the phenomena which they presupposed were Professionalism, Local-ness and Quality respectively. I will argue later

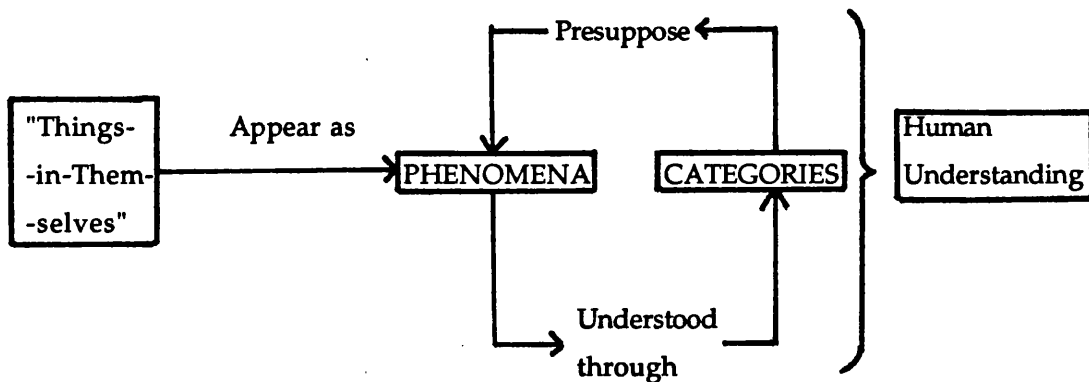
that the authors' idealist assumptions could not accommodate the changes to the meaning of some crucial components of their analytic framework which were happening when the report was published.

The second Kantian aspect of the report was that it combined empiricism with idealism. Local Radio Workshop were empiricist in arguing that our understanding of local radio comes from our experience (as audiences) of features of particular radio stations; much of their critique draws on concrete instances of operations and programme content. However, in practice, instead of basing their study of local radio on experience, they relied on a pre-existing epistemological framework consisting of concepts which existed outside of experience and which seemed to transcend particular material circumstances (i.e. the "categories" of Good Practice, Community and Programme-Form).

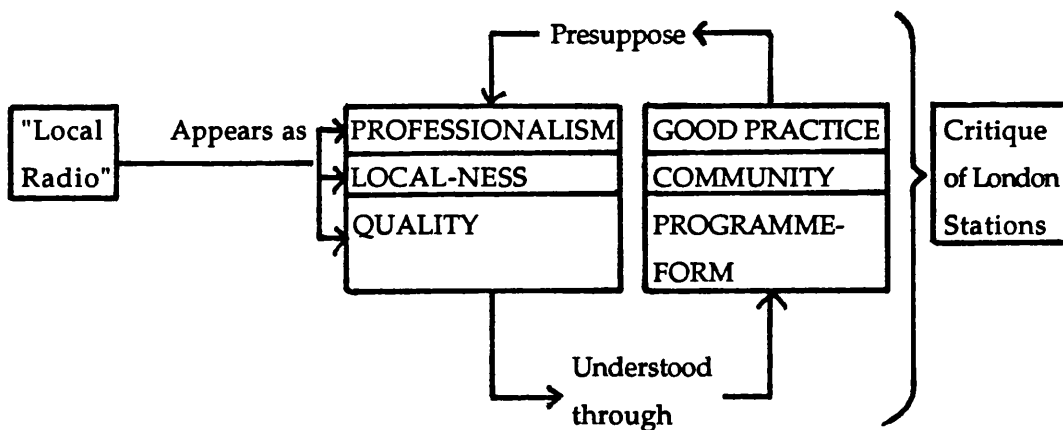
German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) opposed the view that things have definitive ('essential') qualities or characters, of which we can gain variable degrees of knowledge. Instead, he argued that while essences of things ("things-in-themselves" as he called them) exist, we can never know or understand them as such; we can only know their appearances as the phenomena which we experience via an innate epistemological framework of twelve privileged concepts - "categories". Kant's categories can't be applied to already-existing knowledge; they are the forms in which knowledge itself exists/is acquired. By defining and determining the knowledge we can have, they presuppose the phenomena we can experience; we can only know and understand phenomena in the form, and to the extent, 'allowed' by those categories. So the world that we know is not the 'essential' world, but only its 'appearance' as inferred through the categories. Scruton (1982: 26-28) has summarised this as follows:

"There are concepts which cannot be given through experience because they are presupposed in experience Kant called these fundamental concepts 'categories' (e.g. 'substance' and 'cause') Previous philosophers had taken nature as primary and asked how our cognitive capabilities could lay hold of it. Kant takes these capacities as primary, and then deduces the a priori limits of nature."

Kant's epistemology can be summarised as follows:



"Local Radio in London"'s analytical framework can be summarised in a corresponding way, showing the three "category"- "phenomena" pairs through which they analysed local radio, and which I will discuss in detail below:



In my view, the authors of "Local Radio in London" believed that something called "Local Radio" existed, but that it was un-graspable. Accordingly, they analysed the "phenomena" of local radio as presupposed by their "categories" through which they thought about it. Much of their critique implied that the three London stations should be something other than they were, but they failed to specify what that should be. This is equivalent to Kantian logic: we can't know about local radio as such; we can only know about the phenomena through which it appears to us (in an already-existing epistemological framework). Perhaps this is why, as we shall see, they defined their "categories" and "phenomena" so vaguely.

I will now examine in detail each of the "category"-*"phenomena"* pairs in "Local Radio in London" to show the practical outcome of the authors' idealist approach.

2.1.1a) *"Category"-*"Phenomenon"* 1: Good Practice and Professionalism.*

The meaning of Professionalism is never clear in "Local Radio in London". Such definition as does exist is constituted by and within the category of Good Practice (e.g. "good journalistic practice" or "good broadcasting practice"). The authors implied a definition of Professionalism in their attacks on what they saw as unprofessional behaviour: they argued that journalists merely confirmed an existing viewpoint instead of seeking new information (p30); journalists lacked a critical perspective (p30); journalists lacked in-depth analysis, leading to biased reporting (p52). In its turn, Good Practice was never clearly defined or related to particular circumstances, but was just an unproblematic 'given'.

The authors explained unprofessionalism in economic terms: poor staffing levels led to quick interviews with pundits, rather than proper research into a topic (pp 31, 59). They also identified unprofessionalism with failings in individual journalists, explained in terms of a lack of Good Practice in journalistic training (pp 61, 63), to be remedied by better training and new ways of working (p33). However, economics and training couldn't explain an aspect of unprofessionalism on which the authors commented throughout the report: journalists used pundits and experts whose views were consistently in favour of the then-consensus view in politics, or were positively right-wing.

2.1.1b) *"Category"-*"Phenomenon"* 2: Community and Local-ness.*

Local-ness was presupposed by the category of Community, which was defined in three ways. Firstly, a general notion of Community was expressed in phrases such as "(relevance to) the community" (p7) and "(serving) the community" (p32). Secondly, a notion of Community as many 'communities' was expressed in the phrases, "the Black community" (p52), "the nationalist community" (p74) and "the Christian community" (p50). Finally, there was a 'hierarchy' of local, national and international 'communities' corresponding to a hierarchy of local, national and international events and processes.

Local-ness is never precisely defined in the report; like Good Practice, it is implied in criticisms of its absence. The authors described the London local radio stations as "unable or unwilling to get to grips with London issues" (p4); chided presenters of phone-in programmes for not being sufficiently "locally-oriented in their choice of studio guests and subjects for discussion" (p42); and reported that only thirteen of sixty-two items during a day on BBC Radio London "were of special interest or relevance to London" and that in those thirteen, "the relevance was merely that an event had happened in London, e.g. a bank robbery or a fire." (p39). For the authors, this was "the classic commercial radio style - timeless, dateless and placeless, replayable anytime, anywhere " (p16). However, they also accused (non-commercial) BBC Radio London of using that "classic commercial radio style", and it could also be found on the BBC's (non-local) Radios One and Two.

2.1.1c) *"Category"-"Phenomenon" 3: Programme Form and Quality.*

In "Local Radio in London", Quality was presupposed by Programme Form. The authors presented no clear definition of Quality, but it was implied in their critique of five elements of Programme Form. The first element of Programme Form which they criticised was the presenters, especially of music programmes ("Disc Jockeys" or "DJs"). The authors accused them of demonstrating little interest in, or knowledge about the music they played, and of having backgrounds and experiences largely unrelated to most people's lives (pp 13, 17). Implicitly, then, a Quality music programme would be presented by a different sort of DJ; "Undercurrents" was presented as exemplary (p19). The second element was the relationship (or lack of it) between speech and music: the report suggested that most speech items were unrelated to the music (p13). The third element was the choice of music which, the authors suggest, was a "narrow commercial selection heavily promoted by record companies", with no "intrinsic interest in, or respect for the part that music plays in people's lives" (p17). The fourth element was the extent to which Programme Form encouraged listeners to be critical consumers (p42), learning not just to read and play music, but also skills of musical appreciation (pp 16, 17). Finally, the authors argued that in news and current affairs, Programme Form contributed to and reflected establishment views by presenting events as beyond people's influence;

Quality programmes would present the world in terms of diverse social and political forces (p57).

That review of the report's three "category"- "phenomena" pairs shows how its authors combined idealist assumptions about knowledge with a focus of inquiry on the relationship between the Media and Society. This was evident in their concentration on the social, political and economic factors which, they argued, accounted for the operating style of the three stations. They explained the stations' operations in terms of the backgrounds and personalities of programme-presenters, the dominance of 'establishment' views in programmes, and the profit-seeking basis of the commercial stations. Their focus was clearly on the stations' place in society, and they often criticised what they saw as the stations' lost opportunities to use their position to improve the levels of political and cultural (musical) awareness in society.

The report's focus of inquiry is one of its strengths. Its authors clearly felt that the problems they saw in the operations of local radio stations in London were not just the aberrations of particular managers or staff. Their report presents those problems as the structural consequences of the particular form of local radio which had been established in Britain. The authors justified their strategic overview with examples taken from detailed (empirical) examination of the stations' programmes, which was another strength.

There were, however, several weaknesses in the report due to its idealist assumptions and its "Media and Society" focus. Two problems in "Local Radio in London" stemmed from the idealism in its authors' Kantian approach. Firstly, for Kant, a phenomenon must be more than just a reflection of a thing-in-itself; a simple correspondence between a thing-in-itself and its appearance would undermine the notion that a thing-in-itself is un-graspable. Therefore, the possibility must exist of a thing-in-itself appearing as different phenomena, and of people understanding a thing-in-itself in different ways. Such a diversity of phenomena and/or understandings could be synchronic, with several existing simultaneously; or it could be diachronic, with understandings changing over time as we change the object of our knowledge in response to changing circumstances. For example, people may have different

understandings of local radio at different times and different places. However, in "Local Radio in London", local radio appears as an 'essence', and the report criticised the three London stations for not conforming to that essence, although (by Kantian definition) the authors couldn't describe it.

The possibility of diverse understandings of phenomena was compounded by a second idealist feature of the report's analysis - it relied on assertion. Kant asserted the 'a priori' existence of his categories rather than deriving them from - or at least relating them to - circumstances, concepts, phenomena, experience or anything else prior to or separate from their existence. Similarly, the authors of "Local Radio in London" never grounded their framework of categories in any form of policy basis, such as listeners' views (as expressed, however imperfectly, via the 'ratings' figures). Consequently, just as there appears to be no necessary reason to accept that through Kant's twelve categories we can understand the world's appearances, so also there appears to be no necessary reason to accept Local Radio Workshop's assertion that "Good Practice", "Community" and "Programme Form" are the means of understanding 'local radio'.

When "Local Radio in London" was published, the notions that phenomena could be understood in a diversity of ways, and that a "categorical" framework was necessarily the best/only way in which to study phenomena were particularly controversial. Firstly, there was considerable conflict between politicians at national and local levels over the meaning of "Local-ness". These conflicts centred on efforts by some Labour-controlled local and metropolitan councils to maintain their autonomy from central government by, e.g., exerting control of their 'local' economies through 'local' planning, having their own 'local' policies on siting nuclear facilities, and developing 'local' trading relationships with other countries. Rather than a fixed "phenomenon", Local-ness was the focus of conflicts in which "locality" was not a geographical phenomenon but a political one re-cast through practice - a thing-for-us. However, "Local Radio in London" presented Local-ness as complete; a radio station or programme was either Local or it wasn't (despite Local-ness being ungraspable). Despite its criticisms of the BBC's and commercial stations' versions of local radio, "Local Radio in

London" proposed no alternative or oppositional local radio practices. Had it done so, it could have begun to re-cast the meaning of Local-ness from the phenomenal appearance of an ungraspable thing-in-itself into a graspable (and thus contestable) thing-for-us.

Secondly, "Local Radio in London" was published at a time of considerable conflict around local radio over what constituted Professionalism. On one side were radio activists (such as the report's authors), who sought access to the airwaves for 'non-professionals'; on the other side were local radio managements (and unions) who invoked Professionalism as a reason to refuse such access - not as just an abstraction, but as a means of maintaining their control over the airwaves. Local Radio Workshop supported the 'non-professionals' in that conflict, but their report didn't present Professionalism as a form of labour organisation, nor did it link Professionalism with accountability by broadcasters to audiences, despite the importance of a notion of Good (and bad) Practice to any examination of accountability in broadcasting. Instead, Professionalism was presented as the (phenomenal) appearance of timeless Good Practice.

Thirdly, Local Radio Workshop was itself in conflict over the meaning of 'local radio'. Conflicts between Local Radio Workshop and the stations over how to think of the phenomenon of local radio meant that the report's 'critique' was often a conflict of definition. Conflicts between Local Radio Workshop and the stations' audiences over the meaning of "Quality" in radio programmes were expressed in the contrast between the report's disparagement of the three London stations' programmes and the consistently high listening figures some of them achieved. Such conflicts could only be resolved by making one of the definitions the basis of dominant practices in local radio. Had that occurred, an ungraspable 'thing-in-itself' would become a graspable (and thus contestable) 'thing-for-us' through political debate over the stations' structures and operations.

The focus of inquiry in "Local Radio in London" was the relationships between the media (in this case, local radio) and society, but its authors lacked a clear theory of society. This gave rise to two major problems: an ambivalence towards 'audiences'; and an inability to account for the

dominance in local radio of what the report called "establishment" views.

The authors' view of 1980s British society was ambivalent; it oscillated between an amorphous 'mass' devoid of any social groupings on the one hand, and a conglomerate of independent special interest groupings on the other. Such ambivalence appeared in the report as contradictory views on just who was listening to local radio in London. The report's comments on local radio coverage of industrial relations juxtaposed 'mass' and 'special interest groups' in the form of "public opinion" versus "trade unionists". On the one hand, listeners were "public opinion", thus denying any divisions or conflicts of interest: "Many of the reports ... (of strikes) must almost certainly have influenced public opinion against trade unionists ... " (p74). On the other hand, listeners included at least one 'special interest group' - trade unionists: "Clearly a sizeable percentage of listeners must also be trade unionists." (p74).

The report's examination of coverage of the 1981 elections to the Greater London Council is another example of listeners being presented in contradictory ways. On the one hand, listeners formed a mass, whose lack of political awareness derived from the programmes to which they listened: "(L)isteners usually had little background against which to assess politicians' statements (and) the presenter was unable to challenge anything that was said, or put remarks into context." (p69). On the other hand, listeners were differentiated according to their particular interests: "(Listeners) seemed to be remarkably well-informed and interested people, virtually all of whom knew that the election was on, and which were the major issues of concern to them." (p69).

The authors' ambivalence towards the concept of society was also expressed in their references to "community". In "Local Radio in London", community was certainly a means of thinking about social groupings, but instead of defining them in terms of social characteristics (e.g. class, gender, race), it defined them in terms of a hierarchy of geographical locality - local, national and international. This hierarchy presupposed a society which was simultaneously atomised (having no coherence other than that associated with a shared locality) and homogeneous (definable as a whole through that shared locality). A

hierarchy of common interest based on geographical proximity also excludes commonalities based on social characteristics, yet the authors specifically addressed such characteristics in two ways: in their considerations of issues such as sexism, racism and economic exploitation, which certainly aren't restricted to London or to Londoners; and by including contributions from Trade Unions and other campaigning groups on aspects of local radio in London specifically relevant to their special interests. The hierarchy's elements were mutually-exclusive: a homogeneous population ('a community') at the national level subsumes differences in locality, and precludes the existence of 'local' issues and differences. Similarly, defining issues (e.g. of radio programming) in terms of a local 'community' such as "Londoners" implies that those issues affect no-one outside of that (arbitrarily-defined) geographical area. Equivalent problems plague relations between any two levels of the hierarchy.

At times, the authors' 'mass' view of society predominated. The report often presented listeners as a homogeneous mass which absorbed programmes like a sponge and had no views on them. The corollary was an assumption that broadcasters have a duty (even a mission?) to educate, entertain and inform listeners, irrespective of listeners' views. There was no analysis of the relationships between the three stations' listeners and the programmes to which they listened (e.g. was their relationship with the BBC station any different to their relationship with the two commercial stations?), nor of any particular social or individual characteristics of those listeners. Consequently, despite audience ratings which showed that many people enjoyed listening to the music broadcast by the London stations, the report dismissed listeners' musical tastes:

"(L)arge audiences demonstrates an understandable demand for music, rather than satisfaction with what is on offer. We suspected that many of Capital's audience (sic) were uncritical listeners"
(p14)

Also, their criticism of BBC Radio London's programmes for their "belief in the intrinsic appeal of stars, rather than any interest in listeners' lives and musical tastes." (p21) assumed that listeners' "musical tastes" and the "appeal of stars" are mutually exclusive, despite

evidence to the contrary in the form of star-dominated charts of record sales.

The authors' ambivalence towards society also rendered them unable to explain the dominance of 'establishment' views in local radio news and current affairs. Their view of society as a conglomerate of independent special interest groups could have enabled them to present news-production as a process in which newswriters must choose between a diversity of competing, interest-based viewpoints when re-presenting events. However, this conflicts with their idealism, which precluded any consideration of the material circumstances in which certain ideas predominate. Further, the notion of a diversity of interest-based viewpoints contradicts the authors' view of society as a homogeneous 'mass' undifferentiated by factors such as class, race, or age. Consequently, rather than linking the dominance of 'establishment' views with features of the stations' structures and operations - and especially with newsmaking routines (identified in the production-oriented studies of news cited in my previous chapter), the report presented news as appearing spontaneously, rather than as the concrete products of particular social institutions; and it presented the newswriter as a cypher through which news passes untouched, rather than as an individual constituted as a social entity by social factors such as class, gender and race.

In summary, the weaknesses in "Local Radio in London" make it an unsatisfactory explanation of how meanings are produced around broadcasting. Its authors' idealist assumptions precluded a dynamic analysis of local radio, because they prevented the authors from accepting others' understandings of just what local radio was all about when these conflicted with their own, and from accepting changes over time in some of their fundamental ideas. The result was a vision of local radio as a fixed, timeless "thing-in-itself", to which particular radio stations conformed more or less closely. That abstract view of the stations was complemented by the report's abstract view of listeners, derived from its Media and Society focus. There, an atomistic notion of society (and thus of an audience) as consisting of isolated individuals contradicted another notion of society as a homogeneous 'mass'. The result was a report which didn't explain how particular meanings were

produced by particular individuals around particular local radio programmes, relying instead on general assertions about stations' failure to match a generalised model of local radio, which owed more to a Weberian "Ideal Type" than to an understanding of the stations as historically-specific social institutions.

To meet the requirements of the new discourse in media research proposed at the end of my previous chapter, the authors of "Local Radio in London" should foreground the listeners far more, and investigate relationships between radio listeners and radio stations, rather than just asserting their existence. Such an investigation should substitute an explicit theory of society for the social determinism of the report's assumed 'mass'. It should focus on the stations as historically-specific social institutions partly-constituted by their relationships with socially-constituted and historically-specific individuals (while avoiding the atomistic view of society associated with the Media and Individual tradition of media research).

As elements of a new discourse in media research, those changes do more than just modify or amend a research project; they change its object of study. "Local Radio in London" combined content-analysis of programmes with idealist evaluations of particular local radio stations in order to investigate whether 1980s local radio rendered an appropriate service to the society which had established it. In contrast, an investigation of local radio within the proposed new discourse would ask how knowledge and understandings are produced in the act of listening to programmes, and whether they are related to the circumstances in which programmes were firstly produced and transmitted, and then listened to. As such, it would have to abandon the idealist assumptions about knowledge and the socially-determinist focus of inquiry into knowledge-production which characterised "Local Radio in London". In the rest of this chapter, I will show the need to abandon the assumptions and foci of inquiry of other media research projects, then in chapter three I will assess the suitability of theories of culture and of ideology as substitutes.

2.1.2 'Half-Way' Analysis: The "Diffusion" of Lazarsfeld.

"Diffusion" theorists such as Lazarsfeld argue that the ideas and information which constitute media 'messages' are transmitted through society via the relationships between 'opinion leaders' and their 'followers'. From their viewpoint, 'mass communications' consist of media organisations and interpersonal networks, with most people making sense of the world as a result of interactions between those two elements, and with the media ancillary - or even subordinate - to interpersonal relationships. The emphasis in "diffusion" theories on the links between programme content and social relationships shifts attention away from the media as sites at which ideas originate, and towards social relationships as sites at which ideas are accepted or rejected.

Lazarsfeld's "diffusion" approach to the media stemmed from his investigation in 1940 into voting, in which he argued that information flows from the media to 'opinion leaders' in a community, who pass it on through discussions, in what came to be called a "Two-Step Diffusion" process. (Lazarsfeld et al, 1948. The "Two-Step" approach is summarised in Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) The study also reported that during an election campaign, most voters' responses to media 'messages' were based on their predispositions and identification with a group. Thus, for example, voters seemed to be influenced more by their friends than by the media. Since Lazarsfeld et al's original study, other researchers have undertaken similar investigations, adding substance to the original formulation. (See Katz, 1957; Ellul, 1965)

In "diffusion" models, opinion leadership is seen as a role rather than a character trait: opinion leaders change over time and between issues, although some leaders hold that role in only one area, while others may lead in several areas. More recently, a 'Multiple Step' model has emerged in response to research showing that the number of 'steps' between the origination of an idea by the media and its ultimate acceptance or rejection may vary from case to case. (See, for instance, Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971)

"Diffusion" theories can be placed 'Half-Way' between Materialism and Idealism in my analytical grid (p19), because their underlying

assumptions about knowledge-production are both materialist and idealist. This is not to say that "diffusion" theorists have succeeded in reconciling those two very different approaches to knowledge; as I shall show, their approach embodies the weaknesses of the two approaches as well as their strengths.

"Diffusion" theories are materialist in two respects. Firstly, they explain the transmission of ideas in very historically-specific ways. Their emphasis on opinion leadership as a role (rather than a character trait) which is differentially adopted enables them to combine a general overview with detailed findings about the specific interpersonal networks which form the 'channels' through which particular messages diffuse in a particular society. In other words, they approach each occasion of "diffusion" as a particular instance of a general process: each message diffuses from a media source outwards in a number of 'steps' (two or more), but it does so through particular 'channels' consisting of specific relationships between particular people. Thus, a given group of people (e.g. the population of a small town) will consist of several overlapping networks, in each of which there will be opinion leaders and followers. An individual will encounter new ideas and information within one or more of those networks, and will respond to them (whether as a leader or a follower) according to how much they value the sources of those new ideas.

That emphasis on human agency is the second materialist aspect of "diffusion" theories. For theorists such as Lazarsfeld, ideas do not travel from an active 'transmitter' to a passive 'receiver'; rather, ideas are accepted or rejected as they "diffuse" through a society. Indeed, to highlight the role of human agency, it might be better to say that members of particular interpersonal networks who find particular ideas acceptable "diffuse them" through those networks. Clearly, for "diffusion" theorists, people do more than just soak-up ideas and information from opinion leaders - a contrast with the passive 'receivers' in unidirectional models of communication such as that implied in "Effects" theories.

On the other hand, "Diffusion" theories are idealist in that within their accounts, a media message's 'acceptability' to opinion leaders seems to

depend on the message itself. The fact that opinion leaders accept certain media messages (and "diffuse" them) but reject others is not explained in ways which acknowledge the circumstances in which opinion leaders encounter new ideas and information: instead, (some) ideas seem to be inherently valuable, and an opinion leader is one who can recognise a valuable idea when s/he encounters one. (This is very similar to the argument that a 'cultured' person can recognise culture when s/he sees it.) In that way, the impact of a media message on opinion leaders seems to derive solely from its content, rather than from any relationship between the content and the circumstances in which it is encountered.

"Diffusion" theorists are also idealists when explaining the impact of the media messages which opinion leaders diffuse to members of a network. Their reports that opinion leaders' influence depends on the group identification and predispositions of their 'followers' are idealist in that they don't explain the origins of those predispositions - they just seem to exist. Further, while "predispositions" can certainly characterise individuals, and can be used to explain their actions, to pose predispositions shared by several individuals who are (possibly as a result) members of a network demands some sort of common experience. However, such a (materialist) commonality of experience does not appear in the (idealist) accounts of "diffusion" theorists.

The focus of inquiry for "diffusion" media theorists is as ambivalent as their assumptions. On the one hand, their focus is clearly on relationships between the media and society. They try to explain precisely how ideas and information in media 'messages' come to be accepted or rejected in a society. As I've suggested, each "diffusion" investigation is seen as a particular instance of a general relationship between the media and society in which ideas "diffuse" from the former through society by (two or more) 'steps'. On the other hand, "diffusion" theorists focus on the media and the individual: their attention to specific instances (which I mentioned earlier) produced explanations of the influence of media 'messages' which were couched in terms of the ("diffused") influence those 'messages' had on individuals (albeit in networks).

Lazarsfeld's work exhibited such an ambivalent focus of inquiry. His work assumed a pyramidal society with a 'top down' pattern of communication: at its apex are the media organisations, transmitting ideas and information to a second layer of opinion leaders who selectively re-transmit those ideas and information to a final layer, i.e. the rest of the population grouped into networks of interpersonal communication. Lazarsfeld assumed such a society in the course of administering surveys to investigate relationships between the media and individuals. Thus, although he addressed the issue of media influence at the level of society as a whole, his methods of investigation were addressed to relationships between media 'messages' and individuals. Janowitz (1981: 304) has argued that the exclusive use of surveys by "diffusion" researchers may in themselves account for the fact that such research tends to find that the influence of the media is limited by interpersonal factors:

"(M)any survey specialists have collected data which tend to emphasize the limited effectiveness of the mass media for producing specific changes in attitude and behaviour. The survey approach deals with a person's response to specific messages or campaigns rather than the cumulative effect and fails to deal with the role of the mass media in 'defining the situation' and posing alternatives."

In describing the materialist assumptions underlying "diffusion" research on the media, I have already pointed to what I now wish to suggest are the three strengths of this approach. Firstly, its focus on particular instances of the operation of the media, rather than working at the level of generalisations; secondly, its attention to the circumstances in which concrete individuals (whether opinion leaders or followers) encounter particular media 'messages'; and finally, its emphasis on human agency in relations between media and audiences. However, those studies' materialist assumptions are also a source of weakness. Despite researchers' emphasis on the variability and specificity of the contexts in which ideas and information "diffuse" outwards from the media, they rely on a unidirectional model of communication which contradicts the emphasis on particularity by its sheer generality and lack of attention to how 'messages' are 'received'. To emphasise context is to emphasise variability, yet a unidirectional model of communication, almost by definition, assumes homogeneity

in the process of communication, with variability being relegated to the influence of the 'message'. A unidirectional model tends to imply influence at the expense of shared meaning or understanding; yet, as Rogers (1983: 5) points out, communication is more a matter of convergence or sharing of meaning than just influence:

"Communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This definition implies that communication is a process of convergence (or divergence) as two or more individuals exchange information in order to move toward each other (or apart) in the meanings they ascribe to events. We think of communication as a two-way process of convergence, rather than as a one-way, linear act in which one individual seeks to transfer a message to another."

In other words, we accept or reject innovations according to how easily we can assimilate/accommodate them with existing viewpoints.

In describing "diffusion" theorists' idealist assumptions, I also pointed to the problems they pose: explanations of influence which emphasise 'message' content at the expense of the circumstances in which an individual encounters it; the seeming timelessness of the predispositions of network members; and the problem of posing shared predispositions without a basis in some sort of common experience.

The focus of inquiry of "diffusion" theorists is also a source of some problems, and I have already discussed their ambivalent view of the relationship between society and individual. Their view of society is, I suggest, simplistic: its simple functional distribution of roles between media, opinion leaders and 'the rest' fails to explain how opinion leaders make sense of the 'messages' they 'receive', and judge their significance before 'transmitting' them. Thus, it gives no indication of how certain individuals become opinion leaders around certain issues - like those "predispositions" in their followers, their credibility just appears to exist of itself.

In summary, the weaknesses in "diffusion" theories make them an unsatisfactory explanation of how meanings are produced around the media. Their idealist assumptions precluded a dynamic analysis of media influence, because they prevented the authors from asking

whether the origins of the predispositions of 'followers' were related to the influence of earlier media 'messages'. It isn't clear whether those predispositions were themselves the result of encounters with earlier media 'messages' (however "diffused"), and this was Janowitz's criticism of the exclusive reliance on surveys by Lazarsfeld and other diffusion theorists. Each media 'message' appeared to be "diffused" into a society hitherto untouched by the media, rather than being encountered by people who may have already been influenced by previous media messages - and who may thus confer credibility on new messages from the same sources. That lack of historical context was compounded by a unidirectional model of communication, which scarcely acknowledges the specific circumstances in which people encounter new ideas.

To meet the requirements of the new discourse in media research proposed at the end of my previous chapter, "diffusion" theorists should expand the historical specificity of their investigations to include the particular circumstances in which the media communicates new ideas to opinion leaders. In particular, researchers should investigate the 'predispositions' of opinion leaders, and ask whether these were related to their circumstances, in order to explain how such people discriminate between messages which are acceptable and unacceptable to them. A similar approach should be taken to the predispositions of their 'followers'. The overall result would be an explanation of 'diffusion' in which human agency was consistently included; in the original work, it was excluded from considerations of the role of opinion leaders.

To complement that reorientation of assumptions about knowledge and the circumstances of its production, researchers would need a focus of inquiry more consistent in its presentation of the relationships between individual and society. Presenting relationships between individuals and the media as continuous implies the media as having a continuing role in the process by which dynamic social groupings produce and reproduce the ideas with which they explain their circumstances. This contrasts with "diffusion" theorists' view of media-society relationships as a series of autonomous incidents corresponding to a series of autonomous 'messages'.

Finally, diffusion researchers should focus on the media as historically-specific social institutions partly-constituted by their relationships with socially-constituted and historically specific individuals. This would contrast with their view of the media as the idealist 'sources' of 'messages' delivered from some unspecified position at the 'apex' of a pyramidal society.

As elements of a new discourse in media research, those changes do more than just modify or amend "diffusion" research; they change its object of study. Researchers such as Lazarsfeld combined content-analysis of programmes and empirical surveys of audiences in order to investigate whether the media influences decision-making, for example at election times. In contrast, an investigation of the role of the media (especially at election times) from within my proposed new discourse would ask how individuals produce knowledge and understandings in the act of attending to print and broadcast media output, and whether those understandings are related to the circumstances in which such output was firstly produced, then transmitted, and finally encountered.

2.1.3 Materialist Analysis: McLuhan's "Impacts".

Marshall McLuhan argued that in each historical epoch, the dominant communications technology determines how people make sense of their world by creating a particular and characteristic balance between the senses. For example, in his view the printing press shifted the balance of the senses away from hearing and towards sight, and produced linear, logical ways of thinking. In his early work he worried about this; later, he celebrated it.

McLuhan's early work urged resistance to what he regarded as the threat posed by technology to humanity. He saw himself guarding 'culture' against the ravages of mechanisation, a self-appointed role which he shared with other cultural critics such as Orwell, Eliot and Leavis. (See, for instance; McLuhan, 1946) Later, however, McLuhan presented new media as random but inevitable expressions of 'technology' - a transcendent principle determining the development of culture and society. The later McLuhan (1959: 340) saw new media reshaping the old world, and argued that, "... primarily, the social action of these new

forms is their meaning in the long run." This became the slogan "The medium is the message", appearing first as the title of a 1960 article, and as a mature theory in his "Gutenberg Galaxy" in 1962.

If the medium itself is the message, then both the content it transmits and the senses people make of it are irrelevant. Indeed, McLuhan (1973: 15-16) regarded analyses of content as insufficiently structural:

"The electric light is pure information. It is a medium without a message, as it were, unless it is used to spell out some verbal ad or name. This fact, characteristic of all media, means that the 'content' of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph."

Clearly, McLuhan's view of the relationship between the media and society rested on materialist assumptions about knowledge and the circumstances of its production: in each society, people think about their relationships with the world in the concrete circumstances created by the dominant communications medium. Indeed, he goes further than this, arguing that relationships between people and their world are determined by communications technologies, rather than expressing interactions between, say, people, social institutions and political forces. Thus, McLuhan was a technological determinist: in his work, new technologies seemed to emerge from nowhere and "impact" on society due to their sheer novelty, rather than to their relationships with a particular society.

Equally clearly, McLuhan's focus of inquiry was the relationship (singular) between media and society, specifically the (determinant) role played by the dominant technology in the thinking of an epoch. However, his view of societies was schematic, with each one being little more than a context for the unfolding of the transcendent principle of 'technology'. Consequently, his work did not examine how particular individuals (or even types of individual) make sense of the world in their particular historical circumstances.

It is hard to discuss the strengths of McLuhan's work here, because much of it consisted of aphorisms and metaphors, rather than a coherent body of explanation. As Littlejohn (1989: 256) has argued:

"(McLuhan's) ideas are almost impossible to criticise using standard categories of theory and criticism ... (because) ... his work is mostly an artistic-historical-literary treatment and does not constitute a theory in the standard sense."

In the context of the other case studies in my analytical grid (p19), the strength of McLuhan's work is that it highlights the place of communications technologies in the process through which people make sense of the world. In most media research, the technologies of communication are invisible, merely implied as non-intrusive and neutral 'givens' with no active role in the production of knowledge. McLuhan, on the other hand, foregrounded technology as an object of investigation by media researchers. He did so in problematic ways, summarised in the term "technological determinism", on which I will comment later, but at a very general level McLuhan's emphasis can counter the 'technological naivete' of much media research.

The particular materialist assumptions underlying McLuhan's view of the relationship between knowledge and the circumstances of its production are also a weakness. McLuhan's work was clearly oriented towards material contexts of knowledge-production, in the form of the technologies involved. However, his account of technological innovation was historicist: a particular technology appears at a particular time as part of a relentless unfolding of the transcendent principle of 'technology'. In his work, technologies 'emerge' independently of a society's scientific and cultural institutions because for McLuhan, society was a 'given' which only became significant if it didn't 'adjust' to new technology: in relationships between media and society, society was a sleeping partner.

In his day, McLuhan was many people's first encounter with 'media studies', and the technological determinism that characterised his later work also characterises many people's view of new technology. Consequently, I will consider at length how (if !) his work could fit with the new discourse of media studies proposed in my previous chapter.

For technological determinists such as McLuhan, new technologies are random and inevitable results of the steamroller of "Progress", and social change is merely a list of dates on which particular machines came onto the market. In my view, however, new technologies are the outcome of the actions of people and political forces, organised in an intricate web of scientific, social, political and economic institutions at national and international levels. For example, particular changes in communication technology aren't random and inevitable, but are part of general changes in the ownership and control of major sections of the national and international economy. These general changes are the result of particular choices made by national governments and by international corporations. For example, in the early 1980s, organisational and technological changes in the media were so integrated that to say that one led the other would be false. Changes in television were part of broad changes in the communications industry as a whole, including the integration of press, broadcasting, computers and telecommunications within new corporate structures; a reduction in the number of people who owned the media; a reduction in the diversity of films and television programmes available internationally; and a dilution in the various forms of regulation of the media. For a technological determinist such as McLuhan, these changes were the direct and inevitable consequence of then-new technologies, including teletext, videocassettes, videodiscs, cable and satellites. Such views were held by those (for example the UK government) who asserted that video machines and new wideband cable systems would inevitably bring more diverse programmes, and that economic recession could be beaten by factories and offices adopting new communications technologies.

Many of those new communications technologies were merely new ways for communications companies to do old jobs. For instance, video and satellites enabled film and television companies to do their old job of distributing programme material across the globe, but in new ways which undermine national controls over the availability of ideas. The real innovations associated with these technologies are the concentration and integration of the production and distribution of programmes in a shrinking number of (corporate) hands, and the integration of the machinery and companies involved in television

with those involved in apparently diverse areas such as computers, telephones and homeworking. Video, satellite and cable help companies such as Philips, Thorn-EMI and Warners to re-organise the production and distribution of knowledge, ideas and culture. Whether one welcomes or opposes these changes, to debate them at all one needs a model of relationships between technology and society which recognises differing interests. For McLuhan, however, technological innovation is self-evidently a good thing, and the only differences he acknowledged are between people who readily adapt to innovation and those who resist it.

New technologies such as videocassettes and videodiscs were developed as part of a general industrial re-structuring of both production and consumption. Robins and Webster (1981: 17-18) have suggested that the process of re-structuring around production entails;

".... the hastening and consolidation of trends within capitalist organisations towards vertical integration (placing under one holding the facilities for chip production through to end product manufacture) and horizontal integration (regrouping around a coherent range of product and processes such as office equipment)."

The authors illustrate their analysis with quotes from the Annual Reports of companies involved in Information Technology. E.g. "We are working to use our electronic technology as a connecting element to tie together the products of our various sections." (Hitachi Annual Report 1980); "If our technological know-how and our experience in different market-areas are to be deployed as effectively as possible, a process of far-reaching rationalisation, product-concentration and re-grouping is called for in our enterprise." (Philips Annual Report 1979).

Gershuny (1982: 64-65) has argued that new technologies have been crucial to a restructuring of the consumption of goods and services, in which the service sector has come to occupy an "informal" position outside of the "formal" money economy:

"The growth of production of services in the informal economy provides the markets for the products of the formal economy."

Gershuny's argument rests on an increase in the ownership of domestic technology, including radio and television:

"During the 1950s and 1960s, households in Britain in general had a very substantial increase in the range of services they could consume because they purchased household equipment and produced domestic services themselves. Householders increased their mobility not by buying more trips on buses or trains but by buying cars and driving them themselves. The accessibility of entertainment was increased not by going more frequently to the cinema or theatre but by buying televisions." (ibid)

For Gershuny (1982: 64-65, 69), changes in the "formal" economy were integrated with the re-structuring of domestic consumption around new technologies:

"In the post-war decades, it was the growth in informal production services, transport services and entertainment that provided the basis of washing machines, televisions and motor cars, which in turn provided the mainspring of growth in the formal economy. ... Those new markets for washing machines, refrigerators, cars and so on were made possible by the infrastructural investment in the electricity grids and the roads in the 1930s."

That shift from social to private provision of services (which Gershuny obscures with his talk of formal and informal economies) has been summarised as "self-service" by Blackburn et al (1982: 24):

"By 'self-service' we are referring to the historical phenomenon of the last 100 years whereby 'households', rather than use labour intensive services (public transport, laundries, etc.) have purchased material goods (cars, washing machines) to operate themselves."

Blackburn et al highlight the significance of that shift across a broad spectrum of political and social change:

"Private manufacturing capital, utilising the potential of information and communication technology, can offer commodities for sale and substitute (them for) part of some currently-offered public service In short, the restructuring of social welfare service consumption may involve the privatisation of collective consumption." (ibid)

Re-structuring of producer-consumer relationships has occurred in broadcasting, too. Over the last thirty years, there has been a shift in the balance between the public and private provision of broadcasting services in the UK. A public sector monopoly by the BBC became a public sector 'duopoly' of the BBC plus private companies regulated by the Independent Broadcasting Authority. More recently, the 'duopoly' has been joined by a private sector monopoly in the production and distribution of videocassettes and videodiscs, the 'emergence' of which has been explained as posing a new reason to make 'television' in all its forms accountable only to 'market forces', rather than to Parliament.

By the early 1980s, the dominance of private-sector production and distribution in the video sector had resulted in a very narrow range of programme material being available on pre-recorded videocassettes and videodiscs. It was virtually all feature films and music videos; no news or current affairs, and little 'cultural' or 'educational' material. Just as importantly, most of the films originated in the USA; only a small proportion were British or European, and there were virtually none from elsewhere. Technological determinists such as McLuhan would accept that some people find this unfortunate, but would regard it as inevitable, and advise immediate adaptation to the new circumstances.

McLuhan's comments on societies' adaptations to new technologies were based on determinist analyses of technological innovation combined with crude materialist assumptions about relationships between knowledge and the circumstances of its production. For 'McLuhanesque' material such as "Understanding Media" to conform to the new discourse in media research proposed in my previous chapter, it would have to investigate how people in particular circumstances related to particular technologies. Merely asserting relationships between a society and a technology is no basis on which to explain how a technology comes to occupy the place it does.

In the new discourse, 'technologies' would be not just particular machines, but would include the circumstances in which they were developed and used by organisations within the communications industry. Such organisations should be thought of as historically- and

socially-specific institutions constituted (at least partly) through their relationships with equally-specific audiences, rather than just being part of 'society'. Those relationships would include particular technologies, but research would investigate the roles (if any) which each technology has in meaning-production around broadcasting, rather than just asserting a determining role. The machinery would no longer be just a socially-neutral 'given'; instead, it would be a factor in the encounter between meaning-production by programme-makers and meaning-production by audiences, with an influence in that encounter which would be by no means predetermined.

2.2 The Media and the Individual.

In this part of the chapter, I will examine three approaches to media research which, in my view, focus on relationships between the Media and the Individual. As with the research in the Media and Society tradition, each of the three approaches chosen rests on different assumptions about the production of knowledge: idealist, 'half-way' and materialist.

2.2.1 Idealist Analysis: "Effects" and the Glasgow Media Group.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, long-standing criticisms of the media from the 'left' of British politics coalesced around the work of the Glasgow Media Group (GMG). The group's work, originally a report to the Social Science Research Council, was published as a series of books. "Bad News" (1976) and "More Bad News" (1980), were formal, academic pieces of work, not intended for the general reader; "Really Bad News" (1982) used the same methods and approaches as its predecessors, but was less formally academic. "Really Bad News" has been cited most frequently by 'left' critics of the media, so it is this volume which I will examine here.

GMG reported in "Really Bad News" that in the late 1970s, British television was "biased to the extent that it violates its formal obligations to give a balanced account" (pxi). In particular, in that period television news programmes were consistently biased against the views of the 'left'

of British politics and, specifically, the ideas and activities of the 'left' appeared less frequently than those of the 'right' (p98). GMG gave several instances of that pattern of reporting: in 1975, television news programmes presented wages as a cause of inflation eight times more frequently than any other explanation, and presented wage cuts as a solution to inflation seventeen times more frequently than any other solution (p47). In GMG's view, the issue was not the simple disparity in coverage, but how that disparity was used by broadcasters to organise understandings around limited explanations. For example, referring to coverage of inflation they argued (47-48):

"(T)he alternatives, where they appear, are mere fragments, while the dominant theme of wage inflation and the need for restraint is at the core of news gathering and reporting."

I regard "Really Bad News" as a confluence of idealist assumptions and a focus of inquiry on relationships between the Media and the Individual (as summarised in my Analytical Grid p19). In that confluence, the authors' empirical methods were crucial: there is a reciprocal relationship between their focus on individuals and their empirical method of inquiry; and their idealist assumptions were expressed in the 'transcendent' ideas they used to explain their empirical findings.

GMG were idealists in that they explained television news coverage in terms of the extent to which it conformed with abstract notions of "balance" and "bias", rather than linking the nature of television news programmes with the particular circumstances in which they had been produced (as a materialist would have done). In GMG's approach, the 'metaphysical' sense of idealism as a way of explaining the world merged with its 'ethical' sense as a way of judging the world. "Balanced" and "unbiased" are more than just empirical descriptions of a form in which knowledge exists; they also prescribe the form in which knowledge should exist ... and lament the fact that it doesn't.

GMG were also idealists in explaining the nature of that coverage through abstract notions of "news", "television" and "the media". For GMG, "news" is a problem. It is "news" which is biased in its view of the world, and which misrepresents the world in the ways they identified through their research, which I summarised earlier:

"Television news gives a partial view of the world; it offers an open door to the powerful and a closed door to the rest of us. In this way it violates its own proclaimed principles of fairness and objectivity."
(16)

"The news is neither balanced, nor impartial nor even accurate ..."
(67)

"The news is profoundly committed to a distinct social and political order." (88).

In those ways, GMG gave life to an abstraction - "news" - and then blamed it for misrepresenting the world in the ways which they had reported. They did the same thing with "television" and "the media": each is an abstraction, but each is made to share with "news" the blame for misrepresentation:

"Television constantly selects and organises information ..." (106)

"The media relay the ideology ..." (143)

"The essential thrust of our critique is not against media workers as such ... Rather, it relates to the picture of society that the media construct with such remarkable consistency. We attribute this artificial and one-dimensional picture to the nature of organisations whose basic assumption is that our industrial, economic and social system operates to the benefit of everyone involved." (144/5)

GMG's presentation of media organisations was idealist in that they were 'living abstractions', rather than the specific and particular social institutions in which the production and transmission of television programmes had been organised in 1970s Britain. "News", "television" and "the media" failed to match up to (idealist) expectations of another abstraction - "balance". In GMG's work, "the media" and "television" certainly did not appear as concrete social relations between journalists, audiences, and people in other social organisations, and so there was no hint as to why those particular organisations should have given rise to the particular pattern of news coverage which they had reported. Finally, the authors' denial that they were attacking news workers conflicted

with the two pages of criticisms aimed explicitly at broadcasters which had immediately preceded it, and with their claims elsewhere that problematic coverage was due to journalists' views (pp 73, 88), the application of journalistic norms (p149) and journalists' isolation from the rest of the working population (pp 12/13).

Not every use of "news" was idealist in that way; in explaining the routines through which journalists produced television news, GMG sometimes explicitly related "news" to a class society. However, they didn't do so in an historically-specific way. Instead of analysing the particular conditions under which journalists were working, and demonstrating any material links between journalists' views, their professional working practices and the nature of the society in which they operated, GMG did little more than just assert the existence of relationships between knowledge and the circumstances of its production:

".... routine working practices of journalists are informed by the class assumptions of the society in which they live ..." (138);

".... journalists and editors and the mass media generally (are) part of a society which takes private ownership, social hierarchies and profit for granted ..." (128)

It might be argued that I'm giving too much significance to GMG's use of "news", "television" and "the media" because these were, after all, little more than stylistic idiosyncrasies, a metaphorical way of writing. However, "news" and, to lesser extents, "television" and "the media", can imply an empirical distinction between events and their observation and reportage, and I think they were certainly used in that way in "Really Bad News". An empiricist regards the world as distinct from each individual who experiences it; in the specific instance of knowledge-production around broadcasting, an empiricist would regard "news" (information, events, etc.) as distinct from the person who reports it. Consequently, for an empiricist, 'good' "news" is, as it were, untouched by human hand, and a 'good' journalist is a mere conduit between the events and the viewers. In that way, GMG's empirical methods of investigating television news programmes are linked with their idealist views of the broadcasting organisations as somehow

separate from social relations, and it is this that convinces me that their use of terms such as "news" and "the media" is more than just a style of writing.

The authors' focus on the relationship between the Media and the Individual was closely related to their empirical methods of inquiry. Empiricists such as John Locke (1632 - 1704), George Berkely (1685 - 1753) and David Hume (1711 - 1776) defined knowledge as the sense-data available to the consciousness of individuals from observable facts. They opposed idealists such as Kant and Hegel, who assumed the existence of concepts or epistemological frameworks with which and through which people make sense of the world. To an empiricist, knowledge and understanding is acquired in a steady, piecemeal process akin to solving a jigsaw puzzle. Empirical findings aren't regarded as 'givens'; they are tested by measuring their predictions about the world against the judgement and experience of suitably-qualified people trained in techniques of observation, such as scientists - indeed, empirical researchers into broadcasting often assert that their work is "scientific".

The emergence in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries of British empiricism was linked with the rise of experimental science. Science argues that we can explain the world (only) through observations or facts, and that we can (must) distinguish between the object and the subject of knowledge (i.e. between a phenomenon and the scientific observer of it). Williams (1976: 99) described empiricism's place in science and in epistemology thus:

"'Experience' in one main sense was until the late Eighteenth Century interchangeable with 'experiment' In one important sense, of observation and experiment as the primary scientific procedure, 'empirical' has remained normal in English to our own day."

However, as Williams (1976: 100) has pointed out, there has been a tendency to distinguish between empirical investigation and theoretically-based investigation in virtually normative terms:

".... the general modern use (of 'empirical') has to do with the broad distinction between knowledge which is based on observation ('experience' and 'experiment') and knowledge which is based on

the conscious application of directing principles or ideas, arrived at or controlled by reasoning. This difficult distinction sometimes leads to a loose use of 'empirical' to mean atheoretical or antitheoretical, which interacts with the more common distinction between 'practical' and 'theoretical'."

Empirical research into television involves careful and methodical 'observation' of the 'content' of programmes. For example, GMG quantitatively measured programme-content over particular periods of time, regarding the particular collection of sounds and images which constituted the content of each programme as independent entities, 'waiting', as it were, to be transformed into sense and meaning by viewers. Consequently, GMG describe their interpretations of the programmes, and their judgements as to the significance of those programmes, as though they were describing an objective truth. This was classic empiricist thinking: experience is the basis of truth because the individual can experience the world in an 'immediate' (literally, "not mediated") way, unencumbered by any mediating cognitive or epistemological frameworks.

In that way, empiricism was heavily implicated in GMG's focus on relationships between the media and the individual. For empiricists, the world is accessible to each experiencing individual, regardless of her/his membership of social or cultural groupings, because to acknowledge such membership would pose something ('society' or 'culture') more determinant of knowledge than experience. That, in its turn, would imply that our experience of the world depends on social position, and would undermine empiricism's basic assumption that the production of knowledge centres on the isolated, a-social experiencing individual.

GMG's combination of empirical method and a focus on the individual characterises the "Effects" school of media research, which assumes that viewers and listeners 'absorb' meanings from sources outside of themselves (e.g. programmes), which therefore have "effects" upon them. For "Effects" researchers, the techniques and technologies of broadcasting have behavioural "effects" on audiences. Watching television is seen as a process in which individuals' ideas are direct responses to programmes; the classic example is the view that the

"effect" of violent programmes is to make viewers behave violently. The "Effects" school clearly embodies a unidirectional model of communication, which Wright (1975: 70) almost caricatured in his "hypodermic needle" model of media effects:

" accompanying the concept of a mass audience is an image of the communications media as acting directly upon individual audience members each audience member in the mass audience is personally and directly 'stuck' by the medium's message."

The great strength of GMG's work (in "Really Bad News" as well as their preceding books) was the detailed observation of programmes over substantial periods of time. This gave their analysis a very firm basis in quantitative data, and prevented their conclusions from being dismissed as the results of selective viewing. When they presented patterns in programme content which they had identified, such as the under-representation of the views and ideas of the 'left' in British politics at that time, they did so with a confidence derived from the sheer scale of their content analyses: such patterns were not just occasional lapses or aberrations. The 'transparency' or 'obviousness' in their data which was implied in their empirical methods meant that their findings were easily accessible to non-specialists (Hence the popularity of "Really Bad News"). It also made it relatively easy for them to draw conclusions about broadcasting policy from that data, and for readers to grasp the origins and purpose of those conclusions - "Really Bad News" is a really good read !

In my view, those strengths dissolve if we examine the authors' discourse. As idealists, GMG used transcendent ideas of "bias" and "balance" to describe coverage, and used 'living abstractions' of "television" and "the media" to explain how that coverage was produced. As empiricists, they assumed the existence of empirical distinctions between an (objective) world and 'the experiencing individual', in which programmes have one-way "effects" on viewers. Accordingly, they disregarded the everyday practicalities of watching television: they didn't ask concrete individuals how they watch television; and they didn't investigate whether those individuals' responses were related to the circumstances they shared with other individuals as a result of their common membership of social and

cultural groupings such as class, gender and race. Thus, as researchers with an analytical focus on relationships between The Media and 'The Individual', GMG's empirical methods led them to disregard the 'individuals' who watch television programmes. The outcome was a populist stance towards broadcasting policy, in which GMG called for change to liberate 'the people' from the oppression of media "effects" without considering just how 'the people' watch television - indeed, without demonstrating an "effect" in operation.

Their empiricist distinction between the world and 'the experiencing individual' was expressed in their view that "news" existed independently of those who reported it, and was just 'waiting' to be reported accurately. This led them to conclude that the major issue in "news" concerned styles of reporting (pp 37, 54), and that "The debate about free communications must confront the issues of access, accountability and control. " (p147). Implicit in that conclusion was a notion that viewers are manipulated by broadcasters, rather than active producers of meaning, and this view sat uneasily with GMG's policy prescriptions: to obtain "access, accountability and control" for people who are vulnerable to manipulation by broadcasters is rather a pyrrhic victory, even by the standards of populist politics !

In "Really Bad News", GMG reported that television is a major source of information and news and that certain views dominated television news programmes, and they expressed concern about viewers' possible susceptibility to those views. Their concern derived from their "effects" view of relationships between viewers and programmes, with its one-way model of communication and its empirical distinction between "news" and how it is reported. A number of problems flow from the "effects" view. Firstly, it cannot explain how changes in people's thinking occur, because it cannot explain how viewpoints or ideas emerge which are alternatives to, or opponents of, the dominant one(s). For instance, GMG failed to explain how, in the face of the alleged dominance of television news programmes by particular explanations of events, viewers such as themselves become critical of current broadcasting practice and of the representations of the world which it produced. Their failure was derived from an irreconcilable conflict between their attitude towards what they saw as the damage being done

to 'left' politics by television "news" and their empiricist epistemology. Their attitude led them to charge "news" with bias and to oppose the ways in which it represented the world. In my view, their attitude was a framework within which and through which they interpreted television news programmes, thereby contradicting empiricism's notion of 'unmediated' experience.

The second problem with GMG's "effects" viewpoint was that it conflicted with their pluralism. "Really Bad News" occasionally abandoned the view that television programmes dominated the masses through one-way communication, and adopted a more pluralist approach to explaining how knowledge is produced around broadcasting. GMG's occasional pluralism was consistent with the views of the Changing Television Group, whose eponymous publication was quoted approvingly in "Really Bad News" (p154):

"The problem, then, is not 'how to represent the real world in a real way', but rather 'how to represent and recognise the different, often conflicting views of the 'real world' which exist within society and within the mass media themselves".

GMG's pluralism was expressed in three ways. Firstly, they suggested in different ways that understanding the world (including television programmes) entails choosing between a range of competing ideas or views, each associated with a different social group (pp 10, 63, 75). Secondly, they suggested that we make sense of television programmes according to our social and material circumstances (p132). Finally, GMG described media institutions as autonomous of the state (p140), although they wrote of the BBC that; "A publicly owned broadcasting system ought to look more open, pluralistic and partisan than the conservative press. In fact our research shows that it does not." (p143). Those three elements constituted a coherent pluralist view of how meanings are produced around broadcasting. However, they are contradicted in the rest of "Really Bad News" by a picture of society dominated by views associated with 'the establishment', and of the media as major contributors to the dominance of those views.

In summary, the weaknesses in "Really Bad News" make its explanations of meaning-production around broadcasting unsatisfactory.

Its authors' idealist assumptions prevented them from analysing the broadcasting organisations in ways which were both historically specific and capable of explaining changes in those organisations over time. Instead, the organisations appeared to be general, fixed entities - 'living abstractions', as I called them - irrespective of the actions of the concrete individuals who worked in them. That abstract view of the organisations was complemented by an abstract view of the (empirical) 'individual' viewer, divorced from the specific individuals who watch specific television programmes under particular conditions.

To meet the three requirements of the new discourse in media research proposed at the end of my previous chapter, the authors of "Really Bad News" would have to switch their emphasis to relationships between viewers and programmes, investigating specific instances of television viewing behaviours rather than just asserting a one-way flow of information and ideas. The authors would also have to redefine the broadcasting organisations in ways which acknowledge that their relationship with individuals (plural) was related to their historically-specific character and place in society as a whole. In other words, the authors would have to present "watching television" as an interactive relationship between entities which are socially-constituted and historically-specific and which are, therefore, producers and products of a particular society.

As elements of a new discourse in media research, those requirements would change GMG's object of study. "Really Bad News" combined content-analysis of programmes with idealist explanations of the origins of that content, and concluded on the basis of idealist concepts of balance and bias that the broadcasting organisations had failed in their duty to society. In contrast, an investigation of television news programmes from within the proposed new discourse would ask how knowledge and understandings are produced in the act of watching programmes, and whether they are related firstly to the circumstances in which programmes had been produced and transmitted, and secondly to the circumstances in which they were watched.

2.2.2 "Half-Way" Analysis: Uses and Gratifications.

Researchers in the "Uses and Gratifications" school, such as Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler, have argued that people "use" television programmes to "gratify" their (individual) needs for information, excitement, relaxation, etc. They have compiled lists of the "uses" to which individual listeners and viewers put programmes, and of the "gratifications" they receive from them. For example, McQuail et al (1972) proposed that the media fulfilled needs for diversion, personal relations, personal identity, and surveillance. Similarly, Katz et al (1973) argued that the media meet five needs: cognitive (information, knowledge and understanding); affective (emotions and aesthetics); personal-integrative (self-confidence, status and stability); and tension-release (escape and diversion). Peled and Katz (1974) examined media coverage of the 1973 Middle East War, and found that people had explicit expectations of information and interpretation from the media, and that the media had satisfied those expectations. They also found no automatic correlation between viewers' use of a programme and its formal category (e.g. News, entertainment, etc.). DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach (1975) argued that the media fulfil three needs: to understand our social world; to act meaningfully and effectively in that world; to escape through fantasy from daily problems and tensions.

The assumptions underlying "Uses and Gratifications" theories are 'Half-Way' between materialism and idealism. They are materialist in that their explanations are grounded in particular relationships between audiences and programmes, rather than in an idealist vision of a general flow of ideas in society: researchers interview individuals to discover how they choose between programmes. On the other hand, these theories are idealist in that individuals' media "Uses and Gratifications" have no particular relationships with the material circumstances in which people make their programme choices. Even a specific study such as Peled's and Katz's examination of media coverage of the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 gave no explanation of why viewers listed the uses and gratifications they did, rather than any others. Nor was there clear explanation of the origins of those uses and gratifications; would the lists have been the same had there not been a war ?

The ambivalence in the theorists' underlying assumptions is related to the way in which they focus their inquiries on relationships between the Media and Society. Much "Uses and Gratifications" research assumes an atomistic model of society, in which isolated individuals choose within and between media in seeking purely rational ends. This is redolent of traditional learning theories, where positive and negative 'reinforcements' are said to determine our behaviour in a purely rational way.

A strength of the "Uses and Gratifications" approach is that its concern with meaning-production is directed at how individuals produce meanings around broadcasting, rather than asserting generalities about relationships between programmes and audiences. However, its strength is more than counteracted by its weaknesses, which arise from a combination of ambivalent assumptions about knowledge-production and an atomised model of society. Just as traditional learning theories fail to acknowledge numerous instances of people acting in spite of the high likelihood of 'negative' consequences, so "Uses and Gratifications" theorists fail to acknowledge the material factors which limit the rationality of our decisions around media coverage of elections. These include Party loyalty, political consciousness and the media's "Agenda Setting" role of defining some issues and not others as important. These theorists also disregard the fact that certain "uses" and "gratifications" are valued above others. (For instance, in 1950s Britain, when "general entertainment" programmes first appeared on the new commercial television channels, they created a new, predominantly working class audience for television, who hadn't wished to 'use' the programmes hitherto offered by the BBC.) Finally, these theorists ignore cultural critics' differential valuation of "gratifications". (For example, Local Radio Workshop scorned "pop music" shows on radio.) Those last two factors throw some doubt on the validity of any "Uses and Gratification" results from surveys which don't make explicit provision for interviewees giving what they think are the 'right' responses.

Like other 'mass society' theorists, writers in the Uses and Gratifications tradition present 'society' as merely a 'background' to the 'real issue' of how individual's make choices around the media. For instance, Blumler (1977: 6-8) examined the role of broadcasting in the political process, and

its influence on the ways in which the individual viewer/voter decides how to vote on an issue-by-issue basis, and in his view, such research;

".... does not entail any particular view of how the individual is related to other members of society - and certainly not an atomistic one."

Certainly, Blumler's own research conformed to that model of neutrality: it contained references to neither specific social or political contexts in which individual voters decide how to vote, nor competing social or political groupings. However, the absence of such considerations is itself a political (i.e. non-'neutral') view of the structure and operation of society, and Garnham (1979b) argued that Blumler's research presented relationships between audiences and programmes in ways which maintain a 'common sense' about the political status quo. In Garnham's view, Blumler ignored the political groupings in audiences (and thus in society at large) arising from the class conflicts fundamental to capitalist society.

To meet the requirements of the new discourse in media research proposed in my previous chapter, "Uses and Gratifications" research should re-think its model of relationships between viewers' choices and their social contexts. Indeed, researchers would have to think about relationships between individual viewers and society in ways which don't privilege the former and relegate society to a 'background'. If their view of the individual as an active agent was modified to accommodate the individual as historically-specific, researchers could present individuals' programme choices and their expectations in approaching programmes as related somehow to the individual's degree of exposure to the particular collection of competing viewpoints which characterise their society. Thus, a redefinition of the active individual would be integrated with a redefinition of society, and thus of the relationships between them. Finally, those competing viewpoints should be represented in ways which acknowledge their association with particular social groupings, and their expression in and through social institutions, including the organisations of the communications industry.

In summary, by redefining both 'individual' and 'society', "Uses and Gratifications" research should be able to explain meaning-production

around broadcasting in terms of encounters between two moments: the production of programmes by/in those organisations, which will express some or all of the particular collection of viewpoints characteristic of that particular society; and the 'reception' of those programmes by audiences using particular technologies and particular viewpoints or frameworks. Such explanations retain the emphasis on the active agent, but rethink 'active' in terms of the individual's negotiation of the particular 'constraints' (on programme-choice and programme-expectations) which characterise particular societies. Such 'constraints' would include the influence of particular technologies on what and how we watch. For example, we can use videocassette recorders to skip commercial breaks, to watch programmes at times other than their original scheduling, and to watch 'non-broadcast' material. Another 'constraint' would be the degree to which dominant programme forms are open to diverse interpretations. Finally, individual viewers must negotiate 'constraints' arising from the historically-specific relationships between broadcasting organisations and prominent social and political groupings. For example, the establishment of Channel 4 in the UK was the outcome of competition between visions of a fourth television channel which were held by distinctly different social groupings, including television companies, trade unions and various pressure groups. (See Blanchard & Morley, 1982; Lambert, 1982)

2.2.3 Materialist Analysis: "Multiple Audiences".

There is no "Multiple Audiences" school of media studies in the manner of, say, "Effects" or "Uses and Gratifications", but the work of McQuail, and of Piepe et al is sufficiently distinct from the other major schools to warrant separate identification. Their work was grounded in a clear theory of society (and thus 'the audience') as segmented into groups. Indeed, Piepe et al posed the relationship between viewers and programmes in terms of separate and distinct audiences corresponding to the classes in capitalist society.

Dennis McQuail worked within the "Uses and Gratifications" school, but rejected the notion of a 'mass' audience. In 1975, he criticised traditional audience research for relying on a market-research model which failed to recognise that there was interaction between viewers and

programmes just as between participants in a conversation. McQuail (1975: 187) argued that such a model reduced people to parts of an equation of supply and demand:

"Audience research is a form of market research, and hence represents the audience as a market - a body of consumers of a particular product (But) the people we talk to are not 'consumers' of our words, children are not a 'market' for their lessons nor are voters a market for the appeals of political leaders."

McQuail moved further from the 'free market' supply-and-demand assumption of audience research in arguing that the influence of a media 'message' on viewers depends on:

- * The source's degree of monopoly;
- * The source's perceived degree of expertise, status and power;
- * The message's congruence with the viewer's existing opinions, beliefs and dispositions;
- * The viewer's breadth of understanding of the world;
- * The viewer's identification with the source;
- * The value-system of the viewer's reference-group.

Significantly, in that model influence depends on audience-members' predispositions, and the degree of credibility they accord to each message-source, both media and non-media. 'The audience' is replaced by a collection of audiences (plural) each with its own reference groups and mixture of sources. In summary, McQuail posed an alternative research method within the "Uses and Gratifications" school, with the aim of obtaining better understanding of the relationships between programmes and audiences.

In contrast, Piepe, Crouch and Emerson (1979) opposed the "Uses and Gratifications" school from without. Rather than argue that audience-programme relationships consist of one set of "effects", "uses" or "gratifications" rather than another, they posed a different sort of relationship. In their work, relationships between audiences and programmes were described not just in terms of media "use" but also in terms of viewers' social class and housing tenure. For Piepe et al, viewers are members of groups with social, political and cultural

characteristics, rather than members of a society which is at once atomistic and 'mass'.

Piepe et al reported that the subjects of their investigations lived in one or more 'worlds' defined in social and cognitive terms. For example, where factors of work and/or home location isolated working class people from dominant (bourgeois) values, a form of culture had developed which tended to oppose those dominant values. In contrast, in areas of social mix (at work or at home), neighbours, workmates and the media reinforced and enriched those dominant values. Piepe et al's work thus strongly contrasts with that of "Effects" and "Uses and Gratifications" researchers, who eschew social, political and cultural diversity in audiences in favour of an assumed uniformity, and eschew class conflict in favour of an assumed political consensus.

Piepe et al argued that television played a role in socialising all classes, but that its influence in socialising working class people was greater. They found that the aspirations and self-images of people from predominantly working class areas (e.g. Portsmouth's Council Housing estates) were 'more working class' in orientation than those of people from more socially-mixed areas. However, they also found that such people didn't totally reject dominant (bourgeois) values, and the researchers attributed this to the high incidence of heavy television viewing in those Council estates, which reinforced and enriched dominant values, filling the role played in socially mixed areas by middle class neighbours and workmates:

"It is possible to hypothesise that reduced structural support for dominant values experienced by council tenants is only weakly reflected in their general ideology (which is surprisingly conservative) because of heavy television viewing and greater exposure to abstract values which contradict their everyday experience. While this proposition holds true for all working class groups, council tenants represent it in its most extreme form." (128)

Their complex research framework integrated several (sometimes conflicting) elements of meaning-production, and gave to television viewing an influence on meaning-production which was independent

of, and in addition to, the other elements. Their view was similar to a tradition outlined by Gerbner and Gross (1976: 192-193):

"We have found, as others have found, that heavy viewing is part and parcel of a complex syndrome which includes lower education, lower mobility, lower aspiration, higher anxieties and other class-, age- and sex-related characteristics."

However, unlike Gerbner and Gross, Piepe et al (1979: 158) posed social, political, and cultural factors as (potential) counters to the "media effect":

"The relationship between heavier television viewing and acceptance of dominant values may be an instance of a mass media effect occurring even when the predisposing environmental conditions are working in the opposite direction."

Their judgement implied an empirical distinction between programme content (and its "effects") and the social and political contexts in which it is viewed. In their judgement, viewers' political and social circumstances are the 'background' to the 'real' business of watching programme-content, the "effect" of which may be modified by that 'background'. This conflicted with their research framework, in which television viewing, social class and housing tenure formed an integrated 'world' within which particular groups encountered programmes; the variability of those factors was expressed in the existence of a multiplicity of audiences as a counter to the 'mass' implied in media "effects" research.

Clearly, Piepe et al's work rested on materialist assumptions: they assumed that people's understandings of television programmes were related to their material circumstances, including social class, the nature of their work environment, and where they live. For Piepe et al, the relationship between programmes and consciousness was clearly part of the broader relationship between knowledge and the circumstances of its production. Their focus of inquiry was the historically-specific social contexts of meaning-production around broadcasting, rather than the impacts of programmes on viewers, and this implied a multiplicity of audiences.

In my view, the strength of Piepe et al's work lies in its complex research framework, which combined materialist assumptions with a focus of inquiry on relationships between the media and the individual: the viewer was a member of a social class, whose television viewing was integrated with reinforcement from workmates and/or neighbours.

Their empiricist conclusion, on which I've already commented, was one major weakness of their work. Another was their disregard of the broadcasting organisations and of television technology as potentially problematic elements of meaning-production, assuming that those organisations would more-or-less reflect the (bourgeois) ideas which dominated the society under scrutiny: they were only contested when programmes were watched. The extent of that contest depended on relationships between programme content, viewers' understandings and viewers' class consciousness, derived from their circumstances at home and work. This was also a weakness: they didn't explain how those three elements interact, leaving us to assume that consciousness (somehow) reflects material circumstances. Suggesting that circumstances are reflected in consciousness can easily lead one to suggest that they determine consciousness, and thus strip individuals of any autonomy.

To meet the requirements of the new discourse in media studies posed in my previous chapter, "Multiple Audiences" research needs to explain how meaning-production around broadcasting is related to viewers' circumstances in ways other than just 'reflection'. It should clarify how the ways of thinking of people in particular classes or groupings are influenced by particular circumstances - including the operations of the media. That would present the media as transmitting to individuals who are defined in terms of class, material circumstances and their (consequent ?) particular relationships with programmes. It would also pose media organisations as sites at which such socially-defined individuals come together, and thus as sites of potential contest over what sorts of knowledge and information to transmit - contests over programme-production which would complement those at the point of reception.

2.3 Conclusion.

Each of these six case studies has its strengths and its weaknesses. In my "Analytical Grid" (p19), I have summarised (very briefly) the weaknesses but not the strengths in each of them, because in chapter three I want to investigate the extent to which those weaknesses can be countered by notions of "culture" and of "ideology". Here, I will present a 'meta summary', as it were: I will summarise the summaries of weaknesses which ended each 'case study', looking for weaknesses common to all of them, firstly those associated with the underlying assumptions, and secondly those associated with the foci of inquiry.

The case-studies illustrate my argument in chapter one that by the early 1980s there were serious inadequacies in media research. They show that idealists' reliance on apparently timeless ideas can prevent them from distinguishing between the different circumstances (both social and historical) in which particular people encounter particular programmes. Idealist case studies explained relationships between programmes and audiences in terms of apparently timeless ideas having no specific connection with the actions of particular people watching or listening to particular programmes in particular circumstances at the time of their investigations. Local Radio Workshop used a timeless model of local radio to measure the performance of London's three local radio stations (and found them wanting) irrespective of listeners' views as expressed (however imperfectly) in listening figures. Lazarsfeld posed shared predispositions in opinion-followers which had no grounding in shared history, circumstances or any other characteristic of the people he surveyed. The Glasgow Media Group used "bias" and "balance" to examine the "effects" of television news, rather than interview viewers, and they explained the origins of such news programmes by means of the "living abstractions" of "television" and "the media". Blumler presented uses and gratifications (associated with watching television) in isolation not only from the different ways in which different groupings in a particular society "use" television, but also from the differential value accorded in particular societies to various "gratifications".

In materialist case studies, the weaknesses were less consistent. McLuhan's work clearly grounded people's relationships with the media in the concrete circumstances created by particular, historically-specific

technologies. He presented the actions of people in societies as virtually the effects of technologies, which was a consistent (if extreme) form of materialist thinking. Materialist researchers' emphasis on the concrete specificity of people's encounters with media 'messages' was contradicted not just by an empiricist equation between meaning and content which disregarded audience-members' 'predispositions' (including their encounters with previous programmes), but also by the use of a unidirectional model of communication in which such circumstances are just 'variables'. These studies disregarded the possible influence of previous media 'messages', even though (according to "Diffusion" models) they may have been a significant element in the "predispositions" which people brought to encounters with subsequent 'messages'. In "Uses and Gratifications" studies, the materialist emphasis on individuals' rational choices in particular circumstances disregarded people's potential for non-rational action. In Piepe et al's work, a materialist emphasis on the influence of viewers' circumstances at work and at home was contradicted by an empiricist equation between a programme's content and its meaning. Also, their materialist view of meaning-production by audiences wasn't matched by an equivalent examination of the circumstances of programme-production.

The weaknesses associated with the foci of inquiry centred on the fact that many case-studies lacked explicit models of society (Lazarsfeld's functional pyramid and Piepe et al's class stratification were exceptions). Each of the research projects failed to ask why the relationships between programmes and their audiences took the particular form they did at the particular time the research was performed. Their lack of an historical dimension prevented them asking whether those relationships were specific to their time, or whether they occur between all audiences and all programmes: if they were time-specific, then audiences' (time-specific) circumstances may influence how they relate to the programmes; if, on the other hand, they were timeless, then audiences' circumstances cannot influence how they understand programmes. To decide whether audience-programme relationships are time-specific, one needs to distinguish one period in a society from others and, indeed to distinguish one society from another ... and to do that requires an explicit theory of society. Generally, however, society was ill-defined and of variable significance to the results. In two studies, society was an

unproblematic, almost inert 'mass': in Blumler's work, society was just the background to individuals' rational decision-making; and in McLuhan's work it was an atomistic 'mass' which may split into those who can adapt to new communications technologies and those who can't. Another two studies were ambivalent about society: Local Radio Workshop's view of society oscillated between an atomistic 'mass' and a number of geographically-defined 'communities'; the Glasgow Media Group's view oscillated between society as a 'mass', as a plurality of groupings and as a duality (a 'mass' and a critical elite such as themselves). In the final two studies, however, society appeared more clearly: Lazarsfeld saw society as a functional three-tier pyramid built around information-flow, in which people moved between the bottom two tiers while the media remained fixed at the top; and for Piepe et al, society was clearly stratified according to class.

In short, my examination of these case studies indicates that a new discourse in media research must resolve two dualisms. It must resolve the materialism-idealism dualism if it is to explain how knowledge is produced in the particular circumstances of broadcasting; and it must resolve the individual-society dualism into a new historically-specific focus of inquiry. In Chapter Three, I will assess whether theories of culture and of ideology, while not addressed specifically to broadcasting, can offer ways of resolving those dualisms in a new discourse.

CHAPTER THREE

CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter examines theories of culture and of ideology influential in the early 1980s, in order to decide whether any of them could help to explain how audiences make sense of programmes. "Culture" and "ideology" had each had long histories of changes in their meaning, but by the early 1980s a very general summary would be that culture refers to the dynamic processes through which people understand their circumstances and express their understandings; and that ideology refers to the discourses associated with people's circumstances which structure or limit their understandings.

My examination of major theories of culture and of ideology will link each theory's focus of inquiry to its idealist or materialist assumptions (as summarised in my "Analytical Grid" on page 19); and then discuss the extent to which each theory's focus and assumptions could contribute to explanations of relationships between audiences and programmes.

3.2 Culture.

In this section, I will examine three approaches to the notion of culture, each resting on different assumptions about the production of knowledge: idealist, 'half-way' and materialist.

3.2.1 An Idealist Approach: Hoggart's "Uses of Literacy".

Culture has traditionally meant an individual's ability to appreciate 'the good things in life', which are defined according to timeless criteria encapsulated in notions of 'great' literature, art, music, etc. In other words, "culture" has been synonymous with 'high' culture in a tradition of cultural criticism including Eliot (1948), Arnold (1869), and de Tocqueville (1935-'40). As Williams (1987) has documented, many writers in that tradition argued that the emergence of an industrialised mass society held the promise of a new barbarism which would eliminate ('high') culture. In that sense, arcane discussions of aesthetics and artistic 'greatness' expressed clear political opposition to the development of industrial society.

Such a tradition of cultural analysis was clearly idealist: its proponents asserted that their criteria of greatness transcended particular historical circumstances and could therefore be used to judge any cultural product in any society. Its idealist transcendence was held to be its strength: it was a set of values which enabled aesthetic judgements to be made with the absolute certainty of a moralist. For example, F.R. Leavis and Q.D. Leavis argued in "Scrutiny" (a British journal of literary criticism published between 1932 and 1953, with which they were closely associated) that the levelling tendencies of 'mass society' threatened culture, and they sought to create a new intellectual elite to preserve cultural excellence against what they regarded as the 'false' values propounded in the 'mass media'. However, the tradition's strength was also its weakness. Lacking an explanation of why 'mass society' produced those forms of culture which they so strongly disliked, critics such as the Leavises had no option but to just dismiss 'popular culture' and thus forego any opportunity to change it. Consequently, their critique of capitalism became marginalised, restricted to an intellectual elite with no foothold in the everyday lives of most people.

More contemporary theorists have rejected the traditional view of culture as a fixed set of criteria of greatness, in favour of a view of culture as a complex network of practices and institutions through which social groups negotiate the particular competing ideas and understandings about themselves and their circumstances which characterise each historical period in a society. This view of culture is generally traced to the argument by Hoggart (1958) that culture is the everyday process of re-creating shared meanings. For Hoggart, culture was the way of life associated with a class: a society contains several 'cultures', each autonomous of the other and each associated with a class.

Hoggart clearly broke with the traditional notion of culture as a collection of fixed aesthetic standards, and particularly with the writers in "Scrutiny", for whom there is one 'Culture' which, while allegedly transcending history and social structure, is associated in practice with an elite. However, I think that beneath the obvious contrast between "Scrutiny" and "Uses of Literacy" lay a common, idealist view of

culture as something divorced from the material circumstances of a particular society. Just as "Scrutiny" saw culture as a set of absolute criteria distinct from, and threatened by the 'mass society' associated with industrialisation, so Hoggart presented traditional British working class culture as threatened by a 'mass culture' emanating from the USA; and in neither case did the authors theorise those cultural changes as having any connection with contemporary political and economic circumstances. Hoggart (1958: 324-325) presented the threat of 'mass culture' in terms verging on the apocalyptic:

"Among working-class people, then, how much of a decent local, personal and communal way of life remains? It remains in speech, in forms of culture (the Working-Men's Clubs, the styles of singing, the brass bands, the older types of magazine, the close group-games like darts and dominoes), and in attitudes as they are expressed in everyday life ... The question, of course, is how long this stock of moral capital will last, and whether it is being sufficiently renewed."

Hoggart regarded class position as a mediator between social circumstances and individual consciousness, but he didn't explain in practical terms how such mediation occurs. Instead, in "Uses of Literacy", working class culture somehow exists separately from the material circumstances of particular working class people. Since Hoggart could not explain in practical terms how class influences the development of consciousness, he was unable to account for changes in 'traditional' working class culture such as the responses to those United States influences which he abhorred. Hoggart did not present the British working class as a dynamic category, as both a cause and a result of historically-specific relationships with other classes and with national and international political and economic forces (in particular the post-war relationships between British and United States capital); and he did not present working class culture as the ways in which working class people understood their historically-specific circumstances and the forms in which they expressed those understandings. Rather, he presented an a-historical view of the working class' in a 'mass society' ... and worried about the likely consequences for 'working class culture'. As Swingewood (1977: 40-41) has argued, Hoggart regarded working class culture as;

"... inward-looking, self-enclosed and self-sufficient communities conceived as largely passive enclaves within capitalism, generating their own distinctive values, institutions and practices."

While Hoggart presented culture as the everyday re-creation of shared meanings in the lives of working class people, his general, a-historical view of (working class) culture prevented him from explaining how a culture is linked with its circumstances at a particular moment. Thus, he could not explain how the political and economic circumstances of class position are expressed in/as culture: nor why the way of life he called "working class culture" was associated only with working class people and not with people in other classes as well or instead.

In "Uses of Literacy", class consciousness was synonymous with class position, implying that class consciousness will only change when there is a fundamental change - a revolution - in the political and economic circumstances defining class position. However, Hoggart's argument that the influence of US culture threatened to extinguish British working class culture (consciousness) included no mention of a revolution in the political and economic circumstances of the British working class. Hoggart's position was contradictory: if circumstances determine consciousness, then change cannot be explained in terms of the human agency and creativity which Hoggart admired and felt was being lost; on the other hand, if change is due solely to human agency, then why does it occur in some circumstances but not in others ? (For instance, why were the cultural changes which prompted Hoggart's concern occurring at that particular moment in British history ?)

What could Hoggart's approach to culture contribute to explanations of meaning-production around broadcasting? "Uses of Literacy" expressed an idealist approach to culture in which class mediates (in an a-historical and non-specific way) the 'individual-society' dualism: each individual relates to society through the prism of the 'culture-as-way-of-life' associated with her/his class. In my view, this approach could enhance theories within both the Media and Society and the Media and the Individual traditions. It could enhance idealist theories in those traditions (e.g. those of the Local Radio Workshop and the Glasgow Media Group) by acknowledging the existence of ideas which are shared

by people in similar circumstances. It could also enhance 'Half-Way' theories in those traditions: it presents society as consisting of other (more significant?) groupings than the media-based ones in Lazarsfeld's work; and its acknowledgement that people's understandings are structured by their culture/way of life contrasts with Blumler's atomism. Finally, it could also enhance materialist theories in both of those traditions because it emphasised culture as a way of life, in which programmes are but one instance of the (class-based) process of understanding, countering McLuhan's view that the media are a determining factor, and also countering Piepe et al's view that the media are separate from and opposed to other (class-based) sites of meaning-production.

However, such potential enhancement of media theories would be limited in two ways. Firstly, Hoggart's notion of cultures as class-based ways of life conflicts with his idealist view that (working class) culture is separate from - and threatened by - changes in society. Classes are elements of a society, so if culture originates in classes, then logically changes in that society can't also threaten culture. Secondly, Hoggart's "working class culture" took no account of the specific political and economic circumstances of specific working class people, preventing him from explaining how such class-based circumstances influence consciousness - for instance, how (if at all) people's class position influences their relationships with programmes. All such an approach can do is to warn of the 'threats' posed by programmes ... which simply returns us to the "Effects" tradition of media research!

3.2.2 A 'Halfway' Approach: "Cultural Studies".

A UK tradition of Marxist cultural studies emerged in the 1960s around the journal *Universities and Left Review* (later to become *New Left Review*) via writers including Stuart Hall, Raphael Samuel and E.P. Thompson. Hall (1958) summarised the concern with relationships between structure and experience which would characterise the tradition:

"The central problem concerns the different objective factors which shaped, and were in turn shaped and humanised by, an industrial working class; and the subjective ways in which these factors grew to

consciousness within the minds and lives of working people; and the degree to which those shaping factors have changed or are in the process of changing."

The Cultural Studies view of consciousness as the outcome of a tension or balance between ideology/structure and experience, highlighted in Hall's summary, contrasted with the notion that consciousness more-or-less reflects economic circumstances (as in, for example, the "Images of Society" tradition which I will examine later). That tension became central to the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham when Hall succeeded Hoggart as Director. Later, Hall (1980: 60) attempted to distinguish between experience and structure by emphasising the general foundations of particular cultural forms:

"The underlying patterns which distinguish the complex of practices in any specific society at any specific time are the characteristic 'forms of organisation' which underlie them all, and which can therefore be traced in each."

Hall's formulation tried to walk a line between the Charybdis of an individual voluntarism which ignores the role in meaning-production of social structures of understanding and ideas, and the Scylla of an impersonal structural determinism which denies people a significant role in meaning-production. The argument that we make sense of the world through underlying structures of thought can enable us to understand in practical terms how ideas and images work only if accompanied by examples of actual working meanings which particular people make of them. For instance, it can be argued that the media produce agendas ("underlying structures") within which we understand the world, but that within those agendas people may produce resistant meanings and understandings.

Hall's successor as CCCS Director, Richard Johnson (1979a: 234) reinforced the link between culture and everyday life (c.f. Hoggart) in his argument that culture is;

"... the complex of ideologies that are actually adopted as moral preferences or principles of life. To insist on this usage is to insist on the complex re-creation of ideological effects as a moment of the analysis of consciousness."

Like Hall, Johnson (ibid) tried to reconcile experience and structure, and did so by arguing that when an individual encounters structures, s/he is already-constituted by experience:

"The effects of a particular ideological work or aspect of hegemony can only be understood in relation to attitudes and beliefs that are already lived. Ideologies never address ('interpolate') a 'naked' subject. Concrete social individuals are always already constructed as culturally classed and sexed agents, already have a complexly-formed subjectivity."

Johnson (1979a: 236) contrasted his notion of an already-complexly-formed subjectivity with the humanist view that culture is the construction of self through 'experience' only, in which self /consciousness reflects experience - and thus material circumstances:

"Against the humanist view of 'self-making' it is important to stress that what is affirmed or assented to, or rejected or transformed, has its own particular origin and history. The model of culture as a working up on 'experience' lacks one vital element - the instruments of labour themselves, in this case the conceptions, categories and preferences already present. ... (E)xperience as a term conflates the raw materials (the way, especially, in which capitalist economic relations impinge on human beings) with the mental means of their representation (the existing cultural repertoire)."

Johnson's critique of humanism's empiricist basis, for all its methodological clarity, offered no coherent methodological alternative because it failed to locate its critical elements: where is the "particular origin and history", and where are the origins of "the existing cultural repertoire"? Similarly, the origins of cultural forms and of consciousness were absent when Johnson (1979a: 237) argued - against Althusserian functionalism - that the reproduction of relations of production is the variable outcome of the continual process of managing (class) conflicts between capital's demands and working class culture which (re-)creates both subordination and resistance:

"Working class culture is formed in the struggle between capital's demand for particular forms of labour power ... (and) ... socialist

organisations with an integral relation to proletarian conditions and working class cultural forms."

Those were the basic issues which informed the work of the many writers in the Cultural Studies tradition. That tradition included writers concerned specifically with broadcasting, especially Hobson, Morley and - from different beginnings - Fiske, each of whose work I will examine in chapter five. At the general and basic level, the Cultural Studies tradition can bring to broadcasting research an emphasis on the non-reflective nature of relationships between experience and structure, and between consciousness and circumstances. However, writers in the Cultural Studies tradition failed to explain how, in a particular society, individuals reconcile competing structures of understanding, offering no way to explain either why an individual reconciles that competition in one direction rather than another or why s/he forms one world view rather than another. Thus, even fairly recently, while Hall (1989: 51) presented culture as "a field of relations structured by power and difference" in which discursive relations are never permanent, he gave no indication of the practical means by which concrete, class-based individuals negotiate the resulting discursive disparities.

3.2.3 A Materialist Approach: "Images of Society".

Writers in the "Images of Society" tradition have posed a reflective relationship between consciousness and circumstances. They have assumed that our understanding of our circumstances reflects our experiences at (mainly industrial) work, rather than investigate how those circumstances determine individuals' reconciliation of the competing understandings and ideas in a society.

(According to Davis [1979], working class consciousness was first described in the phrase "Image of Society" in a cluster of investigations in the late 1950s, including; Popitz et al, 1957; Willener, 1957; Dahrendorf, 1959; Andrieux & Lignon, 1960.)

The "Images of Society" tradition became current in British sociology largely through the typology of working class images of society outlined by Lockwood and by Goldthorpe et al. Lockwood (1966) posed the

existence of three categories of worker, each defined by its 'image of society' which, in turn, depended on the workers' experiences at work; the categories reappeared in Goldthorpe et al (1968/9).

At a general level, writers in the "Images of Society" tradition shared with other theorists of culture an interest in relationships between circumstances and consciousness: "Images of Society" writers examined links between working class people's circumstances and their understandings ("Images") of society. More specific links between "Images of Society" and cultural theory appear in the argument by Davis (1979) that writers in the "Images" tradition had emphasised the influence on consciousness of experiences at work, but had ignored, or at least underestimated, other sites of meaning-production such as the family and the state (and, we can add, the media). Davis (1979: 175/6) saw work in the Cultural Studies tradition as a means to rectify the situation:

"(J)ust as we initially required a model of the evolution of work in an industrial society to understand the role of labour as the foundation of social consciousness, so we eventually require a model of the evolution of culture to understand some of the particular forms which consciousness takes. In our view such a model is unavailable at the present time but, in their various ways, cultural studies, public opinion research, media sociology and semiology are engaged in the search. They all address the problem of why, in a class society, social consciousness and class consciousness are not synonymous."

"Images of Society" writers had clearly materialist assumptions about relationships between knowledge and the circumstances of its production. For them, ideas and understandings originated in material circumstances - people's class position determined their consciousness (their "Image of Society"). Their approach offers a clear basis from which to explain empirical differences in attitudes and values between different classes in a society, and this is an advance on idealist notions of 'working class culture' such as the suggestion by Hoggart (1958: 16) that insights into contemporary 'working class life' can come from novels such as Lawrence's 'Sons and Lovers':

"It is some novels, after all, that may bring us really close to the quality of working-class life - such a novel as Lawrence's 'Sons and

Lovers' at least, rather than more popular or more consciously proletarian fiction."

(Characteristically, although 'Sons and Lovers' was published in 1913, Hoggart gave no hint that the ensuing forty five years, two world wars and loss of Empire may have influenced the consciousness of working class people!)

However, "Images of Society" writers' assumptions were so strongly materialist as to outweigh any advantage offered by their clarity of focus. The tradition had two major weaknesses: it was determinist, and it was a-historical. Writers in this tradition were so clear that people's experiences at work formed their view of society that they left no room for human agency; people were little more than vehicles for world views originating (somehow) in forms of employment. To be fair, the determinism wasn't consistent: Davis (1979: 10, 15) argued that early work by Popitz et al (1957) was less determinist than later studies:

"According to (Popitz et al), an image of society is a collection of themes, which may or may not constitute a comprehensive framework for understanding society, but which nevertheless provide a means for understanding the fragments of personal experience ... it is the function of images, not to provide a uniform orientational framework for behaviour, but to provide a framework for the articulation of varied elements from personal experience and from a collective supply of themes and ideas. The heterogeneity of images is therefore no less important than their homogeneity."

The insistence that the understandings "may or may not constitute a comprehensive framework for understanding society" avoids simple 'reflection', and accords with the emphasis in the Cultural Studies tradition on a tension between experience and structure, but Popitz et al, like others in this tradition, still assumed those 'frameworks' were determined by experiences at work.

Davis (1979, 26) also argued for an historical dimension in studies of links between work and consciousness, developing the views of Kern and Schumann (1970) that;

"(I)nstead of the process of levelling and homogenisation of the labour force (which, it can be argued, Marx predicted) modern industrial work is increasingly differentiated. This has had repercussions in workers' consciousness and it helps to account for significant changes in the thinking of industrial workers."

Critcher (1979) has written of the "Images of Society" tradition that its a-historical nature was expressed in its static, 'ideal type' categories of 'the working class' (for example, the "traditional worker" in Goldthorpe et al Vol. 2 "The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour"), together with its corresponding lack of a theory of social change. For Critcher (1979: 16), those a-historical ideal types were sociological categories, not historical ones, because they referred to particular trades or communities, not to a class. In his view, they expressed the particular historical conditions in which they were formulated: late 1960s British social democracy regarded the 'evils of capitalism' as largely overcome, and considered studies of the links between meaning-production and the experiences of wage labour, consumerism, and the changing infrastructure of a booming capitalism as largely irrelevant:

"The political theory of social democracy could not break through ... (the idea that capitalism had disappeared) ... when the state controlled the economy, the economy was expanding, there was a shortage of labour, and the main threat to 'world peace' came from a 'communist power'."

The result, according to Critcher (1979: 16), was a tendency to use general, a-historical models of 'the working class' (c.f. Hoggart), defined by;

"... students of working class culture ... (who could not) ... conceive of a working class without the extended family, back-to-backs or mild beer."

Critcher (1979: 22) contrasted the "Images of Society" approach with the study by Dennis et al (1969) into miners' responses to changes in their world, which addressed the tension between experience and structure by posing a human agency limited by specific economic conditions of the time, situating miners' culture within the structuring circumstances of their class position:

"The immediate and concrete expressions of the class may be seen as representations of the structural situation." (My emphasis)

The use of "representation" avoided a structurally determinist, reflective relationship between the miners' class position and their culture. It implied a class-based culture as the historically-specific ways in which people in a particular class position understand their circumstances and express those understandings ... which may or may not reconcile them with the consequences of those circumstances. Critcher (ibid) used the following quote from Dennis et al (1969: 76) as illustration:

"In his everyday work the miner has seen great improvement in the physical condition of labour ... (but) ... the actual changes have been absorbed into the miners' traditional ideology rather than transformed it ... (and) ... have been unaccompanied by any profound modifications in the general economic framework of which mining is a part, or of the social structure within which miners exist."

What could "Images of Society" research contribute to explanations of meaning-production around broadcasting? In my view, the tradition's determinism and ahistorical approach prevent it from contributing anything specific. Its argument that meaning-production occurs at the material sites constituting a class-based society was clearly an advance on the atomistic models of society underlying much media research, as were the similar arguments in work by Hoggart and in the Cultural Studies tradition. However, its determinism prevented it from posing a role for human agency in meaning-production, for example around broadcasting. (The Cultural Studies tradition emphasised the role of human agency, while 'deferring' its origins.) Finally, and despite its materialist assumptions, its lack of an historical perspective and a theory of change prevented it from explaining how the material circumstances of historically-specific working class people influence the ways in which they make sense of the world - for instance, of television programmes.

3.3 Ideology.

By the early 1980s, as I suggested earlier, "ideology" was often used to refer to discourses associated with people's circumstances, which structure and limit their (class-based) experiences. However, there was a variety of emphases.

3.3.1 Different Emphases.

Many theorists of ideology used "ideologies" as a virtual synonym for 'ideas', and Marxists used "ideology" in several ways, some more specific than others, as Williams (1977: 55) has summarised:

- "(i) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group;
- (ii) a system of illusory beliefs - false ideas or false consciousness - which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge;
- (iii) the general process of the production and meaning of ideas.

"In one variant of Marxism, senses (i) and (ii) can be effectively combined. In a class society, all beliefs are founded on class position, and the systems of belief of all classes ... are then in part or wholly false (illusory)."

I think that Williams's sense "(iii)" could apply to general notions of culture; his senses "(i)" and "(ii)" then define ideology in ways which can distinguish it from "culture".

Many theorists have tried to determine why the working class hasn't developed the revolutionary consciousness that 'ought' to spring from its objective material circumstances, and thus why the working class hasn't emerged as a revolutionary political force. They have posed "ideology" as the answer, but the precise form of their answer depends on the perspective from which each writer theorises ideology.

Marxists have written about ideology from two perspectives: 'base' and 'superstructural'. Those who adopt a 'base' approach to ideology argue from materialist assumptions about knowledge-production that (economic) circumstances determine consciousness to some extent. This implies that changes in consciousness must wait upon economic changes such as the collapse of capitalism ... and since that has yet to happen, it's no surprise that the working class hasn't emerged as a

revolutionary political force. On the other hand, Marxists who adopt a 'superstructural' approach argue, from assumptions about knowledge-production which are 'halfway' between idealism and materialism, that consciousness is a mental "superstructure" of society, autonomous to some extent of material (especially economic) circumstances. This implies that changes in consciousness can occur before economic relations are overthrown; indeed, such changes are a precondition of revolution. Larrain (1983) has argued that superstructural theories have vacillated between presenting the superstructure as reflecting the base, thereby denying it any specific content and significance; and distinguishing between superstructure and base at the expense of any relationship between them, thereby presenting the superstructure as existing of itself, rather than being continuously produced in the material world. In his view, that vacillation is the result of "superstructure" being asked to do two things simultaneously: to describe the development of specialised 'levels' of society brought about by capitalism; and to explain how one of those 'levels' determines the others. Larraine (1983: 45) concluded that there are limits to the insights to be gained from using a notion of superstructure:

"(It can describe) ... the development of institutional differentiation and of specific 'fields' of practice - economic, political, and intellectual - which are presided over by specialised apparatuses. But it seems less adequate to explain the determination of politics and social consciousness, or to account for the emergence of each level as part of the social totality ...".

I will consider 'superstructural' and 'base' theories of ideology in detail to assess the contribution which each one can make to a new focus of inquiry in media research, but beforehand I will just summarise what Johnson (1979a: 209-210) has posed as three other responses to the continuing failure by the working class to emerge as a revolutionary political force. The first response has been to re-define the problem, i.e. to abandon Marxism. The second has been to modify the problem by emphasising the heterogeneity of the working class, rather than its homogeneity. The third response has been to re-structure the problem by defining the working class as continuously re-composed around internal divisions - for example, those between workplaces, industries, occupations, between genders, and between employed and unemployed.

3.3.2 A 'Half-Way' Approach: Althusser and *Screen*.

I think that Althusser's work on ideology could contribute to a new focus of inquiry in broadcasting research the notion that audiences' relations with programmes are part of an overall system of social relations which reproduces the capitalist mode of production. In presenting this view, I shall draw heavily on the argument by Robins (1979) that this notion informed much of the work published in *Screen*, the British journal of film studies: despite assertions by cinema theorists that the conditions under which we watch films are unique, I think that Althusser's work can be applied to broadcasting research just as easily as to cinema research - with just the same problems.

(Althusser's notions of 'social formation' and 'ideology' are the most relevant to my objective in this section. However, Robins's article discussed the influence on *Screen* of more than just these two notions, so I will try to summarise them a-contextually while maintaining their original sense.)

Robins argued that the journal of film studies *Screen* developed in the context of what he called "New Left Marxism", centred on writers in the journal *New Left Review* in the 1960s. New Left Marxists emphasised ideology at the expense of capitalist production and accumulation because they felt that bourgeois cultural hegemony in the post-war period had halted history and class struggle, making it necessary to 'import' Marxism to a passive working class. Writers in *Screen* applied the same analysis to post-war cinema, and drew an equivalent conclusion - that intellectuals such as themselves had to 'import' Marxism to passive cinema audiences. An equivalent position in broadcasting research is the view (held, for example, by 'Effects' and 'Impacts' researchers) that the audience is a more-or-less passive mass.

Robins suggested four links between ideas in *Screen* and Althusser's work on the social formation and on ideology, each of which I consider in detail below: firstly, Althusser's notion that a social formation consists of distinct 'levels' of human activity led *Screen* to concentrate on film consumption at the expense of film production; secondly, the tendency in Althusser's scheme for those 'levels' to shift from relative to complete autonomy from each other led *Screen* to 'import' other

disciplines into Marxism; thirdly, *Screen* rejected the notion of an already-constituted subject on the basis of Althusser's anti-humanism; and fourthly, on the basis of Althusser's anti-empiricism, *Screen* rejected the notion of the realist text and argued that films which deconstruct realism are revolutionary. I shall argue that Robins's critique of those four aspects of *Screen*'s ideas can indicate the problems of using an Althusserian notion of ideology to explain relationships between audiences and television programmes.

3.3.2a) *Althusser's theory of the Social Formation.*

For Althusser, each society - social formation - consists of a specific hierarchy of distinct but interrelated 'instances' or 'levels' of human activity: economic, political, ideological and theoretical. Each level determines and is determined by the others - there is 'relative autonomy' between and within them - but the economic level is determining in the last instance. Althusser (1979: 202) encapsulated all this in describing the social formation as a 'structure articulated in dominance':

"(T)he unity discussed by Marxism is the unity of the complexity itself ... the mode of organization and articulation of the complexity is precisely what constitutes its unity ... the complex whole has the unity of a structure articulated in dominance."

Althusser's social formation is 'decentred': in it there is no essence or centre which drives historical development. Thus, he argued (1975: 17) that an understanding of history cannot simply be 'found' through empirical study of historical events:

"(T)he truth of history cannot be read in its manifest discourse, because the text of history is not a text in which a voice (the Logos) speaks, but the inaudible and illegible notation of the effects of a structure of structures."

A 'social formation' consisting of distinct 'levels' which are 'relatively autonomous' of each other always holds the risk that 'relative autonomy' will become complete autonomy, and that the superstructure will effectively be regarded as separated, free-floating and able to either support or inhibit economic production. In such a scenario, the superstructure is regarded as the active 'level' at which either bourgeois

hegemony or revolutionary change is secured, and its 'autonomous' activity would imply that (new) theories of ideology need not be consistent with Marxism's already-existing theory of the economic 'level'.

Robins contended that just such an argument had led *Screen* to separate film texts (cinema as 'ideological practice') from the film industry (cinema as 'economic practice'). Although *Screen* acknowledged the importance of film production, it concentrated its attention on the film as text - film consumption - instead of seeing cinema as a complex of social relations, playing a (diminishing) role in the overall reproduction of the social formation. In broadcasting research, an equivalent position is expressed in research which analyses programmes solely in terms of their content, rather than seeing programmes as an outcome of social relations both within the broadcasting organisations and between those organisations and audiences.

Robins also contended that Althusser's notion of the 'relative autonomy' of 'levels' implied that Marx had only theorised the economic level and had neglected the others, and that other disciplines were needed to remedy this neglect. He suggested that writers in *Screen* had held this view: they felt that Marx's work lacked a theory of the subject, and so they 'imported' the psychoanalysis of Lacan and the semiotics of Barthes and Kristeva - writers whose work was, suggested Robins (365) conspiratorially, "especially congenial to, and compatible with, Althusserian Marxism". An equivalent emphasis on 'the subject' was less evident in broadcasting research by the early 1980s, but much subsequent broadcasting research has concerned relationships between 'subjects' and programmes, as I will discuss in Chapter Five.

3.3.2b) *Althusser's theory of Ideology.*

Althusser's theory of ideology was integrated with his notion of the social formation as a "structure (of relatively autonomous 'levels') articulated in dominance", and both notions implied a decentred individual. His work in these areas echoed that of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, and writers in *Screen* drew on both men's ideas in developing their theories of the cinema.

Althusser argued (1977: 201) that Marxism shared with Freudian psychoanalysis an interest in how individuals become (decentred) 'subjects':

"Since Copernicus we have known that the earth is not the 'centre' of the universe. Since Marx, we have known that the human subject ... is not the 'centre' of history - and even ... that history has ... no necessary 'centre' except its ideological misrecognition. In turn, Freud has discovered for us that ... the human subject is de-centred, constituted by a structure which has no 'centre' either, except in the imaginary misrecognition of the 'ego', i.e. in the ideological formations in which it 'recognizes' itself."

Within that shared interest of Marxism and Freudianism, Althusser was concerned with the role of ideology, and Lacan with that of language. However, the difference in their concerns is far less significant than the similarity in their descriptions of how the subject is constructed. In contrast with the view that the human individual is the origin of consciousness, Althusser (1977: 180) regarded the decentred individual-as-subject as merely a support or effect of the social formation, that is, of a structure of social relations determined, in the last instance, by economic practices:

"(T)he structure of relations of production determines the places and functions occupied and adopted by the agents of production, who are never anything more than the occupants of these places, insofar as they are the 'supports' (Trager) of these functions. The true 'subjects' ... are therefore not these occupants or functionaries ... 'concrete individuals', 'real men' - (but the) relations of production and political and ideological social relations (which cannot be reduced) ... to any anthropological inter-subjectivity ... "

Althusser argued (1977: 158, 160) that individuals are 'constituted' as subjects by ideology (a complex set of material practices, not a collection of ideas) which structures their actions:

"(A subject's) ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject ... (T)he category of the subject is ... constitutive of all

ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects."

He elaborated on this as follows. At a general level, ideology is the precondition of social existence, and each particular form of social existence occurs through historically-specific ideologies. Ideology in general operates by 'interpellating' or 'hailing' (and thus constituting) the individual as a free subject within the specific ideologies existing in and through historically-specific material practices and apparatuses; the individual is a subject in responding (as s/he always does) to such 'hailing'. In the process of becoming a subject, the individual-as-subject 'subjects' her/himself to a unique and central other Subject - the Christian God and the Freudian unconscious are, in their different ways, crucial to the view that the subject is the origin of consciousness. However, Althusser (1977: 169) argued that the subject is constituted as subjugated to a Subject:

"(T)he individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjugation, i.e. in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection 'all by himself'. There are no subjects except by and for their subjection. That is why they 'work all by themselves'.

Laclau (1979: 100) has also shown how in Althusser's system interpellation is linked with 'imaginary' ideological relations:

"Individuals, who are simple bearers of structures, are transformed by ideology into subjects, that is to say, that they live the relation with their real conditions of existence as if they themselves were the autonomous principle of determination in that relation. The mechanism of this characteristic inversion is interpellation."

In such arguments, 'the ideological level' becomes relatively autonomous of 'the economic level', and appears as the means by which people experience the world and live their conditions of existence.

In Althusser's scheme, reproduction of social relations is performed for capital by ideology through the state in Ideological State Apparatuses such as education, the church, the law, the political system and the media, backed by the repressive state apparatuses of the police and armed

forces. Althusser argued (1977: 146) that while it is 'ideology in general' which 'constitutes' subjects, each Ideological State Apparatus reproduces relations of production in particular ways:

"The political apparatus by subjecting individuals to the political State ideology, the 'indirect' (parliamentary) or 'direct' (plebiscitary or fascist) 'democratic' ideology. The communications apparatus by cramming every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc. by means of the press, radio and television. The same goes for the cultural apparatus (the role of sport in chauvinism is of the first importance), etc."

For Lacan, language was the equivalent mechanism through which subjects are constructed. In each individual, the unconscious, operating by and through language, is primary: there is no 'ego' as the source of consciousness. Instead, each individual inscribes her/himself as a 'subject' through language - for example by posing her/himself as the subject of a sentence, "I". In acquiring language the subject becomes subjugated to a symbolic order in which s/he can express only her/his conscious desires: unconscious ones are (in Lacan's terms) pre-linguistic. Althusser (1977: 193) suggested that;

"Lacan has shown that this transition from (ultimately purely) biological existence to human existence (the human child) is achieved within the Law of Order, the law I shall call the Law of Culture, and that this Law of order is confounded in its formal essence with the order of language."

(The passage is rendered ambiguous by his use of "confounded", normally meaning "bewildered or confused".)

Lacan also argued that the unconscious is structured like a language. In commenting on this, Althusser (1977: 191/2) seemed to say that dreams form a self-referential system, only ever referring to other dreams:

"Freud himself said that everything depended on language. Lacan makes this more precise: 'the discourse of the unconscious is structured like a language' ... Freud studied the 'mechanisms' and 'laws' of dreams, reducing their variants to two: displacement and condensation. Lacan recognised these as two essential figures of speech, called in linguistics metonymy and metaphor. Hence slips, failures, jokes and symptoms, like the elements of dreams

themselves, became signifiers, inscribed in the chain of an unconscious discourse ... Hence we were introduced to the paradox, formally familiar to linguistics, of a double yet single discourse, unconscious yet verbal, having for its double field only a single field, with no beyond except in itself: the field of the 'Signifying Chain'."

(This echoed the view that language is a self-referential system in which a signifier refers merely to other signifiers, not to a signified or ultimate meaning. For example, Derrida [1973] argued that there is no ultimate meaning, but that meaning is always "deferred" in an endless chain. For example, metaphors and metonyms are linguistic devices which explain something with which we are unfamiliar in terms of something we know. A metaphor gives something unknown the characteristics of something familiar. For example, a city's 'bright lights' are often used as a metaphor for excitement ... or confusion. A metonym makes part of something 'stand for' the whole of it, and is often used to represent abstractions. For example, dark alleys or shining office blocks are often used as metonyms of 'city life' - each is only one part of the whole. In each case, the meaning of the image exists not in itself but in its evocation of something else; there is a chain of meanings in which each link refers to another link which, in turn ...)

Robins regarded Althusser's and Lacan's arguments as both anti-humanist and anti-empiricist, and saw each of these characteristics in *Screen*. In Althusser's and Lacan's arguments, the subject is merely an effect of a system (ideology/language), and for Robins (364), this anti-humanist perspective was expressed in *Screen*'s argument that instead of a reader existing already outside the film text, the text constructs (interpellates) its reader as a subject, structuring and fixing her/him in the only position from which it is possible to 'read' the text. Althusser and Lacan were also anti-empiricist because they rejected the notion of a 'final' or 'real' world accessible to the senses: Althusser (1977: 155) presented ideology as individuals' "imaginary relation ... to the real relations in which they live", i.e. as an image of an image; and Lacan presented language as just a collection of signifiers, with no necessary signifieds, i.e. with no necessary relationship to the 'real' world ... which can therefore never be apprehended. For Robins (365), such anti-

empiricism was embodied in *Screen's* rejection of 'realism', i.e. of the idea that films reflect reality:

"For Screen, a realist text is one in which the filmic discourses are arranged in a hierarchy, dominated by one, privileged discourse, which 'denies its own status ... and claims 'direct access to a final reality' (Sn 15, 2: 8-10). It has been stated quite explicitly that 'realism is not just a matter of aesthetics, but also of epistemology', and that Screen is opposed to realism at 'the philosophical level' (Sn 18, 1:5; c.f. 17, 3:9-11)."

In work on realism, writers in *Screen* related ideology to language by rejecting the idea of a concept (signified) existing independently from, and prior to, language (the signifier). Instead, it saw language as a system of inter-related signifiers, in which a signified is merely an effect of this chain of signifiers. Thus, a realist text can no longer be regarded as 'reflecting' reality; instead, it is merely an effect or a construction of a chain of signifiers, which masks its own construction by constructing its reader as the subject who originates that text's meaning. In other words, just as ideology/language produces the individual as a subject for Althusser/Lacan, so texts produce meaning in readers ... and so for writers in *Screen*, the inscription of the individual as a subject occurs in and through the practices of (cinematic) signification .

From there, semiotics becomes the basis for an anthropology in which, argue Coward and Ellis (1977: 23), "Man is constructed in the symbol". Similarly, (Lacanian) psychoanalysis becomes the foundation for all discussions of ideology, because, say Coward and Ellis (ibid: 69), only (Lacanian) psychoanalysis "... has gone any way to analysing the formation of the subject which receives its specific subjectivity in the work of ideology". (Coward and Ellis were closely associated with *Screen*, and cited in Robins.) That semiotic/anthropological, psychoanalytic analysis of realism implies that the working of ideology in film can be disrupted by producing films which deconstruct realism and emphasise the materiality of language. Such films would 'unmask' their own construction as an effect of a chain of signifiers, 'unmasking' the reader-as-subject as an (ideological) effect of the text's organisation ... thus subverting ideology. Robins (1979: 362) is dismissive of such a strategy:

"Within Screen, there is no conception of social change, no estimation of how film might contribute to the process of social change. Emphasis is put, instead, on the way in which cinema interpellates and fixes individuals as the mere subjects of ideology, structures them as the passive 'bearers' of social relations. Within this functionalist problematic, the most that can be achieved is the subversion of those codes that effect subjectification."

I think that Robins underestimated the significance of "the subversion of those codes that effect subjectification". After all, to resist subjectification is, in Althusser's terms, to resist historically-specific ideologies, which is no small feat! (Unfortunately, Althusser's terms preclude overcoming ideology in general!) In my view, the real weakness in *Screen's* view that anti-realist texts were weapons in the 'ideological struggle' is that it fatally compromised its own premises. From an Althusserian perspective, how can subjects inscribed within ideology act to subvert ideology? Similarly, from a Lacanian perspective, how can subjects inscribed within a Symbolic Order of rules, meanings and relationships act to subvert it? Just as class conflict is precluded by/in Althusser's subject-inscribed-in-ideology, so the anti-realist texts called for by *Screen* are precluded by/in Lacan's/*Screen's* subject-inscribed-in-the-Symbolic-order.

3.3.2c) *Conclusion.*

In my view, Althusser's approach to ideology rested on assumptions about knowledge and the conditions of its production which can be classed as 'half-way' between idealism and materialism. His argument that the ideological level is relatively autonomous of the economic level rested on ambivalent assumptions: his notion of "autonomous" relationships was idealist because it denied any necessary correspondence between our (ideological) understandings of the world and our economic circumstances; but his qualification "relatively" injects a cautious note of materialism! However, his view that ideology is an incorrect understanding ('false consciousness') of the 'real' world distinguished between the 'real' world and our experience of it in an idealist manner reminiscent of Kantianism. As Kant distinguished between the 'real' noumenal world and the 'phenomenal' form in which it appears to us, so Althusser distinguished between 'real' social

relations and individuals' "imaginary relation ... to the real relations in which they live" (1977: 155); and as Kant argued that we understand our circumstances through idealist, a-historical "categories", so Althusser (drawing on Lacan) argued that an a-historical 'subject' is subjugated to ideologies through idealist, a-historical 'language'.

Althusser's view of relationships between ideology in general and specific ideologies also rested on assumptions 'half-way' between idealism and materialism. His argument that ideology in general - despite being a (false) form of consciousness - exists materially in historically-specific ideologies expressed in Ideological State Apparatuses expressed a materialist emphasis on historical differences in ideological subjugation. However, his argument that individuals always and everywhere become 'subjects' through historically-specific ideologies, rendering a correct understanding of social relations ('true consciousness') unattainable, rests on the idealist assumption of an a-historical, continually absent 'true' consciousness as the means by which to define those historical differences in ideological subjugation.

Althusser clearly presented ideology as a process operating through specific social institutions, rather than as an omnipotent, omnipresent force, and he regarded the media as a means of securing compliance with capitalist relations of production. The media does this by 'constituting' audiences as 'subjects' with 'imaginary' relations to the existing capitalist social relations: a (classic realist) text constructs its 'readers' as subjects who mistakenly see themselves as originating its meaning. This implies an identical outcome to ideological 'subjectification' (for instance, by the media), regardless of the materially- and historically-specific characteristics of particular programmes and of the particular 'subjects' who watch them. However, Althusser's perspective offered clarity of vision at the expense of political direction - it was fundamentally pessimistic about people's ability to change their circumstances, and justified complete political quietism. Althusser substituted ideology for language in the Lacanian notion of 'subjectification', but his explanation of how subjectification occurs retained a Lacanian universality and timelessness: ideology is divorced from the specific material circumstances in which (concrete) individuals encounter the (equally concrete) Ideological State Apparatuses, including the media.

In criticising *Screen's* reliance on Althusser's a-historical subject, Morley (1980b: 163) offered possibilities for political action because he posed a dynamic view of the individual rather than a static and 'subjectified' view leading to political quietism:

"(In *Screen*) The subject is not conceived as already constituted in other discursive formations and social relations. Also, it is treated in relation to only one text at a time (or, alternatively, all texts are assumed to function according to the rules of a single 'classic realist text') ... (T)his proposition ... serves to isolate the encounter of text and reader from all social and historical structures and from other texts."

Morley contrasted Althusser's "subject" with Pecheux's "interdiscourse", in which the individual's entry into language and the symbolic creates a 'space' for the inter-relationship of several 'subject-positions', each the result of historically-specific discourses. Consequently, the subject is "an interdiscourse, the product of the effects of discursive practices traversing the subject throughout its history", about which Morley (1980b: 163) commented:

"... At the moment of textual encounter, other discourses are always in play besides those of the particular text in focus - discourses which depend on other discursive formations, brought into play through 'the subject's' placing in other practices - cultural, educational, institutional. And these other discourses will set some of the terms in which any particular text is engaged and evaluated."

Morley (1980b: 166) related *Screen's* position to Pecheux's ideas thus:

"It is clear that the concept of interdiscourse transforms the relation (in *Screen*) of one text/one subject to that of a multiplicity of texts/subjects relations, in which encounters can be understood not in isolation but only in the moments of their combination."

Further, Morley (1980b: 171) used Pecheux's 'interdiscourse' to develop his own earlier argument (Morley, 1980a; c.f. Brunsdon and Morley, 1978) that different categories of viewer (e.g. different classes) make sense of programmes in different ways, by presenting class as a (the?)

precondition of access to a greater/lesser variety of already-existing discourses:

"The meaning(s) of a text will ... be constructed differently depending on the discourses (knowledges, prejudices, resistances) brought to bear on the text by the reader. One crucial factor delimiting this will be the repertoire of discourses at the disposal of different audiences."

Morley (1980b: 166) used the notion of a discursive repertoire to attack on three levels the notion of the 'subject' as used (in different ways) by Althusser, Lacan and contributors to *Screen*. Firstly, he defined the individual as 'subject' at any one time to different (historically-specific) positions or interpellations: for example, as a 'national subject' by the discourses of the news media, but as 'class/sectional' subject by the discourses of his/her trade union or co-workers. Secondly, he also defined the individual as the (historically-specific) 'subject' of an interdiscourse between past and present interpellations. Finally, using the argument by Laclau (1979: 108ff) that interpellations are conditional and provisional, he presented 'subjectification' as the articulation and disarticulation within class struggle of several interpellations, some of which ("traditional and institutionalised 'traces'...") have greater weight than others at particular moments.

(I will discuss Morley's work in detail in chapter five.).

3.3.3 A Materialist Approach: Lukacs.

Lukacs defined ideology as the 'knowledge structures' or ways of thinking imposed on a society by the group(s) or class(es) which dominate(s) it. He argued (1971: 242) that each society is dominated by an ideology; that the dominant ideology is the 'pure' ideology of the dominant class in that society, i.e. a reflection of that class's circumstances; and that the dominance of that ideology relates to the economic dominance of that class:

"In every society, therefore, the dominant system of production will put its stamp on those subordinated to it and will decisively modify their real economic structure."

Lukacs's notion of ideology re-stated the argument by Marx (1965: 60) that in each society 'mental' production (ideology) is linked with material production:

"The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; i.e. the class which is the ruling material force in society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of material production are subject to it."

For Lukacs, the essential and interrelated features of capitalist society are commodity fetishism, in which commodities and 'the market', rather than the actions of concrete individuals, appear to determine social relationships; and reified relationships, in which relationships between people take on the appearance of relationships between things. In Lukacs's view, bourgeois philosophers have presented capitalist society as an aggregate of discrete entities united not by conscious human control but by market relations: an object (the market) has power over the subject (people). Commodities play a reificatory role in bourgeois ideology: people are either producers or consumers of commodities, and so commodities appear to set the terms of human relationships, with the result that people relate to each other, as Stedman-Jones (1977: 40) put it, through "the ghostly discourse of commodities".

Lukacs (1971: 168) argued that consciousness is integral to a society's economic base, rather than autonomous of it:

".... in the commodity, the worker recognises himself and his own relations with capital His consciousness is the self revelation of the capitalist society founded upon the production and exchange of commodities."

This is not to say that one can 'read off' someone's consciousness from their economic position. Nor is it to say that there is a 'true' and definitive class consciousness based on shared economic circumstances; for instance, the existence in the proletariat of 'true' class consciousness was not inevitable in any particular epoch and thus had to be ascribed or imputed. (Livingstone translated Lukacs's "zugerechnetes

klassenbewusstsein" as "imputed class consciousness", but Stedman-Jones translated it as "ascribed class consciousness") Similarly, Lukacs didn't argue that economic laws forecast the inevitable collapse of capitalist society and revolutionary victory for the working class, but emphasised the need for the working class to achieve its own 'true' consciousness:

"To become conscious is synonymous with the possibility of taking over the leadership of society."

(Cited by Stedman-Jones as "History and Class Consciousness" p268, but not found there.)

Associated with that analytical caution was an ambivalence about determinacy in relationships between class consciousness and economic circumstances. His view that a class must actively seek its 'true' consciousness countered any historicist assumption that the proletariat would necessarily overthrow capitalist society. However, his view implied that a dominant class ultimately rules by 'spiritual' not material means, and will be overthrown once the dominated classes develop their 'true' class consciousness. As Stedman-Jones (1977: 45) wryly observed, this view ignores;

"... the brute material struggle for power - strikes, demonstrations, lock-outs, riots, insurrections, or civil wars - that is the stuff of terrestrial revolutions."

Rather than address "the brute material struggle for power", Lukacs (1971: 197) presented revolution in ontological terms: the working class can win the class struggle because its 'true' consciousness is superior to that of the bourgeoisie:

"When confronted with the overwhelming resources of knowledge, culture and routine which the bourgeoisie undoubtedly possesses the only effective superiority (of the proletariat) its only superior weapon, is its ability to see the social totality as a concrete historical totality."

In all of this, Lukacs appeared to reject the determinacy of economic circumstances, arguing that the seizure of (economic) power by a class must be preceded by a transformation in its consciousness. On the other hand, Lukacs (1971: 70) argued elsewhere that economic circumstances

are primary - that only a full-scale economic and political crisis can lead the proletariat to transcend bourgeois ideology and achieve its 'true' consciousness:

"(W)hen the final economic crisis of capitalism develops, the fate of the revolution (and with it the fate of mankind) will depend on the ideological maturity of the proletariat, i.e. on its class consciousness ... The proletariat cannot liberate itself as a class without simultaneously abolishing class society as such."

The implication that the proletariat only reacts to events, rather than initiating them was made explicit when Lukacs (1971: 304, 309-310) argued that the class consciousness of the proletariat lags behind the objective situation:

"Large sections of the proletariat remain intellectually under the tutelage of the bourgeoisie; even the severest economic crisis fails to shake them in their attitude ... (T)he concentration of capital has made further advances and this in turn results in a further concentration of the proletariat - even if the latter is unable wholly to keep pace with this trend in terms of its consciousness and its organisation."

Lukacs reduced ideologies to the economic positions of the classes with which they are associated: the dominant ideology is associated with the class which dominates the economic base of a society and which will (definitively) reign (more-or-less) supreme until it is overthrown by another one. (For the background to Lukacs's notion of successive world-views, see Hall [1977]). In his scenario, struggles between modes of production and between classes express a failure by the relevant ruling class to achieve 'full' class consciousness.) His notion of an ideological 'failure' by a ruling class was ambiguous. On the one hand, it implied that bourgeois dominance can be resisted or even challenged in circumstances where bourgeois ideology 'fails' to suffuse completely through a society, thus creating areas of weakness within the social institutions which reproduce ideology in particular societies, including trade unions, political parties, schools, the family and, of course, the media. On the other hand, there is little room for such ideological manoeuvre in the rest of Lukacs's theory, in which social institutions are given little or no autonomy from economic relationships,

precluding explanations of how alternative or oppositional ways of thinking emerge, and how a class subjected to ruling class ideology can reach 'true' consciousness - or even start its journey towards it.

Lukacs was a radical pessimist: he radically presented ideology as a (the ?) means of maintaining capitalist society, but pessimistically implied that the pervasiveness of ruling class ideology prevented the proletariat from overthrowing the capitalist society of which it is an integral part. He didn't situate the reproduction of ideology in any material, institutional context, and explained the transition from one epoch to another by means of (as Stedman-Jones put it) either economic spontaneism or organisational voluntarism.

Johnson (1979a: 211) has argued that Lukacs's view of class cultures as simply determined by social position, and his tendency to ascribe to whole societies one whole 'central' or 'essential' way of thinking, prevented him from giving a concrete account of how lived cultures are formed and transformed. As illustration, Johnson (1979a: 209) contrasted Lukacs's position with Gramsci's theoretical and practical emphasis on the lived experiences of working class people. In similar vein, Boggs (1976: 17-18) has argued that in Gramsci's view of society as an "ensemble of relations", consciousness and material (economic) circumstances were integrated while maintaining their specificities, "so that the struggle to change one is inevitably bound-up with the struggle to change all, i.e. the totality."; and that in Gramsci's view, the existence of the dominant ideology always depends on continuing negotiations between dominant and dominated classes in the institutions of civil society.

Gramsci's emphasis on social institutions as sites of political and ideological struggle also appeared in the work of writers associated in the 1930s and 1940s with the Frankfurt School, especially Adorno and Horkheimer. These writers traced the dominance of ruling class ideology to the influential role of 'civil society', which they saw as a counter-balance to the (bourgeois) state. Like Lukacs (and Marx), they related ideology to economic circumstances (allegedly those of late capitalism, but in reality only those of Nazi Germany), but while Lukacs presented ideology as suffused through society yet related somehow to economic

circumstances, Adorno and Horkheimer located it specifically in the day-to-day operations of the companies and corporations of "the culture industry". As Swingewood (1977: 13) has suggested, they argued that the rise of fascism in Germany had ended bourgeois ideology by eliminating 'civil society', and that "the culture industry" secured mass acquiescence to the social order:

"For Adorno and Horkheimer ... (T)he mass media are repressive, happiness is identified with acquiescence and with the complete integration of the individual into the existing social and political order ... mass culture forms the basis of modern totalitarianism, the removal of all genuine opposition to the reifying trends of modern capitalism."

Negotiation and struggle were absent from Lukacs's view that a 'successful' ruling class is one which has attained a 'true' consciousness which it imposes on the rest of society, and that incomplete imposition of its ideology on the rest of society is a ruling class 'failure'. His view that a subordinated class attains 'true' consciousness through conflict presupposes its incomplete domination by the ruling class and its continuing struggle to transcend the false consciousness of ruling class ideology. As Slaughter (1980: 144) has argued:

"If consciousness is an expression of the social whole, or of the whole of the possible outlook of a class (Lukacs, Goldmann) and not at the same time the form in which and against which the growth of human knowledge takes place, then there can be no real revolutionary practice ..." (Original emphasis)

Lukacs's theory of ideology was materialist because it assumed that knowledge was directly related to the circumstances of its production: the ruling class's ('true') ideology expressed its control of the commodity-based system of producing and distributing wealth; and working class consciousness expressed its subordinate position in that system. In particular, Lukacs derived bourgeois ideology and its subjugation of the working class from the dominance of the commodity in capitalist relations of production and distribution. However, his materialist assumptions didn't appear as a materialist analysis: he didn't locate knowledge-production in any particular material, institutional context. The result was the conflict between his argument that ideology

and economic circumstances are directly linked, and his argument that a class can attain 'true' consciousness in a society subjugated to the ideology of the ruling class.

Despite those problems, Lukacs's argument that a ruling class sometimes 'fails' to impose its ideology on the whole of society could explain conflicts between broadcasters and the state over what constitutes 'the public interest'. One such conflict occurred at the time of the Falklands War in 1982. (Greenberg and Smith (n.d. 1982?) described how the BBC's decision to include an Argentinian point of view in its coverage of the Falklands War brought fierce government criticism, which was picked up by the Sun's accusations of treason against BBC reporters and against its own rival, the Daily Mirror. From Lukacs's perspective, that part of the BBC's coverage of the war was an instance of ideological resistance in an area of 'weakness' caused by the partial 'failure' of government ideology. In another example, the continuing dominance of notions of public interest and public service in British broadcasting can be regarded as a 'failure' to suffuse the whole of society with the 'naturalness' of private or individual interest. From that perspective, government pressure on the BBC to adopt the methods and priorities of commodity-production, and government proposals to expand broadcasting on the premise that private capital will increase programme choice appear as attempts to rectify that 'failure' by suffusing private interest through the public broadcasting system.

Lukacs's view of the commodity as the focus of reified social relations between producers and consumers can enhance broadcasting research in two ways. Firstly, it questions the distinction between "producer" and "consumer". Each category defines the other solely in terms of its relationship to a 'product' (which in broadcasting is sometimes a commodity, sometimes not): each category is distinguished from the other by the way in which it relates to a product. Implicitly, to accept the reified nature of the producer-product-consumer relationship is to accept the current commodity-based system of programme-production and distribution; and once that system is accepted, discussions about the interests served by particular programmes' representations of the world appear merely as consumers praising or criticising products, much as they might comment on the relative merits of different breakfast cereals.

This is a significant development for opponents of 'public service' broadcasting: it enables them to argue that the more forcefully consumers praise or criticise programmes, the more this 'proves' that 'consumers' choosing freely in the 'free market' of ideas guarantees freedom of thought better than any state-regulated broadcasting system; and that, therefore, public service broadcasting should be abolished in favour of a purely market-based system.

Lukacs's focus on the ideological role of the commodity is also potentially significant for broadcasting research. Much contemporary programme-production (like much contemporary cultural production in general) takes the form of the industrialised production of commodities, and Lukacs's work should lead us to ask whether relationships exist between the production of programmes as commodities, their 'consumption' by viewers, and the reproduction of the dominant ideology. By linking viewers' consciousness with programme-form and, therefore, with programme-production, this opposes liberal emphases on the individual viewer at the expense of the 'text' and also poststructural emphases on the text as inherently open to any interpretation (which I discuss further in chapter five).

In my judgement, the issues raised by those two implications of Lukacs's theory of ideology are sufficiently important to warrant inclusion in any new discourse in broadcasting research. Consequently, alongside the criteria with which to assess a new discourse in broadcasting research which I developed in chapters one and two (that a new discourse in media studies must pose a clear, non-atomistic model of society and thus resolve the individual-society dualism into a new, historically-specific focus of inquiry; and that it must resolve the materialism-idealism dualism into a new model of knowledge-production), I will add a third criterion concerning the presence or absence of those issues of cultural form, as follows:

3. Explain the roles of particular cultural forms and of particular cultural and ideological institutions in social change, especially their roles in the commodification of culture.

3.4 Conclusion.

A general conclusion of this chapter is that the explanatory force of theories of culture and of ideology is limited by theorists' failure to definitively distinguish within and between the two concepts. The notion of ideology as a system of beliefs associated with a particular group or class (let alone the pejorative notion of ideology as a system of illusory beliefs - false ideas or false consciousness) appears "Superstructural" in its concentration on systems of ideas. However, it also implies a differential distribution of power in a class-based society, in which beliefs are more-or-less powerful according to their association with a more-or-less powerful group or class ... which is close to a "Base" notion of ideology! Further, if one regards the differential distribution of power in a society as a problem, then one will also regard the beliefs associated with the most powerful group or class as problematic, and define it as an "ideology" in the pejorative sense. Conversely, if the differential distribution of power is not regarded as a problem, then beliefs associated with the most powerful group or class will pose no problem either, and will be regarded as just another part of "culture".

More specifically, I think that none of the theories of culture and of ideology I have examined can assist in explaining relationships between programmes and audiences by contributing to the new discourse in broadcasting for which I have argued, because each in its own way posed an already-formed 'collective' consciousness without explaining how that consciousness originates and is reproduced in and through individuals' everyday life. Firstly, the theorists of culture and of ideology whose work I have examined reproduced the individual-society dualism because while they all assumed a society stratified according to class, in presenting world views as already-formed, they separated society (as the origin of those world views) from individuals' everyday lives. Secondly, they reproduced the materialism-idealism dualism because they failed to explain just how individuals' everyday experience of class-specific material circumstances influences their consciousness or world view. Finally, the issues of cultural form and commodification were addressed differently: of the cultural theorists, only those in the Cultural Studies tradition addressed the specificity of different sites of meaning-production; Althusser's theory of ideology paid no explicit attention to the ideological significance of the commodity form as such; and Lukacs's

emphasis on the ideological significance of the commodity in bourgeois ideology subordinated cultural forms and institutions to broader economic factors, precluding any dynamic relationship between (for example) audiences and programmes.

Let me now highlight the weaknesses of these theories in detail, using as my criteria my three aims for a new discourse.

3.4.1 The Individual-Society Dualism.

In my view, the theorists of culture and of ideology whose work I examined reproduced the individual-society dualism: they assumed the existence of already-formed world views, which led them to pose society (the origin of those world views) as somehow separate from individuals' everyday lives.

I have shown in this chapter that by the early 1980s, theorists of culture and of ideology were asking how already-formed, class-based world views featured in individuals' experiences of everyday life. The dominant view that class-based circumstances determine consciousness did not explain how this happened; a sort of osmosis was implied, in which people somehow 'absorbed' their consciousness from the social and material circumstances associated with their particular class. Those theorists' concern with the collective experience of classes wasn't matched by a concern with how each member of the class manages to faithfully reproduce collective experience in her/his individual life, and by posing 'society' as the origin of those already-formed, class-based world views, they separated it from the everyday lives of (class-based) 'individuals', thus reproducing - albeit in a more complex and sophisticated way - the individual-society dualism.

Hoggart, the Cultural Studies tradition and the Images of Society tradition shared the general views that culture is the everyday production of meanings, and that shared class position tends to produce shared consciousness. They each posed non-atomistic models of society, in which the individual-society dualism was at least mediated, if not resolved, by class membership. Problems arose at the level of the specific. Hoggart's "Uses of Literacy" contained no notion of a class formed in and through its relationships with national and international capital

and with other classes, and so 'the working class' appeared, as Swingewood put it, as a self-enclosed enclave, incapable of mediating relationships between individuals and society - indeed, the very notion of "society" breaks down in such a fractured analysis. Similar problems beset the work of the Images of Society tradition, which also posed an ahistorical 'working class', lacked a theory of social change, and thus failed to explain relationships between any particular class and society as a dynamic whole. The Cultural Studies tradition posed concrete working class people in shared, historically-specific circumstances, actively attempting to reconcile competing ideas around historically-specific sites (e.g. the media). However, while that tradition's non-atomistic model of society may have resolved the individual-society dualism, its argument that competing ideas are reconciled around historically-specific sites by already-formed, complex subjectivities deferred explaining where and how those subjectivities were formed, thus also deferring the resolution of the materialism-idealism dualism.

In both Lukacs's and Althusser's theories, ideology was an inherent feature of a society which was class-stratified rather than atomistic, and in which consciousness is associated with class position. Indeed, for Lukacs, the association is so close that the individual virtually disappears: his work 'resolved' the individual-society dualism by abolishing it! On the other hand, in Althusser's notion of ideological subjectification, the individual-society dualism was functionally resolved: interpellation integrated the 'subjectified' individual with the reproduction of the particular relations of production which characterise a particular social formation.

3.4.2 The Materialism-Idealism Dualism.

By the early 1980s, an unresolved materialism-idealism dualism was expressed in the failure by theorists of culture and of ideology to provide a concrete explanation of how individuals' everyday experiences of class-specific material circumstances influences their consciousness or world view. These theorists had failed to address the question of whether individuals' circumstances simply determine how they think about them, and if they don't, how does each member of a group or class develop a way of thinking associated with that group or class? The

implications of that question are clear: general propositions to the effect that world views are common to particular groups or classes can help to explain how audiences understand programmes only if they become a starting point for investigations into how each individual's experience of everyday life produces the world view which characterises her/his group/class and through which s/he will understand (for example) programmes. Similarly, for theories of culture and of ideology to explain relationships between consciousness and circumstances, they must explain the historically-specific dynamic (cultural) processes through which individuals understand their equally-specific circumstances and express those understandings, and the (ideological) discourses associated with those circumstances which structure and limit their understandings. Theories which present culture or ideology as merely a 'black box' between circumstances and consciousness take us no further than the determinism of crude materialists.

(A methodological digression. Calling for "investigations into how each individual's experience of everyday life produces the world view which characterises her/his group or class, and through which s/he makes sense of programmes" implies the individual as a 'blank slate' onto which s/he 'writes' experiences. In other words, it implies that a world view is the result of experience while simultaneously posing it as the starting point of experience ! This contradiction is a particular form of the centuries-old tussle between empiricism and rationalism, which Marxists argue is resolved in Dialectical Materialism. For example, Novack (1971: 83-84) has argued that the solution to that problem of the relationship between experience and reason lies in a dialectical experience-reflection 'spiral', in which experience is the historically developing outcome of the progress of social life [of nature's action upon people and of people's action on nature] and in which reason is the evolving mental capacities of mankind:

"Thus the two factors, each of which had been the basis for independent and antagonistic philosophies, were transformed into interrelated aspects of a single process. They became the twin poles of the active, productive, feeling, thinking individual, historically emerging out of the social practice of humanity as it engaged in the reconstruction of the natural and social environments ... Experience gave birth to reflection whose results fructified and directed further

experience. This conceptually enriched experience in turn corrected, tested and amplified the results of reasoning - and so on, in a never ending spiral."

Novack's solution to the experience-reason relationship continues to talk in general terms of reflective experience, but doesn't explain the origins of the particular forms of reflection which characterise and create particular world views - for instance, Marxism itself. A definitive solution to this problem is beyond the scope of this thesis! My pragmatic solution will be to argue that the concept of reflective experience is a useful resolution of researchers' 'methodological' dilemma as to whether to focus on experience or on reason, while leaving unresolved the fundamental 'philosophical' distinction between them.)

In my view, Lukacs's work failed to resolve the materialism-idealism dualism. The political-economic determinacy in his materialist assumptions about relationships between knowledge and the circumstances of its production precluded any autonomy for consciousness, thus obliterating any idealist elements from the materialism-idealism dualism, just as elsewhere in his work the individual disappeared from the individual-society dualism! For its part, Althusser's theory of ideology failed to resolve the materialism-idealism dualism because it presented ideologies as already-formed world views: despite ideologies appearing as historically-specific material practices, their form and content aren't explicitly and specifically related to the material circumstances of their existence - for example, to the nature of those historically-specific ideological institutions.

3.4.3 Cultural and Ideological Forms and Institutions.

By the early 1980s, the concentration by theorists of culture and of ideology on already-formed 'collective' consciousness at the expense of the reproduction of consciousness in and through individuals' everyday life meant that they had underplayed the roles of cultural forms, and of the cultural or ideological institutions (for example, broadcasting organisations) within which these forms are produced. Culture had appeared as competitions between world views, but little attention was paid to the nature and extent of the competition around each

historically-specific cultural form. Consequently, cultural change appeared as a general process occurring irrespective of the cultural forms involved, rather than being the particular reconciliations around particular cultural forms of specific competing world views. (Competitions between world views could have been addressed by asking, for example; Are all cultural forms equally-susceptible to a diversity of understandings or 'uses'? Are some more 'open' than others to interpretation - specifically, are some more 'open' than others to 'resistant' or 'subversive' interpretations?) Similarly, these theorists failed to ask whether the particular methods of production associated with institutions of ideological or cultural production, such as a radio or television station, are linked with the forms of their products (for example, programmes as commodities) and whether this link influences the ways in which audiences understand them.

For all the attention to the specificities of the circumstances about which they wrote and in which cultural processes were occurring, Hoggart and writers in the Cultural Studies and Images of Society traditions had little to say about the fact that an increasing proportion of culture was being produced (as it continues to be) as commodities by cultural or ideological institutions such as radio and television stations; and none discussed whether this relatively new form of cultural product would offer people new ways of understanding their circumstances and of expressing their understandings. The a-historical perspective of much of the Images of Society tradition precluded attention to the specificities of particular instances of meaning-production, and especially of the cultural forms around which meaning-production occurs. In contrast, writers in the Cultural Studies tradition emphasised the specificity of different sites of meaning-production but had little to say about the significance of different cultural forms, nor about the commodification of culture.

Hoggart (1958), however, was particularly interesting, because the 'mass culture' which he regarded as a threat to the traditional culture of 'the working class' was a commercial form of culture (pp 242, 335), which he presented - albeit in a dismissive, elitist way - as a problem in itself. While not explicitly addressing the commodity form and the commodification of culture, Hoggart was clearly aware that the cultural changes summarised as "commercialism", which he saw as superficiality

and sameness, were fundamentally changing people's relationship with the products of 'their' culture:

"(A)t present the older, the more narrow, but also more genuine class culture is being eroded in favour of the mass opinion, the mass recreational product, and the generalised emotional response. The world of club-singing is being gradually replaced by that of typical radio dance-music and crooning, television cabaret and commercial-radio variety." (p343)

The commodity form was given no explicit ideological role by Althusser, despite his familiarity with Marx's notion that commodities are fetishised social relations. To use Althusser's theory to analyse the role of the commodity in broadcasting would be to raise particular forms of the general problems for action entailed in his position. Althusser's functionalist integration of material circumstances (relations of production) with our consciousness of them (our 'illusory' relation to them) left no room for change, and implied no strategies for combatting the oppressive relationships it described - for example, those perpetrated by the Ideological State Apparatus of the media.

(Another methodological digression. This isn't to assume that the only or ultimate test of a theory's validity is its implications for action because, as Smyth [1987: 1] has argued, emphasising research findings' "instrumental applicability" exaggerates the certainty with which they can be regarded. However, I am drawn to the view that practice ultimately validates theory, as expressed in the classic quote by Marx [1946: 65] that "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.", reinforced by the argument by Gramsci [1971: 333] that;

"The active man-in-the-mass has ... two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him and all his fellow workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one which, superficially explicit or verbal, he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed." (My emphasis.)

Such an approach to relationships between theory and practice is consonant with a 'dialectical' view of experience as discussed in Novack

[1971], and in remarks about theory and practice in educational research by Carr & Kemmis [1986: 115/6]:

"Educational theory' ... refers to the whole enterprise of critically appraising the adequacy of the concepts, beliefs, assumptions and values incorporated in prevailing theories of educational practice. ... (B)y subjecting the beliefs and justifications of existing and ongoing traditions to rational reconsideration, theory informs and transforms practice by informing and transforming the ways in which practice is experienced and understood. The transition is not, therefore, from theory to practice as such, but rather from irrationality to rationality, from ignorance and habit to knowledge and reflection.")

Lukacs, on the other hand, built his whole analysis of (bourgeois) ideology on the centrality of the commodity in capitalist society. Although he didn't specifically address the commodification of culture, his focus on the commodity as both the result of production and the object of consumption could enable broadcasting researchers to resolve to some extent the materialism-idealism dualism by integrating the material conditions of programme-production with those of a programme's 'consumption' - a model which would associate the commodification of culture with bourgeois domination through the 'illusion' that the commodity, despite being a socio-historically specific form of cultural product is, nonetheless, 'natural'. From such a perspective, individuals would encounter commodities in circumstances created at the level of bourgeois society as a whole - a partial resolution of the individual-society dualism. However, Lukacs's insistence that economic change is the prerequisite of changes in consciousness would mean that cultural change in, for instance, broadcasting, would always have to follow changes in the broader 'economic' arena ... despite the fact that broadcasters produce commodities, too. (Note, however, that not all programmes are produced as commodities, and that there has been debate about whether the commodity in broadcasting is the programme or the audience. See Smythe, 1977; Murdock, 1978; Smythe, 1978; Livant, 1979)

Lukacs's focus on dominance in and through the commodity form would conflict with 'active' models of audiences in which audiences (as individuals or as collectivities) appear as the ultimate 'producers' of

meaning. However, in their turn, 'active' models of audiences embody notions of subjectivity which were the starting point for Althusser's theory of ideology. From Althusser's perspective (and thus that of writers associated with *Screen*), programmes are products of Ideological State Apparatuses, and so perpetrate the (ideological) illusion of 'subjectivity' (and of 'realism'), and the operation of the Apparatus constructs the viewer-as-subject as the origin of meaning. The viewer's illusory relation to the 'real' relations of production thus transcends the dichotomy in media studies between 'active' and 'passive' models of audiences: audiences 'actively' produce meaning ... but only within a position constructed for them, over which they have no control.

3.4.4 Conclusion.

In my judgement, none of the theories of culture and of ideology which I have examined could provide a satisfactory means of explaining how audiences make sense of programmes. Within theories of culture, the "Images of Society" tradition was unsatisfactory because it posed a reflective relationship between consciousness and circumstances; and the work of both Hoggart and of the British Cultural Studies tradition presented consciousness as already-formed but without clearly-identified origins, deferring the question of how it is related to circumstances. Neither Althusser's 'superstructural' approach to ideology, nor Lukacs' 'base' approach was satisfactory, because neither explained the formation of forms of consciousness opposed to the 'dominant ideology'.

This isn't to say that these theories could offer nothing to broadcasting research. I have shown the potential contributions by elements of them to new work on audience-programme relationships, just as in chapter two I showed the potential contributions to be made from elements of the research projects I examined there. Nonetheless, these theories - like those projects - could not meet my three requirements for a satisfactory discourse in broadcasting research. In the next chapter, I will describe my own research into audience-programme relationships, showing how and why it, too, failed to meet my requirements, and how its lessons could inform the design of further - and, hopefully, more satisfactory - research projects.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WALWORTH CABLE RADIO (WCR) SURVEY

4.1 Introduction.

In the early 1980s I asked my own general question about relationships between knowledge and the circumstances of its production: *How do people's understandings of their historically-specific circumstances, and the ways in which they express those understandings, derive from and contribute to the (dynamic) world views associated with the class or social group(s) to which they belong?* At the time, I was working on the Aylesbury Estate, a Local Authority housing estate in South London, and I was interested in relationships between residents' experiences of their everyday lives and the ways in which they watched television. Consequently, my general question took this more specific form: *What is the influence, if any, of audiences' social-material circumstances on their understandings of television programmes?*

I surveyed Aylesbury Estate residents at a time (mid-1981) when some broadcasting researchers were becoming uneasy with the terms in which many discussions about media influence had occurred. (See, for instance, Morley, 1980a: chapters one and two.) In retrospect, it's easy to see that in the early 1980s, broadcasting research was 'between discourses', i.e. the dominant discourse was facing a challenge. (I will discuss this in detail in chapter five.) At that time, much broadcasting research was based on the belief that the media constituted a major instrument through which capitalist society was maintained, and that, therefore, the researcher's job was to describe the many ways in which the media influenced people to support the status quo. Audiences were regarded as more-or-less passive 'dupes', complying with whatever ideologically-loaded messages the media transmitted. This view of audiences appeared in a range of forms, from simple Effects-based accounts of broadcasting to psychoanalytically-based structuralist accounts of audiences' 'inscription' in films (for instance, in the journal *Screen*). However, that dominant view of audiences as 'passive' was being challenged by researchers in the emerging post-structuralist or polysemic tradition of broadcasting research. Within these researchers' discourse about meaning-production around broadcasting, audiences 'actively' engage with programmes, rather than 'passively' absorbing programmes' inherent meanings.

In itself, the notion of the 'active' audience wasn't new: it had already been implied in the work of (for example) researchers in the Uses and Gratifications tradition, who investigated the particular 'gratifications' which audiences 'actively' sought from their particular 'uses' of the media. What distinguished adherents of the new polysemic discourse was that as well as regarding audiences as 'active', they regarded the meaning(s) of a sign as inherently indeterminate, thus challenging the strong links between sign and meaning posed by semiotics, and subverting the whole notion of a media 'effect'.

Very broadly, those two discourses' different views of audiences expressed their definitively different attitudes to the media: the dominant discourse posed the media as a problem, the challenging discourse didn't. My research tried to steer between those two positions: instead of posing meaning-production around broadcasting in terms of the presence or absence of inherent meaning in programmes, I tried to pose it as the relationships 'negotiated' by audiences between programme content and form on the one hand, and their own social-material circumstances on the other - between programmes, 'active' audiences and constraints on audiences' activity.

My Walworth research attempted to forge a new research practice out of the three requirements of a new discourse in broadcasting research which I have developed in the previous three chapters of this thesis. However, such a new practice did not eventuate, for two reasons. Firstly, my research didn't definitively explain relationships between audiences' social circumstances and their television viewing: such a project would have required more resources than were available to me at that time, especially to follow-up the Walworth survey with some qualitative investigations such as extended interviews with individuals, and focus-group discussions with people from the social groups in which I was interested. Secondly, and with hindsight, some of my survey questions were inappropriate instruments through which to answer my research question, despite the questionnaire being the result of two 'pilot' investigations, which one would normally expect to reveal at least the major conceptual and methodological problems with a project.

However, the investigation problematised television viewing in a way which was relatively new at the time, and it had heuristic value. In analysing its results, I will show how they can be used to suggest in general terms the sorts of research questions, methods of investigation and form of results which could contribute to the development of a new discourse in media studies in light of my three aims for such a discourse. Then, in chapter five, I will examine some major broadcasting research projects of the 1980s to decide whether their findings could contribute to a satisfactory new discourse, and how they could be used to refine my three aims and to develop the initiatives of the Walworth project.

4.2 The Walworth Cable Radio (WCR) Project.

Between 1979 and 1981, I spent time with Walworth & Aylesbury Community Arts Trust (WACAT), a neighbourhood arts project on the Aylesbury council housing estate in the Walworth area of South London. WACAT was one of several 'community arts' projects funded from a variety of sources and operating in the centres of towns and cities. WACAT's revenue funding came from the Local Council and the Arts Council, and its capital funding was mostly grants from trusts and charities.

Towards the end of 1977, one of the Tenants' Associations in Walworth had asked WACAT to investigate the feasibility of establishing a neighbourhood radio station, and in 1978 work began on the Walworth Cable Radio (WCR) project. At that time, coincidentally, the Home Office was inviting groups to apply for licences to run 'experimental' cable radio stations; WACAT successfully applied¹. Tenants and WACAT workers who had discussed the development of WCR before I arrived intended it to be a definitively different local station from the BBC's and from the commercial (Independent Local Radio) sector's. They also wanted the project's development documented, including local people's relationships with it and with existing media. In early 1979, WACAT's Management Committee (which included representation from the Local Council - the London

Borough of Southwark) asked me to design and implement a development strategy for WCR.

4.2.1 The Pilot Survey Questionnaire.

(A copy of the questionnaire appears as Appendix One.)

In July 1979, I attempted to interest colleges and universities in London in collaborating in WCR's development. I felt that potential existed for interesting and useful research projects in the fields of electronics design, electrical engineering and transmission technology, as well as in media studies, cultural studies, and sociological methodology. Only three institutions expressed any interest: North-East London Polytechnic, South Bank Polytechnic, and Thames Polytechnic; and only the latter two made a practical commitment. (The relationship between WCR and Thames Polytechnic is outside of the scope of this thesis. It was a student project to design and construct a prototype unit for use in an electronic 'mixer', as part of a portable radio studio, and was successfully concluded.)

The relationship with South Bank Polytechnic began in the summer of 1979, when four students from its Department of Community Nursing under my supervision surveyed residents of the Aylesbury estate about their current radio listening, and about what programmes they would want a Walworth neighbourhood radio station to transmit, were one to exist. On its completion in November 1979, this survey indicated the general interests and attitudes of residents to their locality, but it said nothing (nor was it designed to) about their views on the programmes they mentioned. Thus, it served as a 'pre-Pilot' for the main WCR Survey eighteen months later.

In October 1980, I asked the Department of Community Nursing to participate in a Pilot Survey based on the 'pre-Pilot', but it refused. Consequently, in that same month I contacted the Student Unit at Blackfriars Settlement, and we agreed a broad outline for a research placement with WCR for two students of Social Work and Social Administration. The two students - Anna Meeuwisse and Erik Hedling, from Lund in Sweden - worked with the WCR project from

January to July 1981 under my supervision, assisting me in administering the Pilot and Final WCR Surveys.

The Pilot Survey would test the form of the Final Survey. The latter was meant to provide information on which WCR could base its programming policies, so it would ask people about their current radio listening, about their wishes for a Walworth station and about their views on Walworth as an area in which to live and work. It was also meant to investigate relationships (if any) between people's views on the world and their current viewing and listening. (The Survey's formal aims are listed in full in the WACAT policy document, "Walworth Cable Radio: Broadcasting Survey. Summer 1981", which appears as Appendix Two.) A further, informal aim of the Survey was to publicise the WCR project, interest people in its current development, and encourage them to participate, learn about broadcasting, and then make their own programmes.

The Pilot Survey's questions concerning WCR's future programming policies concentrated on television, which seems perverse. However, the 'Pre-Pilot' had shown that the range of programmes in which people were interested was wider on television than on radio, and so I expected to learn more about relationships between their understandings of programmes and their social-material circumstances by seeking their comments on television than on radio.

The two students had seen little British television before, so we watched and discussed a range of current television programmes, especially those which would feature in the Survey, to develop a shared understanding of British television's major characteristics before administering the Pilot survey. From this swift appraisal, which certainly wasn't meant to be a definitive content-analysis, we discerned four main characteristics. Firstly, Britain appeared to be the centre of the world; for example, news programmes concentrated on domestic issues at the expense of international ones, and many programmes (especially current affairs) originated in Britain and examined events solely in Britain. Secondly, while Britain appeared highly independent of events in other countries, while other countries appeared highly vulnerable to actions taken in Britain; for

example, reports about Britain's relationship with the Common Market. Thirdly, programmes and adverts expressed a very insular outlook; for example, certain products were 'sold' purely on their British origin. (Each of these first three characteristics was apparently in marked contrast to Swedish television.) Fourthly, Britain appeared as a smoothly-running democracy, in which the media occupied a neutral position, exemplified in broadcasters' espousal of 'balance'.

The students summarised our discussions preceding the design of the Pilot Survey thus:

"We think that television, by its centralised, 'professional' and one-way communicative structure, contradicts the basic meaning of democracy ... (in that) ... the majority of people are not given access to this medium, and have no possibilities of influencing the messages delivered to them by television. By the structure of television, a political status quo is maintained through:

A. Objectivity. In documentaries, news and current affairs programmes, the programme-presenter remains 'neutral' in the sense that s/he delivers 'facts' that are ... however ... previously constructed and chosen.

B. 'Expertism'. When it comes to participation in television debates, and to individuals commenting on news items, only experts are given the opportunity to express an opinion ... (which is then) ... treated as factual truth; and ordinary people are often excluded from discussions.

C. 'Individualism': This is illustrated by the concentration on 'personalities' in series, shows, and even documentaries."

As the person responsible for developing a WCR strategy, I designed the Pilot and Final Surveys, although in each case I consulted with the students and with my co-workers at WACAT before taking my final decisions. The Pilot and Final Surveys were administered on the Aylesbury estate in Walworth, which consisted of 2157 households in eleven blocks of flats or maisonettes. One block was chosen for the Pilot Survey, and the remaining ten for the Final Survey.

Both the Pilot and Final questionnaires included two types of question: those concerning local and neighbourhood radio, and the WCR project

in particular; and those concerning relationships between meaning-production and audiences' circumstances. Responses to the first type of question were important to WCR but not to this thesis, so those questions and the responses they produced will not be reported and analysed here.

In the Pilot, the first group of questions concerning relationships between meaning-production and audiences' circumstances addressed three issues: links between broadcasting and the political system; individualism; and insularity. Firstly, three questions about programmes:

Q2 Radio and television current affairs programmes are like British democracy, because they allow both sides of a question to be heard.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Q5 Radio and television concentrate on individuals because change happens through the actions of strong, ambitious personalities.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Q15 Adverts in broadcasting concentrate on British products because British products are better than foreign ones.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Each of those three questions was complemented by questions which tested whether people's opinions on those issues in a broadcasting context were the same in a non-broadcasting context.

Complementing Q2 were two questions:

Q10 It is easy for people in this area to influence local politicians.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Q21 Surrey Docks have been bought-up by big business, and there are almost no social facilities planned. Why do you think this is so?

Complementing Q5 were three questions:

Q6 Is there any information that you could give to people in this area if you were able, e.g. through newspapers, radio or television?

| |
|---------|
| YES/NO: |
|---------|

| |
|-------------|
| WHAT SORT?: |
|-------------|

Q16 Discussing social and political issues requires specialist knowledge.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Q19 You personally can change your situation through your individual effort and ambition.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Complementing Q15 were two questions:

Q13 If you were going to buy a new car, what would be its country of origin?

| | | | |
|---------|-------|---------|---------|
| GERMANY | JAPAN | HOLLAND | BRITAIN |
|---------|-------|---------|---------|

Q23 If you were going to buy a new radio or television, what would be its country of origin?

| | | | |
|---------|-------|---------|---------|
| GERMANY | JAPAN | HOLLAND | BRITAIN |
|---------|-------|---------|---------|

In the next group of questions, I wanted to investigate some broad themes in popular television fictional programmes, to see whether they were congruent with audiences' experiences of equivalent situations in their own lives. Fictional series were investigated rather than individual programmes because I felt that people would probably recall a series of programmes more easily than single programmes such as documentaries.

(A methodological digression. In asking whether a programme's representation of things was congruent with audiences' own experiences of them, I wasn't assuming that programmes should faithfully represent, or even reflect, 'the real world' - to do so would be to assume that realism is the only valid form of representation. Rather than simply asking, "Is this an accurate representation?" I wanted to ask whether people's own experiences of a subject influenced their

understandings of its representation in a programme, and whether such influence differed according to gender, occupation and age. Those understandings may or may not be concerned with the person's perception of the programme's accuracy.

In the event, realism wasn't dismissed so easily! In my analysis of the results of the Final Survey, I will show that, in retrospect, questions about working class life, and about individualism and the role of experts - in broadcasting and more generally - didn't distinguish sufficiently between interviewees' experiences of 'reality' and its representations on television. Did *Coronation Street* represent working class life in general, or only working class life in the north of the country? If the latter, then interviewees' understandings may have differed according to whether they had lived in a working class area in the north before living in the working class area of Walworth. The Survey wasn't that specific: assuming a non-specific 'working class life' [c.f. Hoggart, 1958], it asked whether interviewees' own 'working class lives' influenced their understandings of representations of 'working class life' in a television series. In another instance, the Survey asked whether the emphasis in television programmes on individualism and expert status as preconditions for success matched interviewees' own experiences. However, the Survey assumed that 'life on television' - in which those qualities manifestly are important - was equivalent to interviewees' own lives, in which those qualities may not be important. Consequently, as I will show, an interviewee could say quite consistently that individualism and expert status are important but only on television, not in their own experience.)

The first broad theme was the material conditions of working class people, as represented in Granada Television's *Coronation Street*.

Q4 "Coronation Street" shows a true picture of what working class life is like.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Interviewees' views on *Coronation Street* were compared with their experience of the working class area of Walworth in two questions:

Q11 It is easy to make friends and acquaintances in this area.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Q18 What do you consider to be the five most important social problems now?

This theme was pursued in other questions which asked for people's view on how much - if at all - the material conditions of the working class had changed. Firstly, I sought their view of the validity of the representation of 1920s and 1930s working class life in BBC Television's *When the Boat Comes In* by asking two questions:

Q9 What social and political problems appear in "When the Boat Comes In"?

This was compared with people's own views on current social problems (cross-referencing Q18); I also asked:

Q22 Over the last fifty years, people's living conditions have;

| |
|-------------------|
| REMAINED THE SAME |
| IMPROVED |
| DETERIORATED |

The third group of questions concerned the broad theme of representations of the police in Thames Television's *The Sweeney*. First, a question about the programme:

Q3 "The Sweeney" shows what solving crime really involves:

| |
|--------|
| YES/NO |
|--------|

This was compared with people's own experiences of the police through two questions:

Q12 To control crime in this area, the police have to be violent.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Q14 Have you seen the police in this area using violence in their duty?

| |
|--------|
| YES/NO |
|--------|

The final theme was insularity. I investigated whether British television's insularity was shared by people in Walworth by asking two questions concerning Britain's alleged economic independence from other countries:

Q17 The competitiveness of UK industry abroad influences UK inflation and unemployment;

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

Q20 Britain's economic and political situation is independent of the economies and politics of other countries.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|

4.2.2 Results of the Pilot Survey.

The Pilot Survey was administered to eleven people (a 21.5% response rate of the 51 flats visited) of various ages and both sexes.

There were three major findings. Firstly, interviewees were perplexed by the purpose of the whole questionnaire, and they found the questions through which I sought to investigate congruence between programmes and social experience particularly problematic: for example, why were they asked about international economics and buying cars in a Survey about radio and television? Secondly, interviewees needed more time to get interested in the questions seeking their judgement on such apparently non-broadcasting issues, and those questions needed to be linked more immediately with watching and listening to programmes. In designing the Final Survey, I tried to structure the flow of questions so as to meet these problems. Finally, many interviewees were unaware of the controversy concerning the future of Surrey Docks, and most had never watched *When the Boat Comes In*. Both questions were, accordingly, dropped from the final questionnaire!

4.2.3 Administering the Final Survey.

Using the Pilot Survey's response rate of 20% - 25% as a guide, we attempted to cover 25% of the households in the ten blocks.

Every fourth household would be visited up to three times to find someone at home, giving a 'pool' of 475 households which should produce about 100 completed questionnaires.

The actual response rate was:

| | Number of Households | Percentage of Total |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| No answer after three visits | 246 | 52% |
| Refused to participate | 128 | 27% |
| Successful interview* | 101 | 21% |

* In seven of the visits we interviewed two people, thus making the number of completed questionnaires 108.

The Final Survey aimed to publicise the WCR project, so it was administered differently from a traditional 'market research' survey. Each household to be interviewed was sent a leaflet introducing the interviewers, describing the broad purpose of the Survey, and outlining the WCR project within which the Survey was being administered. Each interviewee was given material explaining the WCR project's aims and encouraging her/him to participate in it. Once the Survey results had been analysed, each interviewee received another leaflet inviting her/him to a meeting to discuss the results and their implications for the WCR project. Finally, at that meeting, copies of a short summary of the Survey results were available, so that interviewees could see how their views related to those of the others. (Copies of these leaflets appear as Appendix Three.)

A word about interviewee 'set'. Interviewees in the Final Survey were hardly taken unawares by the questionnaire, so their responses may have been more considered than in, say, a street interview. For example, they may have prepared answers which they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. In my view, this wasn't a significant issue in the Final Survey, because the leaflet preceding the interview described only the Survey's place in the WCR project. It didn't describe the issues in the Survey, even in general terms, and it gave no clue that the Survey would include questions about BBC and ITV programmes, i.e. the questions germane to this thesis. (A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix Four.)

4.3 Results of the Final Survey.

(As I mentioned, I consider here only those questions about meaning-production and audiences' circumstances.)

My conclusions from these results are merely indicative: firmer conclusions would need qualitative investigations to complement the quantitative work described here, and the analysis will outline these.

4.3.1 Coronation Street and Working Class Life.

This group of questions related interviewees' experiences of working class life in Walworth with the representation of working class life in Granada Television's series *Coronation Street*. I chose this series for two reasons. Firstly, people are likely to be more familiar with a continuing series than with a single programme, which can more easily become 'dated'. Secondly, *Coronation Street* was consciously set in a working class area of an anonymous Northern English town.²

Walworth and the area depicted in *Coronation Street* share many material indicators of "working class-ness": residents' jobs, education, housing and income. Thus, we asked the following three questions:

Q26 Do you think that "Coronation Street" shows a true picture of what working class life is like?³

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A |
|------|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|-----|
| % | 24.2 | 9.5 | 11.6 | 54.7 | |
| Nos. | 23 | 9 | 11 | 52 | 13 |

Q33 Is it easy to make friends and acquaintances in this area?

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A |
|------|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|-----|
| % | 38.3 | 3.7 | 0 | 58.0 | |
| Nos. | 41 | 4 | 0 | 62 | 1 |

Q44 What do you think are the three main social problems in Britain now?⁴

| | UNEMPLOYMENT | RACIAL ISSUES | HOUSING ISSUES |
|---|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| % | 56.3 | 20.9 | 22.9 |

This group of questions asked interviewees whether the representation of working class life in *Coronation Street* was

congruent with their own experiences of Walworth. Q26 showed that people didn't see *Coronation Street* as a true representation: 66.4% judged it "False" and 33.7% "True" (by aggregating the results under "False" and "More false than true" and those under "True" and "More true than false").

The other two questions in this group cross-checked that response by comparing features in Walworth with their representation in the programme. They also clarified - to an extent - what constituted our interviewees' experience of a working class area as regards friendliness/sociability and social problems. Sociability (Q33) is a major characteristic of the neighbourhood in *Coronation Street* (for instance, the programme emphasised collective life in the corner shop and the pub), but it was clearly felt to be missing in Walworth: 58% of our interviewees found Walworth a difficult place in which to make friends and acquaintances, as against the 38.3% who found it easy, and the 3.7% who found it fairly easy. Thus the programme's representation of the sociability of working class life was incongruent with interviewees' experiences of working class life in Walworth.

The question of (in)congruence between representation and experience was less-clearly resolved around social problems, i.e. unemployment, racial issues and housing issues as ranked in order of importance to our interviewees. Q44 didn't aim to investigate whether these social problems were represented in ways which were congruent with interviewees' experience of them, but rather whether issues which our interviewees thought important were represented in the programme, in order to judge whether or not the programme's representation of working class life accorded with interviewees' experience of it.

At the time of the Final Survey (March - April 1981), *Coronation Street* featured unemployment in two ways: the actual unemployment of the character Bert Tilsely, and the threatened unemployment facing workers at Mike Baldwin's factory. Perhaps it was this that led 33.7% of interviewees to answer "True" and "More True Than False" to Q26. However, at that time the programme featured neither racial issues nor housing issues which were, between them, of concern to 43.8% of our interviewees. At that time, the programme ignored housing as an

issue, and its editorial policy positively excluded not only racial issues as such, but even black characters.⁵ (Subsequently, Fred Gee faced an accommodation crisis shortly after his marriage; and Hilda Ogden attempted to sell the Ogdens' Coronation Street house in order to move to the suburbs.)

In summary: a majority of 2:1 of interviewees said that *Coronation Street* was a false representation of working class life; a majority of 1.4:1 contrasted the 'sociability' in the programme with the lack of that quality in their own neighbourhood; and a majority of only 1.8:1 saw the social issues they thought important feature in the programme. At that general level, then, people's experiences did appear congruent with how they made sense of *Coronation Street*. That general finding can be developed by asking whether people's responses to these questions differed according to their different social experiences. Thus, the questionnaire asked interviewees for their gender, age and occupation. (In a couple of instances, I assumed that a person's occupation corresponds to their income and thus to their likely standard of living.) The results of categorising the answers to questions 26, 33, and 44 according to those three parameters appear in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 respectively, and they support - to varying degrees - the finding that people's understandings of *Coronation Street* were congruent with their experience. Let's now look in detail at those results.

4.3.1a) *The credibility of Coronation Street varied within each of the three parameters.*

First, gender. 38.1% of female interviewees thought the programme a "True" or "More True Than False" representation of working class life (as against the 61.9% who thought it "False" or "More False Than True"), compared with 25.1% of men (against 75%). In other words, although interviewees as a whole felt that the programme's representation of working class life lacked credibility (33.7% answered "True" or "More True Than False" and 66.3% answered "False" or "More False Than True"), men found it less credible than women. Second, occupation. There were seven categories of interviewee: those on relatively low incomes, i.e. unemployed people, housewives, pensioners and blue-collar workers; and those on relatively high incomes, i.e. white collar workers and students. ("Others" were mostly

school students.) There was no consistent relationship between views on the programme's representation of working class life, and occupation. Older interviewees found the programme's representation of working class life less credible than the younger two groups. In summary: responses to Q26 concerning the representation of working class life in *Coronation Street* varied with gender, occupation and age.

The pattern of responses (Fig. 2) to Q33's concern with the ease of making friends and acquaintances in Walworth closely resembled the pattern of responses (Fig.1) to Q26 about working class life. Women found it easier to make friends in the area (42.9% of their answers tending to "True", as opposed to 40.5% for men); the unemployed, housewives, pensioners and students had more difficulty making friends than the other occupational groupings; and younger people found it easier to make friends than older ones.

Responses (Fig. 3) to Q44's concern with social problems also varied according to the three parameters, but with one qualification. Interviewees in each parameter reflected the overall feeling of which three social problems rated highest, but ranked the three issues differently: men, white-collar workers, pensioners, unemployed people, and people who were 0-30 years old or more than 61 years old thought racial issues more of a problem than housing issues; and blue-collar workers saw racial issues and housing issues as equally important.

In summary. Responses to Q33 and Q44 (about their attitudes to their neighbourhood and to national issues) were very diverse when categorised according to gender, occupation and age, despite their shared circumstances. This countered simple 'reflective' models of relationships between knowledge and the circumstances of its production; it indicated the existence of several audiences, rather than a single audience; and it indicated that audiences are composed of social groupings, not isolated individuals by showing some commonality of audience understandings of *Coronation Street*, within the chosen three social categories. (However, the Survey did not investigate whether individuals within each category understood the programme congruently, which I will remedy in the analysis below.)

Q26 Do you think that "Coronation Street" shows a true picture of what working class life is like?

GENDER

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 26.9 17 | 11.1 7 | 9.5 6 | 52.4 33 | 7 | % Nos. |
| Male | 18.8 6 | 6.3 2 | 15.6 5 | 59.4 19 | 6 | % Nos. |

OCCUPATION

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 23.3 7 | 10.0 3 | 13.3 4 | 53.3 16 | 3 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar Worker | 22.2 4 | 5.6 1 | 5.6 1 | 66.7 12 | 6 | % Nos. |
| Student | 22.0 3 | 25.0 2 | 12.5 1 | 37.5 3 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 17.6 3 | 17.6 3 | 5.9 1 | 58.8 10 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 30.0 3 | 0 0 | 20.0 2 | 50.0 5 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 16.7 1 | 0 0 | 16.7 1 | 66.7 4 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Other | 50.0 3 | 0 0 | 16.7 1 | 33.3 2 | 0 | % Nos. |

AGE

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|-------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0-30 | 21.1 8 | 15.8 6 | 7.9 3 | 55.3 21 | 5 | % Nos. |
| 31-60 | 26.7 12 | 6.7 3 | 13.3 6 | 53.3 24 | 7 | % Nos. |
| 61+ | 25.0 3 | 0 0 | 16.7 2 | 58.3 7 | 1 | % Nos. |

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 24.2 23 | 9.5 9 | 11.6 11 | 54.7 52 | 13 | % Nos. |

FIG. 1

Q33 Is it easy to make friends and acquaintances in this area?

GENDER

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 40.0 28 | 2.9 2 | 0 0 | 57.1 40 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Male | 35.1 13 | 5.4 2 | 0 0 | 59.5 22 | 1 | % Nos. |

OCCUPATION

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 40.6 13 | 3.1 1 | 0 0 | 56.3 18 | 1 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar Worker | 50.0 12 | 4.2 1 | 0 0 | 45.8 11 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Student | 37.5 3 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 62.5 5 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 36.8 7 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 63.2 12 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 30.0 3 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 70.0 6 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 12.5 1 | 12.5 1 | 0 0 | 75.0 6 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Other | 33.3 2 | 16.7 1 | 20.0 0 | 50.0 3 | 0 | % Nos. |

AGE

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 48.8 21 | 4.7 2 | 0 0 | 46.5 20 | 0 | % Nos. |
| 31-60 | 31.4 16 | 3.9 2 | 0 0 | 64.7 33 | 1 | % Nos. |
| 61+ | 30.8 4 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 69.2 9 | 0 | % Nos. |

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 38.3 41 | 3.7 4 | 0 0 | 57.9 62 | 1 | % Nos. |

FIG. 2

Q44 What do you think are the three main social problems in Britain now?

GENDER

| | UNEMPLOYMENT | RACIAL ISSUES | HOUSING ISSUES |
|--------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Female | 54.9% | 21.8% | 23.3% |
| Male | 58.1% | 26.5% | 15.4% |

OCCUPATION

| | UNEMPLOYMENT | RACIAL ISSUES | HOUSING ISSUES |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 61.8% | 19.1% | 19.1% |
| White-Collar Worker | 64.1% | 24.3% | 11.7% |
| Student | 50.0% | 23.7% | 26.3% |
| Housewife | 51.3% | 17.9% | 30.8% |
| Pensioner | 54.5% | 27.3% | 18.2% |
| Unemployed | 52.9% | 29.4% | 17.7% |
| Other | 47.6% | 23.9% | 28.6% |

AGE

| | UNEMPLOYMENT | RACIAL ISSUES | HOUSING ISSUES |
|--------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 0 - 30 | 57.1% | 25.1% | 17.7% |
| 31-60 | 56.0% | 20.4% | 23.6% |
| 61+ | 48.8% | 29.3% | 22.0% |

| | UNEMPLOYMENT | RACIAL ISSUES | HOUSING ISSUES |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 56.3% | 20.9% | 22.9% |

FIG. 3

The next stage of the investigation was to investigate whether each interviewee-grouping's response to each of the three questions in this group differed from or reflected the overall response. I therefore compared the percentage figure for each interviewee-grouping's response with the percentage figure for the sample as a whole. If the grouping's response was lower than the overall sample's, I gave it an "L" rating; if it was higher, an "H" rating. (There was no instance in which the two figures were the same, although some were very close.) For example, in responses to Q26, the overall percentage of responses tending to "True" (i.e. agreeing that the programme's representation of working class life was credible) was 33.7%, whereas for the Male interviewee-grouping the figure was 25.1%, so that grouping received an "L" rating on that question; similarly, the figure for women tending to "True" in Q26 was 38.6% compared with the overall figure of 33.7%, so that grouping received an "H" rating on that question. The results of performing that exercise are in Fig. 4.

Overall, the great majority of our interviewees thought that *Coronation Street* represented working class life inaccurately; found it difficult to make friends and acquaintances in Walworth (and thus to experience the 'sociability' of working class life represented in the programme); and were concerned with social issues which were, however, absent from the programme. In other words, there was a degree of congruence between our interviewees' rejection of the programme's representation of working class life and their own experiences of major features of that representation.

That congruence is confirmed in responses according to interviewee-grouping. First, there was congruence in responses by both genders. Women attributed higher credibility to the programme; found Walworth an easy place to make friends and acquaintances; and attributed less importance to one of the three social issues missing from the programme. Men attributed lower credibility to the programme; found Walworth a difficult place in which to make friends; and attributed more importance to two of the three missing social issues.

Responses according to occupation were less clearly congruent. Blue-collar workers attributed lower credibility to the programme and greater importance to one of the three social issues absent from it, but regarded Walworth as an easy place in which to make friends and acquaintances. White-collar workers showed congruence, attributing higher credibility to the programme, finding Walworth an easy place to make friends but attributing greater importance to two of the three missing social issues. Students attributed higher credibility to the programme, but saw Walworth as a hard place in which to make friends and acquaintances and saw unemployment as less important than the overall response, i.e. congruence so far. However, they saw racial and housing issues as more important than interviewees as a whole. Housewives attributed more credibility to the programme but saw Walworth as an 'unsociable' place, and were less concerned than the overall response with two of the three absent social issues, thus showing no overall congruence. Pensioners attributed lower credibility to the programme, found Walworth an unfriendly place and accorded a higher significance to one of the three absent social issues; unemployed people attributed lower credibility to the programme, found Walworth an unfriendly place and gave a higher rating to one of the missing three social issues; and "Others" attributed higher credibility to the programme, found Walworth a friendly place, and gave a lower rating to one of the three absent social issues.

Thirdly, age. The 0-30 grouping attributed higher credibility to the programme, thought Walworth a friendly place, but attributed higher importance to two of the three absent social issues. However, people in both the 31-60 and 61+ groupings gave congruent responses: each saw the programme as less credible, found Walworth an unsociable place, and attributed higher importance to one of the missing social issues.

Overall, there was some congruence between audiences' understandings of *Coronation Street* and their social experiences: in five of our twelve interviewee-groupings (i.e. 41.7%) there was congruence. More significantly, the degree of congruence varied according to the three parameters: 50% for gender, 28.6% for occupation, and 66.6% for age.

Gender

| | Q26 | Q33 | Q44 | | | CON | % CON. |
|--------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------|---------|-----|--------|
| | "Programme credible" | "Walworth friendly" | "Social Problems" | | | | |
| | | | Unemployment | Race | Housing | | |
| Female | H | H | L | H | H | | 50 |
| Male | L | L | H | H | L | + | |

Occupation

| | Q26 | Q33 | Q44 | | | CON. | % CON. |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------|---------|------|--------|
| | "Programme credible" | "Walworth friendly" | "Social Problems" | | | | |
| | | | Unemployment | Race | Housing | | |
| Blue-Collar | L | H | H | L | L | | 28.6 |
| White Collar | L | H | H | H | L | | |
| Student | H | L | L | H | H | | |
| Housewife | H | L | L | L | H | | |
| Pensioner | L | L | L | H | L | + | |
| Unemployed | L | L | L | H | L | + | |
| Other | H | H | L | H | H | | |

Age

| | Q26 | Q33 | Q44 | | | CON. | % |
|---------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------|---------|------|------|
| | "Programme credible" | "Walworth friendly" | "Social Problems" | | | | |
| | | | Unemployment | Race | Housing | | |
| 0 - 30 | H | H | H | H | L | | 66.6 |
| 31 - 60 | L | L | L | L | H | + | |
| 61+ | L | L | L | H | L | + | |

| | Q26 | Q33 | Q44 | | | CON. | % CON. |
|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|---------|------|--------|
| | "Programme credible" | "Walworth friendly" | "Social Problems" | | | | |
| | | | Unemployment | Race | Housing | | |
| Overall Response | 33.7% | 42% | 56.3% | 20.9% | 22.9% | + | 41.7 |

"CON" = "Congruence"

"% CON" = % Congruence in parameter

FIG 4

4.3.2 The British Political System.

These questions investigated the relationship between the British political system and Current Affairs programmes. The Pilot Survey had failed in its attempt to do this in one question, so the Final Survey asked three, each under a different heading: "Broadcasting Issues", "Local Issues" and "National Issues". These questions sought congruence (if any) between our interviewees' understandings of the British political system as it was represented in current affairs programmes and as they experienced it at local and national levels.

Q29 Do you think that current affairs programmes like "World in Action" and "Panorama" allow both sides of a question to be heard?

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K |
|------|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|-----|
| % | 47.9 | 26.6 | 2.1 | 23.4 | |
| Nos. | 45 | 25 | 2 | 22 | 14 |

Q34 Is it easy for local people to influence local politicians here?

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K |
|------|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|-----|
| % | 17.8 | 6.9 | 0 | 75.2 | |
| Nos. | 18 | 7 | 0 | 76 | 7 |

Q39 Do you think that British democracy allows both sides of a question to be heard equally?

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K |
|------|------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|-----|
| % | 40.2 | 13.4 | 4.1 | 42.3 | |
| Nos. | 39 | 13 | 4 | 41 | 11 |

The great majority (74.5% to 25.5%) clearly believed that current affairs programmes were fair because they allowed both sides of a question to be heard. In contrast, people's own experiences of the British political system were mostly negative. The great majority (75.2% to 24.7%) dismissed the proposition that local people can influence local politicians. Regarding national politics, however, aggregated tendencies showed that 53.6% thought the system allowed both sides of a question to be heard. The responses showed a clear lack of congruence between the perceived fairness of the programmes, the

experience of local politics, and the judgement on national politics. In summary:

| | Q29 "Current affairs" programmes are fair | Q34 "Local politics works" | Q39 "National politics works" |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Overall Response | 74.5% | 24.7 | 53.6% |

In retrospect, this group of questions was misconceived in two respects. First, the questions themselves were incongruent! They assumed that viewers judged current affairs programmes solely according to how accurately they reflected 'the real world', but a viewer's judgement about the fairness of a programme needn't reflect her/his judgement about the fairness of the political system. Secondly, in asking interviewees whether they regarded current affairs programmes as 'fair', the questions asked them to judge whether issues are presented fairly in current affairs programmes compared with how they could be presented. To our knowledge, no interviewees had worked in a broadcasting organisation, and so they were in a weak position from which to make such comparative judgements.

To investigate relationships between audiences' social experiences and their understandings of current affairs programmes would require a series of questions, each dealing with the coverage by specific editions of particular current affairs programmes of a particular issue of which our interviewees would be likely to have some experience (e.g. high-density accommodation). Such an approach could compare interviewees' understandings of each programme's representation of a particular 'political' issue with their own experiences of that issue, without relying on their ability to judge the comparative 'fairness' of different programme-structures.

4.3.3 The Role of the Police.

These questions, like those concerning *Coronation Street*, attempted to relate people's understandings of a television series to their own experiences of the issues represented in those programmes - in this

case, the programme was the police series, *The Sweeney*. These questions investigated interviewees' understandings of police violence as represented in *The Sweeney* and as experienced in their own lives. At that time, *The Sweeney* had been criticised for its police characters' violent performance of their jobs, although such violence was almost always associated with an attempted arrest; only rarely was there violence in another context, such as the 'roughing-up' of a suspect. The central characters of the series - Inspector Regan and Sergeant Carter - weren't portrayed as particularly vicious and vindictive, although each tended to lose his temper when dealing with particularly nasty "villains". Accordingly, interviewees were asked about how the series represented the requirements of the job of policing.

Q28 Do you think that "The Sweeney" shows a true picture of what solving crime really involves?

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K |
|------|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|
| % | 18.8 | 20.8 | 12.9 | 47.5 | |
| Nos. | 19 | 21 | 13 | 48 | 7 |

Q35 Do you think that in order to control crime in this area the police have to be violent?

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K |
|------|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|
| % | 10.5 | 20.0 | 9.5 | 60.0 | |
| Nos. | 11 | 21 | 10 | 63 | 3 |

Q36 Have you, personally, seen the police being violent in this area in the course of their duty?

| | YES | NO | D/K |
|------|------|------|-----|
| % | 19.6 | 80.4 | |
| Nos. | 21 | 86 | 1 |

There was clear congruence: a majority rejected the notion that *The Sweeney* showed a true picture of crime-solving, rejected the idea of 'necessary' police violence, and had no personal experience of police violence. These results can be summarised thus:

| | Q28 | Q35 | Q36 |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | "'The Sweeney' is credible" | "The police must be violent" | "Personal experience of police violence" |
| Overall Response | 39.6% | 30.5% | 19.6% |

These responses show interviewees firmly rejecting the 'message' of a television series when it doesn't accord with their own social experiences. They were reinforced by anecdotes accrued in administering the survey. When answering Q28, a number of interviewees remarked "Oh, it's not the real thing" or "It's only a play, isn't it?", clearly indicating that audiences aren't just passive recipients of programmes, but that they actively and critically 'make sense' of programmes.

Categorising responses to Q28, Q35 and Q36 according to gender, occupation and age produces the results which appear as Figs. 5, 6 and 7 respectively. Fig. 5 shows the lack of credulity in the overall response to Q28 repeated in each audience category to varying degrees (and with the inexplicable exception of Students); Fig. 6 shows the rejection of 'necessary' police violence by the overall response repeated in each category (although again, the force of rejection is variable); and Fig. 7 shows the overall response's lack of personal experience of police violence repeated by each category. In other words, interviewees categorised according to gender, occupation and age all rejected the 'message' of *The Sweeney* regarding police violence. This third set of figures shows each interviewee-grouping's response differing from the overall response, reinforcing the notion of a diversity of audiences. They also show congruence between people's understandings of the programme and their own experiences - particularly exemplified by Students. (A wry aside: students appear to have seen more police violence, which accords well with their view of *The Sweeney* as credible - they had the highest scores in Q28 - and perhaps illuminates their implacable opposition [in responding to Q35] to the notion of 'necessary' police violence.)

As with the questions about *Coronation Street*, I will now show the degree of accord/deviation from the overall response by each interviewee-group, and then investigate whether there was congruence within each interviewee-group regarding its accord/deviation. Fig. 8 summarises the results of this exercise. Responses by Students and 0-30-year olds could be seen as congruent: they saw *The Sweeney* as credible, had experience of police violence (perhaps explaining their belief in the programme), but thought that police violence wasn't necessary. In other words, while regarding the programme as 'realistic' in terms of their own experience, these interviewees were perhaps asserting, "It doesn't have to be that way".

However, despite congruence in the overall sample, only those three categories gave congruent responses - most categories' responses were internally contradictory. For example, blue-collar workers' belief in the programme wasn't necessarily related to their wider judgements about police behaviour or to their experience; judgements about police violence by the 31-60 group weren't related to understandings of the programme or experience; housewives' judgements on general police violence and the programme seemed unrelated to their experiences.

There are several possible explanations of the internally-contradictory nature of those responses. First, perhaps people's understandings of *The Sweeney* were unrelated to their experience. That is contradicted by the variety of responses to those questions according to, and within, gender, occupation and age. Second, perhaps factors other than a programme's content do impinge on the process of making sense of a programme, but either I investigated the wrong ones, or the factors I did investigate, which could be expected to lead to congruent responses, were out-weighted by others which I neglected. (For instance, perhaps interviewees' views on police violence depend on their judgement as to whether crime in the area is so bad that it justifies an 'unorthodox' approach by police.) Thirdly, perhaps particular individuals' differing relationships between understanding and experience disappear when responses are aggregated. However, this explanation, like the preceding one, seems implausible in light of the congruent responses by the interviewees to equivalent questions concerning understandings of another series - *Coronation Street*.

Q28 Do you think that "The Sweeney" shows a true picture of what solving crime really involves?

GENDER

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| FEMALE | 21.5 14 | 21.5 14 | 9.2 6 | 47.7 31 | 5 | % Nos. |
| MALE | 13.9 5 | 19.4 7 | 19.4 7 | 47.2 17 | 2 | % Nos. |

OCCUPATION

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 26.7 8 | 20.0 6 | 20.0 6 | 33.3 10 | 3 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar Worker | 4.3 1 | 21.7 5 | 4.3 1 | 69.6 16 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Student | 37.5 3 | 25.0 2 | 0 0 | 37.5 3 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 17.6 3 | 29.4 5 | 0 0 | 52.9 9 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 20.0 2 | 20.0 2 | 30.0 3 | 30.0 3 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 14.3 1 | 14.3 1 | 28.6 2 | 42.9 3 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Other | 16.7 1 | 0 0 | 16.7 1 | 66.7 4 | 0 | % Nos. |

AGE

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|--------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 20.9 9 | 25.6 11 | 4.7 2 | 48.8 21 | 0 | % Nos. |
| 31-60 | 15.6 7 | 17.8 8 | 17.8 8 | 48.9 22 | 7 | % Nos. |
| 61+ | 23.1 3 | 15.4 2 | 23.1 3 | 38.5 5 | 0 | % Nos. |

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 18.8% | 20.8% | 12.9% | 47.5% |

FIG. 5

Q35 Do you think that in order to control crime in this area the police have to be violent?

GENDER

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|--------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| FEMALE | 8.8 6 | 23.5 16 | 7.4 5 | 60.3 41 | 2 | % Nos. |
| MALE | 13.5 5 | 13.5 5 | 13.5 5 | 59.5 22 | 1 | % Nos. |

OCCUPATION

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 12.9 4 | 16.1 5 | 16.1 5 | 54.8 17 | 2 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar Worker | 12.5 3 | 16.7 4 | 4.2 1 | 66.7 16 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Student | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 100. 8 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 11.1 2 | 27.8 5 | 5.6 1 | 55.6 10 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 10.0 1 | 30.00 3 | 10.0 1 | 50.0 5 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 12.5 1 | 25.0 2 | 12.5 1 | 50.0 4 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Other | 0 0 | 33.3 2 | 16.7 1 | 50.0 3 | 0 | % Nos. |

AGE

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | N/A | |
|--------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 7.0 3 | 16.3 7 | 7.0 3 | 69.8 30 | 0 | % Nos. |
| 31-60 | 12.2 6 | 22.4 11 | 12.2 6 | 53.1 26 | 3 | % Nos. |
| 61+ | 15.4 2 | 23.1 3 | 7.7 1 | 53.8 7 | 0 0 | % Nos. |

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 10.5% | 20.0% | 9.5% | 60.0% |

FIG. 6

Q36 Have you, personally, seen the police being violent in this area in the course of their duty?

GENDER

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 18.8 13 | 81.2 56 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Male | 21.1 8 | 78.9 30 | 0 | % Nos. |

OCCUPATION

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 12.1 4 | 87.9 29 | 0 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar Worker | 25.0 6 | 75.0 18 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Student | 50.00 4 | 50.00 4 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 15.8 3 | 84.2 16 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 11.1 1 | 88.9 8 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 37.5 3 | 62.5 5 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Other | 0 0 | 100.0 6 | 0 | % Nos. |

AGE

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 23.3 10 | 76.7 33 | 0 | % Nos. |
| 31 -60 | 19.6 10 | 82.4 42 | 1 | % Nos. |
| 61+ | 8.3 1 | 91.7 11 | 1 | % Nos. |

| | YES | NO |
|------------------|-------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 19.6% | 80.4% |

FIG. 7

GENDER

| | Q28 "The Sweeney' is credible" | Q35 "The police must be violent" | Q36 "Experience of police violence" | CON |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--|---|-----|
| Female | H | H | L | |
| Male | L | L | H | |

OCCUPATION

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Blue-Collar Worker | H | L | L | |
| White-Collar Worker | L | L | H | |
| Student | H | L | H | ? |
| Housewife | H | H | L | |
| Pensioner | H | H | L | |
| Unemployed | L | H | H | |
| Other | L | H | L | |

AGE

| | | | | |
|-------|---|---|---|---|
| 0-30 | H | L | H | ? |
| 31-60 | L | H | = | |
| 61+ | L | H | L | |

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 39.6% | 30.5% | 19.6% |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|

FIG. 8

4.3.4 The Role of the Individual and Individualism in Broadcasting.

This group of questions investigated whether interviewees' understandings of the emphasis in some programmes on individualism were congruent with their views on individuals' role in social change, and with their views on the importance of individuals in broadcasting.⁶

I wanted to investigate whether people shared the emphasis on individualism in programmes which the students and I had observed in our brief review, and whether this view of individualism was congruent with their own experiences. I also wanted to investigate whether their view of individualism was congruent with their judgement of themselves as potential broadcasters.

I considered that the likelihood of interviewees joining WCR programme-making groups would depend on whether they saw themselves as potential 'broadcasters' which, in its turn, could depend on the degree of deference they showed to the individual 'experts' whose presence characterised so much of British broadcasting.

Q23 Would you like to help to make programmes for Walworth Cable Radio?

| YES (Two gave two answers.) | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------|------|-----|------|
| Technical/Electrical | Production Edit | Other | NO | D/K | |
| 1.1 | 23.2 2.2 | 15.8 | 57.9 | | % |
| 1 | 22 2 | 15 | 55 | 15 | Nos. |

Q24 Is there any specific information or advice that you could share with people in this area through Walworth Cable Radio (WCR) and/or are there any special issues that you think WCR should cover?

| YES | NO | D/K | |
|------|------|-----|------|
| 72.4 | 27.6 | | % |
| 63 | 24 | 21 | Nos. |

Q27 Many programmes (e.g. "This is Your Life", "The Extraordinary People Show", "Profile") deal with well-known personalities. Is this because these people are more important to society than others?

| YES | NO | D/K | |
|------|------|-----|------|
| 17.5 | 82.5 | | % |
| 17 | 80 | 11 | Nos. |

Q32 Do you think that discussing social and political issues on radio and television requires special knowledge?

| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 58.2 | 16.3 | 1.0 | 24.5 | | % |
| 57 | 16 | 1 | 24 | 10 | Nos. |

Q45 Do you think that personal effort and ambition always pays off?

| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 57.1 | 7.6 | 8.6 | 26.7 | | % |
| 60 | 8 | 9 | 28 | 3 | Nos. |

In retrospect, Q27 must be approached carefully, because it answers itself. After all, one way in which we 'know' that a person is "more important to society than others" is because they are "well-known personalities". Conversely, a "well-known personality" must, by virtue of their status, be "more important to society than others"! However, most responses linked Q27 and Q45 in a way which overcame that problem. A clear majority said (to Q27) that "personalities" are no more important to society than anyone else, and said (to Q45) that personal effort and ambition always pay off, implying that success doesn't depend on whether you're a "personality".

This seems a very coherent assessment of social change: interviewees said that it is not inherent in certain individuals to be 'great men' (for example, military, royalty, statesmen), which is implied in their faith in the effectiveness of personal, individual effort and ambition. They added, however, that certain individuals are more important than others due to the status they occupy (and which, so the argument

would go, they have attained through their own effort and ambition). A clear congruence, then, between the sense made of programmes such as "Profile" and their experience of the individual's role in change.

Interpreting the other questions is more difficult. Again, with hindsight, Q32 answers itself: since "social and political issues on radio and television" are always discussed by people with "special knowledge" (i.e. experts), it is certainly true that, "discussing ... (those) ... issues on radio and television requires special knowledge." A clear vindication of the 'great men' theory, it would seem! However, this question and the responses to it show only that interviewees think that this is how broadcasting is run now (which it certainly is); it does not show that this the way they think it ought to be run.

Similarly, since the prime qualities of current broadcasting are experience, technical ability, etc., it isn't surprising that interviewees who lacked those qualities (as most did) expressed no interest in making programmes for WCR; their lack of those primary qualities may well have dissuaded them from seeing themselves as potential programme-makers, in a variant of the 'great men' theory. However, in response to Q24, a large majority said that they had something of substance to say to Walworth people, or that there were substantial issues which should be covered by a neighbourhood radio station such as WCR. In other words, they were potential presenters, producers and/or editors of programmes, irrespective of whether they expressed a wish to make programmes, thus rejecting the 'great men' theory that only an elite can be broadcasters.

In summary: there is clear congruence between those five questions, provided that we bear in mind the ways in which Q27 and Q45 restricted interviewees to considering only the then-current situation in broadcasting. Fig. 9 summarises the relationship between those five questions; Figs. 10-14 inclusive summarise the results of categorising answers to those questions according to gender, occupation and age. Broadly, the categorised responses reflected the congruence of the overall responses, but there were exceptions, and in those circumstances it is the variety of the responses which is significant rather than their homogeneity.

| | Overall Response |
|--|------------------|
| Q27 "Some people are more important." | 17.5% |
| Q45 "Personal ambition pays off." | 64.7% |
| Q23 "I'd like to broadcast on WCR." | 42.3% |
| Q24 "I have views on which local subjects are important." | 72.4% |
| Q32 "Radio and TV discussions require special knowledge." | 74.5% |

Fig. 9

Fig. 15 shows the degree to which groups' responses to Q27 and Q45 accorded to or deviated from the overall response, and whether that category-based variation was consistent across the two questions. Seeking congruence in the responses to Q27 and Q45 involves seeking consistency in the deviation ("H" or "L") by each group from the overall response. It doesn't matter whether the deviation is "H" or "L", as long as it is consistent, because the overall response rejected the idea that some individuals are more important than others, and accepted the idea that personal effort and ambition always pays off. In summary: Fig. 15 shows congruence in nine of the twelve interviewee-groupings.

Q23 Would you like to help to make programmes for Walworth Cable Radio? (Two gave two answers, so total is 110.)

| |
|--------|
| GENDER |
|--------|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 34.9 22 | 65.1 41 | 8 | % Nos. |
| Male | 56.3 18 | 43.8 14 | 7 | % Nos. |

| |
|------------|
| OCCUPATION |
|------------|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar | 21.4 6 | 78.6 22 | 5 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar | 60.9 14 | 39.1 9 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Student | 100.0 9 | 0 0 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 25.0 4 | 75.0 12 | 3 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 22.2 2 | 77.8 7 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 57.1 4 | 42.9 3 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Other | 33.3 1 | 66.7 2 | 3 | % Nos. |

| |
|-----|
| AGE |
|-----|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|---------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 62.5 25 | 37.5 15 | 5 | % Nos. |
| 31 - 60 | 23.3 10 | 76.7 33 | 9 | % Nos. |
| 60+ | 41.7 5 | 58.3 7 | 1 | % Nos. |

| | YES | NO |
|------------------|-------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 42.3% | 57.9% |

Fig. 10

Q24 Is there any specific information or advice that you could share with people in this area through Walworth Cable Radio (WCR) and/or are there any special issues that you think WCR should cover?

| |
|--------|
| GENDER |
|--------|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 72.9 43 | 27.1 16 | 11 | % Nos. |
| Male | 71.4 20 | 28.6 8 | 10 | % Nos. |

| |
|------------|
| OCCUPATION |
|------------|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar | 65.5 19 | 34.5 10 | 4 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar | 70.6 12 | 29.4 5 | 7 | % Nos. |
| Student | 85.7 6 | 14.3 1 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 81.3 13 | 18.8 3 | 3 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 57.1 4 | 42.9 3 | 3 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 85.7 6 | 14.3 1 | 1 | % Nos. |

| |
|-----|
| AGE |
|-----|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|---------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 75.9 22 | 24.1 7 | 14 | % Nos. |
| 31 - 60 | 71.4 35 | 28.6 14 | 3 | % Nos. |
| 60+ | 66.7 6 | 33.3 3 | 4 | % Nos. |

| | YES | NO |
|---------------------|-------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 72.4% | 27.6% |

Fig. 11

Q27 Many programmes (e.g. "This is Your Life", "The Extraordinary People Show", "Profile") deal with well-known personalities. Is this because these people are more important to society than others?

| |
|--------|
| GENDER |
|--------|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------|------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 16.4 10 | 83.7 51 | 9 | % Nos. |
| Male | 19.4 7 | 80.6 29 | 2 | % Nos. |

| |
|------------|
| OCCUPATION |
|------------|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar | 19.4 6 | 80.6 25 | 2 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar | 8.7 2 | 91.3 21 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Student | 0 0 | 100.0 8 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 40.0 6 | 60.0 9 | 4 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 22.2 2 | 77.8 7 | | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 14.3 1 | 85.7 6 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Other | 0 0 | 100.0 4 | 2 | % Nos. |

| |
|-----|
| AGE |
|-----|

| | YES | NO | D/K | |
|---------|-----------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 17.1 7 | 82.9 34 | 2 | % Nos. |
| 31 - 60 | 15.9 7 | 84.1 37 | 8 | % Nos. |
| 60+ | 25.0 3 | 75.0 9 | 1 | % Nos. |

| | YES | NO |
|------------------|-------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 17.5% | 82.5% |

Fig. 12

Q32 Do you think that discussing social and political issues on radio and television requires special knowledge?

GENDER

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 58.7 37 | 15.9 10 | 1.6 1 | 23.8 15 | 7 | % Nos. |
| Male | 57.1 20 | 17.1 6 | 0 0 | 25.7 9 | 3 | % Nos. |

OCCUPATION

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 58.6 17 | 10.3 3 | 0 0 | 39.0 7 | 4 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar Worker | 40.9 9 | 27.3 6 | 0 0 | 31.8 7 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Student | 50.0 4 | 25.0 2 | 0 0 | 25.0 2 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 76.5 13 | 5.9 1 | 0 0 | 17.6 3 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 70.0 7 | 10.0 1 | 10.0 1 | 10.0 1 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 57.1 4 | 28.6 2 | 0 0 | 14.3 1 | 1 | % Nos. |
| Other | 60.0 3 | 20.0 1 | 0 0 | 20.0 1 | 1 | % Nos. |

AGE

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 45.0 18 | 27.5 11 | 0 0 | 27.5 11 | 3 | % Nos. |
| 31-60 | 68.9 31 | 8.9 4 | 0 0 | 22.2 10 | 7 | % Nos. |
| 61+ | 68.5 7 | 7.7 1 | 7.7 1 | 23.1 3 | 0 | % Nos. |

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 58.2% | 16.3% | 1.0% | 24.5% |

FIG. 13

Q45 Do you think that personal effort and ambition always pay-off?

GENDER

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Female | 50.0 34 | 11.8 8 | 8.8 6 | 29.4 20 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Male | 70.3 26 | 0 0 | 8.1 3 | 21.6 8 | 1 | % Nos. |

OCCUPATION

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | 66.7 22 | 3.0 1 | 12.1 4 | 18.2 6 | 0 | % Nos. |
| White-Collar Worker | 59.1 13 | 4.5 1 | 4.5 1 | 31.8 7 | 2 | % Nos. |
| Student | 75.0 6 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 25.0 2 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Housewife | 36.8 7 | 15.8 3 | 10.5 2 | 36.8 7 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Pensioner | 50.0 5 | 20.00 2 | 0 0 | 30.00 3 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Unemployed | 50.0 4 | 12.5 1 | 25.0 2 | 12.5 1 | 0 | % Nos. |
| Other | 60.0 3 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 40.0 2 | 1 | % Nos. |

AGE

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|
| 0 - 30 | 69.1 29 | 2.4 1 | 7.1 3 | 21.4 9 | 1 | % Nos. |
| 31-60 | 48.0 24 | 10.0 5 | 12.0 6 | 30.0 15 | 2 | % Nos. |
| 61+ | 53.8 7 | 15.4 2 | 0 0 | 30.8 4 | 0 | % Nos. |

| | TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 57.1% | 7.6% | 8.6% | 26.7% |

FIG. 14

GENDER

| | Q27 "Some people are more important" | Q45 "Personal ambition pays off" | CON | % CON |
|--------|---|---|-----|----------|
| Female | L | L | + | 100.00 |
| Male | H | H | + | |

OCCUPATION

| | Q27 "Some people are more important" | Q45 "Personal ambition pays off" | CON | % CON |
|------------------------|---|---|-----|----------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | H | H | + | 71.4 |
| White-Collar Worker | L | L | + | |
| Student | L | H | | |
| Housewife | H | L | | |
| Pensioner | H | H | + | |
| Unemployed | L | L | + | |
| Other | L | L | + | |

AGE

| | Q27 "Some people are more important" | Q45 "Personal ambition pays off" | CON | % CON |
|---------|---|---|-----|----------|
| 0 - 30 | L | H | | 66.6 |
| 31 - 60 | L | L | + | |
| 61+ | H | H | + | |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|--|--|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 17.5% | 64.7% | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|--|--|

"CON" = Congruence

"% CON" = %

FIG. 15

In Fig. 16, the same analysis is performed on Q23, Q24, and Q32. Responses by each interviewee-grouping are interpreted in turn.

FEMALE: Deviation pattern: L H H (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I wouldn't like to broadcast on WCR
although I have views on local issues
but It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there is NO clear congruence. (Q32: H = +0.1)

MALE: Deviation pattern: H L L (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I would like to broadcast on WCR
although I haven't views on local issues
and It doesn't take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there is NO clear congruence. (Q32: H = -0.3)

BLUE-COLLAR: Deviation pattern: L L L (Q23, Q24, Q32)
WORKER

I wouldn't like to broadcast on WCR
because I haven't views on local issues
but It doesn't take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there is NO congruence.

WHITE-COLLAR: Deviation pattern: H L L (Q23, Q24, Q32)
WORKER

I would like to broadcast on WCR
although I haven't views on local issues
and It doesn't take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there IS congruence.

STUDENT: Deviation pattern: H H H (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I would like to broadcast on WCR
because I have views on local issues
but It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there is NO clear congruence. (Q32: H = +0.5)

HOUSEWIFE: Deviation pattern: L H H (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I wouldn't like to broadcast on WCR
although I have views on local issues
but It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there IS congruence.

PENSIONER: Deviation pattern: L H H (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I wouldn't like to broadcast on WCR
although I have views on local issues
but It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there IS congruence.

UNEMPLOYED: Deviation pattern: H L H (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I would like to broadcast on WCR
although I haven't views on local issues
and It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there is NO congruence.

OTHER: Deviation pattern: L H H (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I wouldn't like to broadcast on WCR
 although I have views on local issues
 but It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there IS congruence.

"0 - 30": Deviation pattern: H H L (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I would like to broadcast on WCR
 because I have views on local issues
 and It doesn't take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there is IS congruence.

"31 - 60": Deviation pattern: L L H (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I wouldn't like to broadcast on WCR
 because I haven't views on local issues
 and It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there IS congruence.

"61+": Deviation pattern: L L L (Q23, Q24, Q32)

I wouldn't like to broadcast on WCR
 because I haven't views on local issues
 and It does take special knowledge to broadcast.

In this group, therefore, there IS congruence.

In summary: we found clear congruence in seven of the twelve interviewee-groupings, and possible congruence in three others.

GEN

| | Q23 "I'd like to broadcast on WCR" | Q24 "I have views on which local issues are important" | Q32 Radio & TV discussions need special knowledge | CON | % CON |
|--------|---|--|---|-----|----------|
| Female | L | H | = (H=0.1) | ? | ? |
| Male | H | L | = (L=0.3) | ? | |

OCCUPATION

| | Q23 "I'd like to broadcast on WCR" | Q24 "I have views on which local issues are important" | Q32 Radio & TV discussions need special knowledge | CON | % CON |
|------------------------|---|--|---|-----|---------------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | L | L | L | | 57.1/ 71.4 |
| White-Collar Worker | H | L | L | + | |
| Student | H | H | = (H=0.5) | ? | |
| Housewife | L | H | H | + | |
| Pensioner | L | H | H | + | |
| Unemployed | H | L | H | | |
| Other | L | H | H | + | |

AGE

| | Q23 "I'd like to broadcast on WCR" | Q24 "I have views on which local issues are important" | Q32 Radio & TV discussions need special knowledge | CON | % CON |
|---------|---|--|---|-----|----------|
| 0 - 30 | H | H | L | + | 100.0 |
| 31 - 60 | L | L | H | + | |
| 61+ | L | L | L | + | |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|--|---------------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 42.3% | 72.4% | 74.5% | | 58.3/ 83.3 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|--|---------------|

"CON" = Congruence

"%CON" = % Congruence in parameter

FIG. 16.

4.3.5 Insularity.

These questions derived from the insularity in broadcasting which had been noted in the monitoring exercise. To investigate whether that insularity was congruent with interviewees' experiences, they were asked whether they had noticed television's emphasis on Britain, and whether they shared it. Their responses to those two questions were matched with responses to two others, which investigated whether interviewees' purchasing habits (current or prospective) were consistent with their expressed opinions about Britain's place in the world.

(A note of caution: it had become increasingly difficult to identify a product's country of origin because of the increasing presence of multinational companies and of the increasing international division of production. Therefore, all these questions could hope for was an impression of interviewees' perceptions and judgements on the issues, and not worry if they were mistaken as to the country of origin of the radios, televisions and cars that were advertised and that they said they'd buy.)

Q30 Do you think that radio and television adverts concentrate more on British products than on overseas ones?

| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 47.5 | 7.1 | 0 | 45.5 | | % |
| 47 | 7 | 0 | 45 | 9 | Nos. |

Q40 Do you think that British-made products are better than others?

| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 31.8 | 13.1 | 6.5 | 48.6 | | % |
| 34 | 14 | 7 | 52 | 1 | Nos. |

Q46 If you were going to buy a new radio or television, what would be its country of origin?

| GERMANY | JAPAN | HOLLAND | UK | D/K | |
|---------|-------|---------|------|-----|------|
| 7.1 | 43.5 | 2.4 | 47.1 | | % |
| 6 | 37 | 2 | 40 | 23 | Nos. |

Q47 If you were going to buy a new car, what would be its country of origin?

| GERMANY | JAPAN | UK | D/K | |
|---------|-------|------|-----|------|
| 16.7 | 8.3 | 75.0 | | % |
| 14 | 7 | 63 | 24 | Nos. |

Most interviewees (54.6% in aggregated tendencies) had noticed an emphasis on British products in radio and television adverts, but only a minority (44.9%) thought British-made products better than others, although a greater percentage (47.1%) of respondents stated that they would favour UK products when choosing radios and televisions, and a majority (75%) said they would favour UK products when buying a car. In summary:

| | Overall Response |
|--|------------------|
| Q30 "Broadcast adverts emphasise UK products" | 54.6% |
| Q40 "British products are better than others" | 44.9% |
| Q46 "I'd choose a UK radio or television" | 47.1% |
| Q47 "I'd choose a UK car" | 75.0% |

There was no congruence in this group of questions, which in retrospect was at least partly due to the questions: Q30 asked about the frequency with which British products were advertised, but Q40, Q46 and Q47 each addressed interviewees' views on the comparative attractiveness of UK products, and the two issues aren't necessarily related. Modifying Q30 would not have produced congruency, because responses to the other questions were internally inconsistent: only a minority thought British products were best, and this was reaffirmed in respect of buying radios or televisions, but a majority said they'd prefer a British car. I won't categorise responses to these questions according to gender, occupation and age, as this would only repeat the problems with these general responses.

The second group of questions in this section investigated whether the emphasis on news from the UK, and on Britain's role in News reports was congruent with interviewees' views of the UK.

Q31 Do you think that radio and television news concentrates on the UK?

| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 51.0 | 7.7 | 1.9 | 39.4 | | % |
| 53 | 8 | 2 | 41 | 4 | Nos. |

Q41 Do you think that the UK's political and economic position depends on other countries?

| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 72.0 | 7.0 | 2.0 | 20.0 | | % |
| 72 | 7 | 2 | 20 | 8 | Nos. |

Q42 Do you think that inflation and unemployment in the UK are influenced by how much we sell overseas?

| TRUE | MORE TRUE THAN FALSE | MORE FALSE THAN TRUE | FALSE | D/K | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-----|------|
| 62.1 | 10.5 | 0 | 27.4 | | % |
| 59 | 10 | 0 | 26 | 13 | Nos. |

58.7% of interviewees felt that news programmes emphasised British stories, an emphasis with which, apparently, they disagreed, as shown by their responses to Q41 (79.0%) and Q42 (72.6%). In summary:

| | Q31 | Q41 | Q42 |
|------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | "News programmes are insular" | "The UK is politically & economically dependent" | "UK inflation unemployment depend on sales overseas" |
| OVERALL RESPONSE | 58.7% | 79.0% | 72.6% |

In retrospect, these questions were incongruent - they tried to relate unrelated subjects. Q31 sought judgements about news programmes' insularity, but Q41 and Q42 sought judgements about Britain's relationships with other countries. However, someone's ability to notice programmes' insularity is unrelated to their views on Britain's position in the world. Q31 should have asked, "Do you think that radio and television News present a true picture of Britain's position in the world?", and interviewees' responses compared with their responses to Q41 and Q42, to test whether interviewees made sense of news programmes in light of their own views. Even that would be an unsatisfactory approach to my research question, because it would compare audiences' understandings of televisual representation of an issue with their views on that issue, rather than with their experience of it, as was done in questions about *Coronation Street* and about *The Sweeney*.

4.3.6 Summary.

Fig. 17 summarises the seven groups of questions considered here. The results of the questions concerning the British political system, insularity in advertisements and insularity in News are excluded, because of the problems I discussed, including their failure to investigate the same relationships as the others. Of the remaining four groups, all showed some congruence in the overall response, and two showed some congruence in responses by most interviewee-groups.

GENDER

| | Working Class Life | British political system | Police violence | Role of individual | Individualism in broadcasting | Insular ads | Insular News |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Female | | | | + | ? | | |
| Male | + | | | + | ? | | |

OCCUPATION

| | Working Class Life | British Political system | Police violence | Role of individual | Individualism in broadcasting | Insular ads | Insular News |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Blue-Collar Worker | | | | + | | | |
| White- Collar Worker | | | | + | + | | |
| Student | | | ? | | ? | | |
| Housewife | | | | | + | | |
| Pensioner | + | | | + | + | | |
| Unemployed | | | | + | | | |
| Other | | | | + | + | | |

AGE

| | Working Class Life | British political system | Police violence | Role of individual | Individualism in broadcasting | Insular ads | Insular News |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 0 - 30 | | | ? | | + | | |
| 31 - 60 | + | | | + | + | | |
| 61+ | + | | | + | + | | |

| | Working Class Life | British political system | Police violence | Role of individual | Individualism in broadcasting | Insular ads | Insular News |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| OVERALL RESPONSE | | | | + | + | | |

"+" = Congruence

Blank space = No Congruence.

FIG. 17

4.4 Analysing the Final Survey

4.4.1 Using the Results.

Evaluating my survey results in 'good/bad' terms would assume that they were in an established research tradition with an established paradigm, and that, therefore, they could be evaluated using criteria established by a consensus of peers. However, those were not the circumstances in which I conducted my research. At that time, as I demonstrated in chapter two, I was unaware of a major broadcasting research tradition which satisfactorily presented audiences as 'actively' producing meanings around broadcasting in ways related to their social-material circumstances. (Uses and Gratifications research embodied an 'active' audience but was unsatisfactory because of its methodological individualism, its atomistic view of society and its lack of concern with the possible influence of social-material circumstances.) The only research which related audiences' 'active' understandings of programmes to their social-material circumstances was that concerning *Nationwide* by Brunsdon and Morley (1978) and by Morley (1980a). The scarcity of such research projects reflected the novelty of their discourse: an already-established tradition of research would offer a range of models on which to draw when designing new projects. (I'm not suggesting that an "established research tradition" ceases to evolve, but I am suggesting that as a tradition's problems are solved, its evolution slows down.)

Consequently, my project faced more conceptual and methodological problems than it would have had it been part of an established research tradition. This isn't just 'special pleading' on my part, because those difficulties weren't exclusive to my project: Morley, too, faced particular difficulties because his research was conducted within and contributed to a quickly-evolving discourse. Morley's reflections on, and critiques of, his work (1980a: 15, 19, 156; 1980b: 173; 1986: 14, 174/5) clearly show that its novelty precluded the smooth and consistent exposition of an hypothesis which is likely to occur in an established research tradition. In contrast, the research by, for example, the Glasgow Media Group was part of an established tradition, consisting of an increasingly-forceful exposition of the 'unfairness' with which British television programmes represented the range of political viewpoints in Britain at that time. Morley's research, however, was

anything but consistent. His early consideration (with Brunsdon) of relationships between socially-situated audiences and particular programmes was followed by his presentation of television viewing as occasions on which 'interdiscursive individuals' make sense of programmes in ways which express their histories ... and from there he investigated the significance of the domestic circumstances of much television viewing. With hindsight, and without wishing to equate my work and Morley's, I strongly believe that my survey was problematic partly because - like Morley's projects - it tried to express a relatively new and rapidly-evolving discourse. I also believe that my analysis of my survey results can contribute to the further evolution of that discourse.

The Walworth research neither supported nor rejected the ideas embodied in my research question. As I've shown, some of the groups of questions were inappropriate means through which to investigate my overall research question, and even those groups judged appropriate had problems internally and in their relationships with each other. Consequently, the research results should be regarded as a (further!) Pilot study, and their lessons embodied in further investigations. In my view, such investigations would still be useful, because - as I will show in the next chapter - much of the media research undertaken in the 1980s has failed to satisfactorily address the issues I raised in Walworth.

4.4.2 'Technical' and Linguistic Problems.

Many of the problems in the Walworth research derived from the phrasing of the questions. Firstly, there were questions which answered themselves; for example, those concerning the role on television of experts. Then there were the questions which assumed an identity between the 'real' world and its representation on television; for example, those concerning the operation of the political system. Finally, there were questions which attempted to relate elements which were unrelated; for example, those concerning insularity in adverts and also in News (Are purchasing decisions necessarily related to insular world views? In specifying the nationalities of their preferred choices of cars and stereos, some of our interviewees argued

that quality was a prime consideration - which wasn't an option open to them in the questionnaire.)

In seeking congruence between people's experiences of certain issues (for example, police violence) and their representation in programmes, those questions implied that realism is the 'best' form of programme, and that relationships between a programme and viewers' social-material circumstances are congruent only when viewers recognise their own experiences in a programme's representation. Consequently, those questions implied almost reflective relationships not just between 'the world' and viewers' consciousness of it, but also between 'the world' and programmes' representations of it.

However, relationships between 'the world', consciousness and televisual representations are more complex than mere reflection, as I argued in my critiques in chapters two and three. Viewers do more than just recognise/reject realist representations when watching television - as some interviewees said in response to questions about *The Sweeney*, "It's only a programme, isn't it?". Therefore, investigations into how people make sense of programmes must acknowledge that people may watch a programme on more than one 'level' and, indeed, on several 'levels' simultaneously. Thus, they may do more than just recognise or reject a programme's representation of an issue - they may reject a programme as 'unrealistic' while simultaneously 'identifying' with a character in it.

By the same token, investigations must recognise that television represents issues in different programme-forms. For example, while unemployment was featuring in the soap opera *Coronation Street*, it could well have also been the subject of a documentary, or of a current affairs programme, or of a television play. Clearly, the form in which it was represented could differ radically in each case, and investigations into audience-programme relationships must acknowledge the possible significance of different programme-forms.

4.4.3 Conceptual and Theoretical Problems.

The 'technical' problems I have just discussed expressed a theoretical foundation which was insufficiently coherent, due to the continuously-evolving discourse within which the research question was posed. The question "Are understandings related to circumstances?" missed the point: if they are related, the real issue is how? Indeed, with hindsight, the very form of the research question reproduced the three theoretical problems whose resolution I had argued is essential to a new discourse: the Individual-Society and Materialism-Idealism dualisms, and the particular role of cultural form.

Firstly, asking "Are understandings related to circumstances?" reproduced an Individual-Society dualism in which society is the 'context' for the individual consciousness. However, if circumstances contribute to consciousness, can they be regarded as merely 'context' - indeed, can such circumstances be distinguished from consciousness at all? One could address that problem by diachronically linking an individual's present consciousness with the role(s) played by social characteristics such as gender, class, etc. in her/his general history as an individual and particular history as a television viewer. Secondly, asking "Are understandings related to circumstances?" reproduced a Materialism-Idealism dualism by posing the mental and material 'worlds' as distinct but mutually-defining phenomena. To resolve this dualism, one would need to investigate how an individual's particular negotiations with her/his circumstances produce views in her/him which are similar to those of others who share those circumstances. Finally, asking "Are understandings related to circumstances?" implies that relationships - if any - between audiences' social-material circumstances and their understandings of programmes occur irrespective of programme form, which is thus rendered merely 'contextual' to meaning-production. However, some programme forms are more 'open' than others to diverse interpretations, and so programme-form may more-or-less determine an audience-member's interpretation, depending on the range of understandings which s/he brings to the encounter. (I will discuss this in detail in the next chapter.)

4.4.4 Posing a New Research Question

The results of my Walworth project could contribute to a new discourse in broadcasting research if they met the three aims I derived in chapters one, two and three, and which I will reconsider here.

1. Pose a clear, non-atomistic model of society which resolves the individual-society dualism into a new, historically-specific focus of inquiry.

The difficulty of meeting this aim can be seen in the problems I identified in the Walworth research. On the one hand, it seemed to resolve the individual-society dualism: its focus of inquiry implied a non-atomistic model of society in which (around broadcasting, at least) people who share membership of social groups such as occupation or gender are likely to share understandings of the world. In other words, in the Walworth research, gender, age and occupation appeared as origins of meaning at the expense of the individual, who was 'merely' an expression of those 'collective' characteristics, rather than the unique origin of meaning. Taken to its logical conclusion, this would replace the individual-society dualism with a dualism between 'social group' and society: instead of society being an atomistic agglomeration of independent, unique individuals, it would be an agglomeration of 'social groups', each determining the consciousness of the individuals within it. Indeed, the Walworth research concentrated on social groups at the expense of concrete individuals, and so while it tentatively suggested that there were ways of watching television associated with particular social groups, it failed to ask whether these appeared consistently in the responses by individuals in those groups, and how an individual's everyday life becomes 'translated' into such group-specific ways of watching television.

That failure is highlighted if congruent relationships are sought in responses by individuals rather than by social groups. In Fig. 18, each individual's response to each of the three 'successful' groups of questions (i.e. those concerning *Coronation Street*, *The Sweeney*, and *Profile*, etc.) is described as congruent, not congruent or uncertain; and placed alongside each other to see whether each individual responded consistently (all-congruent, all-incongruent or all-uncertain) to the

Fig. 18

| | A | B | C | | A | B | C | | A | B | C | | A | B | C |
|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|
| 1 | + | - | - | 36 | + | - | ? | 71 | - | - | - | 106 | + | + | ? |
| 2 | - | ? | - | 37 | - | + | - | 72 | - | - | + | 107 | + | - | + |
| 3 | + | + | ? | 38 | ? | - | + | 73 | + | + | - | 108 | ? | - | ? |
| 4 | + | - | ? | 39 | ? | - | - | 74 | ? | - | ? | | | | |
| 5 | ? | + | + | 40 | ? | ? | ? | 75 | + | - | + | | | | |
| 6 | + | + | ? | 41 | + | + | - | 76 | + | - | - | | | | |
| 7 | - | - | - | 42 | + | - | + | 77 | ? | ? | ? | | | | |
| 8 | + | + | + | 43 | + | - | - | 78 | + | + | ? | | | | |
| 9 | - | + | - | 44 | - | + | ? | 79 | - | + | + | | | | |
| 10 | ? | ? | + | 45 | ? | + | - | 80 | + | - | - | | | | |
| 11 | + | - | + | 46 | ? | + | ? | 81 | ? | - | ? | | | | |
| 12 | - | + | - | 47 | ? | - | + | 82 | ? | + | - | | | | |
| 13 | ? | - | ? | 48 | ? | + | ? | 83 | - | ? | - | | | | |
| 14 | ? | - | + | 49 | ? | - | ? | 84 | - | + | ? | | | | |
| 15 | - | - | - | 50 | + | + | - | 85 | - | - | - | | | | |
| 16 | + | + | - | 51 | ? | + | ? | 86 | + | + | - | | | | |
| 17 | - | - | - | 52 | ? | - | ? | 87 | ? | + | - | | | | |
| 18 | ? | + | - | 53 | + | + | - | 88 | + | - | ? | | | | |
| 19 | ? | - | ? | 54 | ? | + | ? | 89 | + | - | ? | | | | |
| 20 | - | - | - | 55 | + | + | + | 90 | - | - | ? | | | | |
| 21 | ? | + | - | 56 | ? | - | - | 91 | - | - | - | | | | |
| 22 | + | ? | + | 57 | + | + | ? | 92 | + | + | + | | | | |
| 23 | + | + | + | 58 | - | - | - | 93 | + | - | ? | | | | |
| 24 | + | + | - | 59 | - | - | - | 94 | ? | ? | + | | | | |
| 25 | - | - | ? | 60 | + | + | - | 95 | - | - | - | | | | |
| 26 | + | + | + | 61 | + | + | - | 96 | ? | + | + | | | | |
| 27 | + | + | - | 62 | + | + | - | 97 | + | + | - | | | | |
| 28 | + | ? | ? | 63 | - | - | - | 98 | + | + | ? | | | | |
| 29 | - | ? | ? | 64 | + | + | + | 99 | + | + | - | | | | |
| 30 | - | + | + | 65 | ? | + | ? | 100 | - | + | ? | | | | |
| 31 | + | - | ? | 66 | + | - | + | 101 | ? | - | ? | | | | |
| 32 | ? | - | + | 67 | + | - | ? | 102 | ? | - | - | | | | |
| 33 | + | + | - | 68 | ? | + | + | 103 | + | + | - | | | | |
| 34 | + | - | - | 69 | ? | ? | ? | 104 | - | - | ? | | | | |
| 35 | + | - | + | 70 | + | + | + | 105 | - | + | ? | | | | |

CONSISTENT "+": 7

" - ": 11

" ? ": 3

INCONSISTENT : 87
108

"H" = "CORONATION STREET"

"B" = "THE SWEENEY"

"L" = "PROFILE", ETC.

questions about different issues in different programmes. The vast majority of interviewees (80.6%) gave inconsistent responses. In Fig. 19, individuals' responses are aggregated according to their membership of social groups, and there, too, inconsistency predominates: among the men, consistent responses were found in blue-collar and white-collar workers, students and the unemployed of 0-60 years of age; but among the women, only pensioners of 31-60 years of age gave consistent responses.

The inconsistency of the responses could be explained by thinking of consciousness as a dialectical process in which each individual actively negotiates the circumstances associated with her/his class, gender, age, etc., while constrained by 'forces' which are also associated with those circumstances, and which her/his 'negotiations' reproduce or challenge. Such a view of consciousness is obviously very general, and would need detailing in particular instances. (The reference to 'forces' acknowledges that the form and content of the individual's negotiations aren't yet understood.) However it poses the individual's 'negotiations' with the circumstances of their everyday lives as reproducing or challenging the nature (and influence) of the constraints associated with the society-wide groupings (class, gender, etc.) to which s/he belongs.

Such an explanation avoids an individual-society dualism because it presents 'society' and social circumstances as existing only in and through individuals' reproductive/challenging negotiations of their social circumstances. Further, the emphasis on individuals' constraints avoids two analytical traps: the Cartesian view of the individual as the (unconstrained) origin of knowledge; and the tendency of Husserlian phenomenologists to see the world as merely the result of 'intersubjective' relationships between individuals. Finally, emphasising individuals' constraints also begins to resolve the materialism-idealism dualism by grounding people's ideas in their material circumstances without regarding them as mere 'reflections' of those circumstances.

Fig. 19

MALES

| | | OCCUPATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------|---|---|--------------|---|---|---------|---|---|-----------|---|---|-----------|---|---|------------|---|---|-------|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | Blue Collar | | | White Collar | | | Student | | | Housewife | | | Pensioner | | | Unemployed | | | Other | | | | | |
| AGE | | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | | | |
| 0-30 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | + | | |
| | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | - | | |
| | | | | | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | ? | | |
| 31-60 | | 4 | 6 | 4 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | + | | |
| | | 4 | 3 | 4 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | - | | | |
| | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | ? | | |
| 61+ | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | + | | |
| | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | - | | | |
| | | 2 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | ? | | | |

FEMALES

| AGE | | OCCUPATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-------------|---|---|--------------|---|---|---------|---|---|-----------|---|---|-----------|---|---|------------|---|---|-------|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | Blue Collar | | | White Collar | | | Student | | | Housewife | | | Pensioner | | | Unemployed | | | Other | | | | | |
| | | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | A | B | C | | | |
| 0-30 | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | + | | | |
| | | 4 | | 1 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 2 | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | | - | | | |
| | 3 | | 3 | 3 | | 3 | | | 1 | 3 | | 3 | | | | | | | | | 2 | ? | | | |
| 31-60 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 | | | | 6 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | + | | | |
| | 6 | 5 | 8 | | 4 | 4 | | | | 3 | 5 | 4 | | | | | | | | 1 | | - | | | |
| | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | 4 | 3 | 4 | | | | 1 | | | | | | ? | | | |
| 61+ | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | + | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 4 | 3 | | | | | | | - | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | ? | | | |

A= GROUP OF QUESTIONS AROUND "CORONATION STREET"

B= " " " " "THE SWEENEY"

C= " " " " "PROFILE", ETC.

" += Congruence; "- = No Congruence; "? = Congruence Uncertain

There is, of course, a danger that individuals' negotiations of their circumstances can seem to be both the pre-condition of consciousness and its result: the individual's understanding of the world depends on how s/he negotiates her/his circumstances ... but such negotiations will depend on how s/he understands the world! Such circular logic is problematic if consciousness is regarded as a static, 'once-for-all' phenomenon; if, however, consciousness is investigated diachronically as a dialectical relationship between people and their circumstances, the problematic 'circle' becomes an interactive relationship between consciousness and circumstances, in which a 'starting point' ("Which is first: consciousness or circumstances ?") isn't an issue. In summary: consciousness is a dialectical process in which each individual actively negotiates the circumstances which s/he encounters because of her/his class, gender, age, etc., while constrained by 'forces' associated with those circumstances, which they either reproduce or challenge through their 'negotiations'.

2. Resolve the materialism-idealism dualism into a new model of knowledge-production;

While my Walworth research concerned the potential influence of social-material circumstances on people's understandings of programmes, I think it failed to satisfactorily resolve the materialism-idealism dualism because it suffered from the same inadequacies as the theories of culture which I examined in Chapter Three. My research (like those theories) implied that people's world views are associated with particular material circumstances, that people in those circumstances somehow 'absorb' world views from them, and that understandings are produced solely at the level of the collective (defined in terms of shared social-material circumstances).

To properly address the materialism-idealism dualism, a modified Walworth research project would have to 'inject' a note of indeterminacy into relationships between audiences' social-material circumstances and their understandings of programmes. Such indeterminacy of understandings would complement the indeterminacy of representation arising from the diversity of programme form, which leads to the next aim

3. Explain the roles of particular cultural forms and of particular cultural and ideological institutions in social change, especially their roles in the commodification of culture.

My research didn't investigate whether meaning-production around particular programmes links programme-makers and viewers: the questionnaire concerned several types of programme, but didn't investigate the influence (if any) of programme form on audiences' understandings. Also, it was concerned exclusively with broadcasting, and so it didn't examine relationships between cultural forms and audiences' understandings. For example: Do people watch programmes on video in the same ways that they watch the original broadcast version; and do people attend differently to material in books, theatre or film than on broadcast television and/or on video?

The Walworth research could be extended in that way by developing the notion of encoding/decoding proposed by Hall (1980) and characterising programmes according to the extent to which they are 'open' to a diversity of decodings, thus integrating the production and 'consumption' of meaning around broadcasting. In such a project, audiences' understandings of a programme could be grouped together according to their degree of similarity with each other, and cross-tabulated with audiences' membership of social 'groups'. The greater the similarity, then the more the programme can be described as 'tightly' encoded - more 'openly' encoded programmes would produce more diverse understandings. From that position, one could investigate whether particular decodings are linked with particular audiences' circumstances.

A new research question which encompasses these considerations could be the following:

What are the relationships - if any - between the following phenomena:

- 1. A particular televisual representation of an issue;**
- 2. The sense(s) made of that representation by individuals described in terms of such social characteristics as occupation, gender and age;**
- 3. Those individuals' encounters - if any - in their everyday lives with the issue being represented.**

4.4.5 Planning a New Investigation.

Investigating that new research question would involve questioning people about their television viewing and their social-material circumstances, but three factors would differentiate the new investigation from the Walworth research: the selection of research subjects; the research methods; and the form of the results.

In a new investigation, research subjects would be selected to produce a 'pool' of people with highly diverse social and physical circumstances, in order to test my argument that an individual's consciousness is the result of 'unique' negotiations with her/his circumstances. This would differ from the Walworth research, in which research subjects were automatically 'selected' by their residence on Walworth's Aylesbury Estate, because that was the location of the WCR project. However, although my Walworth research question hypothesised that people's social-material circumstances may influence their television viewing, in my analysis I failed to consider the physical elements of those circumstances. I highlighted the fact that some of the responses to the questionnaire from people in the "shared circumstances" of a council housing estate in a traditionally working class area were similar, suggesting that this implicated the physical characteristics of those circumstances in interviewees' understandings of programmes. However, I also highlighted the dissimilarity of other responses, and argued that this showed that circumstances aren't simply reflected in consciousness, but gave no indication of just how circumstances and consciousness are related, and particularly how the physical characteristics of people's circumstances may be implicated in their understandings of programmes.

A new investigation could seek to describe the influence - if any - of interviewees' physical circumstances on their consciousness through two procedures. Firstly, the same attention would be paid to research subjects' physical circumstances as was paid to their social characteristics in the Walworth research. To match their social characteristics (gender, occupation and age), the physical characteristics of interviewees' everyday lives would be described in detail, including such matters as the location and nature of their homes; the location and nature of their jobs (where appropriate); the nature and extent of

their non-work time; and the apportioning of their time between home, work and elsewhere. Secondly, questionnaire responses categorised according to interviewees' social characteristics (occupation, etc.) would be cross-tabulated with the physical characteristics of interviewees' circumstances. If social characteristics influence viewing, then responses by individuals in the same social groups will be similar; BUT if physical characteristics also influence viewing, then responses by individuals in the same social groups will only be similar if their shared circumstances have the same physical characteristics.

The investigation itself would have three stages: a 'pre-Pilot', two Pilots and the final investigation. The 'pre-Pilot' would identify the issues to discuss with the research subjects in the Pilot investigations. A representative sample from the 'pool' of research subjects would be given a list of issues prominent in the media at the time and of likely relevance (however defined) to their lives, and asked to rank them in order of importance and to explain the reasons for their ranking. (This draws on the experience in the Walworth Pilot of interviewees never having heard of one of the issues to be discussed - the Surrey Docks controversy!) The second stage would consist of two Pilots for the final investigation. Firstly, each individual in another representative sample of research subjects would be asked to watch and discuss a series of groups of programmes. Each group would consist of a number of programmes of different forms which represent an issue identified as appropriate in the 'pre-Pilot'. ('Represent' could mean anything from a 'live' news report to a theme in a situation comedy.) The results of each individual's viewing and discussions would be categorised according to the social and physical characteristics of their circumstances. In the other Pilot, individuals in a third representative sample would be asked to watch and discuss those same groups of programmes, but this time in groups defined according to one or more of those social and physical characteristics - for example, a group of women, a group of blue-collar workers, a group of 31-60 year-olds, a group of home-owners, a group of factory workers. The results of the 'pre-Pilot' and the two Pilots would be analysed for any methodological improvements, and these would be incorporated in the research instruments to be used in the final stage - investigating

audience-programme relationships in the remainder of the 'pool' of research subjects.

The form of results in the proposed new investigation would be responses to questions, but they would differ from those in the Walworth research because they would integrate the research subjects' consciousness with judgements on the relative 'open-ness' of the programmes under scrutiny. As I suggested earlier, people's understandings of a programme will depend on the extent to which that programme is 'open' to a diversity of interpretations. Thus, questionnaire responses by individuals would be cross-tabulated according to three factors: the social characteristics of research subjects' circumstances; the physical characteristics of their circumstances; and the 'open-ness' of the programmes and programme-forms used in the investigations.

In the next chapter, I will assess the extent to which the new research question, and the proposal for a new investigation which I have developed from analysing my own early 1980s research can be developed in the light of some major pieces of media research performed since that time.

NOTES:

¹ The issuing of the cable radio licences followed the pattern which had been set six years previously around the UK's short-lived cable television 'experiments': a group of people living and/or working in a neighbourhood formed themselves into a committee with the collaboration of the company which was already operating a cable relay system in the local area. That committee then applied to the Home Office for a licence to transmit programmes.

(For a detailed account of the cable television 'experiments', see Lewis, P. M. [1978] "Community Television and Cable in Britain" BFI; and Bibby, A., Denford, C., and Cross, J. [1979] "Local Television: Piped Dreams?" Redwing Press).

At the beginning of 1978, the Labour Home Secretary announced the award of seven 'experimental' cable radio licences. The cable radio schemes, like the preceding cable television ones, were referred to by the Home Office as 'experiments'. However, their establishment was unaccompanied by any statement of objectives, and no form of monitoring and evaluation was undertaken as part of the exercise. Licences were issued to:

- * Aycliffe Community Radio (Newton Aycliffe);
- * Radio Basildon (Essex);
- * CRMK (Community Radio Milton Keynes);
- * WSM Community Radio (Telford);
- * Greenwich Cablesound (South-East London);
- * Radio Thamesmead (South-East London);
- * Walworth Cable Radio (South-East London), where the local cable company was initially British Relay, which was subsequently taken over by the Electronic Rentals Group, and merged with its Visionhire subsidiary.

² When Granada first broadcast "Coronation Street", it was billed as a "drama-documentary" because of its realist(ic) representation of a working class neighbourhood.

³ "N/A" (No Answer) refers to the number of interviewees who gave no answer to this question. Consequently, the numbers and percentages under "True", "False", etc. refer to the total number of interviewees MINUS those not answering, rather than to the total number.

-
- 4 Each subject mentioned by an interviewee was given 3, 2 or 1 marks according to whether it was rated of first, second or third importance respectively. The three most-frequently mentioned subjects were then isolated from the rest, and their total number of marks was aggregated. The mark each subject gained was then expressed as a percentage of that new aggregate number.
 - 5 This policy was stated by Esther Rose, one of the programme's script-writers, on a phone-in programme on LBC in early 1981.
 - 6 This relates to the findings (of the students in the Survey) that UK television concentrates on "personalities" in series, shows and even documentaries, thereby espousing "individualism" as a way of explaining social change.

CHAPTER FIVE

AUDIENCES IN THE EIGHTIES

In this chapter, I will examine the extent to which the results of some major media research projects of the 1980s could develop the new research question I drafted as a result of the lessons of the Walworth research. The new research question was;

What are the relationships - if any - between the following phenomena:

- 1. A particular televisual representation of an issue;**
- 2. The sense(s) made of that representation by individuals described in terms of such social characteristics as occupation, gender and age;**
- 3. Individuals' encounters - if any - in their everyday lives with the issue being represented.**

After reviewing those selected 1980s projects, I will synthesise from them a new model of meaning-production around broadcasting, and in the final section of the chapter I will examine the extent to which that model could develop my new research question into a new investigation of audience-programme relationships.

5.1 The Decline of the 'Dominant Ideology' Thesis

1980s broadcasting research occurred within - and contributed to - a changing 'climate' in Western thinking. Hitherto, social phenomena had been defined or explained by placing them within one or more general explanations of the social world, i.e. within one or more of the 'grand narratives' or 'overarching theories' characteristic of 'modern' thinking (stemming in large part from the Enlightenment). However, by the 1980s many people had begun to eschew general, 'modern' explanations of social phenomena in favour of more 'localised' and 'particular' understandings described as 'postmodern'.

An example of the general dissatisfaction with 'grand narratives' which was particularly relevant to broadcasting research was the decline in the influence of what Abercrombie et al (1985) called the 'dominant ideology' thesis. Broadcasting researchers weren't the only people who had used that thesis to explain events and phenomena, but Collins (1990: 3) has argued that in 1970s media studies it had been

the favoured or dominant paradigm, and he has summarised its use there as follows:

"The dominant ideology thesis attributes to a unified body of erroneous ideas - ideology - causal status in what is defined as a systematic and pervasive mystification of people's understanding of society and social relations. The mass media are customarily understood to be at least a major agency, and often the decisive agency, in the propagation and reproduction of ideology. Implicit in the dominant ideology thesis is a notion of a strong media effect (despite the lack of satisfactory empirical demonstrations of a strong effect as a *general* phenomenon)." (Original emphasis)

The 'dominant ideology' thesis was clearly a 'grand narrative': broadcasting researchers explained particular phenomena, research findings, etc. by placing them within the 'overarching theory' that the stability of capitalist society depended on the continuation of bourgeois ideology, of which the media were leading proponents. I have already argued in chapters two and three that much of the broadcasting research associated with the 'dominant ideology' thesis was problematic (while not necessarily linking those problems with 'modern' characteristics): I criticised the broadcasting research projects of the Glasgow Media Group, of the Local Radio Workshop and of Piepe et al, which (to different extents) embodied that thesis; I showed the particular inadequacies of the work of Althusser and Lukacs, each of whom worked within and developed the 'dominant ideology' thesis in his different way; that thesis informed the "Images of Society" tradition which I criticised for its 'reflection'; and much of the work under the heading "Cultural Studies" was written in reaction to it, which I criticised for its 'deferral'.

In much broadcasting research in the 1980s, the declining influence of the 'grand narrative' of broadcasting research - the dominant ideology thesis - was expressed in a shift in concern away from the conditions of *production* of programmes and towards the conditions of their *reception*, with researchers asking just how audiences understand programmes as they do, and how - if at all - the meanings which they produce around broadcasting relate to those they produce in other areas of their lives. The 'active' audience implied in the concern with

reception clearly challenged the production-oriented 'grand narrative' that audience-members are 'passive' and 'subjected' to the dominant ideology as expressed in (amongst other things) broadcast texts. That grand narrative was increasingly challenged by the reception-oriented view that a text is more-or-less 'open' to diverse interpretations by 'active' viewers - is "polysemic" - and that those interpretations may or may not correspond to the programme-producers' original intentions, and may or may not be couched in ideological terms.

5.2 Towards a New Paradigm in Broadcasting Research?

I agree with Collins that within broadcasting research, dissatisfactions with the 'dominant ideology thesis' have yet to coalesce into a new dominant paradigm. However, during the 1980s, some new ways of thinking about relationships between audiences and programmes emerged which, in my judgement, could contribute to a new discourse in media studies. These new ways of thinking came from four broad areas of work: first, from work on textual and discursive aspects of television viewing by Morley (1979 with Brunsdon; 1980a; 1980b; 1981; 1986; 1989), by MacCabe (1981), by Derrida (1982), by Bennett and Woolacott (1987), by Kaplan (1987) and by Mercer (1988); second, from studies by Hobson (1982), Ang (1985) and Buckingham (1987) of audiences' 'active' relationships with soap operas; third, from research into 'open' and 'closed' texts by Schlesinger et al (1983); and fourth from the continuing work on 'resistant interpretations' by Fiske (1987; 1988; 1989).

5.2.1 Changing Concerns in 1980s Research.

In the work of writers such as those I've mentioned, concern in broadcasting research shifted from dominant ideology to polysemy and from production to reception. At the same time as these researchers presented meaning-production as an intertextual/interdiscursive process, they also presented meaning-producing relationships between programmes and audiences as inherently unstable and indeterminate. In their work, the individual viewer no longer appeared as the origin of meaning around a particular text; instead, her/his 'reading' of a

particular text drew upon already-existing meanings, derived from her/his 'readings' of one or more earlier texts and/or from others' readings of the same and/or other texts. That seems to reduce the individual to the status of a mere 'bearer' of meanings originating 'somewhere else' - a 1980s equivalent of the 'bearers' ("tragers") of social forces in 1970s Althusserian structuralism. However, unlike the latter's implication that intratextual organisation leads 'passive' audiences to 'prefer' a particular interpretation of a text, and thus to experience a particular 'effect' (ideological or otherwise), the 'deferral' of meaning, together with the notion of polysemy, renders it impossible to predict any outcome, which is why audiences' relationships with texts appear as inherently unstable and indeterminate.

That shift in concern away from the conditions of *production* of programmes and towards the conditions of their '*reception*' meant that a concern with the structures and operations of the media as *social institutions* was frequently replaced by a concern with how *individuals* watch programmes. Polysemic programme-analysis emphasises meaning-production by individuals at the expense of social meaning-production by dissolving the distinction between socially-organised 'producers' (and their 'encoded' meanings) and individualised 'audiences' (and their 'decoded' meanings): a producers' 'intention' in a scene or a programme becomes merely one possible interpretation of it, with no necessary priority over any other. One person's definition of a programme's structure and content will not necessarily accord with another person's, irrespective of whether they are a programme-producer or an audience-member, thus obliterating any influence by the institution within which the programme was produced.

From a polysemic stance, no particular interpretation of a programme can be classed as 'preferred', 'aberrant', 'resistant' or whatever without empirical evidence as to the programme-producers' intentions, because producers' intentions can't be inferred from the structure and content of 'their' programme - definitively, structure and content lie in the eye of the beholder, as it were. Further, from a polysemic perspective, such endeavours are anyway futile - since producers'

intentions no longer necessarily determine audiences' interpretations, who cares what they were? However, despite that theoretical openness, some 1980s research projects (for example, Buckingham, 1987: 46-47.) showed many practical instances of audience-programme relationships in which one interpretation had clearly been 'privileged' over others within the scene or programme, and it would be hard to say that polysemy's theoretically-infinite range of interpretations had been the basis of viewers' interpretations.

The producer-viewer distinction certainly disappeared in some 1980s writing about television soap operas, in which the alleged intention of the programme-producer bore no necessary relationship to viewers' interpretations. Some writers argued that audiences' interpretations of soap operas embodied critiques (more-or-less comprehensive and more-or-less clearly articulated) of aspects of contemporary society: Ang (1985) ascribed critiques of patriarchy and capitalism to viewers of *Dallas*; Lovell (cited in Tulloch, 1990: 205) argued that popular culture contained "utopian and oppositional elements"; and Hobson (1982) argued that viewers of *Crossroads* who felt unable to challenge dominant/preferred understandings of the world as it *is*, expressed their critiques in romantic/utopian visions of how it *might* or *should* be. There is an automatic temptation to assume that such 'political' interpretations radically differed from the programme-producers' intentions, because soap operas are generally regarded as 'soft' and 'easy' forms of light entertainment, rather than as vehicles of ideological subversion! However, such 'common sense' judgements reify what is, after all, an interpretation: they say, "*Crossroads* is 'easy entertainment'", rather than saying "One of several possible interpretations of *Crossroads* is that it is 'easy entertainment'".

This isn't just the semantic and/or pedantic matter it might appear to be. After all, 'postmodern' polysemic approaches to broadcasting aim to radically recast ways of thinking about meaning-production around broadcasting, especially the assumption that certain interpretations of programmes are 'obvious' and 'common sense' ("*Crossroads* is light entertainment") merely because they fit particular teleological views of knowledge-production. For instance, a polysemic approach rejects the 'dominant ideology' thesis precisely because within it, signs, scenes,

programmes, etc. are interpreted via their relationships with an historical process (for example, "History is the history of class struggle"), rather than their relationships with other signs, scenes, programmes, etc. Without wishing to trivialise the matter, that radical recasting could be summed-up by substituting "could be" for "is": "*Crossroads* could be light entertainment ... but it's not inevitable."

5.2.2 A New Approach in Broadcasting Research.

Within the overall decline in influence of the 'dominant ideology' thesis, many 1980s broadcasting research projects examined meaning-production around broadcasting in terms of the discourses available to audiences. While many broadcasting researchers have been primarily concerned with the expression of discourses through programmes, some researchers (especially Morley) also acknowledged that audiences may encounter certain discourses at sites and in forms other than broadcast texts, and others (for example Hobson) acknowledged that a particular programme may be the only site and form in which certain audiences encounter certain discourses.

Consequently, 1980s broadcasting research projects posed necessarily complex relationships between discourses, texts and circumstances. However, I think that elements of those projects can be combined into a discourse and associated methods of broadcasting research which differ from those of adherents to the 'dominant ideology' thesis. In the rest of this section I will introduce such a discourse and methods; in section 5.3 I will show their relationships with the 1980s research projects; in section 5.4 I will evaluate the discourse and methods; and in the final three sections I will consider their implications for broadcasting research in the 1990s.

From those 1980s projects, the following discourse could be drafted:

Makers of a programme offer audiences one or more 'viewing positions' from which to understand it. The number, nature, and diversity of the 'viewing positions' offered depend on the programme's degree of 'open-ness' (defined in terms of its structure and content) and on its mode of address. In its turn, each of those

characteristics depends on inter-relationships between, on the one hand, producers' textual and discursive repertoires, and on the other hand the institutional constraints within which they draw upon those repertoires.

Viewers accept or reject a 'viewing position' offered by/in a programme to different degrees, depending on their ability (their cultural competence or "cultural capital") to critically distance themselves from the programme. Viewers' cultural competence consists of the textual and discursive repertoires which they have acquired as a result of their social-material circumstances.

It is also possible to draft a model of meaning-production around broadcasting in association with that discourse. The model consists of four bipolar 'axes' of meaning-production, each of which may be inter-related with one or more of the others:

- a) Intratextual-Intertextual;
- b) Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive;
- c) "Open"-"Closed" (referring to a text's structure);
- d) Production-Reception.

The draft discourse poses meaning as neither imposed on passive audiences by "ideological apparatuses", nor embodied in programmes produced by "tragers" of economically-determined social relationships. Instead, it poses individual programme-producers and viewers producing meaning around programmes (Albeit at different sites - producers have to negotiate not only general social-material constraints which they may well share with viewers but also the specific constraints of the institutional settings in which they work.) by drawing on their particular repertoires of ideas, views and understandings. These repertoires incorporate elements of the texts and discourses they have encountered in negotiating their social and material circumstances. Textual and discursive repertoires are complex mediating frameworks between individuals' social/material circumstances and their experiences of the world, and are constantly reinforced or developed by their experiences as producers and/or as audiences. As such, the notion of a repertoire implies neither a simple reflective relationship between social circumstances and experience, nor a methodological

individualism which would render any social perspective on the media redundant.

The four 'axes' comprising the model of meaning-production are linked with the draft discourse by their common origins in the 1980s research projects. Each 'axis' embodies a direction or focus in broadcasting research: examining texts, investigating discourses, categorising programmes according to structural considerations and integrating the production and reception of programmes within research projects. Such 'directions' or 'foci' aren't research methods in the sense of being explicit, detailed and practical descriptions of how to investigate meaning-production, but each states what should be investigated and how an investigation within one focus links with investigations within each of the other three. Consequently, each 'axis' can be regarded as a research 'method' associated with the discourse.

The draft discourse is my synthesis of the results of those 1980s research projects, but each element of the discourse clearly originates in one or more of the projects:

- * My 'viewing position' combines the "'objective' reading formation" proposed by Bennett and Woolacott (1987), the 'interdiscursive individual' posed by Pecheux (1969, 1975), and the "cultural capital" of Bourdieu (1984), together with the "occasion of reading" proposed by Mercer (1988).
- * My notion that programme-producers and viewers produce meanings around programmes by drawing upon already-existing repertoires of textual and discursive understandings, synthesises research which contributed to what I will call the Intertextual-Intratextual axis and the Interdiscursive-Intradiscursive axis.
- * My notion of programme-producers and viewers as mirror-images of each other draws upon work within what I will call the Production-Reception 'axis'.
- * The relationship I pose between open-ness and 'viewing position' synthesises research contributing to the "Open"- "Closed" axis.

(Each of the four 'axes' in the model of meaning-production also originates in those 1980s projects, as I will show in describing them.)

Two factors prevent the draft discourse replacing the 'dominant ideology thesis' as the dominant paradigm in broadcasting research. Firstly, some of its major elements contradict each other, as I shall show when evaluating it against my three aims for a new discourse. Secondly, there are some serious methodological problem associated with it, as I shall show when discussing elements originating in the work of Morley, Fiske and Bourdieu. Thirdly, even if those methodological problems were solved, the draft discourse would lack distinctive criteria through which to validate the knowledge produced within its perspective. Thus, it couldn't constitute a paradigm as defined by Kuhn (1970: 10), i.e. "law, theory, application, and instrumentation together".

However, if those methodological problems were solved, the draft discourse and its associated methods, while not constituting a Kuhnian "revolution" in broadcasting research, could perhaps challenge what Lakatos (1970) might call the "'hard core'" of the "research programme" of the 'dominant ideology' thesis. Certainly, an increasing number of studies expressing a discourse of polysemic meaning-production have offered insights into audiences' potential for 'active' and multi-layered meaning-production, which challenge the pessimism of the 'dominant ideology' thesis, and which therefore make it possible to describe polysemy in Lakatos's terms as a "progressive" research programme.

5.3 Four 'Axes' of Meaning-Production around Broadcasting.

The following sections define and derive each axis and each 'pole'.

5.3.1 The Intratextual-Intertextual Axis.

*** The intratextual pole.**

This concerns the meaning-producing relationships between structural elements of a 'text' which 'readers' create in the course of understanding that text. While intratextuality could describe earlier structuralist approaches to 'content' analysis, in which a text's structural relationships determined how it is 'read', in 1980s

intratextual studies, the viewer was an 'active' site at which those intratextual relationships occur.

* The intertextual pole.

This refers to the meaning-producing relationships between one 'text' and others which 'readers' create in the course of understanding that text. (This would include a text's 'mode of address'.)

I have presented the two poles as definitively distinct from each other for analytical purposes, but they can be less distinct in practice. For instance, in his study of the UK soap opera *EastEnders*, Buckingham (1987: 34-116, 119-122) showed examples of both intratextual and intertextual meaning-production, and also showed that viewers' intratextual understanding of some storylines depended on viewers' intertextual knowledge of the characters' previous lives as told in the books associated with the programme. While this blurs the definitive distinctions between them, it still presents meaning-production as occurring at two distinct 'moments', with the result that viewers of a particular scene who haven't experienced the relevant intertextual 'moment' will be unable to intratextually interpret particular elements of that scene. The text isn't devoid of meaning without that intertextual experience, but some meanings are impossible without it.

These considerations also apply to the other 'axes'. In each 'axis', definitively distinguishing between the two 'poles' would reify each pole into something which exists 'outside' of a particular research project and imposes a structure upon it. However, I think it is worth trying to retain the analytically valuable distinctions while using them to develop a practicable interpretation of 1980s broadcasting research. Each 'pole' constitutes an 'ideal type' of meaning-production around broadcasting which, while not necessarily occurring in practice, is useful for analytical purposes because it enables us to describe particular 'moments' of meaning-production around a particular text as a relationship between (for example) 'purely' intratextual and 'purely' intertextual practice.

From that position, relationships between the 'poles' can be asymmetrical or symmetrical. In some 'moments', meanings can be produced 'purely' by means of the intratextual elements of a scene or

an episode, i.e. viewers need no (intertextual) knowledge of the characters, storylines, etc. other than that contained within the scene or episode. (This is not to ignore the very general knowledge which viewers need to understand a programme - including the meaning of "a programme"! However, it could be argued that this, too, is 'produced' both intra- and intertextually - we recognise something as "a programme" or not on the basis of our prior experience of other "programmes".) In such 'moments' the intratextual pole has a relationship with the intertextual pole which is asymmetrical in the former's favour. In other 'moments', intertextual knowledge is essential to interpret elements which (on an analytical level) are intratextual, and so the two poles have a symmetrical relationship with each other.

Intertextuality is clearly exemplified in the study by Bennett and Woolacott (1987) of the 'texts' of James Bond. Bennett and Woolacott defined "inter-textuality" as socially organised relationships between texts, in which no one element has (analytical) primacy over the others because there is no 'original' text to which the others more-or-less refer; instead, each text defines the others and has particular relationships with them. (They suggested, for instance, that Sean Connery's performance as James Bond in the *films* affected people's reading of the James Bond *novels*.) Intertextuality means that a text never exists as a 'finished' or 'complete' material product, and so 'explaining' a text's meaning solely in terms of how it was produced becomes inadequate.

Derrida (1982) addressed similar issues when he argued that meaning is never inherent in a text because something only has meaning in the specific, particular and material circumstances in which it is used. For example, the meaning or significance of the names "Dirty Den" (*EastEnders*) or "JR" (*Dallas*) depends on the particular circumstances in which television soap opera characters of that name exist. Meaning never exists 'outside' of a text, so a particular signifier (e.g. an actor's name) is always associated with a particular meaning (e.g. the character they played in a soap opera) because each particular association of the two is always related with the other circumstances in which the signifier has appeared. For Derrida, our every use of a signifier bears a

'trace' of its previous uses, and so a signifier's meaning on any one occasion is constantly associated, via those 'traces', with its previous uses, and the origin of meaning is constantly 'deferred' from present circumstances to previous ones. For example, any future role (itself an intertextual phenomenon) which actor Leslie Grantham plays will have intertextual relations with his time as Dirty Den in *EastEnders*, and future fans may always say "Oh yes; he was Dirty Den": in Bennett's & Woolacott's terms (p56), the relationship between a future fan and the current actor will be occasions when, "the inter-textually organised reader meets the inter-textually organised text"!

In Derrida's work, the individual is no longer the intentional originator of meaning, but just an 'effect' of the structure of the language s/he uses and the texts in which this occurs - Leslie Grantham cannot exist 'outside' of those inter-textual relationships. The 'natural' temptation to try to think of Leslie Grantham in his own right, apart from his existence as Dirty Den is an expression, of course, of the notion of an 'original' meaning or a 'primary' text. This was dismissed by Bennett and Woolacott, and for Derrida, too, 'the individual' exists only to the extent that her/his presence constitutes a particular circumstance - itself a particular combination of 'traces' (deferred meanings) in a particular society at a particular time. So Grantham will 'exist' only inasmuch as he alters a given set of circumstances, which will include (inevitably) the 'traces' of Dirty Den!

That summary of intertextuality makes it appear independent of intratextuality, but in practice it can be difficult to definitively distinguish between intratextual and intertextual dimensions of meaning-production, as the studies by Buckingham (1987) and Kaplan (1987) exemplify. Buckingham (1987: 119-122), as I mentioned earlier, showed that viewers' intratextual understanding of some storylines in *EastEnders* depended on viewers' intertextual knowledge of the characters' previous lives as told in the books associated with the programme. Indeed, the ability to 'be' intratextual AND intertextual depends on individuals' cultural competence at manipulating meanings, a competence acquired in earlier encounters with other texts: the creation of intratextual meanings can be a form of intertextuality! In her study of Music Television (MTV), Kaplan (1987)

presented meaning-production as both intra- and intertextual. She described several types of music videos in which meaning-production is intratextual, including what she called postmodern videos, in which viewers may regard relationships between a video's constituent elements as undercutting and subverting each other, obviating (rather than offering) any clear 'viewing position' from which to interpret them. She also argued that MTV is a virtually seamless 'flow', of which adverts, station promotions and 'actual' music videos are merely components, with a significance deriving more from their intertextual relationships with each other than from their own inherent properties. Indeed, one could develop Kaplan's argument and describe the whole 'flow' of MTV as the 'text', in which the apparently intertextual relationships between its constituent elements are actually intratextual ones!

5.3.2 The Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive Axis.

The poles of this axis are inter-related in just the same way as those in the intratextual-intertextual axis, and so similar remarks about distinguishing between the two poles apply here.

* The intradiscursive pole.

The intradiscursive pole refers to the practical ('intertextual') relationships between 'texts' (of the same and/or different genres) expressing the ideas of the *same* discourse which 'readers' create in the course of understanding those texts.

* The interdiscursive pole.

The interdiscursive pole of meaning-production refers to the practical ('intertextual') relationships between 'texts' (of the same and/or different genres) expressing the ideas of *different* discourses which 'readers' create in the course of understanding those texts.

In their study of the 'texts' of James Bond, Bennett and Woolcott (1987) suggested that meaning-production around Bond has been both intradiscursive and interdiscursive. They argued that the whole Bond phenomenon has been the site of a differential (intradiscursive) 're-working' of the same ideologies (discourses) over time, rather than a simple "passing on" or "reproduction" of them, and that this has been

the outcome of the ideologically 'open' nature of the texts, together with the polysemic nature of the Bond character. Bond texts tracked changes in the Cold War ideology in which he originated in the 1950s, as well as reworking ideologies of nationhood ("the new Britain") and of gender (traditional 'chivalry' became the 1960s' "swinging sexuality"). However, for Bennett and Woolacott, meaning-production around Bond texts has been interdiscursive, too. Part of the significance of the Bond character derives from its (interdiscursive) differences from characters in genres expressing other discourses - principally the detective genre and the 'imperialist' spy thriller. Heroes of detective novels such as those by Mickey Spillane are rugged individuals alienated from 'mainstream' society and expressing a purely individualistic discourse about social structure, social change and social values. In contrast, 'imperialist' spies such as Richard Hannay and Bulldog Drummond were gentlemen amateurs within 'mainstream' society, and expressed a discourse comprised of traditional values of loyalty, patriotism and chivalry. Bond, however, is different again: he is a 'professional' working with or against other 'professionals' in a bureaucratic world suffused with contemporary values, and expressing a rational discourse of efficiency and expediency.

The notion of intradiscursive meaning-production also occurred in the study by Ang (1985) of the US soap opera *Dallas*, in which she argued that popular romantic fiction and soap opera are contrasting genres of fiction within a discourse of patriarchal social relations in capitalist society. For Ang, the contrast between these two genres derived from the 'intradiscursive relationships' within each one: in popular romantic fiction, the heroine achieves happiness within existing patriarchal relations by submitting to them, whereas in soap opera, permanent happiness is precluded by the continuously expressed contradictions of capitalism and/or patriarchy. Interdiscursive meaning-production was central to the study by Hobson (1982) of the UK soap opera *Crossroads*. The viewers Hobson spoke to brought two discourses into play simultaneously when they watched *Crossroads*: they adopted the discourse offered to them by the programme, in that they identified with the characters, and were thus involved in the programme's stories; but they also watched the

programme from within a critical discourse of 'distance' because they knew it was, after all, 'only' a programme. Hobson recorded instances of viewers blurring characters' and actors' personalities, and fact and fiction, but she emphasised that at the same time they knew they were 'playing' with the reality-fiction distinction:

"... even those viewers who professed actually to believe in the Crossroads Motel knew that they had to telephone the ATV studios in order to inquire about it. ... *the audience is joining in a game and they know that they are doing it* ... (p104. My emphasis)

Crossroads viewers' critical discourse is similar to MacCabe's notion of a 'metadiscourse'. MacCabe (1981) argued that in realist texts, the range of usually explicit, different & often contradictory discourses are subjugated to, and evaluated from, an implicit and unrecognised metadiscourse of the all-knowing 'reader'. Two examples of such a subjugating metadiscourse would be the implied author in fiction and the representation of the world provided by the camera/microphone/editor in film and television. Hobson didn't present *Crossroads* viewers' critical discourse of 'distance' as the result of the subjugation of discourses, and so 'distance' doesn't necessarily directly exemplify MacCabe's 'metadiscourse'. However, she did suggest that viewers' 'distance' was partly due to their material circumstances. Alongside viewers' 'playful' distancing, to which I've already referred, Hobson noted that women in particular (most of the fans she spoke to were women) were 'forcibly' distanced by their domestic roles, which prevented them from becoming totally involved in the programme. Many had to combine watching *Crossroads* with domestic responsibilities, especially in the kitchen, so they tended to watch the programme on the family's second (monochrome) set in the kitchen, with occasional forays to watch 'special bits' on the colour set.

Critics of *Crossroads* also had 'distanced' relationships with the programme, although theirs were hardly 'playful'. Their 'distance' took the form of criticising the programme's production (its 'form') rather than its themes and stories (its 'content') which, Hobson argued (1982: 170-171), led them to misunderstand what the programme meant to its fans:

"(Crossroads) is criticised for its technical or script inadequacies, without seeing that its greatest strength is in its stories and connections with its audience's own experiences. ... Conventional criticism is rooted in the traditions of literary critical theories, which demand that certain arbitrarily-defined standards are imposed on any piece of writing, whether it be a novel, a poem or drama. ... What the viewers of Crossroads reveal is that they bring critical faculties which are rooted in everyday experiences and common sense, and not in some arbitrary critical theories."

In my view, the critics of *Crossroads* were working within what Bourdieu (1984) has called an "aesthetic disposition", in which general criteria of appreciation are applied to any particular instance of a genre in a 'distanced' appreciation of cultural products. In contrast, viewers' 'involved' appreciation emphasised the content and impact of the programme and its degree of relevance to their everyday life - a cultural disposition which Bourdieu associated with working class people. Those two contrasting cultural dispositions led to conflicting definitions of 'quality' and 'excellence' being applied to *Crossroads*, and Hobson (1982: 136) criticised professional critics of the programme for failing to recognise that viewers' expectations of the pleasures to be gained from *Crossroads* differed from their own:

"To look at a programme like 'Crossroads' and criticise it on the basis of conventional literary/media analysis is obstinately to refuse to understand the relationship which it has with its audience. A television programme is a three-part development - the production process, the programme, and the understanding of that programme by the audience or consumer - and it is false and elitist criticism to ignore what any member of the audience thinks or feels about a programme."

(I agree with Hobson's general sentiment in that last quote, but her notion of a programme as a "three-part development" comes close to reproducing the 'sender-message-receiver' model of communication, with all its implicit problems of determinacy. Further, such a model ignores the different degrees of influence of different discourses, and, in association with them, the differential distribution of the 'right' to criticise. Again, see Bourdieu, 1984.)

Hobson posed a viewer capable of resisting a text's 'preferred reading' by means of the discursive repertoire associated with her/his social-material circumstances. However, as Hobson emphasised, not all social groups offer their members equal opportunities to develop as richly interdiscursive 'readers', and the *differential* distribution of discourses results in particular social groups (for example, housewives) being less able than others to resist a programme's 'preferred reading' - a condition I will refer to as "discursive deprivation". For some of the women Hobson interviewed, television was the major source of their understandings of the world and so, in the absence of alternative sources, television's particular 'discursive repertoire' perforce became theirs:

"When she was talking about how she spent her time during the day this woman told me that she often looked out of the window of her ninth-storey flat and counted cars as they travelled along the main road below." (117)

Hobson argued that in such circumstances, people resist 'preferred' views in the realms of fiction rather than fact: unable to challenge 'preferred' views of the world as it *is*, viewers developed romantic/utopian visions of how it *might* or *should* be. As Hobson (1982: 149) argued, viewers *can* distinguish 'real life' from 'fiction' - the point is, for specific periods of time they choose *not* to:

"This is not to say that (viewers) confuse the events in factual and fiction programmes, simply that there is a tendency to make comparisons and connections between life as *revealed* in the news programmes and life as it perhaps could be, as *portrayed* in fictional forms. ... For there *is* something wrong in the lives of many people and the reassurances which they derive from fictional programmes should not be underestimated."

5.3.3 The "Open"- "Closed" Axis.

Several researchers, including Schlesinger et al, Buckingham, Ang and Fiske, related the indeterminacy of meaning-production around broadcasting to the indeterminate nature of programmes' structures - principally, to the different extents to which programmes 'allowed'

diverse interpretations. In their study of representations on UK television of terrorism, Schlesinger et al (1983) argued that it was hard to predict the outcomes of meaning-production because different programmes - and programme-types - offered different opportunities for diverse interpretations and thus for divergence from the dominant or orthodox interpretation. In support of that view, Schlesinger et al argued that each programme, film, report, etc. was produced within one of four main discourses - 'official', 'alternative', 'populist' and 'oppositional'; that discourse and programme form frequently (but not necessarily) coincide; that each programme, etc. organises its arguments more-or-less "tightly" or "loosely"; and that each programme, etc. was also "open" or "closed" in terms of the 'space' it offered viewers to challenge the discourse it expressed. They concluded:

"Looking across the whole spectrum of programme forms employed in British television, we can see a range of spaces and openings for alternative and oppositional perspectives. How often and how extensively they are actually used, however, depends on the complex network of external pressures and institutional controls that govern programme-making." (p109)

Buckingham (1987) also discussed the extent to which the notion of 'open' texts had enabled 'reception' studies to counterbalance textually-determinist accounts of viewing. Buckingham argued that soap operas in particular are (relatively) 'open' because of their large number of characters and thus of viewpoints, none of which is authoritative, all of which are changeable, and none of which is ever 'finished'. The 'open-ness' of a soap opera such as *EastEnders* invites speculation between episodes by viewers and also by the media (for example via 'leaks', predictions, and comparisons between the fortunes of the programme's characters and the actors who play them). However, Buckingham was clear that describing a programme as 'open' doesn't imply that any one interpretation of it is as likely as any other; to acknowledge that there is no one necessary or inherent meaning isn't to completely abandon the notions of meaning or of producers' intention. For Buckingham, some texts are more 'open' than others, and diversity of reading depends on particular interactions between textual structure and 'active' viewing:

"If one cannot say what *EastEnders* 'means' to its audience, one can at least say a good deal about how it works. ... Thus, while *EastEnders* cannot be said to embody a single, consistent ideological position, it does encourage viewers to produce meaning in certain ways and not others. To this extent, it becomes possible to talk about readings, not as infinitely various, but as differentiated in more or less systematic ways." (pp36/37. Original emphasis.).

In her study of viewers of *Dallas*, Ang (1985) also posed a distinction between "open" and "closed" texts, and an interaction between textual 'open-ness' and 'active' viewing. For Ang, even though *Dallas* may not be 'realistic', and may bear no direct relation to viewers' own lives, it has an 'open' structure which enables viewers to enjoy it without sacrificing their critical faculties. Viewers can become involved with the characters' lives while simultaneously critically distancing themselves, for example by an ironic 'running commentary' on the programme. Ang argued that viewers' critical distance is the outcome of interaction between the programme's "tragic 'structure of feeling'" and their own "melodramatic imagination". The tragic 'structure of feeling' consists of the characters' endless fluctuations between happiness and sadness, caused by continuous threats to the Ewing family, both from outside and from family members trying to leave the family and/or family roles - in short, of family-strengthening and family-undermining forces, which individual characters can't necessarily control. (76-77).

Ang argued that the tragic structure of feeling of *Dallas* (and of soap operas in general) constitutes a 'viewing position' which viewers are invited to 'occupy', and that viewers respond to that 'viewing position' by means of their "melodramatic imagination", which she defined as a refusal/inability to regard everyday life as banal and unworthy of attention, born of an inarticulate dissatisfaction with one's life. Viewers who watched the programme via their melodramatic imagination (viewing was not the unmediated experience beloved of empiricists) allowed themselves to be constrained by the programme's tragic 'structure of feeling' but simultaneously played with the 'reality' represented within it:

"(In) the realism experience of the 'Dallas' fans ... what is recognised as real is not knowledge of the world but a subjective experience of the world: a 'structure of feeling' ... (leading to) ... a constant to and fro movement between identification with and distancing from the fictional world as constructed in the text ..."
(pp 45, 50)

Viewers' involvement with 'open' texts has been found to vary according to gender. Both Morley (1986) and Hobson (1982) found that men concentrated solely on viewing, while women felt guilty if they didn't combine viewing with at least one domestic task, except when no-one else from the household was present (e.g. early mornings). Ang found (p118) that female viewers of *Dallas* tended to become involved with the relationships within the Ewing family and in the love complications in the programme, while men became much more involved with the business relations and problems, the power and wealth, and the cowboy elements. Ang contrasted such an 'active' and differentiated audience with the 'passive', vulnerable audience implied in 'mainstream' feminist criticism that *Dallas* presents 'stereotyped', 'role-confirming' and 'anti-emancipatory' images of women. In her view, such critiques denigrate viewers because they combine empiricist content-analysis with deterministic models of audience-programme relationships. The result is an attack on the very programmes - soap operas - which are popular among women, reinforcing their 'inferior' status compared with 'male' genres such as detective stories and science fiction.

John Fiske's work in the 1980s also contributed to the notion of an 'open' text, because he replaced a Saussurean emphasis on the integration of signifier and signified in the sign with an assertion of the inherent 'open-ness' of the polysemic sign. The 'active', 'involved' and 'interpreting' audiences implied by the polysemic sign formed the base from which in the 1980s John Fiske developed a politics of 'popular resistance' in a complex and comprehensive body of writing in media and cultural studies. In Fiske's early collaborative investigation with John Hartley into meaning-production around broadcasting, audiences were presented as class-based social groupings, not individuals. The authors argued (Fiske and Hartley 1978: 69, 89,

105, 123/4) that class-based differences in audiences' modes of communication, especially their use of the written word, cause "substantial and identifiable differences in the modes of perception that people bring to bear" (p124), on different media - an argument which clearly concerned the ways in which different audiences interpreted polysemic signs/programmes. Later, Fiske (1982) transformed polysemy from just a description of signs/programmes into a positive evaluation of them: a plurality of interpretations was no longer just an inevitable result of the polysemic nature of the sign but a culturally enriching quality: a divergence of meanings "may, indeed, be a source of cultural richness and of subcultural maintenance." (1982: 157/8).

More recently, Fiske (1987) has integrated the pluralist notion of the inherently polysemic sign with the equally-pluralist notion of ideology as 'just' the general process of producing meanings. In his view of ideology, no one idea, meaning, etc. is more privileged or influential than any other, and the individual is both a 'passive' outcome of ideology and its 'active' creator (1987: 150/1). In Fiske's approach, ideology has no origin - it just 'is'. Such a 'free-floating' ideology slides away from being a set of mental parameters operating to the benefit of dominant classes and towards being the unproblematic general production of meanings ... for example, audiences' encounters with polysemic signs. On the basis of his particular integration of ideology and polysemy, Fiske (1987) demonstrated that 'readings' of television programmes other than the 'preferred' are always possible, and that therefore no particular programme can necessarily be guaranteed to have any particular 'effect' - a stark contrast to the fixed and determinate view of audience-programme relationships implied in the 'dominant ideology' thesis. His argument wasn't confined to television, but encompassed all products of popular culture, and was encapsulated in his phrase, "popular cultural capital", developing Bourdieu's concept:

"Popular cultural capital is an accumulation of meanings and pleasures that serves the interests of the subordinated and ... disempowered ... and that consists of the meanings of social subordination and of the strategies (such as those of

accommodation, resistance, opposition or evasion) by which people respond to it. (1987: 18-19)

Later still, Fiske (1989: 47) broadened his scope to argue that for people in subordinate positions, the whole of everyday life consists of resisting the dominant ideology:

"The culture of everyday life is best described through metaphors of struggle or antagonism: strategies opposed to tactics, the bourgeoisie by the proletariat; hegemony met by resistance, ideology countered or evaded, top-down power opposed by bottom-up power, social discipline faced with disorder."

5.3.4 The Production-Reception Axis.

Almost by definition, 'reception' studies concentrate on audiences to the virtual exclusion of programme-makers and the institutions in which they work. Murdock and Golding (1977) have argued that investigations into meaning-production around broadcasting need to address conditions of programme-production, and that approaches alleging to infer producers' intentions from programme content are;

"... quite divorced from any investigation of the actual institutional imperatives, organisational routines and working exigencies ... (of programme-production)."

Murdock's and Golding's view has been reinforced recently by Tulloch (1990: 27), who has argued that an emphasis on 'reception' such as that in Fiske (1987) marginalises producers' own meaning-production, and that in general the welcome new emphasis on viewers' critical abilities hasn't been matched by an equivalent emphasis on programme-producers' critical abilities to resist imperatives of the institutions in which they work:

"(Fiske) insists that 'Pleasure for the subordinate is produced by the assertion of one's social identity in resistance to, in independence of, or in negotiation with, the structure of domination', yet does not extend this understanding to the producers of TV dramas, nor to our relationship as academics with them."

Few of the 1980s research projects I have examined explicitly foregrounded the conditions of programme-production, but those of Hobson and Buckingham were exceptions. Hobson (1982: 82-86) argued that the features of *Crossroads* which made it the butt of criticism were caused by the unusual conditions in which it was produced. For example, *Crossroads* production staff - unlike staff on other programmes - received very little appreciation from their employers (first ATV, then Central Television); and *Crossroads* was often denied the technical facilities (e.g. use of video) available to other programmes which, as a result, appeared more polished. Consequently, loyal fans of *Crossroads* watched and enjoyed the programme within and despite a climate of hostility or derision from professional critics, related to the programme's conditions of production. For Hobson, this loyalty was due to the programme's themes of emotional entanglements and personal problems which, in her view, enabled viewers to identify at one level or another with the characters and/or storylines, irrespective of the quality of the production. Hobson argued (1982: 118) that;

"What is going to happen next, or the continuous story form, is the mode of soap opera. The storylines and the narrative structure of the serial is the main hook for the audience. *They will excuse any faults in acting or production, or even weaknesses in the scripts, as long as the stories continue.*" (My emphasis)

Similarly, Buckingham (1987) discussed the significance of some of the conditions of production of the UK soap opera, *EastEnders*. He made the point that the series started when the BBC was under close political scrutiny for being 'Left' and 'elitist', and that it represented a big gamble for the BBC: if 'popular' programming such as *EastEnders* attracted large audiences, then how would the BBC distinguish itself from commercial stations; and if it failed to produce 'popular' programming, how could it justify the imposition of a universal licence fee? In an attempt to walk a line between those two positions, the programme's creators produced the programme with very particular audiences in mind. Indeed, Buckingham reported that the findings of the BBC's own audience research unit were only accepted by the programme's creators if they accorded with their own intuitive view of the programme's intended audience! In the event, their intuition proved correct, the programme was a huge success almost

immediately, and the political pressures surrounding its production were lessened somewhat by the enthusiasm with which it was received.

When attention was paid to production and reception, such as in those examples from the *Crossroads* and *EastEnders* studies, the relationships between them were 'geographical' rather than substantively theoretical: programmes were transmitted from their point of production to their point of reception ("A to B"). Distinguishing between the two sites on such 'geographical' grounds may seem only common sense because, after all, programme-producers may well be affected by certain events - such as shifts in the share price of their employing company - which have no apparent impact on individual viewers. However, programme-reception can depend on the conditions of programme-production, because programme-makers' material circumstances (e.g. their employer's share price) may well constrain their abilities to offer audiences certain types of programme and certain 'viewing positions'.

Consequently, we can regard production and reception as distinct-but-related instances of the one, overall process of meaning-production around programmes. For instance, in discussing the success of *EastEnders*, it is impossible to dissociate the programme's production from its 'reception', because the process of 'producing' it as 'popular' television was completed only when the target audiences 'received' it. Such integration of production with reception reinforced the argument by Cesareo (1979) that in the sphere of knowledge and culture there can be no strict distinction between production and consumption - our relationships with cultural commodities such as programmes are ones of "productive consumption" because 'consuming' cultural products re-affirms membership of the culture which 'produced' them. Cesareo qualified the apparent functionalism of his view that we (re-)produce a culture as we consume its products by arguing that in cultural production, particularly in the field of 'mass communication', the outcome of consumption is less certain than in the fields of 'material' goods:

"(T)he 'consumer' constitutes him/herself precisely by 'completing' (in the Marxian sense) cultural commodities, but ...

this 'completion', in the field of knowledge and culture, cannot be so strictly planned as it is in the field of material commodities ... and may produce unexpected and even contradictory results." (p283)

Integrating production and reception theoretically enables us to ask whether *particular* differences in meaning-production around production are due (how?) to *particular* material circumstances (of reception/production). For instance, do conditions of production have greater influence on reception in circumstances of what I have called "discursive deprivation", when the diversity of the discourses accessible to certain audiences in their everyday lives is restricted by their social-material circumstances, especially their economic circumstances?

5.4 Integrating the 'Axes'.

Each of the four 'axes' of meaning-production around broadcasting was derived from one or more individual 1980s broadcasting research projects, but some projects contributed to more than one 'axis':

- (i) Work by Buckingham (1987) on *EastEnders* featured in discussions of three 'axes' - Intratextual-Intertextual, "Open"-"Closed" and Production-Reception;
- (ii) Work on the texts of James Bond by Bennett and Woolacott (1987) featured in discussions of two 'axes' - Intratextual-Intertextual and Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive;
- (iii) The examination of the audiences of *Dallas* by Ang (1985) featured in discussions of two 'axes' - Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive and "Open"-"Closed";
- (iv) Work by Hobson (1982) on *Crossroads* featured in my discussions of two 'axes' - Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive and Production-Reception.

Just as the analysis of a particular piece of research may involve both analytically-distinct poles of an 'axis', it may also involve the use of more than one analytically-distinct 'axes'; and just as the work of different researchers can be grouped under one or more 'axes', so can

the continuing work of an individual researcher. I will examine two instances of the latter: Pierre Bourdieu's continuing work on cultural 'appreciation', including its links with Pecheux's 'interdiscursive individual'; and David Morley's continuing work on television audiences.

5.4.1 Bourdieu and Pecheux.

Bourdieu's arguments about the differential distribution of cultural competence (to which I have already referred in this chapter) show the analytical usefulness of three of my 'axes' of meaning-production around broadcasting: the Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive, the "Open"- "Closed", and the Production-Reception axes.

Bourdieu (1968) argued that allegedly 'neutral' judgements about 'aesthetic' matters embody class-based and culture-specific criteria, and that allegedly 'universal' criteria of 'taste' express an ordering of cultural dispositions which is also class-based and culture-specific. Further, Bourdieu (1980) argued that such specific judgements and criteria come to be seen as 'universal' through the differential valuing of cultural practices and products: those associated with dominant classes are accorded a "high" status, while those associated with lower classes are accorded "low" or "mass" (in its pejorative sense) status. This differential distribution of cultural value echoes the differential distribution of capital, with the owners of wealth also 'owning' what is defined as the culture of a society - hence Bourdieu's phrase, "cultural capital". More recently, Bourdieu (1984) has argued that appreciation of 'high' culture depends on the absorption of particular 'dispositions' towards culture which are socially-organised and closely linked to social origins and to educational attainment (with the educational system preferring the connoisseur's direct, familiar grasp of a style in practice - 'appreciation' - over the scholar's application of a set of explicit norms and formulae - 'knowledge' or 'expertise'). Bourdieu (1984: 18-19) contrasted two 'dispositions': the highly valued "aesthetic disposition" associated with dominant classes, in which one 'distances' oneself from cultural products and practices, categorising them on the basis of their form (their relations with other products/practices) rather than their content (their impact on the

observer); and working class people's 'dispositions' towards cultural products and practices, which concern the impact of content, not of form. People with an "aesthetic disposition" deploy allegedly 'universal' cultural criteria to dismiss working class people's cultural 'disposition' as 'merely' utilitarian, of which the consistent denigration of 'popular' television programmes - especially soap operas - is a case in point.

In summary, Bourdieu argued that the nature of an individual's encounter with 'texts' (and thus discourses) depends on their familiarity with the particular codes, conventions and criteria of appreciation which are associated with particular genres of signification: the individual doesn't originate meaning but manipulates (not necessarily consciously) her/his already-existing textual and discursive repertoire which s/he has as a result of earlier encounters with other texts and other discourses. In other words, a person's circumstances aren't simply 'reflected' in consciousness but are 'refracted' through the repertoire of discursive positions - their "cultural capital" - with which they negotiate their social-material circumstances, and which depends not on their qualities as individuals but on their class, education and general history.

Bourdieu's work presents meaning-production very clearly as a social, rather than individualistic activity, and as one which occurs in a society stratified by class and education. His "cultural capital" corresponds to my notion of a discursive repertoire, and so it could be used to address the same issues as I discussed in outlining my Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive 'axis' in broadcasting research. Similarly, his "appreciation" describes an interaction between generic characteristics and aesthetic 'dispositions', and so it could be used to address the interactions between textual structure and audiences' interpretive competence summarised in my "Open"- "Closed" axis, and which are also a major part of the approach to meaning-production summarised in my Production-Reception axis.

Bourdieu linked differences between people's "cultural capital" (discursive repertoires) with differences between their social-material circumstances - especially their class positions - and thus transformed

an individualistic, aesthetic problematic into one concerning the class-based distribution of cultural competence and influence. His argument that differences in individuals' 'aesthetic' or 'cultural' competence are associated with social stratification is at once a specific instance and a development of Pecheux's more general notion of the interdiscursive individual. (I referred to this in chapter three, and I will return to it later when I discuss the work of David Morley.) It is a specific instance of the interdiscursive individual because "cultural capital" refers to the same historically-derived abilities to manipulate discourses as did Pecheux; but it develops Pecheux's argument by explicitly linking the social-material circumstances of an individual's history with her/his particular interdiscursive characteristics - in my terms, with her/his socially-derived discursive repertoire.

Pecheux argued (1969, 1975; see chapter three) that texts are understood 'interdiscursively', and are encountered by a reader with a particular discursive history. From Pecheux's perspective, a text's form does not guarantee how it will be read, because a text's 'content' is contingent on its reader's particular discursive history. Pecheux's emphasis on the reader differs in three ways from a Cartesian liberalism in which the individual is a unique source of understanding of the world and the origin of the meaning around, for example, television and radio programmes. First, in Pecheux's argument, the individual inevitably understands the world as a member of a society, rather than as an isolated, unique originator of ideas. Second, such a 'social' individual understands the world through the definite, historically-specific range of discourses in circulation at any moment in her/his society's culture. The range of discourses in circulation is restricted - it's not infinite - in any society, but in capitalist society, for example, it is restricted by the historically-specific, market-based relations between people expressed in the commodity. Third, access to certain discourses can depend on institutional factors associated with the wealth needed to buy commodities (for example, access to education, the time needed to study, access to communications media), so each individual's discursive repertoire depends on her/his social-material position in society.

Pecheux's work integrated two of my 'axes': Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive and Production-Reception. From Pecheux's

perspective, the viewer actively (more-or-less consciously) situates a programme's form and content within the discourses with which s/he is familiar as a consequence of her/his particular history. The variability of interdiscursive individuals' histories means that their understandings of programmes are also variable which, in its turn, means that a programme's meaning never exists 'outside' of its 'reception'. Consequently, a programme appears as the meeting-point of programme-makers and viewers, all interdiscursive individuals, none of whose interdiscursive understandings of the programme necessarily has primacy over the others'.

5.4.2 Morley.

Morley's continuing research during the 1980s into audience-programme relationships integrated three 'axes': Intratextual-Intertextual, Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive and Production-Reception. Initially, Morley shared with Hall (1980) an interest in how intratextual relationships constructed 'preferred' meanings (and, therefore, audiences). However, his view of meaning-production around broadcasting developed into a complex, interactive web of socially-organised textual and discursive relationships.

Hall's (1980) "Encoding/Decoding" model introduced an element of indeterminacy to the 'dominant ideology' paradigm in broadcasting research. He accepted that the (intratextual) relations between a programme's constituent elements may embody different meanings, at least some of which are intended by the programme-makers. (Whether or not these are expressions of the 'dominant ideology' is a separate issue). Hall argued, however, that such intended or 'preferred' meanings were not inevitably and necessarily the only interpretations open to audiences, and that it was always and inevitably possible that audiences could interpret a programme in ways which were alternative or even oppositional to the 'intended' or 'preferred' meanings. Like Hall, Morley has denied that texts are necessarily and determinately read in only one way, but his work has moved away from investigating the (intratextual) devices through which 'preferred readings' are constructed, and towards the variability of their 'reception' by audiences.

The notion of a "preferred reading" of a text proposed by, among others, Hall (1980) and Morley (1979) has clear links with the notion of "occasions of reading" proposed more recently by Mercer (1988). For Mercer, there is no necessary relationship between texts and 'real life', and so there can be no such thing as a realist text, only 'realist tactics' within a text. Further, those 'tactics' only exist in relation to specific historical "occasions of reading" constructed by a text's author through rhetorical devices or 'tactics' (for example, persuasion, incitement) which synthesise the reader's experience with the text's formal characteristics (for example, linguistic characteristics). Consequently, a text's 'ideological effect' lies in the techniques and procedures of its transmission, rather than in its 'inherent' meaning. While Mercer's references to rhetorical devices or tactics link his work with that by Hall and Morley, the latter's work differed from Mercer's precisely because they theorised the construction of a preferred 'reading', whereas he theorised the construction of a preferred reader. Indeed, as I have shown, Morley shifted his focus from text to reader, and his intertextually- and interdiscursively-constructed reader has clear links with Mercer's rhetorically-constructed "occasion of reading".

In his early (intratextual) work, Morley (1979 with Brunsdon) argued that the programme-as-text determined audience-programme relationships: a programme 'constructs' its audiences by offering them (intratextual) 'points of identification' (an example of what I've called 'viewing positions'). One 'point of identification' was a familiar broadcaster; another was an audience defined as simultaneously national and 'domestic' - a unitary nation and a conglomeration of families. Later, however, Morley (1980a: 134) argued that viewers' 'identification' with a programme's (preferred) point of view varies according to their social circumstances. Programmes' (intratextual) determining properties are matched (more-or-less) by viewers' interpretive resources, including their (intertextual) familiarity with the different televisual codes and genres through which ideological themes are represented, possession of which is associated with viewers' circumstances, including their gender, class position and Party-political affiliation. In other words, Morley (1980a: 134) stressed that relationships between 'readings' and social circumstances (and/or

'dominant ideology') weren't just reflective, and emphasised the particularity of moments of 'production' and of 'reception':

"This is not to suggest that ... an undifferentiated 'dominant ideology' ... is reproduced and simply accepted or rejected. Rather, ... a specific formulation of that ideology ... is articulated through a particular programme's discourse and mode of address. ... The problematic proposed here does not attempt to derive decodings directly from social class position or reduce them to it; it is always a question of how social position *plus* particular discourse positions produce specific readings; readings which are structured because the structure of access to different discourses is determined by social position." (Original emphasis)

Later still, Morley (1986: 42-43) argued the need to explain how a person's interpretations relate to their circumstances - especially when the same person 'decodes' different types of programme in contradictory ways. Morley posed an hypothetical shop steward who decodes a News programme 'oppositionally', but doesn't necessarily decode other programme types in that way, illustrating the argument by Laclau & Mouffe (1985) that human subjectivity is the *total* result of many different social relations which only partly overlap:

"For instance, the same man may be simultaneously a productive worker, a trade union member, a supporter of the Social Democratic Party, a consumer, a racist, a home owner, a wife beater and a Christian. Laclau and Mouffe argue that no one of these 'subject positions' can be logically derived from any of the others. No one of them is the 'essence' underlying the others."

Consequently, while someone's subject position can't be logically derived from their material circumstances, subjectivity is certainly constrained by circumstances because they facilitate access to a particular range of discourses (and thus of 'viewing positions'), with the result that some people's range of discourses is broader than others'. Morley's conclusion refined his earlier argument (Morley 1981: 11) that each form of television requires viewers to use certain forms of knowledge and to recognise certain televisual conventions within which meanings are produced, and that such abilities are unevenly distributed. It also refined his earlier arguments (Morley 1980b: 166, 171) that class position and the

associated "repertoire of discourses at the disposal of different audiences" were heavily implicated in the creation of interdiscursive subject positions (in the 'Pecheuxian' sense I outlined in Chapter Three), and that any one occasion of meaning-production is described in terms of its relationships with others.

Morley's conceptual shift in researching meaning-production wasn't matched by a corresponding shift in research methods. By the end of the 1980s, Morley admitted that his investigations into television viewing had failed to yield insights into the practical operation of the interdiscursive meaning-production which he himself had theorised. Instead, his investigations had posed circumstances dissimilar to those in which most people watch television. In his early work (with Brunsdon, 1979), viewers appeared to watch programmes to the exclusion of almost anything else; and his subsequent (1980a) research investigated television viewing in almost 'laboratory' conditions, isolated from the other everyday routines (e.g. domestic ones) through which people develop an interdiscursive sense of themselves. His later work, *Family Television*, (1986) aimed to examine the impacts of the domestic/familial context of much television viewing, rather than the relationships between class and meanings, but Morley (1986: 174) admitted that its concern with the viewing behaviours of (adult) individuals distracted it from viewing's specifically familial context.

In summary. In Morley's work, passive viewers subjugated by 'ideological apparatuses' were consistently recast as interdiscursive viewers who recognise or create a programme's constitutive textual and discursive relations as part of everyday family life, influenced to a degree by the programme's mode of address and the 'points of identification' offered by the programme-makers.

5.5 Evaluating the New Approach in Broadcasting Research.

Neither the discourse nor the model of meaning-production I associated with it exists materially - each is a theoretical construction. Consequently, their evaluation must involve something other than empirical observation and assessment, and I want to evaluate them in

two ways: for their internal coherence; and for their degree of correspondence with my three aims.

5.5.1 Internal coherence.

My draft discourse and my model of meaning-production were both unitary in form - both were means of unifying the diverse approaches of the 1980s research projects I reviewed. Those projects lacked a clear common focus of inquiry: in some, society was stratified but in others it was atomistic; in some, meaning was associated more closely with media institutions than in others. This isn't surprising: I had already shown that in the recent history of media research, foci of inquiry had been diverse because they had consisted of various positions constituted by intersections of dualisms between idealism and materialism and between individual and society. Despite that history - but perhaps because of it - my review of the 1980s projects in all their diversity sought an integrated means of investigating the research question which I had derived from the lessons of my Walworth research, and which integrated programme-form, meaning-production and audiences' circumstances.

In other words, my review of those diverse projects aimed to find an integrated solution to a research question which itself sought to integrate relationships between its three elements. No surprise, then, that I summarised the different projects' investigation of disparate aspects of meaning-production using the unifying form of an 'axis'. I've suggested that my four 'axes' constitute methods of investigating meaning-production within my draft discourse, so it's unsurprising that the discourse is also unifying in form. It attempts to integrate textual, discursive and structural considerations of meaning-production around programmes in a way which is equally-applicable to the production and 'reception' of programmes.

Clearly, my aim was not to celebrate diversity! However, my review of 1980s projects didn't produce coherent results, because the projects themselves didn't cohere with each other - they didn't aim to. For example, and I shall develop this further in the next section, the materialism of a "cultural capital" approach to meaning-production contradicted polysemy's idealist assumptions; and the notion that

programme-form is defined as a position on a spectrum of 'open' and 'closed' contradicted polysemy's assumption that a programme is 'open' to a theoretically infinite range of interpretations.

Thus, in my judgement, the discourse and model which I synthesised from the results of my review of those 1980s projects cannot offer a coherent means of developing my post-Walworth research question because the original 1980s projects themselves formed an incoherent collection. Consequently, in the final two sections of this chapter, I outline a new investigation which could coherently develop the research question, and which draws on the results of the next part of this evaluation, in which I assess the extent to which the discourse and model match the three aims for a new discourse which I developed earlier.

5.5.2 Meeting My Aims.

I argued in my first three chapters that for any new discourse in media studies to be judged satisfactory, it should meet three inter-related aims:

1. *Pose a clear, non-atomistic model of society and thus resolve the individual-society dualism into a new, historically-specific focus of inquiry;*
2. *Resolve the materialism-idealism dualism into a new model of knowledge-production;*
3. *Explain the roles of particular cultural forms and of particular cultural and ideological institutions in social change, especially their roles in the commodification of culture.*

My critiques of major approaches to media research (Chapter One) and of particular broadcasting research projects exemplifying those approaches (Chapter Two) led me to argue that a new discourse is needed in media research. I further argued (Chapter Three) that some major theories of culture and of ideology were unlikely to act as sources for the elements of such a new discourse; and that a new discourse should integrate the production and 'consumption' of meanings around broadcasting by acknowledging the industrialisation and commodification of culture. In chapter four, I showed the limited extent to which my own research in

the early 1980s had met my three aims, proposed a new research question, and broadly outlined how that question could be investigated.

The draft discourse which I've synthesised from the results of broadcasting research projects in the 1980s fails to meet my aims. It fails to explain how particular individuals' discursive repertoires are related to the contemporary discursive repertoire of society as a whole, and so instead of explaining the formation of 'active' viewers/readers (whether 'interdiscursive individuals' or not), it just asserts their already-formed existence. That lack of concern with the origins of individuals' discursive repertoires was linked with a disregard of the potential influence of cultural forms and institutions on meaning-production. An interest in the origins of an individual's cultural capital or discursive repertoire would have led researchers to be concerned with the potential for contemporary changes in the communications industry to enormously influence the nature and range of a society's contemporary discursive repertoire - in the absence of such concerns, the Production-Reception dualism remained unresolved in those 1980s projects.

The materialism-idealism dualism also remained largely unresolved in those 1980s projects, appearing as the conflict between the 'practical' limitations of viewers' cultural competence, the differential distribution of which is associated with differences in their social-material circumstances, and the 'theoretically' infinite number of possible interpretations of a sign implied in polysemy. The notion of cultural competence was materialist because its proponents - such as Bourdieu, Pecheux, Morley and Hobson - associated it with people's social-material circumstances. However, the failure by Bourdieu, etc. to explain the nature of the association between competence and circumstance meant that their work tended, to varying degrees, to pose reflective relationships between cultural competence and material circumstances, which was an analytical weakness of materialist views of consciousness in general. Polysemy was an idealist notion because its implication that there is a 'theoretically' infinite number of interpretations of a sign is unrelated to social-material circumstances. The failure by proponents of polysemy, especially Fiske, to explain why viewers favour one interpretation over another and why a particular interpretation comes to be shared by several viewers, meant that their

work relied on a methodological individualism combined with an individualistic, atomistic model of society as a 'market', in which ideas appear to flow irrespective of social and political circumstances - an analytical weakness of idealist views of consciousness in general.

The methodological individualism of the polysemic approach to 'reception' gives virtually no role to cultural institutions such as the media, and Curran (1990) has characterised the new concern with individuals' reception as 'revisionist' because it lacks any notion of the media as a site of ideological conflict, thus marginalising the whole question of media power. Sometimes, as in Fiske (1987), the emphasis on the polysemic basis of 'reception' has been expressed as a celebration of viewers' abilities to more-or-less contest or resist programme-producers' 'intended' meanings, implying that the media - indeed, any and all 'ideological' agencies - pose only a minimal threat to the free flow of ideas and understandings. In that sense, the draft discourse not only fails to pose a non-atomistic model of society, but also fails to acknowledge the role in meaning-production of cultural institutions and of cultural form - for instance the commodity, which is the form in which many of the products of those institutions appear.

Polysemy is aligned with the decline of the dominant ideology thesis - each notion implies a sovereign individual choosing (more-or-less) freely in a 'free market' of ideas. In particular, television audiences appear as individuals who are free to 'actively' interpret programmes in any way they wish. Such a view of the individual underlies, for example, Fiske's notion of 'popular resistance', which Murdock (1989) criticised for its, "romantic celebration of consumer activity (which) can easily support a stance which colludes (however unwittingly) with the commercial populism of the New Conservatism.". Murdock's specific comments about Fiske's work within the discourse, together with my earlier general comments about its methodological individualism show that it hasn't met my first aim of resolving the individual-society dualism; the New Conservatism's "Society-as-market" may be a new historically-specific focus of inquiry for broadcasting research such as Fiske's, but instead of resolving the Individual-Society dualism, it restates it to the point of celebration.

I agree with Murdock's comments about Fiske, but I also find the latter's work problematic on methodological and epistemological grounds. Firstly, method. Fiske's work contains virtually no empirical evidence that audiences do have the sorts of relationships with programmes which he purports to describe. Fiske and Hartley (1978) emphasised that audiences 'actively' and 'creatively' understand programmes (within, of course, the constraints of their circumstances), and yet the authors' own lucid application of semiotic techniques to each of four genres (news, dance, competition and police series) and to particular programmes made no references to specific audiences. They clearly explained possible de-codings of particular examples, but gave no evidence that specific audiences had made sense of them in those ways. By presenting their own understanding of the programmes as definitive, the authors undermined (implicitly but effectively) their argument that the meanings produced around a programme aren't inherent in it but depend on particular audiences' class-based interpretations. Similarly, the convincing demonstrations by Fiske (1982; 1987; 1989) that television programmes and other artefacts of popular culture can be understood in ways other than the dominant or 'preferred', were accompanied by virtually no empirical evidence that they were being understood in these ways by particular audiences. Further, while Fiske's 'descriptions' of such alternative understandings were based on the reasonable argument that television programmes must be polysemic in order to attract diverse audiences, he used programmes' polysemic character as evidence that diverse audiences existed in the first place.

Secondly, Fiske's evolving position is weak epistemologically. He has presented an undifferentiated class consciousness as the basis for 'resistant' interpretations of, say, television programmes by 'the subordinated' without identifying the origins of such a resistant class consciousness. However, if class consciousness is the basis of a resistant response to programmes, one needs to explain how it can emerge in a society in which facets of popular culture (for example, television programmes) exert such powerful ideological influences: where are the ideological 'havens' in which resistant can develop? Fiske provides no evidence of such 'havens', yet his whole analytical strategy rests on their existence.

5.5.3 Restrictions on Contemporary Discursive Repertoires.

Problematic conceptions of audiences in the eighties weren't exclusive to Fiske's work - they expressed a general lack of concern with the particular nature, extent and origins of the textual and discursive repertoires at particular viewers' disposal. In the 1980s research projects I examined, 'active' viewers/readers (whether 'interdiscursive individuals' or not) appeared as somehow, somewhere already-formed, in a manner reminiscent of the "already-complexly-formed subjectivity" posed by Johnson (1979). Further, just as Johnson failed to locate the individual's "particular origin and history" and "the existing cultural repertoire" within which s/he operates, so proponents of the notion of the 'active', interdiscursive individual - for example, Pecheux and Morley - failed to explain both the origins of particular individuals' discursive repertoires and their relationships with the contemporary discursive repertoire of society as a whole.

Some of (for example) Morley's discussions of interdiscursivity in television audiences (including their implied inter-relationship between production and reception) linked consciousness and class, but in his scenario of class-based meaning-production, meanings and discourses had no explicit origins. Instead, class-based individuals somehow 'encountered' particular discourses as some sort of 'consequence' of their social-material circumstances. Bourdieu, for all his voluminous writing on the subject, drew a similarly vague scenario when discussing the interdiscursiveness of cultural/aesthetic judgements. Both Hobson and Ang described viewers of television soap operas in terms of the discursive positions open to them, but neither discussed - nor even inquired about - the practical origins of those discursive positions. The focus on what I have called "viewing positions" in the draft discourse reduces analyses of meaning-production around broadcasting to mere scholarly examinations of text-subject relationships, devoid of institutional considerations, and we return to Curran's charge of 'revisionism', reinforced by the contention by Grossberg (1989: 29-30) that;

"If politics is merely a matter of the subject-positions offered to us, it is difficult to see how we can escape the reduction of politics to the plane of subject/text relations ... (and) ... how we can find a measure of political empowerment and betterment."

In my view, the production and reception of meanings around broadcasting could be theoretically integrated by investigating the social-material origins of discourses, and the relationships between the discursive repertoires of individuals and of society as a whole. I suggested earlier that, in general terms, the conditions in which a programme is produced can influence the number and range of 'viewing positions' it can offer, and therefore the manner of its reception, and I gave as an example fluctuations in the production company's share-price. In the 1980s, there were concrete examples of that hypothesis: two new forms of domestic video technology - the videocassette and the videodisc - emerged in ways which could significantly influence the range and nature of 'viewing positions' accessible to different social groupings. A brief review of those events shows that in neither case was there an increase in the range of ideas available on video, nor in the number of companies producing programmes, nor in the number of companies manufacturing machines with which to view them. Indeed, the new markets created around each new technology were dominated almost from the start by a handful of already-powerful international electronics and media companies, whose ability to influence the contemporary discursive repertoire (what used to be called "setting the agenda" of public debate) was considerably increased by the manner in which these two new technologies emerged.

By the end of the 1970s, three videocassette systems dominated the market: JVC's "VHS", Sony's "Beta" and Philips's "Video 2000", of which only "VHS" successfully survived into the 1990s. From the time each system was launched as a commercial product, viewer's choice of videos has depended on the particular video system to which s/he has access. The pre-recorded material on videocassette for sale and/or rental in the major video shops is mostly feature films which will already have been shown in cinemas and/or broadcast on television, and the makers of the three videocassette system (plus companies manufacturing their products under licence, e.g. Thorn-EMI) aligned themselves with major film and music companies including Twentieth Century Fox, CBS and Polydor to carry only their material on pre-recorded cassettes. Choice has been further constrained by the fact that ownership of the video shops was dominated by companies which were themselves subsidiaries of the machine-makers, e.g. Radio Rentals and Visionhire, which were

subsidiaries of Thorn-EMI and Philips respectively. (Sources: Financial Times and New Scientist *passim*.)

The world market for videodisc systems was similarly structured and managed through agreements between each system's originator (RCA, JVC, Philips) and subsequent licensed manufacturers and film companies who thus became associated with it. There were originally three videodisc systems: "Selectavision" "VHD" and "Laservision", of which only the last has successfully survived into the 1990s. The originator of "Selectavision" was the RCA Corporation; its subsequent manufacturers included GEC, Zenith (USA's biggest manufacturer and distributor of television sets), CBS, and a collection of Japanese companies; and associated film companies included Paramount, Disney, United Artists, MGM, CBS, Rank, and Twentieth Century Fox. There were two originators of the "VHD" system - JVC and its parent company Matsushita Electrical Industries (MEI) - linked through cross-licencing agreements; its subsequent manufacturers included GEC and Thorn-EMI; and its programme material came from EMI's catalogue of feature films and music. Finally, Philips was the originator of the "Laservision" system; its subsequent manufacturers were Magnavox, MCA, Sharp, Sanyo, Trio-Kenwood, Pioneer and Sony and Grundig; and content came from MCA, Universal Pictures, and the record company Polygram (jointly-owned by Philips and Siemens). (Sources: Financial Times and New Scientist *passim*.)

The emergence of the videocassette and the videodisc were clear instances of the ways in which the 'free market' of ideas is increasingly 'structured' or 'managed' by a concentration of media ownership which concentrates the power to determine which discourses are in mass circulation in a particular society. The presence of empirical evidence of such a structuring or managing of the contemporary discursive repertoire highlights the absence of equivalent empirical evidence in the work of writers on individuals' polysemic meaning-production around programmes. It also undermines the idealist notion of a theoretically-infinite and universally accessible discursive repertoire which is implied in those writers' analyses, by showing how socio-historically specific material conditions favour some discourses over others, reinforcing the argument by Murdock (1990: 46) that:

" ... the changing economics of cultural production promotes certain cultural forms and practices at the expense of others ... (and) ... once in play, these cultural forms play a key role in organising the contest of discourse on their own account by granting or withholding visibility and legitimacy."

5.6 Implications for Broadcasting Research in the 1990s.

Notwithstanding my criticisms of the draft discourse, I will review the possibilities of using it in whole or in parts to develop my proposal at the end of chapter four for a new investigation into relationships between audiences' understandings of programmes and their social-material circumstances.

5.6.1 The Individual-Society dualism.

Within the draft discourse, individuals 'actively' produce meanings within the mixture of general and specific socio-historical circumstances summarised in the inter-relationships between my four 'axes'. The general circumstances consist of interactions between the constituents of the total socially- and historically-specific range of discourses in circulation in a society as a whole; an individual's specific circumstances are the particular range of discourses to which s/he has access (whether as a programme-maker or a viewer) as a consequence of her/his social-material circumstances. Research into the interaction between those two general levels would, in my view, begin to create a new historically-specific focus of inquiry for broadcasting researchers, described thus:

"At any moment, what are the relationships between a society's total discursive repertoire and the particular discursive repertoire shared by members of a particular social class or group; and how does someone's discursive repertoire enable them to relate to cultural products such as programmes (which, of course, embody discourses which may or may not be the same as their 'viewers')?"

This focus of inquiry would be new to many broadcasting researchers, but its perspective on the Individual-Society dualism dates from at

least 1898, when Plekhanov's "Role of the Individual in History" was first published! (Plekhanov, 1940). Research within this focus of inquiry would attempt - as did Plekhanov - to resolve the Individual-Society dualism by integrating notions of 'freedom' and 'necessity'. Are we completely free to choose how to behave, or is our behaviour determined, to some extent, by our historical circumstances? Do our actions express our unique personality, or are they, to some extent, the inevitable outcome of an historical process over which we have no control? Bourdieu (1984: 384ff) addressed this issue of the individual's role in history in arguing that working class cultural practices don't merely reflect their economic conditions, but instead are based on choices - albeit choices of necessity, as in the feeling that "that's not for us", and the value accorded to "simple, honest tastes". For broadcasting researchers, the issue translates into the following question: are we completely free to understand a programme as we wish, or are our understandings constrained by our particular discursive repertoire - itself constrained by our particular social-historical circumstances? In other words, are our understandings the result of (individual) choice or of (historical) necessity?

It would seem, then, that a fruitful way for 1990s broadcasting research to seek a resolution of the Individual-Society dualism would be to investigate the relationships between the total discursive repertoire of an historically-specific society and the specific discursive repertoires of particular social groupings within that society, and to do so from a perspective which regards viewer 'choice' as socially-organised, rather than an expression of individual personality. Such research would need to engage with the market-defined models of the individual propounded by New Right thinkers and practiced by new 'niche marketers'. As Tomlinson (1990) has suggested, those two groups currently enjoy a symbiotic relationship: in a reaction against mass (but not homogeneous) consumption in the mass markets created by mass production, people now seek 'individuality' - or, at least, smaller 'masses' - and New Right intellectuals are reinforcing new marketers' claims that 'the market' of popular culture meets those desires by offering free choices to sovereign consumers. Tomlinson (1990: 6, 13) is clear that such claims are illusory:

"If popular culture can be reduced to a set of apparent choices based upon personal taste, then we will see the triumph of the fragmented self, a constant lust for the new and the authentic among a population of consumer clones. ... Our personal identity is created out of elements created by others and marketed aggressively and seductively ... But if we think we are free when our choices have in fact been consciously constructed for us, then this is a dangerous illusion of freedom."

Such a perspective should cause researchers to look twice at the standard broadcasting survey: does it imply audiences' choices as those of 'consumers' or of 'citizens'? In other words, does a particular research project resolve the Individual-Society dualism by presenting audience-members as individual 'consumers' functionally integrated into a relatively stable, market-oriented consensus; or does it present them as 'citizens', socially-organised according to their relationships with sources of wealth and power? I will return to considerations of citizenship in my discussion of Cultural Forms (5.6.3), and to considerations of questionnaire design in my discussion of "Socio-historically Specific Audiences" (5.6.4).

5.6.2 The Materialism-Idealism Dualism.

In much of my discussion of the implications for research in the 1990s, this dualism is a ghostly presence. It is implicit in many of my methodological considerations, and forms a background to much of my discussion of cultural form. However, there are some research implications which are particular to this dualism. The focus in my discussions of the Individual-Society dualism on 'historical process' and 'social-historical circumstances' links them with the Materialism-Idealism dualism, because the 1980s emphasis on meaning as socially situated shifted concern from the form/structure of 'messages' to interpretive processes and to the 'contexts' of meaning-production.

My "Draft Discourse" tried to summarise the attempts by many researchers to present the 'contexts' within which people understand (for example) programmes as the particular interactions between those people's social-material circumstances and their discursive repertoire,

but this strategy perhaps raises as many problems than it solves. If meaning-production is socially-situated, then how does one distinguish between meaning-production and those social circumstances which 'merely' form the 'context' in which it occurs? Which elements of a 'context' contribute (and how?) to meaning-production (and which don't, and why not?), and can elements which contribute to meaning-production be sidelined as its 'context'? Don't explanations of meaning-production which highlight differences in people's circumstances risk an empiricist emphasis on experience at the expense of socially-organised 'frameworks' such as discourses? Don't such explanations risk highlighting differences between people at the expense of commonalities?

Those general questions are brought into sharp focus when we consider some of the contemporary changes in the material conditions of meaning-production brought about by changes in the communications industry, such as the reinforcement of the dominant position of the major communication companies which resulted from the particular manner in which videocassettes and videodiscs emerged. Were those developments merely the 'context' in which viewers of videocassettes and videodiscs made sense of them, or did they, by imposing new restrictions on the range of discourses in circulation, contribute to the particular meanings made by viewers?

5.6.3 Cultural Forms.

Questioning the meaning-context relationship in that way leads to a consideration of the implications of the issues in my third aim for a new discourse, including the focus on socio-historically specific cultural forms, for example the commodity. The emphasis on meaning-production as an inter-relationship between the discourse-based understandings of programme-makers and audiences implies that programmes of different ages can't necessarily be analysed in the same way, because of the different accessibility of their makers. From that perspective, a researcher wishing to understand meaning-production around a particular programme should elucidate two things: the programme-maker's discursive repertoires, associated (somehow) with their particular social-material history, together with

the institutional conditions in which s/he draws upon it to make the programme; and its audiences' discursive repertoires, also associated (somehow) with their particular social-material history, together with the circumstances (for example, domestic) in which they draw upon them while watching the programme. Such an interaction is implicit in each of three of my 'axes' - the Intratextual-Intertextual, Intradiscursive-Interdiscursive and "Open"- "Closed" - and comes to the fore, of course, in my Production-Reception 'axis'.

Clearly, within this framework, investigating meaning-production around contemporary broadcasting requires more than just content analysis! Further, the more "open" and "loose" the programme's structure, the harder it is to define its 'content' - even in terms of its "preferred" or "intended" meanings. However, research involving older programmes has to rely to some degree on content analysis, because the older a programme, the less accessible its makers are likely to be, and so the harder it becomes to describe that programme as an interaction between Production and Reception. While I agree with Golding and Murdock (1977) that when examining programmes one can't infer programme-makers' intentions from the content of 'their' programme, in the absence of the programme-maker from whom to ascertain intention, and from whom to learn of the programme's particular 'exigencies of production', the researcher has to resort to some form of content analysis to 'define' the programme's 'meaning' for its makers. Only then can s/he consider relationships (within my four 'axes' of meaning-production) between 'production' and 'reception'.

Another consideration for 1990s broadcasting researchers interested in the significance of socio-historically specific cultural forms must be the continuing integration by communications companies of hitherto-disparate cultural forms. My emphasis on the particularity of 'consumption' or 'reception' around cultural forms must be qualified in the 1990s by a recognition that developments in the communications industry are blurring distinctions between forms - for example, between "film" and "television programme". Differing perspectives on such developments have appeared in work by Bill Ryan and by Graham Murdock.

Ryan (1991) described the increasing tendency for cultural products to be incorporated into each other. Specifically, products made for profit-generating consumption by individuals are 'advertised' by being incorporated into radio and television programmes, where 'consumption' by individuals generates no profit (because consumption by one person doesn't exclude consumption by others). For example, films are transmitted on television, records become components of radio shows, and music videos become components of MTV. Incorporation can be less direct: new releases (books, films, records, etc.) are 'promoted' in 'entertainment news' programmes and in interviews with their producers, who may also be promoted through broadcast biographies. Consequently, analyses of individual texts may not be enough to understand them because of the intertextual nature of the advertising and marketing practices associated with their 'consumption'. In a passage coloured, unfortunately, by a determinist view of ideology, Ryan (1990: 267) drew out the methodological implications of his work:

"Consumption practices must be investigated empirically, and not just the consumption of individual works, to see their ideological effects. ... (T)he sociology of culture needs an adequate theory of consumption ... as agency, as individual and/or collective appropriation of signs through a particular form of practice in the construction of a life style."

Murdock (1990: 90) has argued that cultural forms hitherto-distinct from television are being integrated with it, and his examples included the 'televising' of music through music videos, television sponsorship of sport and television funding of much of the US film industry. As a result of these developments, television increasingly dominates people's experience of the world. I think that these developments become particularly significant in circumstances when the viewer perforce adopts television's discursive repertoire as her/his own. I called such circumstances "discursive deprivation", using the term to describe the situation of the isolated housewives described by Hobson (1982); I would suggest that it may well apply to people who are unemployed for any length of time, and whose opportunities for discursive expansion and richness become increasingly limited by the

constraints placed on their material circumstances by government policies towards poverty in general and unemployment in particular.

Thus, a consideration of the socio-historically specific nature of contemporary cultural form - such as television programmes - is inextricably linked with considerations of the different socio-historically specific audiences watching them.

5.6.4 Socio-historically-specific Audiences.

I think that if the gender-based differences in viewing reported by Hobson (1982), Ang (1985) and Morley (1986), are integrated with some research results reported by Bourdieu, some methodological considerations emerge which imply a change in approach to audience surveys. Bourdieu (1984: 400ff) reported that the probability that someone will express an opinion on an issue in a survey (i.e. they won't answer "Don't Know") depended on a relationship between the qualities of the respondent and of the question. The probability that someone will express an opinion rises with their education, social status and income, reaching a peak among young men in large towns; and variations in probability increased as the questions asked became more removed from ordinary experience and demanded responses based on explicit political principles. Bourdieu cited several instances in which "Don't Know" responses coincided with occupation and class. For example, "Should France help poor countries?" elicited a higher response rate than "Should France favour countries with a democratic regime?', with the variation in response rate corresponding with those social factors already listed. On the basis of such coincidences, he suggested that "Don't Know" may sometimes be a positive abstention on thorny issues. For example, in 'political' surveys, the ability to recognise a question as 'political' and to respond to it as such - and not, for example, 'ethically' - depended on being socially recognised as entitled to express opinions on political matters; those who weren't so recognised responded with variations on "It doesn't concern me" or "It doesn't interest me":

"Thus the probability of replying depends in each case on the relationship between a question (or, more generally, a situation) and an agent (or class of agents) defined by a given competence, a

capacity which itself depends on the probability of exercising that capacity ... indifference is only a manifestation of impotence."
(pp405-406)

Possible links between Bourdieu's work and gender differences in television audiences (especially for soap operas) should clearly be borne in mind by researchers in the 1990s. His findings are particularly illuminating when applied to the gender-based differences in watching television news programmes reported by Morley (1986: 169ff). In the families Morley interviewed, men claimed an interest/involvement in 'news programming' as a general category, but several women claimed to like specifically *local* news programmes. These women said that they didn't understand 'the pound going up or down', and weren't interested in it since it had no experiential bearing on their lives, unlike crime in their local area, which they felt they needed to know about for the sake of themselves and their children. Consequently, they made a point of watching 'crime' programmes such as *Police Five*, or programmes warning of domestic dangers, which they saw as practically useful to their domestic responsibilities.

These considerations show the need for broadcasting researchers to recognise the possibilities for particularity and difference in audiences. However, as Grossberg (1989) has argued, a focus on difference holds several risks, which researchers must acknowledge. Firstly, fully acknowledging differences in the experience of social groups - associated with differences in their social-material circumstances - risks emphasising differences of experience at the expense of commonalities, thus reifying 'difference' into 'fragmentation'. Secondly, carried to its logical conclusion, a focus on difference may emphasise 'the individual' at the expense of 'the social' - and we return reinvigorated to the Individual-Society dualism! Finally, Grossberg argued that acknowledging the different 'contexts' of meaning-production around broadcasting need not always imply a cultural relativism in which critical judgements are precluded by the lack of comparable conditions of meaning-production. He noted (p32), however, the attractiveness of cultural relativism to intellectuals wishing, as he put it, to avoid confronting;

" ... the (contemporary) crisis of authority and, for example, the very real and often deleterious power of the contemporary media at the level of national and international existence."

It is to the implications of such cultural relativism for broadcasting researchers in the 1990s that I now wish to turn.

5.6.5 Cultural Relativism.

Much of the attention paid by 'critics' to broadcasting has occurred in an agenda of two contrasting critical positions. Adherents of the first, 'Leavisite' position see their task as passing 'good/bad', 'high/low' judgements about cultural products, irrespective of the views of people who find them pleasurable. For example, Ang (1985) argued that bourgeois literary/cultural critics deride melodrama for its emphasis on plot at the expense of character-development; and Hobson (1982) showed that much 'critical' appraisal of *Crossroads* embodied class-specific judgements of what constituted 'good' and 'bad' television. Adherents of the contrasting critical position refuse to make such judgements, on the grounds that one aesthetic preference is as good as any other. Work in the Cultural Studies tradition - such as that by Williams and by Hoggart - has subverted the first position by substituting notions of culture as everyday life for the idea that culture is the 'treasure house' of excellence and aspiration in a society. Consequently, I wish to focus on the particular problems for broadcasting research in the 1990s which are posed by the position of cultural relativism.

I suggested earlier that research into meaning-production around broadcasting should investigate the relationships between a society's total discursive repertoire and the discursive repertoires of the particular social groups from which a programme's audiences are drawn. From Bourdieu's perspective, the differential distribution of discourses is linked with the differential distribution of the 'right to express an opinion' expressed in his term "cultural capital", and so such investigations into broadcasting would implicitly investigate the extent to which a particular society embodies notions of citizenry and the 'public sphere': are rights and opportunities to express opinions

distributed equally in that society, or are they associated with access to power, wealth and status? That implicit focus is explicit in my other suggestion - that researchers should ask whether the audiences implied in their work were 'consumers' or 'citizens' socially-organised according to their relationships with sources of power, wealth and status.

Clearly, my questions implicate particular discourses in particular power relations, and it would be easy to say that because discourses are ("of course") always implicated in power relations, one discourse is as good/bad as another. However, for Grossberg (1989: 31), the fact that particular discourses are linked with particular power relations does not guarantee the continuation of those relations. Nor does it mean that all discourses should be opposed as equally problematic, because not all power relations are equally bad. I would develop his position by arguing that some discourses are preferable to others in terms of the extent to which they serve the different interest of different social groups, and that therefore cultural products such as programmes can and should be appraised in 'good/bad' terms, according to the extent to which they serve the interests of different social groups - especially those oppressed by the status quo.

My rehabilitation of 'good/bad' judgements reinforces the argument by Murdock (1989: 40-41) that audiences aren't mere 'consumers' entitled to choose in the marketplace, but citizens with other entitlements, including;

"... rights of access to the full range of information, argument and interpretation they need in order to understand their situation and to intervene to change it if they choose."

In the same vein, Murdock (1990: 99) later passed a judgement which clearly implied notions of 'good/bad':

"American commercial television is about promoting mass consumption, not about providing resources for citizenship."

This isn't a 'backdoor' return to the Dominant Ideology thesis, in which programmes are described in terms of the extent to which they serve the interests of the ruling class. Instead, I am suggesting that

audiences' 'active' encounters with discourses in programmes always hold the potential for a range of responses to a programme's 'viewing position', because of the complexity of the inter-relationships between a society's total discursive repertoire and the particular discursive repertoires of interdiscursive individuals in the social groups constituting that society. Consequently, audiences' responses to a programme can never be predicted purely on the basis of its discursive position. This is not, however, an endorsement of the 'open door' argument (put by, among others, Fiske [1987]) that cultural products have no necessary, fixed or determinate meaning, because by explicitly relating meaning-production to the differential distribution of the felt capacity and/or the confidence to pass opinions and judgements, I am highlighting the social organisation of cultural judgements.

However, while I reject Fiske's assertions about the indeterminacy of meaning in cultural products, I also think that researchers could regard it as a useful working assumption from which to ask; how are the potentials for contestations and resistance that he outlined so well practically resolved in the everyday lives of socio-historically specific individuals? (This would also answer my complaint about the lack of empirical evidence in Fiske's work.) This question is applicable to programme-makers and audiences as individuals, and it can also be applied to those institutional constraints within which programme-makers work: how do particular discourses (and their particular 'viewing positions') come to dominate everyday business in cultural institutions such as radio and television stations?

Such a project would offer spaces to describe audiences' relationships with programmes - and thus with programme-makers - in terms other than the 'dupes' of the Dominant Ideology thesis and the 'sovereign consumer' of polysemy, because it would emphasise the potential variability of relationships between interdiscursive, socially-organised audiences and the 'indeterminate' products (programmes) of interdiscursive, socially-organised programme-makers. It would also offer spaces to discuss audiences' potential to resist dominant meanings in terms other than "yes/no", because it would emphasise the range of potential relationships between audiences, programmes and the institutions which produce them.

5.7 Designing a New Investigation.

These considerations of media research in the 1980s could develop in three ways the broad outline of the new investigation into audience-programme relationships with which I ended chapter four. Firstly, much of the 1980s research I have reviewed concerned discursive repertoires, and incorporating this notion in the proposed new investigation would develop it in ways which would meet two of my three aims for a new discourse in media research: resolving the Individual-Society Dualism into a new, historically-specific focus of inquiry; and acknowledging the role(s) of particular cultural forms in meaning-production around broadcasting. The new investigation would include an examination of the influence(s) of the communications industry on the discursive repertoire of society as a whole, of the particular social groups from which a programme's audiences are drawn, and of individuals in those groups. It would also study the historically-specific relationships between those discursive repertoires, asking how particular discourses (and the particular 'viewing positions' they imply) come to dominate everyday business in cultural institutions such as radio and television stations. A person's discursive repertoire is a complex mediator between social-material circumstances and consciousness, whether s/he is a programme-producer or a viewer, so investigating the significance of the products of the communications industry in different people's discursive repertoire could address polysemy's disregard of the role of cultural forms in meaning-production by individuals.

The second development of the proposed investigation would be methodological, and would begin to meet my second aim for a new discourse - resolving the materialism-idealism dualism. In polysemy theory, the potential variability of relationships between interdiscursive, socially-organised audiences and the 'indeterminate' products (programmes) of interdiscursive, socially-organised programme-makers means that relationships between audiences, programmes and the institutions which produce them are potentially almost limitless. In contrast, the new investigation would examine the

differential distribution of discourses within which different audiences understand programmes, asking whether rights and opportunities to express opinions are distributed equally in a particular society.

Such an examination of the possible material constraints on the flow of ideas in a society would have clear methodological implications. The differential distribution of discourses is linked with the differential distribution of the 'right to express an opinion' (Bourdieu, 1984; Hobson, 1982; Morley, 1986), and so in the new investigation, the analysis of research subjects' answers to questions would try to acknowledge that answers by individuals in different social groups (for example, and in particular, gender) are likely to be socially-organised by their relationships with sources of wealth and power. There would be explicit attempts to avoid regarding answers as those of individual 'consumers' functionally integrated into a relatively stable, market-oriented consensus.

While emphasising the differential distribution of discourses, the new investigation would have to note the argument by Grossberg (1989) - to which I referred earlier - that to fully acknowledge differences in individuals' experiences associated with differences in their social-material circumstances, risks emphasising 'the individual' at the expense of 'the social', may imply a cultural relativism precluding critical judgements ... and return us reinvigorated to methodological individualism and an Individual-Society dualism! These issues would be less problematic in the new investigation, which would study historically-specific relationships between the discursive repertoires of society as a whole, of particular social groups and of individuals in those groups. While recognising that ('of course') individuals make sense of programmes, it would ask how much - if at all - their understandings are 'socially organised' by membership of social groups with shared social/physical circumstances. One approach would be to adopt and adapt the 'naturalistic' approach by Morley (1986) to television viewing. Observations of informal television viewing by people in their homes (or wherever they normally watch television) would complement the more formal discussions and interviews with individuals and groups. This would begin to examine the interplay between the individual viewer and those others with whom s/he

regularly watches television, cross-checking the extent to which her/his answers to the formal survey questions match her/his behaviour in the more informal, 'non-research' setting of the home.

The third contribution would be an historical perspective on individuals' meaning-production around programmes, which would be derived from Pecheux's notion of the interdiscursive individual's discursive history and Bourdieu's notion of the historical 'trajectory' through which an individual's cultural capital develops. That perspective could inform investigations of whether and how the potential contestations and resistance outlined so well by Fiske (1987, 1989) have been practically grasped in the everyday lives of socio-historically specific individuals. Such investigations would be empirical (*contra* Fiske!), and would be long-term enough to describe the historical development of an individual's discursive repertoire.

5.8 Outline of a New Investigation.

The lessons drawn in chapter four from my Walworth research can be combined with those drawn in this chapter from some major media research projects of the 1980s to inform and colour the aims and methods of a new investigation of audience-programme relationships. The precise form and content of the investigations will be driven by the nature of the 'pool' of research subjects and their circumstances, as well as by the contemporary agenda of issues represented in television programmes. Further, any investigation will need extensive 'Piloting', during which its original form and content may change radically. However, at a very general level, such an investigation is likely to have the following characteristics.

Aims of a new investigation.

1. To investigate whether and how the communications industry influences the historically-specific relationships between the discursive repertoires of a society in general, of social groups within it, and of individual audience-members drawn from those social groups, and to do so in a series of investigations over a period of time.

2. To highlight the socio-historically-specific differential distribution of discourses within which individuals in different audiences understand programmes, and to explain how particular discourses come to dominate the everyday business of cultural institutions such as television stations.
3. To investigate the influence of individuals' discursive histories on their ability and willingness to contest/resist programmes' 'preferred' meanings.

Methods of a new investigation.

1. Design survey questions which recognise that research subjects' choices of response are socially organised by their access to power and wealth. In this way, link the socio-historically-specific differential distribution of the 'right' to express opinions with the equally socio-historically-specific differential distribution of discourses within which individuals in different audiences understand programmes.
2. Question research subjects with diverse social-material circumstances about televisual representations of topical and relevant issues in a variety of programme-forms, in a series of investigations, each consisting of a mixture of discussions with individuals and with social groups of which they are members.
3. Cross-tabulate subjects' responses to questions about television programmes they are asked to watch and discuss with the social and physical characteristics of subjects' circumstances and with the forms of the programmes. In turn, match these results with the results of the 'naturalistic' investigations of television viewing in different settings.

It is, of course, impossible to predict the outcomes of such an extensive research programme, but three general points can be made. Firstly, the results are unlikely to support either the determinism of the 'dominant ideology' thesis or the idealism of polysemy. Instead, they are likely to present meaning-production around programmes as part of the continuing contest for hegemony which constitutes our

everyday lives. Secondly, a significant feature of different socio-historically-specific phases of that contest is the ascendancy and decline of institutions expressing particular understandings of the world, and the new investigation is likely to highlight the differential discursive effects on viewers of the continuing concentration of media ownership. Thirdly, the reduced discursive diversity which may accompany media concentration particularly affects those whose histories have offered them fewer opportunities to encounter discursive diversity, for example the poor, the less-educated and the less-mobile. Consequently, the investigation is likely to show that in a time of rapid economic and political change, such people may be less able to understand and control their circumstances than people whose discursive repertoire includes ways of understanding which are clearly and explicitly alternative or oppositional to those dominating the media.

The new investigation is unlikely to support the view that people who watch television risk being manipulated by an international conspiracy of 'media moguls'. However, it is also unlikely to support the opposing view that viewers' resistant interpretive resources undercuts such potential manipulation. Instead, the new investigation is likely to show a need for new media institutions designed to counter such 'relative discursive disenfranchisement' in new relationships between programmes, audiences and their social-material circumstances ... which is where I came in!

5.9 Synoptic Conclusion.

My aim in this thesis has been to examine in detail examples of some influential strands of broadcasting research in the 1970s and 1980s, in order to establish whether or not any of them had produced credible explanations of how people made sense of programmes. In particular, I have sought in my selection of major research projects into meaning-production around broadcasting in those years some concern with tripartite relationships between programmes, audiences' understandings of them and audiences' social-material circumstances. I have concluded that, overall, such tri-partite relationships have not been

satisfactorily addressed, and I have argued that this has been due to the particular philosophical and epistemological foundations which characterised broadcasting research in those years.

Those foundations consisted of assumptions about relationships between the individual and society, and about knowledge and the circumstances of its production. In each set of assumptions, there was an unresolved dualism: in the assumptions about relationships between the individual and society, there was an unresolved dualism between atomistic and deterministic models of society; and in the assumptions about knowledge and the circumstances of its production, there was an unresolved dualism between materialism and idealism. Each of the projects I have examined failed to resolve one or both of those dualisms, with the result that its explanation of how people make sense of programmes has been flawed by an individual voluntarism and/or a social or technological determinism.

My examination in chapter two of a selection of 1970s media research projects showed that their underlying assumptions had led researchers to pay insufficient attention to the question of how - if at all - people's understandings of programmes are linked with their social-material circumstances. Instead, researchers referred to viewers as 'audiences' or - even worse - 'the audience', resolutely ignoring differences in gender, occupation, class, age, status, and a whole range of social characteristics. Researchers in those years also, for the most part, paid little attention to the different physical circumstances in which different categories of viewers lived their lives, a notable exception being the work by Piepe et al (1979). Finally, broadcasting researchers' concerns with how audiences related to programmes wasn't matched by a concern with the origins of programmes, and with the possible influence on understandings of a programme which may be exerted by its origins in a commercial or 'public service' broadcasting institution.

Researchers' failure to address the issue of audiences' social-material circumstances meant that they tended to present audiences' understandings of programmes in one of two ways, neither of which I judged to be satisfactory. In the first approach, researchers' materialist assumptions about knowledge-production combined with a focus of

inquiry on relationships between "Media and Society" meant that they tended to concentrate on society at the expense of the individual, and this led them to present audiences' understandings as 'mere' reflections of their circumstances. In the second approach, researchers' idealist assumptions about knowledge-production combined with a focus of inquiry on relationships between "Media and the Individual" to produce a methodological individualism in which audiences' circumstances seemed irrelevant to their understandings of programmes.

In my view, neither approach was credible. In the first approach, people appeared to be merely mirrors of their circumstances, with no creative or imaginative resources with which to understand them. From such a perspective, it is very hard to explain social change - for instance, in viewing behaviour. It can have no roots in people, only in their circumstances ... but what/who causes the changes in circumstances which bring about social change? From the second perspective, it is hard to explain the occurrence of patterns of behaviour - for instance, the simultaneous watching of the same programme by millions of viewers. If viewers are individuals unaffected by their circumstances, then why do so many behave identically? Neither of those two approaches to meaning-production around broadcasting presented a coherent model of audience-programme relationships, and so I looked beyond the realms of broadcasting research for at least the elements of a credible explanation.

My concern was with meaning-production, and so in chapter three I examined some influential theories of culture and of ideology. Writers on these subjects were concerned with the broad issues of how people understood the circumstances of their everyday lives and expressed those understandings, and also with the social, political and economic forces which may shape people's understandings, and within which they express those understandings. In the event, neither collection of theories proved to be a satisfactory solution. Within theories of culture, the issue of how knowledge is related with the circumstances of its production remained particularly problematic: the "Images of Society" tradition argued that a person's knowledge or consciousness merely reflects their material circumstances - specifically, their

working environment; and in the work both of Hoggart and of the British Cultural Studies tradition, the issue was deferred, because in each, consciousness appeared as already-formed but with no clearly-identified origins. There was no satisfactory explanation of relationships between knowledge and the circumstances of its production in either of the two approaches to ideology which I examined. Both Althusser's 'superstructural' approach to ideology and Lukacs's 'base' approach explained the formation of consciousness in ways which precluded people understanding the world in ways other than those constituting the 'dominant ideology'. From within these approaches, it would be impossible to think that audiences 'actively' watch programmes because, as in some of the broadcasting research projects I had examined, society was emphasised to the exclusion of the individual, dismissing the notion that people are autonomous, creative and imaginative. The consideration of work by those writers on culture and on ideology highlighted their lack of concern with cultural form. Most of the writers were critical in one way or another of the capitalist mode of production, and yet they paid virtually no attention to the fact that within capitalist society, cultural production is becoming increasingly industrialised, and culture is being produced in the form of commodities - for example, commercial television programmes, and commercial videos of programmes from both commercial and 'public service' television.

Such a disregard for the particularities of cultural production and form had also been a feature of the broadcasting research projects I had examined in chapter two. It would have been unrealistic to expect all six of those research projects to address the programme as a commodity. Of the six, only three (Local Radio Workshop, Glasgow Media Group and Piepe et al) were in any way explicitly concerned with the specificities of the capitalist mode of production in the cultural sphere, and so might have been expected to express an interest in the possible influences of the ways in which programmes are produced and distributed. However, even in those three projects, there was no coherent explanation of whether/how the conditions of programme-production are related to how people make sense of those programmes, and in none of them was there any consideration of the possible influences of the different forms in which programmes are

produced and distributed - for instance, do people watch programmes on commercial television in the same way as they watch programmes on 'public service' television, and do they watch such programmes differently when they are originally transmitted and when they are subsequently distributed as videos?

My review of these broad swathes of theoretical and research work led me to believe that in the years prior to the 1980s, broadcasting researchers' views on audience-programme relationships had been seriously flawed. Their presentations of the relationships between the individual and society had tended to overemphasise one at the expense of the other; their explanations of how audiences make sense of programmes had tended to erect a false distinction between individuals' consciousness and their social-material circumstances; and they had discussed audience-programme relationships as though the origins and form of programmes didn't matter. I concluded that a credible, coherent explanation of how people make sense of programmes could only emerge if those three weaknesses were addressed, and expressed my conclusion as a set of three aims for future broadcasting research projects - aims which would serve as criteria by which to assess the results of future projects. The aims were as follows:

1. *Pose a clear, non-atomistic model of society and thus resolve the individual-society dualism into a new, historically-specific focus of inquiry;*
2. *Resolve the materialism-idealism dualism into a new model of knowledge-production;*
3. *Explain the roles of particular cultural forms and of particular cultural and ideological institutions in social change, especially their roles in the commodification of culture.*

My own investigation of audience-programme relationships, which I describe in chapter four, was explicitly designed to address the first two of those aims. It interviewed people to discover whether their understandings of programmes were related to their circumstances - specifically, to their gender, occupation and age. The results were inconclusive. Interviewees' understandings weren't consistently related to their circumstances, but sufficient links were found to

indicate that further investigations could be worthwhile. Ironically, that judgement was strengthened by the considerable methodological faults which were revealed in the analysis of the results: my attempt to explicitly break new ground in broadcasting research had brought with it its own conceptual and methodological problems. However, the investigation did have real value: the analysis of its results, while highlighting problems, also offered several lessons. These could be incorporated in the design and operation of future research oriented to those three aims or criteria I posed earlier, and I conclude chapter four by posing a new research question which is more specific than the one on which I had based my investigations: Are there relationships between representations of issues in programmes, audiences' understandings of those representations and their encounters - if any - with the issues in their everyday lives, and, if so, what form do those relationships take? The analysis of my results had also shown the need to ask people about their viewing not just individually but also in groups defined by the social and physical characteristics of their members' circumstances. Finally, it had also emphasised the need to integrate with such interviews a judgement as to the degree to which the particular representations under scrutiny are 'open' to a diversity of understandings by audiences.

In this final chapter of the thesis, I have reviewed a selection of 1980s media research projects, in order to assess whether any had approached audience-programme relationships in ways which met the three aims I had derived from my examination of earlier research. In the 1980s, the influence in media studies of the 'dominant ideology' thesis was being challenged by polysemic approaches to meaning-production around broadcasting, and from the projects I examined, I was able to synthesise a new model of meaning-production. Nonetheless, for all its novelty, and despite its break from traditional views of audience-programme relationships, the model still failed to meet my three aims. However, there are two major elements of that new model which could be used to develop the proposals for a new investigation I outlined at the end of chapter four. The first of these is the general notion of a discursive repertoire, and especially the notion that discursive repertoires are differentially distributed in particular societies. Second, and allied to

this, is the notion that individuals' discursive repertoires can develop and change over their lives.

Each of these elements highlights the potential influence of the communications industry over audiences. This wasn't the direct and oppressive influence implied in "Effects" theorists and by adherents of the 'dominant ideology' thesis; it was an influence derived from the communications industry's dominant role in circulating discourses through a society. Its role is particularly significant in the lives of people with little access to a diversity of discourses, whom I referred to as 'discursively deprived'. I concluded, therefore, that a major feature of a new investigation should be the influence of the communications industry on the discursive repertoires to which individuals in different social-material circumstances have access, and that this concern should be matched with a focus on how particular discourses come to dominate institutions within that industry.

Overall, then, I have presented two problems in broadcasting research. Firstly, how are we to investigate the relationships, if any, between programmes, audiences' understandings of them and audiences' social-material circumstances? Secondly, how, if at all, do the structure and operations of the communications industry influence audiences' understandings of programmes? I have argued that in some major traditions in broadcasting research in the 1970s and 1980s, researchers were unable to coherently address those problems satisfactorily, let alone solve them, and that this was due to their assumptions about knowledge-production, combined with their focus of inquiry. However, my examination of those projects not only highlighted their weaknesses, it also drew a variety of lessons about addressing those two problems. Consequently, I have been able to conclude the thesis by outlining some features which should be included in future research of investigation, and which should enable future researchers to think about audience-programme relationships in new and, hopefully, more productive ways.

In my view, broadcasting researchers have yet to satisfactorily explain how people make sense of programmes. The task is not to find more sophisticated methods of investigation, it is to find new ways of

thinking about meaning-production which acknowledge the roles of audiences and programme-makers. We need to think about meaning-production as a continuous process, influenced by people's social characteristics such as gender, class and race, the material circumstances in which they live, and the cultural discourses or frameworks to which they have access. In this way, we can integrate analyses of the production and consumption of meaning around broadcasting and, in the process, outline the conditions necessary for all audiences to have equal opportunity to use and develop the ideas which characterise their society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

Pilot Questionnaire

WILMOUTH CABLE RADIO (WCR)Broadcasting Survey Summer 1981PILOTBroadcasting Issues

1. BBC Radio London, Capital Radio and London Broadcasting Company all produce programmes to serve the interests of people in London

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

2. Radio and television current affairs programmes are like British democracy, because they allow both sides of a question to be heard

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

3. "The Sweeney" shows what solving crime really involves

YES/NO

4. 'Coronation Street' shows a true picture of what working class life is like.

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

5. Radio and television concentrate on individuals because change happens through the actions of strong, ambitious personalities

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

6. Is there any information that you could give to people in this area if you were able, e.g. through newspapers, radio or television ?

YES/NO

WHAT SORT ?

7. What sort of radio programmes do you like listening to ?

| | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| Documentaries | Phone-ins | Discussions |
| Interviews | Classical Music | Jazz Music |
| Rock Music | Disco Music | Punk Music |
| Country Music | Middle-of-the-road | |
| Other Music..... | | |
| Serials | Series | Plays |
| Comedy | Weather | News |
| Current Affairs | Religious progs. | Religious services |
| Consumer Info. | Children's progs. | Quiz programmes |
| Educational Progs. | Sports progs. | Ethnic minority progs. |
| Progs. about music, theatre, films, books. etc. | | |

8. What sorts of radio programmes would you like to listen to that aren't broadcast at present ?

9. What social & political problems appear in "When the Boat Comes In" ?

Local Issues

10. It is easy for people in this area to influence local politicians

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

11. It is easy to make new friends and acquaintances in this area

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

12. To control crime in this area, the police have to be violent
 TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE
13. If you were going to buy a new car, what would be its country of origin?
 GERMANY JAPAN HOLLAND UNITED K.
14. Have you seen the police in this area using violence in their duty?
 YES/NO

Social Issues

15. Adverts in broadcasting concentrate on British products because British products are better than foreign ones
 TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE
16. Discussing social and political issues requires specialist knowledge
 TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE
17. The competitiveness of UK industry abroad influences UK inflation and unemployment
 TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE
18. What do you consider to be the five most important social problems now?
 1st. 2nd. 3rd. 4th. 5th.
19. You personally can change your situation through your individual effort and ambition
 TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE
20. Britain's economic and political situation is independent of the economies and politics of other countries
 TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE
21. Surrey Docks has been bought up by big business, and there are almost no social facilities. Why do you think this is?
22. Over the last fifty years, people's living conditions have
 REMAINED THE SAME
 IMPROVED
 DETERIORATED
23. If you were going to buy a new radio or television, what would be its country of origin?
 GERMANY JAPAN HOLLAND UNITED KINGDOM

APPENDIX TWO

"Walworth Cable Radio: Broadcasting Survey"

(Extract)

1:1 Community Broadcasting Stations.

During the seventies a number of community broadcasting stations had been established in different parts of England. The aim of those stations was to change the relations between listeners and programme-makers by restricting the radio station to serve one particular community. By serving one community the radio station remains close to its listeners and gives the listeners access to the actual production of radio programmes. The radio station is owned and controlled by people living or working in its area of transmission and is funded from a variety of sources. According to the ACBS (Association of community broadcasting stations) a community broadcasting station has the following characteristics:

1. It serves a recognisable community and/or community of interest.
2. It is non-profit distributing.
3. It is locally controlled through a broadly representative Board of Governors.
4. It earns or receives a proportion of its income from (eg.) subscriptions, advertising and local authority grants.
5. It is not expected to necessarily provide a comprehensive, but could draw on the BBC and ILR to provide "a sustaining service".

In this way the community broadcasting station acts as a resource-centre for local people to produce their own radio programmes rather than a professional production area. The community broadcasting station is intended to fill the gap between listener and radio station, a gap which is at present represented by the nationally orientated and professional BBC and IBA stations.

The present members of the ACBS are:

WSM Community Radio in Telford, x
 Radio Princethorpe in Birmingham.
 CRMK in Milton Keynes. x
 Radio Basildon in Basildon. x
 Radio Thamesmead in South-East London. x
 Walworth Cable Radio in South London.
 Swindon Viewpoint in Swindon.
 Greenwich CableSound in South-East London. x
 Aycliffe Community Radio in Newton-Aycliffe. x x=currently broadcasting

The community broadcasting stations are currently operating on cable. This means that the stations are only established on modern estates equipped with a cable system. The listener subscribes to the cable system which is usually owned by commercial companies. This dismisses large areas from the possibility of community broadcasting stations and prevents people from receiving this form of radio. It is the policy of the community broadcasting stations to apply for licences to broadcast on the air and the ACBS member stations are currently applying to the Home Office for such permission in order to establish stations in areas not equipped with a cable system.

1:2 Walworth Cable Radio.

Walworth Cable Radio(WCR)is being established by Walworth&Aylesbury Community Arts Trust(WACAT)in the north Southwark area of London and is a member of the ACBS.Work began on the station in late 1978 as a product of a call from a local Tenants'association.WCR is planned to start transmissions in 1981 and will reach an area bounded by the Walworth Road,Old Kent Road and Albany Road.This area is dominated by the Aylesbury and Heygate estates which are connected to the cable system owned and operated by Visionhire.People who subscribe to this cable will be able to receive transmissions produced by WCR and its potential audience will thus be 6000 households.

WCR is staffed by one fulltime and one half time worker who are members of WACAT.It has its own office and is fully supplied with the equipment necessary for producing and broadcasting radioprogrammes.The work is at present concentrated towards the forming of a Management Committee of local residents,the pilot production of radioprogrammes, fundraising,the building of portable studio units and also gaining local support for the project.The area in which WCR is going to operate is dominated by ethnically mixed working-class people living in council owned houses.It is hoped that the community radio station might be able to increase the possibility of internal communication and understanding.The station currently receives its main funds from GLAA(Greater London ARTS Association)but plans to gain the support of local shops and companies as potential advertisers.Much emphasis will be put on access and the participation of local people which is vital for the stations existence.The station plans to broadcast the following types of programmes:

LOCAL ENTERTAINERS
 INFORMATION FROM LOCAL GROUPS
 PROGRAMMES FROM SCHOOLS
 LOCAL CONSUMER ISSUES
 LOCAL DJ:S
 LOCAL NEWSPROGRAMMES
 LOCAL MUSICIANS
 SOUTHWARK COUNCIL ISSUES
 PHONE-INS WITH LOCAL PERSONALITIES
 TENANTS ASSOCIATION NEWS
 DRAMA FROM LOCAL GROUPS.....

1:3 Introduction to research.

The following research about Walworth Cable Radio has its origin in an approach to Blackfriars Settlement by WCR,who requested some students to do a piece of audience research before the station went on "the air".The research was aimed at discovering what people thought of current radio and television as well as what people thought of having a community radio station of their own and what they would expect it to provide.

As Swedish students(attending University of Lund)doing a community work placement at Blackfriars Settlement we were offered to do this survey and by working for WCR we hoped to achieve the following:

- 1.Provide useful research for WCR which would influence its activities in the future.
- 2.As community workers we wanted to raise consciousness about WCR and its possibilities for the residents in the area.
- 3.We wanted to gain experience and knowledge of a community project like WCR.

1:4 Questions to be asked.

1. For the planning of WCR.

- A. Audienceresearch. What current radioprogrammes do people listen to, what stations, when and why?
- B. What do people think of a community radiostation in the area and what would they like it to provide and how would they like to use it?
- C. What is the general feeling in the area? What problems are there, what resources are there and what should be the tasks of a community-radio in the area?

2. For the policy of WCR.

To what extent are current radio and television-programmes affecting peoples view of reality? Do people use the media critically?

The second of these questions is the result of discussions between ourselves and WCR-worker Patrick Hughes and also of a current debate in the UK which has led to political criticism of the BBC and the IBA. This criticism is based on academic research which accuses the broadcasting corporations of giving a biased view of society. (See appendix)

In the beginning of our work we closely monitored television for two weeks and drew the following generalized conclusions of British television:

British television

A. Puts the UK at the center of the world.

Televisionnews concentrate on internal affairs and international news are given unproportionally small space. Nearly all programmes are produced in Britain and most of them deal with aspects of British society.

B. Gives the UK an independent status in terms of international relations.

Television diminishes the importance of other countries to Britain and exaggerates Britains importance to other countries, as exemplified by the treatment of the Common market.

C. Make British industrial products look superior to others.

Adverts on television, if advertising a British made product, often try to manipulate the consumer to believe that the quality of the product is guaranteed by its being made in Britain.

D. Describes Britain as a well functioning democracy.

Much emphasis is put on giving all political parties the same amount of space in a media which is supposedly neutral. We think that television by it's centralized professional and one way communicative structure contradicts the basic meaning of democracy. Ordinary people (the majority) are not being given access to this media and have no possibilities to influence the messages delivered to them by television

By the structure of television a political status quo is maintained through:

A. Objectivity.

In documentaries, current affairs programmes, and news the programme-presenter remains "neutral" in the sense that he delivers uncommented "facts" that are previously constructed and chosen. Both sides of a question are given space for arguments but the programme-presenter adopts the neutral normalizing role and does not allow deeper penetration.

B. Expertism

When it comes to participation in television debates and the individuals commenting on news items only experts are given the opportunity to express an opinion. The opinions of the "experts" are treated as factual truths and ordinary people are often excluded from taking part in discussions.

C. Individuality.

Television tends to, by its structure, overrate the importance of the individual to society. This is illustrated by the concentration on personalities in series, shows and even documentaries.

Many of those generalized conclusions that we have drawn from British television may be seen as exaggerated and not even true but we suspect that there are certain myths presented by television and have constructed our survey in order to find out whether people accept these myths as reality or not.

A great part of British television programmes consist of different kind of series. Two of the most popular ones shown on television during our time in England were "Coronation street" and "The Sweeney" why we were interested in understanding whether people liked these programmes because they were realistic and meaningful to them (identification) or whether the main reason for their popularity was their entertaining character (escapism). A programme like "Coronation Street", which is the oldest TV-series in England and is aimed to illustrate British workingclass-life ought therefore to be very suitable to discuss with people living in a typical workingclass-area.

APPENDIX THREE

Leaflets surrounding the administration
and analysis of the Survey.



WALWORTH CABLE RADIO

We are two Swedish students who are doing a survey for Walworth Cable Radio (WCR).

WCR is a radio station that will serve the Walworth area, and on which local people will transmit programmes that they themselves have made.

The WCR project is situated in Chartridge Block on the Aylesbury Estate, and plans to start transmissions later this year.

In our survey, we are asking people what they think of current radio and television programmes, what they would expect from a radio station in this area, and also some questions on general social topics.

During the course of our survey, we hope to see as many people as possible, and we would be very grateful for your participation. The interview will last about half an hour.

After completing the survey, we will invite people involved to a meeting at the end of June to discuss the results. We will tell you more about this meeting when we see you.

Thank you, in advance, for your help.

Anna Meeuwisse

Anna Meeuwisse

Erik Hedling

Erik Hedling

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WALWORTH CABLE RADIO

WALWORTH CABLE RADIO - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT ?

The flats on the Aylesbury and Hegate estates and the homes in the surrounding area are provided with a Visionhire cable for television and radio programmes. Some members of Walworth and Aylesbury Community Arts Trust and some local residents have an idea for a new type of local radio station that is run by the people in the Walworth area-people living or working in the area can make programmes that can be sent down the cable.

We are building special portable studio units so that programmes can be made anywhere in the area-in your flat, in the launderette, at school, at work: even in the streets or on the walkways .

We would like WALWORTH CABLE RADIO to open in 1981-but we need local support: WE WANT YOU TO BE INVOLVED FROM THE BEGINNING!

There is alot to do:- building the portable studio units
making radio programmes
telling others about the radio station
raising money

DON'T WORRY IF YOU HAVN'T ANY EXPERIENCE _WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW!!!

SHOP UNIT 8, TAPLOW, AYLESBURY ESTATE, LONDON SE17

01 701,9010

WALWORTH CABLE RADIO

WALWORTH CABLE RADIO

your radio

unemployment

youth clubs

local news

PROGRAMME

MAKING

COURSE

sports

music

holidays

jobs

cinema

STARTING SOON!

Make your own radio programmes!

Learn all that the Capital Radio disc-jockeys know!

Our course will show you how to:- use a tape recorder
record interviews
edit tapes
AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

COME TO OUR STUDIO -Office A Chartridge ,(off the
Westmoreland rd.on the Aylesbury-SEE MAP)

ON ANY *****TUESDAY***** and we will show you how!!!

*****5.00pm-6.00pm*****

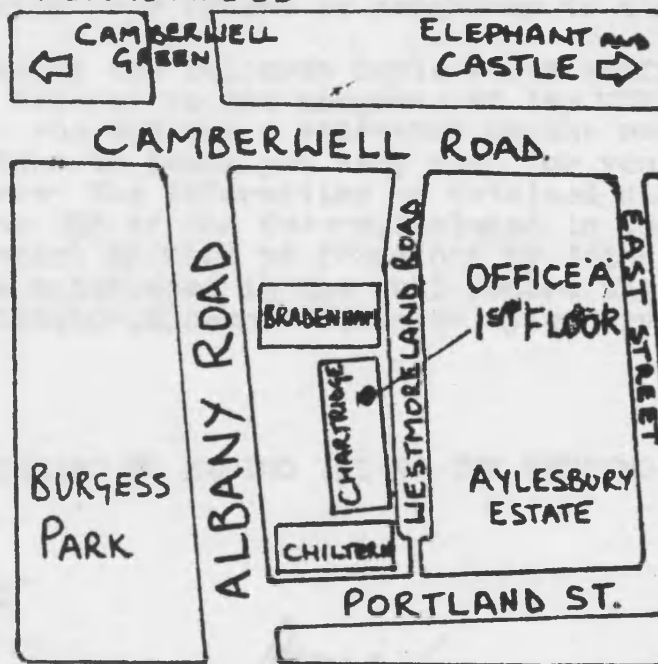
everyone welcome*****

FOR ANY INFORMATION ABOUT WALWORTH CABLE RADIO AND THE
PROGRAMME MAKING GROUPS call in or ring Caroline or
Patrick-701 9010. Mon -Fri 10-6.

WALWORTH CABLE RADIO

Chartridge studio for radio-
groups on the Aylesbury Estate.

HOW TO FIND US



Office A, Chartridge, Westmoreland St

Aylesbury Estate S.E. 17

Phone 701-9010



For any information about
Walworth Cable Radio:
Call in Mon.-Fri. 10-6 or ring 7019010

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WALWORTH CABLE RADIO

You are invited to attend a meeting to discuss the survey that we have completed with your help, and the future of WCR.

WEDNESDAY

The meeting will be held on the 17:th of June at 7PM at

ACTIVITY CENTER
ENDOVER
AYLESBURY ESTATE

(Please bring your friend or neighbour to the meeting)

At the meeting the Walworth Cable Radio staff will bring you up to date as to the progress of the WCR on Aylesbury estate and you can see a slideshow on the radio. We would like to thank you very much for your participation in the survey. The information we obtained will be very useful for the WCR in the future. Included in this leaflet is a brief report of what we found out by doing the survey. If you are interested in the full report this is available at the printshop, Shopunit 8, Taplow, Aylesbury estate.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE MEETING!

Erik

Erik

Anna

Anna

Introduction

During the course of our survey we called at 475 flats and managed to interview 110 residents. This report is based on the results.

Listening to the radio: 94% like listening to the radio and most of them listen daily. Radio seems to be mostly popular in the morning but quite a few listen during the afternoon.

Most people listen for sheer entertainment but quite a few enjoy the information and the news that is provided as well. Capital Radio and BBC Radio 1 are the most popular radio stations mostly due to their 'easy listening' type of music. LBC is the least popular station mostly because they don't play any music at all.

Most people thought that Capital, LBC and BBC Radio London served the interests of people living in London because they provided information on traffic, communication, what's on in London and also different kinds of services like the flatline, the jobline and swaps and sales. A few people thought that those stations did not serve the community as a whole mostly due to the size of London and also because North London was favoured.

What would people like to hear more of on the radio? Most people wanted more of what they liked, especially light music. But some people clearly saw the need for a greater coverage of local issues on the radio.

WALWORTH CABLE RADIO

The survey found that a large majority of the residents feel that it is hard to make contact with others and that there is little communication on the estate. Many people feel insecure on the estate and many think that the Council neglects the Aylesbury. People found it difficult to influence local politicians and it is also difficult to organise around local issues. 87% of those interviewed thought that a community radio station like Walworth Cable Radio is a good idea.

What do people want from WCR? Among the programmes that WCR has suggested to provide local news, tenants association news and local entertainers were the most popular. One third of these interviewed were keen to help with the radio themselves. More than half of the people we asked had ideas of which issued Walworth Cable Radio should cover in its programmes and also had messages which they would like to share with their fellow-residents on the Aylesbury estate. Many good ideas like how to help the elderly, how to find activities for children how to use the garages below the flats, and so on were suggested. Many people wanted to have the local problems of vandalism and rubbish discussed.

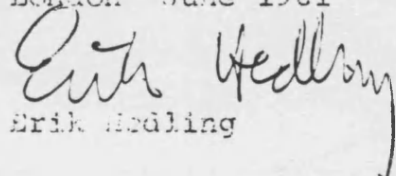
NATIONAL ISSUES

In our survey we asked people what they thought of television and the treatment of national issues. Most people like for example 'Coronation Street' or 'The Sweeney' but they do not correspond to reality. A majority think that current affairs programmes like 'Panorama' and 'World in Action' are interesting programmes that give a fairly honest picture of the problems discussed but many also thought that special knowledge is needed to discuss social and political issues on radio and television and many people said that they often got the impression that people on radio and television lack practical experience of what they were talking about.

There was considerable doubt as to whether British democracy really worked and many people realised that Britain is economically and politically dependent on other countries.

According to the survey unemployment, racism and housing were the most evident problems in Britain at the moment but living conditions had improved over the last 50 years.

London June 1981


Erik Hedding


Anna Meuwisse

PS A more detailed report of this research is available at the Printshop, Taplow, Aylesbury Estate.

APPENDIX FOUR

Final Questionnaire

WALWORTH CABLE RADIOBroadcasting SurveySummer 1981PART ONE: RADIO RESEARCH

1. Are you on the Visionhire Cable ?
YES/NO

2. Do you own a separate radio (including car radio) ?
YES/NO

3. How often do you listen to the radio ?
OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

4. Do you like listening to the radio ?
YES/NO

5. When do you listen to the radio on weekdays ?

| | BBC Radio 1 Capital Radio | BBC Radio 2 LBC | BBC Radio 3 Pirate Radio | BBC Radio 4 | BBC Radio London |
|---------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Morning | | | | | |
| Lunchtime | | | | | |
| Afternoon | | | | | |
| Early Evening | | | | | |
| Late Evening | | | | | |
| Night | | | | | |

6. When do you usually listen to the radio at weekends ?

| | BBC Radio 1 Capital Radio | BBC Radio 2 LBC | BBC Radio 3 Pirate Radio | BBC Radio 4 | BBC Radio London |
|---------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Morning | | | | | |
| Lunchtime | | | | | |
| Afternoon | | | | | |
| Early Evening | | | | | |
| Late Evening | | | | | |
| Night | | | | | |

7. What programmes do you like listening to?

| MUSIC | BBC Radio 1 | BBC Radio 2 | BBC Radio 3 | BBC Radio 4 | BBC Radio 1 | Capital Radio | LBC | Pirate Radio |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-----|-----------------|
| Rock | | | | | | | | |
| Country | | | | | | | | |
| Classical | | | | | | | | |
| Disco | | | | | | | | |
| M.C.R. | | | | | | | | |
| Jazz | | | | | | | | |
| Punk etc. | | | | | | | | |
| Folk | | | | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | | | |
| "SPEECH" | | | | | | | | |
| Documentaries | | | | | | | | |
| Interviews | | | | | | | | |
| Current Affairs | | | | | | | | |
| Phone-ins | | | | | | | | |
| Discussions | | | | | | | | |
| News | | | | | | | | |
| Religion | | | | | | | | |
| Weather | | | | | | | | |
| ENTERTAINMENT | | | | | | | | |
| Serials | | | | | | | | |
| Comedy | | | | | | | | |
| Sport | | | | | | | | |
| Children's | | | | | | | | |
| Plays | | | | | | | | |
| Quizzes | | | | | | | | |
| OTHERS | | | | | | | | |
| Consumer Info. | | | | | | | | |
| Educational | | | | | | | | |
| Ethnic Minority | | | | | | | | |

8. Why do you listen to radio ?

E.g. information, relaxation, company, entertainment, etc.

9. Do you get any of those things in any other way?

10. What radio stations do you like listening to, and why?

BBC Radio 1
 BBC Radio 2
 BBC Radio 3
 BBC Radio 4
 BBC Radio London
 Capital Radio
 LBC
 Pirate Radio

11. What radio stations do you NOT like listening to, and why not ?

BBC Radio 1
 BBC Radio 2
 BBC Radio 3
 BBC Radio 4
 BBC Radio London
 Capital Radio
 LBC
 Pirate Radio

12. BBC Radio London, LBC and Capital Radio are all local radio stations that are intended to serve the specific local interests of people living in London. Are they successful ?
 YES NO DON'T KNOW
13. If these stations are serving the local interests, how do you think they achieve this ?
14. If you think they are NOT serving local interests, what do they lack?
15. Of what type of radio programme would you like there to be more?
16. What types of radio programmes would you like there to be less of ?
17. Are there any types of radio programmes that you -ould like to listen to but aren't broadcast at present ? Please specify.

PART TWO: WALWORTH CABLE RADIO RESEARCH (WCR)

18. Have you heard about WCR before now ?
19. Do you think that a local radio station in this area would be a good idea ? (Please specify)
20. What kind of programmes would you like WCR to provide ?
- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Local entertainers | Local musicians |
| Info. from local gps. | Southwark Council issues |
| Local DJ's | Phone-ins with local personalities |
| Programmes from schools | Tenants' Associations' news |
| Local consumer issues | Drama from local groups |
| local news programmes | |
21. Do you get those sorts of programmes from anywhere else now ?
22. At what time would you listen to WCR when it starts ?
- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Morning | Lunchtime |
| Afternoon | Early evening |
| Late evening | Night |
| Don't know | |
23. Would you like to help to make programmes for WCR?
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Technical/electrical | Editorial |
| Production | Other |
| Don't know | No (Why not ?) |
- What sorts of programmes

24. Is there any specific information or advice (or other) that you could share with people in this area through WCR ?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

PART THREE: TELEVISION RESEARCH

25. Do you watch television ?

OFTEN

SOMETIMES

NEVER

26. Do you think that "Coronation Street" shows a true picture of what working class life is like ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

27. Many programmes (e.g. "This is Your Life", "The Extraordinary People Show", "Profile") deal with well-known personalities. Is this because these people are more important to society than others ?

28. Do you think that "The Sweeney" shows a true picture of what solving crime really involves ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

29. Do you think that current affairs programmes like "World in Action" and "Panorama" allow both sides of a question to be heard equally ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

30. Do you think that radio and TV adverts concentrate more on British products than overseas ones ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

31. Do you think that radio and TV news concentrates on the UK ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

32. Do you think that discussing social and political issues on radio and TV requires special knowledge ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

PART FOUR: LOCAL ISSUES

33. Is it easy to make new friends and acquaintances in this area?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

34. Is it easy for local people to influence local politicians here ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

35. Do you think that in order to control crime in this area the police have to be violent ?

TRUE

MORE TRUE THAN FALSE

MORE FALSE THAN TRUE

FALSE

36. Have you, personally, seen the police being violent in this area

in the course of their duty ?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

37. Are you a member of any group or club in the area ?

38. Do you think that there are any special issues that WCR should cover ?

PART FIVE: NATIONAL ISSUES

39. Do you think that British democracy allows both sides of a question to be heard equally ?

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

40. Do you think that British-made products are better than others ?

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

41. Do you think that the UK's political & economic position depends on other countries ?

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

42. Do you think that inflation and unemployment in the UK is influenced by how much we sell overseas ?

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

43. Do you think that over the last fifty years people's living conditions have;

DETERIORATED

IMPROVED

REMAINED THE SAME

44. What do you think are the three main social problems in Britain now ?

First:

Second:

Third:

45. Do you think that personal effort & ambition always pay off ?

TRUE MORE TRUE THAN FALSE MORE FALSE THAN TRUE FALSE

46. If you were going to buy a new radio or TV, what would be its country of origin ?

GERMANY

JAPAN

HOLLAND

UK

47. If you were going to buy a new car, what would be its country of origin ?

GERMANY

JAPAN

USA

UK

Sex:

Age:

Occupation

THANKS VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP !