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a) Authors' surnames and initials;
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Editorial

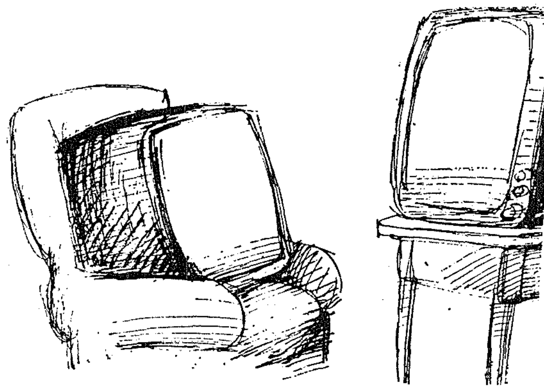
Mass Media Education

Anniversaries

This double issue of *Education* focuses on the mass media – their characteristics, educational uses, and the methods which can be employed to educate both those who work through and in them, as well as those who depend on them for their information, contact and entertainment. There are historical as well as practical considerations underlying this choice of topic. For one thing, this issue celebrates a number of recent and imminent anniversaries of events which have had wide-ranging cognitive, cultural and educational implications.

On an international scale, the 2nd of November of 1986 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the first ever regular network television transmissions (by the BBC in London in 1936). It was a fairly modest opening, limited to two hours a day, six days per week, with a target audience of a few hundred viewers who could afford to buy or build the cumbersome and expensive early receivers (which cost about the same as an automobile at the time). Since then the television industry has grown at a phenomenal pace, and our ways of thinking, seeing and acting have also been profoundly modified by these advances. It has been estimated (by Granada Television) that by 1984 television could be seen by about 2,500 million people in 162 countries throughout the world, and that the average number of television sets manufactured throughout the world every day is the same as the average number of births – 250,000. We are now also on the brink of new developments (some would say revolutions) in this sphere with the widespread accessibility of satellite transmissions – developments which in theory would make redundant and ineffective all national broadcasting boundaries and local controls of what is transmitted and viewed on television. There is an anniversary behind this development as well, in that the first earth satellite ever launched went into orbit 30 years ago (the Russian Sputnik in 1957). Ten years before that saw the invention of the transistor (by the Bell laboratories) – an invention which has made possible many of the more sophisticated advances in mass media technology.

On a local scale, 1987 will also mark the 25th anniversary of the first regular transmissions by the Maltese television station – which had its first broadcast on the 29th of September 1962. Television had in fact already been introduced into



Maltese homes in 1957, when transmissions by the Italian RAI television network (at the time just one channel) started being received in Malta from Sicilian transmitters. This mixture of local and foreign transmissions has now been staple viewing fare in Malta for 25 years – with the number of Italian stations increasing over the years to the present average of 14 in many areas. The complex repercussions and potential uses of this state of affairs have on various occasions been the basis of heated political debate, but (to date) little systematic analysis has been conducted of its cultural and socio-linguistic implications.

Consequences

The potentials of technological media for educational purposes have long been recognised, and the possibilities provided by print, audio-recording, radio, film, television, video and computers have been developed and exploited (with varying degrees of competence) in a wide range of educational contexts. The potential uses of the mass media for purposes of persuasion and propaganda have also long been recognised, exploited and (in many cases) over- or underestimated by autocrats, politicians and commercial advertisers.

The mass media have broken down many traditional barriers to information and have given rise to new power relations in the control and sharing of information, in the setting of the agendas of public debate, action and concern, in the definition of social and political realities. Indeed, the very shape and orientations of politics themselves have been modified as a result of these definitions and power relations. In many industrialised nations, the 'public image' (or presentability as a 'media personality') of politicians has assumed more importance in popular terms than policies, beliefs and intellectual/governing competence. Election campaigns have thus in a number of cases become elaborate and expensive exercises in the manufacture and sale of consumable images – not very different from those involved in the selling of commodity products. It is not just the mainstream politicians who have learned to tailor their methods according to the constraints and potentials of the

mass media. Terrorists plant their bombs to explode in time for the evening television news, proclaiming their responsibility and the creed and demands of their cause to and through the news media. From all sides, propagandists and advertisers bombard us with messages employing various degrees of subtlety to persuade us to adopt a particular stance, endorse a specific set of beliefs, or buy a particular product. The types of television programmes, films and other technologically transmitted messages (images, sound, music) which we have grown used to over the years have also modified many of our perspectives and expectations as regards what we consider entertaining, interesting, well-presented or boring. And because such products (like all social products) come loaded with a variety of proclaimed, assumed as well as unacknowledged values and attitudes, our methods of identifying and evaluating information, ascribing meanings and attributing motives have also been affected.

Literacy

Your ability to grasp the meanings encoded in this journal (or any written or printed text, for that matter) involves the deployment of a complex series of learned and socially transmitted skills and aptitudes. It is these learned (as distinct from inherently spontaneous) aptitudes which make it possible for you to extend your biologically based abilities (seeing, hearing, etc.) to the recognition and interpretation of the shapes and arrangement of letters, words and sentences. It is also on the basis of these learned aptitudes and skills that you should be able to consider and critically measure the ideas and information transmitted in this particular code against the background of your accumulated knowledge and expectations.

Our educational institutions make a lot of allowance for the development of these aptitudes. We teach children how to read, write and manipulate numbers, letters and words; we exercise them in the composition and comprehension of messages encoded in different languages (Maltese, English, Italian); and we introduce them to complex variations of these codes (as in algebra) or to the nuances of literary expression with the aim of sharpening their powers of manipulating and analysing the written word and responding to it critically. We have also continued to judge academic competence and achievement virtually exclusively in terms of levels of aptitude in the deployment of one medium of communication: the written/printed word. Paradoxically, the channels of communication which dominate a substantial portion of our contemporary waking lives (television, radio, film) are rarely considered worthy of this type of attention -- even though, like the written word, they are made up of many arbitrary and culture-based conventions, nuances and connotations. In the majority of cases, the standard school assumption is that these newer media constitute little more than time-wasting distractions from the traditionally more serious business of studying and becoming competent users of the older media.

On a fairly modest scale, work in the area of mass media education has been taking place at the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta for some time now, both on an individual basis and also along more formally structured lines. A number of students at the Faculty, for instance, have over the years worked on a series of dissertations exploring mass media issues under the supervision of various lecturers and professional broadcasters. There are currently optional modules offered within the Educational Theory component of the B.Ed. (Hons.) course which encourage students to explore some of the relations between the mass media, child development, learning and social behaviour.

The University has also been running Diploma courses in Journalism Studies and in Communication Studies, both of which include substantial components of mass media studies geared to the needs and interests of professional communicators (practising and prospective journalists, teachers, public relations officers, secretaries) as well as other adults who have a non-vocational interest in the critical study of a subject which forms an essential component of their daily lives.

The environment we inhabit today is structurally and functionally very different from the one which existed before the technological advances whose anniversaries are celebrated by this issue. Being a competent and educated adult in such an environment presupposes the ability to understand, develop and deploy a set of skills (cognitive, emotional, social) which are necessarily different from (and possibly more complex than) those which were required in antecedent cultural and physical environments. In this sense, our conceptions of what it means to be 'literate' and 'educated', as well as the curricula we develop to nurture these qualities, urgently need to be updated in the face of the radically changed and changing realities of our times. As we approach the 21st century, we cannot afford to continue neglecting the educational implications of the more recent media -- particularly since such neglect allows free reign to those who are more than ready and competent to use such media for personal gain and for a host of other variously loaded purposes.

Educating Maltese Journalists

Evarist Bartolo

The media institutions of a country can be studied as a system in which a set of input-output relationships bind its constituent elements in a network of mutual dependences[1]. Significant variation in the activity of one component will be associated with significant variation of all other components.

A system's approach to the Maltese media would show that they are

> "essentially secondary bodies; entirely dependent on others for the news and opinions they pass on; and highly constrained in their operation by a number of political, economic, cultural and technological factors"[2].

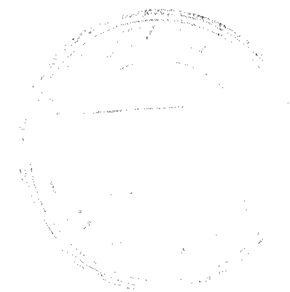
The smallness of the Maltese economy permits only one television station, a daily and a weekly newspaper to operate profitably. The rest of the media survive on subsidies from the Church, the Nationalist Party and the General Workers' Union. Small and economically weak media are known to enjoy few degrees of autonomy in their work[3].

The various laws regulating the media in Malta do not provide for editorial confidentiality. No freedom of information act exists in Malta to enable local journalists to have access to Government files. There are no management arrangements to ensure editors' authority and independence from proprietorial influences. Most of the recruitment and career advancement of Maltese journalists is through nepotism. This reinforces the journalists' dependence on their employers.

Maltese journalists have no common organisation, code of ethics or press council. Journalists belong to antagonistic trade unions and political parties and most of them have a great deal of animosity towards each other.

The media are an integral part of the local political culture. No consensus politics exists on the island. Both major political parties stress their disagreement with one another. They expect their supporters to show military loyalty. This highly polarised political culture denies the Maltese a common ground, a common history and a common future. This is at its most obvious in the "national" broadcasting system. Since it started operating fifty years ago it has failed to satisfy the sectionalised, fragmented and contradictory demands of the Maltese audience.

In the Maltese media system local journalists play a very subordinate role. The routine jobs they carry out demand low skills. Their employers see them mostly as human tape-recorders bringing the news and views of their sources to their readers and audience. The employers seem happy with this state of affairs as they do almost nothing to encourage their journalists to upgrade their skills and improve their output.



No Bright Future?

Are Maltese journalists condemned to remain in their plight for a long time to come? Lucian W. Pye writes that a society with a weak economy finds it impossible to support a full community of professional communicators. Journalists can only hope to become professional when they work in a country which has a modern communications process. In such a process the media system

> "not only is comparatively independent of other social and political processes but also constitutes a distinctive industry in both an economic and social sense"[4].

Pye argues that only through the rise of the commercial media can journalists become professional because now, free from party or government control, they can have "an objective, analytical and non-partisan view of politics"[5].

There is nothing inherently "objective" and "disinterested" in the editorial policies of commercial media. These media too have a stake in political, social and economic issues. They are very partisan when it comes to defending the interests of the private business sector of which they form part.

There is also nothing intrinsically libertarian about free market forces. In fact if only advertisers and commercial considerations were to decide the structure of the media in Malta there would be fewer newspapers and magazines. Freedom of expression would be even more restricted. Rather than becoming more professional most Maltese journalists would simply lose their job.

The smallness of the Maltese Islands and the constraints of their economy cannot be conjured away. The islands' media will most probably have to continue to depend on subsidies from political, religious and trade union organisations for their survival. Can Maltese journalists become better despite these constraints?

Unqualified Recommendations

The Maltese media recruit their employees like many other media around the world. As a British colony Malta inherited the peculiarities Jeremy Tunstall writes about:

> "Journalism in any country poses special problems of recruitment and training; and in Britain these problems appear in an extreme form because of a combination of peculiarities:
>
> (1) The English amateur tradition
> (2) The low status of vocational education and training in British universities and society generally"[6].

Very seldom are Maltese journalists recruited through competitive examinations. Even for the only commercial newspaper publishers

> "recruitment is done by application, although recommendations count a lot"[7].

Malta is certainly not unique. Analysing Latin American media Raymond B. Nixon observes:

> "Family and friendship ties appear to be far more important in gaining employment than professional qualifications alone"[8].

Lars Engwall found that in Sweden news organisations practise selective recruitment; they

> "recruit persons who fit the norms and values prevailing within the organisation"[9].

Even in Malta loyalty and kinship seem to be the highest qualifications looked for in prospective journalists. As journalism is not considered a high-skill job by most employers they are ready to recruit internally, even from technical departments where no writing abilities are required. Those recruited, either internally or externally, are seldom fired even if they turn out to be very incompetent at their new job. Only disloyalty might mean a transfer to another job or department. Maltese journalists, like those of most other countries, can hardly bite the hand which has provided them with their job and is feeding them and their families. As alternative employment is very scarce both inside and outside the media, journalists have to obey all orders from above. Maltese journalism is not an occupation which values individuality, personality and creativity.

Lifeless Reporting

The effect all this has on the finished product is obvious. Journalists are not encouraged to go out of their newsrooms and look for stories. When they do so it is to bring back reports of routine official activities and public speeches. Most of these news reports read like lifeless minutes taken by anonymous and cautious civil servants. Very few news items are written completely by the journalists themselves. Most of the time the media look and sound like notice boards displaying official statements. The media hardly ever follow a story through. Journalists write reports on the basis of a briefing given by the minister, the party official, the company manager, the union secretary ....

Press conferences tend to be very boring and ritualistic in Malta. No probing, uncomfortable questions are asked... unless a conference deals with a subject that could be used to blacken the other side. Even in such cases, journalists rarely put forward any personal questions: they are prepared beforehand by somebody high up.

Human interest stories are written in this officialese style as well. They too are subject to selective reporting:

> "Partisanship has diminished the genuine news story .... The murderer and his victim have to be probed about their political beliefs before any slant is given to the story .... Both camps in the political arena are guilty of having destroyed serious news gathering. Genuine stories are rejected because they may not suit actual political exigencies"[10].

Apart from suppressing unfavourable news items, those who control the partisan media are prepared to invent stories to be used as weapons against the other side. These owners see the mass media as their loudspeaker. The journalists' main job is to hold the microphone well and fiddle with the volume to try and drown the sounds coming from rival loudspeakers.

When reporters cover events that really happen they very rarely capture the colour and atmosphere. Political speeches are covered almost verbatim with no attempt to highlight the newspoints, if there are any. Even when interviews are carried out, only the questions and answers are given, in rigid catechism fashion. Nothing is said about the personality, the motives and lifestyle of the interviewee.

The passive role journalists are expected to play explains why most of the local newsrooms do not have a good reference library with cuttings files, background information and statistics ready at hand to be consulted in writing a story. Where some kind of library exists it is hardly ever used. Journalists are there just to report, not to explain, interpret and investigate.

Untrained and Unskilled

None of the Maltese media organise formal training for their reporters. These are expected to learn on the job. The effectiveness of this method can be seen from anecdotes like this:

> "In my first days as a reporter, just after leaving secondary school, I was sent to cover a parliamentary sitting. I did not even know where the House of Parliament was, let alone had an inkling of its jargon and procedures. Asking the way I eventually found the place. I was saved by another reporter who worked for another paper. He took pity on me and wrote my report"[11].

In the Sixties the Union Press tried an apprentice scheme where a junior reporter would be assigned stories

> "with somebody who was called a journalist, who himself had 'learnt' whatever he knew the hard way, through mistakes with nobody around to correct those mistakes. As a junior reporter you would be sent to cover a court case. The senior reporter would accompany you to the courtroom, tell you to pay attention to what was going on. He would go off to the cinema coming back just after midday. If you got confused writing your story he would ask another reporter of another paper for his report, copy it and give it to you to type"[12]

Even when learning on the job is carried out more seriously it cannot lead to much. As Wilbur Schramm writes:

> "The difficulty with this traditional way of training is that the more experienced workers usually have little time for teaching the younger ones. Furthermore, in this kind of training the standard is set by the present operation - there is no very good way to raise the standards of newspapering or broadcasting above the level of the present supervisors, who themselves probably came up through the same kind of school of experience and therefore were restricted by the level of their supervisors"[13].

Having had no formal training before getting their first job, only a handful of Maltese journalists have had the opportunity to do inservice training, all of it abroad as there is none available at home. Those who do go abroad find that if this training experience has changed them it cannot change the organisation they work for and the overall reality in which they have to operate. As the Commonwealth Committee on Communications and the Media rightly points out:

> "Communicators will forever remain relatively untrained or unskilled, and therefore regarded as incapable of fulfilling their proper function, until their role in society is firmly established and resources for enhancing their skills are provided. In the same spirit, communicators require a certain latitude within which to function. Skilled professionals deprived of 'elbow room' remain in place as malcontents or opt out"[14].

Employers do not care

Maltese journalists are denied 'latitude' and 'elbow room'. Their employers think there is no need to spend any money on training them. In February 1985 the University of Malta started a diploma course in journalism which very few working journalists attended. Those who did had to pay the course fee themselves and could attend only when they were off-duty:

> "Few working journalists are attending the Journalism Course .... because they are not directly encouraged to do so by their employers. They are not allowed day release to study due to chronic staff shortages ... Those who are attending the course

are doing so very much on their own initiative. There are also no financial incentives, or any other for that matter, for those who qualify. Maltese journalists are not encouraged to upgrade their skills. They are not treated with the respect they deserve either by their employers or by the authorities. They are looked upon as propagandists .... All the rest is a direct result of this"[15].

Telemalta Corporation which runs the national radio and television station has a training committee but journalism education is not one of its priorities. In one of it's recent annual reports (1984/85) it has two full pages[16] on what is being done to train the technical staff of the telecommunications division. There is not even a single word about the need of training the editorial and technical staff of the broadcasting division.

Journalists cannot be expected to attend training courses which their employers think are a waste of time. Journalists know that such personal effort will not advance their career. The smallness of the media job market with its low turnover means that top vacancies are few and rare. When they occur promotion is frequently like recruitment: a question of patronage. Personal loyalty to a powerful politician and a spurt of political activism are more useful for career advancement than any other qualification.

Despite all this there are a number of media employees who are self-motivated enough to want to educate themselves further and improve their skills. It will be impossible for them to attend day time full university degree courses. They will also find it very difficult to attend evening courses that take years and years to complete. The most realistic way to educate media employees in Malta is through short, intensive and specialised courses, seminars and workshops.

Problems Ahead

Undoubtedly journalism education in Malta will face problems very similar to those experienced by journalism schools of several small Latin American countries:

"One weakness of journalism education from the very first has been that it has depended almost entirely upon part-time instructors who taught two or three times a week in the late afternoon or evening, after putting in a full day's work elsewhere .... Most students, too, work for a living while attending classes only part-time. This renders more difficult the kind of personal supervision that is so essential in education for journalism. It also adds to the problem of using the library, and leaves little time for research. Another weakness is the lack of specialists .... they were either self-taught or were dependent .... upon using text-books .... written by specialists in the more developed countries"[17].

Peter Golding suggests that such courses can easily become "part of the general stream of cultural dependence"[18]. It is obvious that in such courses:

".... imported assumptions and conventions become the standards by which achievement or professional competence are measured ...."[19].

Raymond B. Nixon writing of journalism schools in Latin America claims that before 1960 most of them were merely imitations of the early schools in the United States. It took them at least ten years "to begin a development that is distinctively their own"[20].

Local academics still have a long way to go towards grounding themselves in the Maltese reality. Instead of trying to come to grips with the reality in which they live, and develop a relevant analytical framework to understand it and explain it, most of the local academics still seem only capable of producing "mimicked knowledge"[21]. Like their colleagues in other ex-colonies

".... they constantly have to look over their shoulders to the centre to have knowledge created at the periphery stamped as legitimate"[22].

Most of the books on the media and on journalism have been written in and about the United States[23]. To a large extent they condition how the media are perceived all over the world.

Cultural Alienation

Dudley Seers warns of the consequences of cultural alienation:

"... an elite whose minds are stuffed with foreign values and theories may be unable to understand even the need for national interest, however defined ... the roots of an independent strategy may lie not so much in the country's particular productive structure or military capability, important though these are, as in a culture strong and homogeneous enough to avoid alienation especially dependence on an imported way of perceiving the nation' own needs"[24].

Media education in Malta should not be prefabricated outside Malta or formulated without a detailed knowledge of the Maltese reality. This does not mean that those planning media education in Malta should turn their back on what other countries are doing. The Maltese are not inventing media education in the world. They certainly have to invent it in Malta. A useful way of learning from others is indicated by Amilcar Cabral:

"…. we must see who has already done the same, who has done something similar, and who has done something opposite, so that we learn something from this experience. It is not to copy completely because every reality has its own questions and its own answers for these questions"[25].

A process of learning from others must not displace a serious search for home-grown alternatives. Foreign assistance is to be sought with caution. It is in the interest of several foreign embassies to finance and facilitate the visits of lecturers from their countries. Such 'help' should not be turned down provided that the visiting lecturers are from countries with a variety of political, social and economic systems. The visiting lecturers should speak about the realities of the media in their countries. This kind of input will help to show the plurality and diversity of media systems in the world.

Other international collaboration can be sought with many existing organisations around the world. It is always of the utmost importance not to let one foreign country or organisation dominate media education in Malta. Soedjatmoko gives some very useful advice:

"We are therefore dealing with problems of self-reliance, not through decoupling or through development in isolation, or in any autarchic sense, but through the proper management of interdependence"[26].

Insufficient Resources

Once the daunting problem of cultural alienation is solved, planners in small countries like Malta face other difficulties in trying to implement appropriate media education policies. The smaller developing countries lack the necessary human, technical and financial resources to conduct research and develop indigenous educational materials. These constraints reinforce dependency and mimicry. Harald von Gottberg warns that

"Unless a society is prepared to commit sufficient resources to train it's communicators in its own way, to provide the kind of information and media content which is befitting and relevant to the social environment in which it exists, communication within that social body will be inefficient, insufficient and in many cases excessively dependent on outside sources"[27].

A society might be very willing to spend more on its communicators but it simply cannot afford to. Several African, Latin American and Asian universities and other educational institutions do not have adequate personnel to teach and develop their own communication studies[28]. Maltese educational set-ups will likewise have to borrow lecturers from other areas. As these lecturers' main responsibilities lie elsewhere it is not realistic to expect them to devote time and energy to produce communication research and educational materials relevant to Malta.

There is no easy way out. Media education organisations will probably have to identify areas of common interest with different university faculties and other local and international organisations. Carrying out common research projects will hopefully produce enough material on which to build communication studies courses to answer local need.

Effective media courses cannot consist solely of chalk and talk. If media educational institutions lack their own equipment, or do not have access to the equipment of local broadcasting stations and newspapers, their courses will most probably remain cut off from the real world and be impractical. To be really relevant and forward looking media education all over the world has to keep in touch with the vast technological changes going on today in the field of communications.

New Directions

These technological changes are forcing even the developed countries to look for new directions in education for the media:

"Media personnel have to learn their craft at a time when the nature of the craft itself is changing rapidly. New technologies have made many established training manuals obsolete. The process of training has therefore to be continuously reassessed and, when necessary, revamped. In this context, 'training for trainers' becomes as important as 'training for trainees' "[29].

Elliot Parker adds:

"It will be impossible for Asian mass communication training institutions to look upward to more developed countries to see what is adaptable or adoptable, even if they wanted to. Those institutions that might have served as a model or at least a point of departure, are also attempting to find answers"[30].

Breda Pavlic and Cees J. Hamelink also argue the need for a new approach:

"…. which goes beyond the hitherto prevalent, rather limited understanding of the mass media and their function in modern societies. Developments in technology -- the information - communication technology specifically and modern technologies generally — make the treatment of the mass media (or, public media) and the more sophisticated forms such as computer communications , telecommunications, etc. as separate issues obsolete and misleading"[31].

Pavlic and Hamelink also stress that while training for mass media personnel is going on in developing countries, progress is still very slow in the area of computer training and other new information - communication forms[32].

Even small developing countries like Malta have no way of escaping these new technological developments. Education for the media in Malta should now include computer literacy and communications technology. The Development Plan for 1986 to 1988 launched by the Maltese Government in mid-July 1986 calls for a national strategy aimed at introducing information technology capabilities[33]. The national telecommunications infrastructure will be strengthened and new appropriate technology will be introduced so that a national database and information network can be set up. The University of Malta will initiate research and teaching in new subject areas such as technology, informatics, electronics and telecommunications.

Vincent Lowe asks:

> "If information and communication are to be strategic resources especially relevant for developing countries, should not universities undertake policy and planning studies? Should not universities offer courses and supervise research in this new frontier, to guide policy makers to decide how their countries can plan and benefit positively from the newly emerging international frameworks and structures?"[34].

The new technologies should make media educators adopt a broad vision:

> "In view of the convergence of modes in communication media, should there not be a convergence of disciplines into a broadened new field of communications, which includes both hardware and software knowledge?"[35].

Elliot Parker suggests one of the possible answers:

> "Educators may not be able to consider training people for media specific jobs. The requirements will be more generic .... institutions will be forced more and more to present their students the basics of communication rather than training for specific forms. Training will more and more emphasise the skills of information gathering and editing that are common to all fields, rather than training for specific industries or media. Students will not only be cross-trained, but better able to take their place in the developing media world"[36].

An American university has already brought together the three separate disciplines of communication, library and information studies, and journalism into a single school[37].

Not only the new technologies demand a broad approach to communication studies. In a small society like Malta personal and informal communication systems are very important. Education for Maltese journalists should not neglect these aspects.

The Limits of Education

Journalism education must not be idealised and given a power it does not in itself possess. It can help Maltese journalists improve their output.... but only within the constraints of the organisation where they work. Journalism courses should at the same time set out to enable Maltese journalists to think critically about the constraints they and their fellow journalists face all over the world. This is crucial as journalists from developing countries tend to idealise their colleagues from developed countries. Douglas Birkhead proposes that:

> "News gathering and writing, for example, should be taught openly and frankly as skills that are primarily accommodations to media organisations and their daily routines .... That most journalists eventually must conform to media institutional settings in order to earn a living does not bind journalism education to perpetuating ideologies and myths of the workplace"[38].

Maltese journalists should be given the opportunity to learn the history of journalism of their own country and of other ex-colonies. They should be exposed to the attempt of other developing countries to decolonise their media and develop them according to their own distinct cultural and regional characteristics.

Courses should also analyse the international news agencies and the various foreign sources Maltese journalists have to rely on as their organisations cannot afford to send their own correspondents abroad. Seminars and workshops should try to help Maltese journalists equip themselves to treat and process from a Maltese perspective all the news items and features of the international news agencies, foreign embassy hand outs and foreign press articles. Although the Maltese media are owned and run by local organisations most of their content still originates abroad. As the Prime Minister of Guyana observes:

> "A nation whose mass media are dominated from the outside is not a nation"[39].

Seminars should also analyse the activities organised for the Maltese media by the foreign embassies that have a vested interest in cultivating Maltese journalists and turning them into their own errand boys.

Maltese journalists should also be helped to acquire the necessary skills to process the information flowing from local sources. Al Hester points out:

> "Journalists, especially those working most of the time with government officials, will be flooded with abstract information, frequently told in complicated ways. Sometimes economists, educators, doctors and politicians use phrases which they understand but which ordinary people don't. It is your (i.e. the reporter's) job to interpret this 'inside language' so that ordinary people know what it means"[40].

When Maltese journalists themselves do not understand this 'inside language' they do not know how to make it intelligible to their audience and readers. Many stories carried by the media are full of jargon left untouched. As a result the Maltese media often tend to be just noticeboards displaying court reports, financial statements, medical information and so on. Maltese journalists need to be educated in all these areas as their on-the-job training has not prepared them to come to grips with the serious and complex issues facing Malta's development.

Competence needs to be raised not only in basic journalistic skills. Other areas must not be neglected and workshops can be held on media management and economics, layout, and reader/audience research.

The quality of the media does not depend entirely on the quality of the journalists working within them. It is definitely important to educate the Maltese journalists but it is not enough. Other changes are necessary in the local political culture, press laws, working conditions, management policies, national flow of information .... if the Maltese media are to develop beyond their present stage.

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The Need for Mass Media Training in Non-Traditional Settings

Al Hester

Introduction

It becomes increasingly evident that the traditional university as we know it - set up with quite definite structures, periods of instruction, rigid progressions through involved curricula - does not always lend itself to education needs.

There are millions of persons who will never be able to avail themselves of a university education. We do not have the luxury to write off these citizens who do not have the resources to become college graduates. It is dodging the issue to say that these individuals should be taken care of by lower-level educational institutions. There is a need for learning which is not satisfied by lower level education, but which is also not met within traditional university structures.

These introductory remarks do not mean that the general population does not respect the institution of higher education - to the contrary, many have an almost mystical faith that the very process of higher education - the elaborate, slow ritual of the minuet of learning between professor and student - will ensure that there is education. And magic things are expected when the professor imparts learning to the waiting student (note that the teacher is conceived as the active agent and the student the passive one).

First of all, there will be the prestige of having a university degree. The mere blessing of the process as carried out by a major institution of higher learning confers great satisfaction to many. We, and they,too often confuse the form with the substance. The emphasis is not so much upon *what* is learned as upon the *manner* in which it is costumed in the regalia of social prestige.

Those of us who devote our lives to university teaching believe that the institution has much to commend it, and that it can form an environment for rigorous, logical and stimulating approaches to learning. Universities have survived for many centuries, and in many ways have served us well.

But while the traditional educational apparatus of universities is necessary and worthwhile, we cannot ignore the fact that it is impossible for many individuals to obtain a formal university education. And, too, we must guard against the dangers coming through the traditional university system, being co-opted by forces interested in dominating us and in preserving social control for their own narrow interests. Newly independent countries such as Malta fortunately are more sensitive to the need to search for new ways of outreach between the university and the citizen. The pragmatics of creating a new society or independent nation force educators to take a hard look at their mission within their social system and how they may best achieve it.

Universities can use a wide array of approaches to passing on information - ways which are not included in the more formal, long-term college curriculum. These include, but are not limited to, extension work, short courses, workshops, seminars, training institutes, correspondence work, non-credit courses, evening courses, television and radio instruction, informal "get-togethers" between faculty and non-university learners, informal learning networks, university-sponsored cultural events, etc. The list is a long and rich one. Some of these ways of bringing teacher and student together do not carry the traditional imprimatur of a degree or the awarding of academic credits.

But an Australian educator, John Collins, has noted in his studies of eight West European university extension departments that there is still a hesitancy to experiment with ".... different types of organization promising techniques and sometimes, clientele..."[1].

There are some reasons for this hesitancy: a fear that rigor will be missing from the more informal instruction methods, that students will not be serious-minded without the academic don lecturing formally, and sometimes a sub-conscious fear that the professor will have to learn new teaching methods when he or she does not have the captive audience guaranteed by the more rigid, formal university course.

Another impediment toward offering informal education under university sponsorship is the belief that we can wrap up higher education in a neat, four- or five-year package, with an abrupt termination after which we have turned out a completed product, just as an automobile manufacturer completes a car off the assembly line. But more and more educators are now seeing all education as a continuing process - not just the province of formal education but of a number of efforts.

Dr. Kenneth Wain of the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta is one of the leaders in higher education who plainly sees the need for learning as a continuing process.[2] Ettore Gelpi has also addressed himself to the role of the university in non-traditional teaching, pointing out the vast needs not covered by formal higher education[3].

Dr. Gelpi notes that "During the last ten years the concept of lifelong education has, not without difficulty, begun to be adopted as a principle of educational policy and planning by politicians and educationalists: it has been seen not simply as one element of the education system but as a means of transforming it in both its formal and non-formal aspects. This development has signified a new interest in lifelong education for many countries..."[4].

Not everyone, however, agrees that citizens should be subjected to "lifelong education". Some feel continuing education repressively subjects persons to even more conditioning by the educational process,to take subordinate roles in decaying societies. Ivan Illich is one of the most-quoted and vocal critics of the entire formal education process. He sees schools (and certainly universities) as being the most effective agencies in stimulating an increasingly consumption-oriented society[5].

It is this author's opinion that Illich's strongly presented criticism must be given attention, but most of us are not ready to share his disillusionment with the social system and take a somewhat more optimistic view of the role of education in our respective nations.

Illich, however, can point the way to freeing us from our preoccupation with lock-step, formalized higher education as being the be-all and end-all of the learning process. The less-formal methods of adult, or lifelong education, including formats given previously in this article, may serve as fresh approaches bridging the gap between academic traditionalists and those who wish for more "deschooling" of society.

A Nigerian educator, E. Odinakachuku Okeem, has also called attention to ways in which formal schooling can be counter-productive, acknowledging his debt to Illich[6].

These problems which Okeem says apply to traditional education include the following:[7]

1. Formal, long-term schooling is too expensive and not all can afford it.
2. An individual's worth is determined by his "ritual attainment in formal education; therefore schools perpetuate social inequalities".
3. Formal schooling impedes social progress and teaches and encourages competition, rather than cooperation.
4. It imparts a dependency relationship, and the teacher is forced ".... into a role and presentation of self in which he thinks and acts like an intellectual dictator - and gives his students only what he feels is good for them".

Okeem then marshals some good arguments for using non-traditional approaches toward less formal modes of education:[8]

> The search for possible alternatives to formal school systems therefore is intensified by, among other things, the ineffectiveness of schooling in general, its dictatorial tendencies and consequences of restrictiveness its perpetuation of social inequality and social distance between the schooled and unschooled, and its drag on progress and on individual self-fulfillment and national development. Small wonder then that a more liberalizing system and more effective alternatives are being searched for, hence the increasing attention of out-of-school education in particular and adult education in general.

The Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research

It is against this background, then, of the need to bridge a gap between the traditional university environment and the needs for continuing, mass media adult education, that we have formed the Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research.

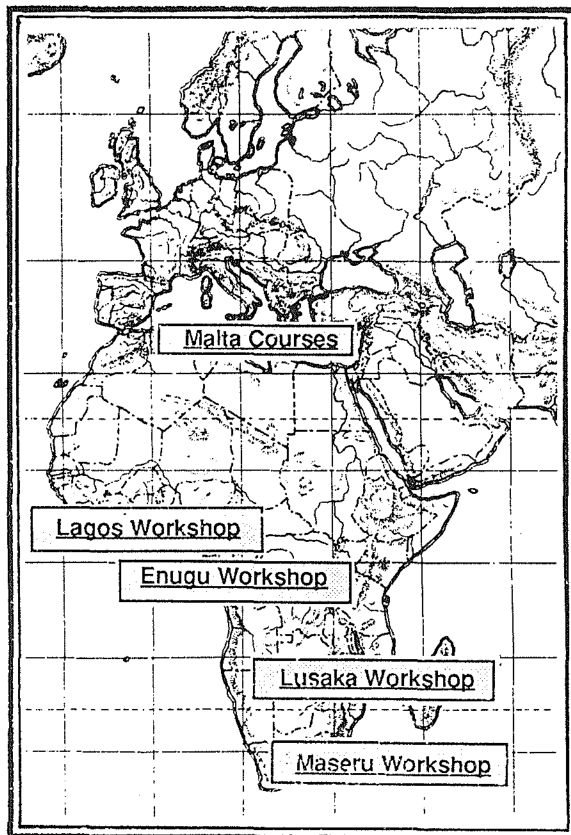
Our University is the nation's oldest land-grant institution, being chartered in 1785, with a gift of land by the state government to be used in setting up the state's first publicly supported institution of higher learning. This heritage encourages many programs of outreach designed to be of public service. The University of Georgia has a very active international development program and seeks to make learning opportunities available internationally as well as to residents of the State of Georgia. In its statement of the International Mission of The University of Georgia, we note that ".... the quest for knowledge is universal and the need for global perspectives is imperative"[9].

The mission statement goes on to say that "The University of Georgia affirms its commitment to the internationaliziation of its programs for students and the people of Georgia.... The University of Georgia recognizes its mission in developing, refining and sharing knowledge and understanding, *not only in the state and nation, but in the world*". (italics not in original)[10].

The work of the Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research extends this philosophy to working with persons involved in the mass media outside the United States, and with international aspects of media work here in our own country. Activities of the Center include the

sponsorship jointly with governments, journalistic organizations, foreign universities, etc., of training workshops, seminars, short courses, etc. We also act as a liaison to bring foreign media professionals to the University for especially designed courses. These may be for academic credit or may be certificated, non-credit courses which emphasize intensive training in such areas as reporting, editing, broadcasting, public information, etc.

Non-traditional activities of the Center and/or our School of Journalism and Mass Communication have included two workshops jointly sponsored by the Nigeria Union of Journalists, the U.S. Information Agency and the Center, in Lagos and Enugu, Nigeria; a workshop for editors jointly held by the Center, the Zambian Institute of Mass Communication and the U.S.I.A.; a workshop for Lesotho journalists, sponsored by the Ministry of Information, the U.S.I.A. and the Center; a workshop on communication sponsored by the Venezuelan journalists' national organization; and two short courses at The University of Malta, sponsored by that University, the Center, and the U.S.I.A.; and workshops contracted for by Malaysian private media organizations. The School has also sponsored certificated, non-credit training programs for media personnel from Qatar and from Egypt.



We are also currently producing a *Handbook for 3rd World Journalists* with content by journalists from the developing world and by Center associates. Publication will be in 1987, on a non-profit basis.

The Center is not dictated to in any way concerning content of its training and research activities. Teachers or professional media members working on Center projects must be free to develop their workshops, projects, etc., without political interference. So far, we are in the second year of operation, and have worked with approximately 150-200 journalists or students preparing to enter media work in various countries. Associates of the Center who have taken part in training or research missions have come from India, Egypt, Morocco, Hong Kong, Tunisia, Yugoslavia and the United States.

Education and training for mass media work takes on a special importance when we think about how dependent upon the Media most persons are for much of their information about the world. Generally, the media are given first-rank importance in educating, setting the agenda for public discussion, improving the social system and enriching the experience of living. But at the same time, ill-prepared media workers or narrow press philosophies can be a hazard to any nation.

In many of the new nations of the world, no coherent education for media work exists, or where it does, it lacks many resources to be effective. The Center specializes in working as an equal colleague with sponsoring groups in such countries to improve professionalism among media employees. We attempt to show examples of many different solutions to improving the media, not trying to make over nations in our own image. The Center recognizes that each nation is sovereign and should be free to determine its own destiny. Wherever possible, workshop staff includes non-U.S. teachers or media professionals, with teaching aids, texts, etc., drawing upon the experience of different nations.

Frequently lacking in many countries are financial and educational resources for improving the skills and understanding of communicators. There is often a shortage of well-trained media professionals. Personnel in the mass media perforce had to learn much on the job, having been denied more organized training by previous colonial governments, by lack of resources, or the lack of trained teachers conversant with actual media work and needs. The Center makes available teachers and professional journalists who may be of help in overcoming education and training problems.

During our work with various adult reporters, editors, broadcasters, public information officers, etc., we have begun to develop a scheme for what we hope will be effective training. All workshops, seminars, short courses, etc., are evaluated anonymously by the participants. So far, these activities have been rated as excellent and relevant by participants. Generally speaking, we feel it is better to work in their own countries with media professionals or students going into media work. This keeps the training in a known environment and reduces the chances that we will carry-over culturally-biased teaching in the non-traditional learning activities.

As a first step, the Center discusses possible projects with interested organizations. Most often, these organizations come to us with specific education and training problems. We then propose what we hope will be effective methods, based upon such discussions and upon the outcomes the organizations desire. Ideally, we try to discuss with those who will receive the training what their own goals may be. In effect, a Center training program is usually flexible and may be changed on short notice to take up needs which were not apparent at the beginning of the project. This flexibility requires an openness and adaptability by teaching personnel - a flexibility which some academics and professionals find unsettling.

We must keep in mind constantly the realities of the social system in which the media personnel must function. This means that training must be adapted to the economic, work, and education situation. Typically, training activities are short-term, because few reporters, editors, or other media personnel can take off months or years of time to receive such training. In many countries, media professionals are in short supply, as are other professional workers. Their organizations simply cannot function well if key personnel are gone for long periods.

We must design practical programs, often holding classes or workshops in evening hours, on weekends, or in half-day modules, in which we repeat learning units so that employees do not have to be absent an entire day.

Instructors "feel their way", since they are often unfamiliar with cultural differences or differing life-styles which can affect efficiency of instruction. For instance, a Christian instructor must realize that Islamic trainees require time off for Mosque attendance or for daily prayers. The instructor, too, must be cognizant that trainees frequently have not been subjected to competitive, Westernized educational systems in which criticism is rather freely bestowed by instructors. First, instructors must realize that some criticisms may be completely idiotic and culturally blind. For example, it took months for this writer to realize that many Third World journalists are not just being perverse in not learning how to use a typewriter. They compose their stories long-hand, and give them to a clerk to type. This is slower and increases the chance for error in transmitting the media message, but it also is culturally acceptable and gives employment to many clerks - an item of some importance in many countries. Second, in some cultures, it is bad form to criticize someone openly and plainly. Subtle methods and suggestions must be used to get points across. "Loss of face" may result if a trainee or student is evaluated too bluntly.

A foreigner, too, may have criticisms which are not valid concerning the performance of the trainee. The trainee may be reflecting the predominating mode of expression, which to the foreigner's eyes and ears is unsatisfactory, being too convoluted, vague, etc. One cure for this is to involve the entire group in self-criticism, if this is an acceptable way to enhance learning. There is a universal need for clarity in communication, but there are some different ways to achieve it.

Frequently non-traditional education of media professionals must take into consideration the frequent lack-of-assurance among those doing media work. In many developing countries, media workers are not chosen on the basis of any relevant experience, but may come from a variety of educational backgrounds, or may be there simply because no one else was available to fill the job. In some nations, every college graduate is assured employment of some sort, even if their degree does not prepare them appropriately. The adult education specialist must always be alert to sense the depression and sense of isolation which may hit those working without adequate preparation, educational background or understanding of their task. A mixture of empathy, compassion and patience is needed.

There is a delicate dynamic formed even in the briefest of training programs. It includes the following relationships: the relationship between the individual and the instructor, the relationship between the instructor and the group as a whole, the relationship among members of the group, and the relationship between the training group and "outsiders" who may be important. We have found it wise to allow instructors enough time to sense such factors and to deal with them, or to be able to call upon members of the group for help.

Social contact outside the classroom or workshop is needed. One of the most important outcomes of such non-traditional educational experiences is in the sharing which occurs. It is

very valuable for many media trainees to find out that their colleagues are plagued by the same problems and fears the world over. They often gain a sense of mutual caring and support through the training sessions and personal friendships which are formed. In their own evaluations, they tell us they go away strengthened to carry out difficult tasks and feeling it is possible to do a better job.

Such a caring context also engenders trust in which trainees will begin to express real lacks and problems. The instructor, too, must be found worthy of trust if real learning is to take place. It is against such a background that basic philosophical and ethical questions become real. Ideally, the training workshop, short course, etc., becomes a mutual exchange of information with the teacher as a guide or facilitator. He or she acts as a catalyst for the learning process. Of course, this is true, too, in good traditional academic teaching. But where non-captive adults attend workshops or courses through personal choice, dictatorial teaching methods do not often work well. And media personnel have little patience with the "cloud castles" of theory which some university instructors love to build. In some countries, university teachers flee from hard reality to a world of comforting abstractions, but the non-traditional, continuing education workshop or course leaves little room for this. It is not that adults are not hungry for intellectual and cultural stimulation. It is just that they have an uncanny ability to spot the academic who has never earned his or her daily bread outside the classroom.

In our non-traditional approaches to continuing education, we reach for a combination of intellectually stimulating, yet practical learning situations.

Other advantages to bringing instruction to trainees or students in their own countries include saving the country's foreign exchange (an important consideration in some nations), cutting personal costs of the trainee, decreasing time absent from the job or from the family, and not taking key professionals away for long periods. Gerald W. Fry has a more detailed treatment of advantages of taking training or education to the student in his or her own community or country in his article, "The Economic and Political Impact of Study Abroad"[11].

Finally, another reason why non-traditional training and education for mass media students or professionals may be needed is this: the traditional university simply cannot afford to embark on an entire curriculum in this area. Educator Doug Stewart recently wrote that the traditional university in many countries faces increasing problems – low salaries for academic staff, deteriorating physical plants, and smaller numbers of administrators and support staff. Frequently we have found it possible to involve several "partners" in non-traditional media education and training activities. This means that the entire burden is not put on one organization, but is shared. This frequently makes work possible which could not be attempted with more limited resources.

Such practical cooperation by different organizations has also paid unexpected dividends to us as teachers. We learn more about ourselves as we are seen by others. We also learn from those we teach, and we can go back to our own organizations and apply what we have learned. Non-traditional, continuing education for media work is a two-way street. Under the right circumstances, with good luck and good planning, real teaching and learning can take place.

Notes:

1 "Target: The Community in Extra-Mural Programming", *Australian Journal of Adult Education* 22:1 (April, 1982) p. 21.
2 See his "Lifelong Education and Philosophy of Education" in *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 4:2 (1985), pp. 107-117, for a thoughtful discussion of the role of education throughout life.
3 "Lifelong Education: Opportunities and Obstacles", in *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 3:2 (1984), pp. 79-87.
4 Ibid., p. 79.
5 One of Illich's best known attacks upon formal education is found in his *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).
6 "An Assessment by Adult Education Personnel of the Problems of Adult Education Programmes in Selected States of Nigeria, 1976-82", in *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 4:3 (1985), pp. 239-257.
7 Ibid., p. 239.
8 Ibid., p. 240.
9 "International Mission of The University of Georgia", International Development Office, Univ. of Ga., Athens, Ga., U.S.A., October, 1986, p. 1.
10 Ibid.
11 In *Comparative Education Review* 28:2 (1984), pp. 203-220.

Popular Culture and the Meaning of Feelings

Fred Inglis

In the human sciences at large, it is still the case that only literary criticism and psycho-analysis seek to theorize with any degree of generosity a place for the feelings in the practice of their discipline. Of late, indeed, the most weighty presences in both literary criticism and psycho-analysis have worked to expel mere subjectivity and the theoretically irrelevant but idio-syncratically incontestable feelings which are held to *define* subjectivity. The structures that are left become venerable in virtue of their scientific standing: the fierce induration of such Parisian worthies as Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, and (in his playful, dandyish way) Jacques Derrida has worked to reproach devout Gallophiles in England for ever countenancing 'sincere and vital emotion' and all the emotional vocabulary-baggage of the bourgeoisie. And even in philosophy, which has taken the place of the emotions seriously, the subject has come clearly down the list of both difficulty and prestige - epistemology first, then the theory of meaning, then (perhaps) metaphysics, and only then the emotions as the difficult adjunct of ethics.

The smallish corner of the human sciences occupied by questions of feeling and emotion (and for the purposes of this paper I shall make no conceptual distinction between them) looks at first and second sight preposterously too small a space. It is so *plain* to see that the experience of understanding human behaviour is coterminous with the bounds of feeling set by the capacity of the understanding (and interpreting) agent. The vindication of this straight-forward and intuitive claim is the point of this paper, although it is a point which of its nature can only be pressed home by precise *assertion* and recognisable definitions, rather than by argument.

In the present circumstances, however, the urgency of such assertion is in the biggest sense vital. For the small corner of academic intellectual life allocated to the emotions prefigures their significance on the vaster planes of public life. This is not to say that this significance is small; it isn't. But it is quite specific and on the argument of this paper, quite specifically mistaken.

Within the frames of customary interpretation, feelings and emotions are classified as private but precious, and counterposed to the unfeeling public world, where decisions are thought to be taken according to a model of rationality founded upon those observable, empirical facts the computation of which is held to guarantee objectivity. Such a definition throws into relief a series of antinomies simply to quote which is to do much to sense in what I am calling 'customary' meanings and interpretative motions the essential structures of our present ontologies. Consider these:

private	:	public
personally possessed	:	externally known
subjective	:	objective
feelings	:	reason
imagination	:	calculation
values	:	fact
women	:	men
arts	:	science
morality	:	politics

The terms of the left-hand column interpenetrate in the domain of feelings, which is conventionally protected not only as being one's own, occupied by the personally possessed qualities of self, but also as being unassailable: that is, you can't be mistaken about your own feelings, and you certainly can't be told by someone else to improve or alter them. Private in essence and, as we hope, intense in substance as they are, feelings define the human world-reality and create the meanings which make sense of the inane events occurring within that reality, turning them into manageable experience.

The primacy won for the feelings, since Romanticism released Hume's 'civil passions' from the correctness of that civility, and allowed the vast detonation of spontaneity, ardour, and expressiveness to break the connections between virtue and happiness, duty and sincerity [1], has led the suntanned hedonists of consumer living back from the great freedoms of Beethoven and Wordsworth to some small and dismal rooms. In the armchairs of the encounter group, and the analyst's comfortable closet we find the dire and deadly-sweet narcissism to which our customary version of private feelings can lead, especially in the carefully self-regarding affluence of *Ordinary People, Kramer versus Kramer,* and *A Bouquet of Barbed Wire.*

This corner of the culture has turned itself into the laboratory of the feelings, whose research reports are the corresponding bedrooms of such films and television programmes as I have named. As Richard Sennet and Christopher Lasch both claim [2], in their general, rather unchecked and polemical way, the encounter-group narcissist searches for a deep cleansing of the self from the

destroying, polluting structures of *all* social institutions in the name of a perfect purity of free aspiration, realized in a series of personal intimacies, unfettered by dead conventions and traditions, most surely confirmed in the passionate conviction of a fulfilled, unfulfillable sexuality.

There is, no doubt, a genuine good somewhere near the heart of the more vapid congenialities in the direr encounter groups. In amongst the mixture of frightful and touching self-interrogation, the 'truth for me', the 'getting in touch with my feelings', the 'is it feeling right?' is a main valuation of the culture in which the satisfaction of emotional needs is situated in the very middle of our teleology.

It is easy to be brisk with this view. We might say, with the Left, that such a preoccupation with personal feelings is merely the last refuge of a bourgeoise driven out of an intelligible public life by the unintelligible centrifuge of monopoly capitalism (in a phrase), and left to make the best it can out of the delights of the consumers' domesticity. To coddle personal feelings (the argument runs) in a two-thirds starved world is, strictly an irresponsible and impossible evasion of political reality. There is justice in such a view of course. Indeed, we might say on behalf of the encounter groupists and their sympathizers in the Tolkien commando that they too repudiate the cosy dissatisfactions of consumerism by seeking an immaterial and socially placeless intimacy which rests neither on property nor acquisition. They too are looking for a non-utilitarian non-exploitative social ethic. What is more, the power of Romanticism is irreversible; its dizzy brew combined the elements of democratic rights, personal fulfilments, and nationalism, which have been appealed to by as mixed a bunch of liberators in the past forty years as Fidel Castro, Abdul Nasser, Ho Chi Minh, Kwame Nkrumah, Lech Walesa and Bobby Sands. The implicit appeal to the power of spontaneous feeling latent in international nationalism is the most dangerous as well as the most exhilarating of the energy veins laid down by the Romantic movement.

If I am right, however, about the present definitions, valuings,and organisation of feeling, that danger is the greater for its misunderstanding. For we feel our feelings within the social structures we have for their allocation. If we return for a while from the larger geographical ranges of international feeling to the scope of British customary culture, then it is more plausible to claim to make that insofar as our conceptual-material structures distort our expressible feelings, to that extent the whole social order is twisted out of its 'natural' shape.

To speak so is to endorse naturalism with a vengeance. It is to claim, with Rousseau and Romanticism, that there is a natural way to feel which is coterminous with the natural way to live, and that the discovery of this co-incidence is the moment of the good life. Well, there are innumerable ways of living the good life, both within and between cultures, and it is by now certain, after a century of classical sociology and classical novels, that however tricky it may be to theorize the endogenesis of feelings, they are equally the producers of social structures as they are their expression. In other words, the human spirit and human culture are mutually embedded, and feelings themselves not only have no natural primacy, but are inseparable from and simultaneous with both cognition and the intransigent matters-of-fact which similarly produced and are produced by both *Geist* and culture.

Yet while it may be true that this moment of our historical corner has given untoward prominence to feelings and emotions, we all of us go on having more or less strong feelings, and have little choice in attempting a science of human nature and affairs, and its historical hermeneutic, but to imagine that people at all times and places have similarly had feelings and needed urgently to interpret, understand, and improve them. Having said which, what may we convincingly claim about the status and nature of feelings, which may be both recognizable to the popular view and its antinomies as I have tabulated them, *and* replace the feelings in some more public and less excluded room in the mansion of the human sciences in particular, and popular education in general? As I have argued, any such venture must commit itself against the deeply traditional paradigm in the human sciences (by which phrase I only intend the available conceptual frameworks of intellectual life at all its levels, from the five-year-old's reception class to the Ph.D. seminar). This paradigm identifies the primary qualities of the world as objective and realist; an always strong but largely underground opposition insists upon the singular view of humans as self-interpreting animals as being utterly solvent of realism; this is the class-struggle of the human sciences, and the heart of hermeneutics. The nature and location of our idea of feeling (*sic*) is its dominant conundrum.

II

I shall now attempt to assert a series of 'emotions-claims' which go some way towards placing emotions on a hermeneutic agenda. This is not, as they say, an academic point. It is plainly true that all forms of education attempt to make systematic the dominant modes of knowing, of interpreting, and of self-education;[3] in which case, to get out of the dead ends of educational narcissism, and the confident

falsehoods of a physical science-based objectivity, is to give education some chance of understanding the world better, and to make it political in a more than sentimental sense. In an effort to be firm about the emotions-claims, I shall list them numerically[4]

(1) It is generally acknowledged that emotions have *objects;* that, for example, the experience of fear has typically a *structure,* in which the fear is fear of something which is necessarily part of that structure, and towards which the emotion is suitable. This is brought out by our view that persistently objectless or nameless fear is a neurotic condition. This, as we say, irrational fear is so described, because we cannot, in turn, ascribe what Charles Taylor names the *imports* towards which the fear is our response. Saying what an emotion is like is a matter of describing imports. Thus, in order to impack the structure of the feeling 'shame' we typically identify the shameful features of the situation. By the same token, though, we cannot love mistakenly (the statement clearly has no content), we may well be mistaken as to whether or not we do 'really love' somebody, and try to determine this by describing imports truthfully. There is a salient identity between this descriptive process, and the descriptive processes by which we sort out a variety of hermeneutic utterances, as for instance, the placing of moral insights or justifying aesthetic judgements[5].

(2) Imports are subject-referring in ways directly evidenced by the language of emotions.

> 'When my love swears that she is made of truth,
> I will believe her though I know she lies...'

Shakespeare's piercing lines emphasize a familiar disjuncture in the everyday recognition of emotions, but one which insists not only on the subject-referring property of feeling (which is obvious) but also on the non-secondary force of this referral which in itself confutes the behaviourism refusing to deal in internal states beyond reflexes. When we say with Shakespeare 'I believe her with all my heart, even though I know she is lying to me', we emphasize that subject referring imports entail a subject who is aware of them intuitively, and therefore requires his emotion as a way of grasping the imports themselves. His emotions may change on reflection, but without emotions he cannot work out what has happened in the first place. (This is the point of the excellently double-edged joke in the famous Marilyn Monroe film *Some Like it Hot* in which Tony Curtis pretends to have lost the capacity to feel the emotion, love, and the sensation (feeling) of physical desire. Marilyn helps him find them).

(3) Feelings and emotions are a mode of access to imports, therefore; but, as Shakespeare's two lines so painfully bring out, knowing X while feeling Y doesn't win the day for either. As the encounter-groupists and the deadly protagonists of the American television confessional *Couples* are all too apt to forget, the feelings in question may be horrible ones, and the difficulty of this can't be solved in Plato's surely far too simple view that virtuous action is a necessary consequence of knowledge of the good. The directness of his line between knowledge and action is far too early to take account of the impulses unleashed by Romanticism behind the emotions. Perhaps a mildly neo-Platonic proposition could, however, venture that a good grasped by all our feelings and emotions as the fullest awareness of what is going on will be epistemically grasped *as import* in a superior way to a good grasped by a limited range of emotions. Loving the good, on this argument, involves full insight as a consequence of comprehensive feeling; loving the bad, on the anti-platonic hand, is not, regrettably, just ignorance or lack of knowledge.

(4) Given these claims, it follows that our awareness of the good is a function of our own feelings (and emotions). Feeling is what it is, first, as I have asserted, in virtue of the dialectical motion between itself and its 'imports'. Secondly, it is so in virtue of *various* constituent feelings as they played upon imports, and which it incorporates. Thus, remorse (guilt) as many ethical theorists as well as psychologists[6] have remarked for one necessary basis for acting altruistically at all, expresses in *its* structure a sense of right and wrong. To feel remorse is to acknowledge that you have done wrong when you might have done right. Under the impulse of such feeling, it is natural to proceed to further articulation of our situation (an articulation not merely presupposed but constituted by our initial feeling)[7], which may in turn transform the initial feelings — the process clearly recognizable as emotional growth.

(5) Feelings, in a key proposition *ascribe a form* to what happens to us. If we take this proposition as the culmination of my four premises, we may (truistically) conclude that feelings are bound up definitionally with their own articulation: self-understanding or *mis*understanding alike shape what we really feel, and this essentially linguistic claim returns me to the form of hermeneutics. These propositions, once granted, prefigure the hermeneutic (and human) sequence which, structurally inseparable as it is from emotional response to the imports of eventual experience, and in spite of the customary-cultural allocations of feelings and emotions, reaffirms the essential relations of feeling and cognition, and of both to ethics and politics. In a phrase, and on these claims, feelings and emotions are every bit as much part of the momentum of *public* life and thought as the self-congratulatory and austere rationalities of computation and so-called pragmatic expediency. To restate: feelings are a structural ground of cognition: both impel the necessary and human motion of interpretation, and are therefore no less necessarily linguistic, and intersubjective. This intersubjectivity can only be understood (after interpretation) in relation to the 'imports' which define situations. Such (linguistic) understanding is moral, and, obviously, may be taught.

III

Equipped with the satisfactions of these conclusions, how may we deploy them in the hermeneutic process? More precisely, how shall these revisions upon the popular and conventional definitions and locations of feelings in relation to cognitive status and public (political) values, be made to tell in the actualities of social practices, perhaps supremely in those areas held to be immune to the invasions of naturalism and the intelligentsia? The cue is provided by Clifford Geertz's account of the Balinese cockfight in which, seeking to locate the meaning of the intense and organised passions aroused by the 'deep play' of the occasion, he dissolves distinctions between art and sport, and proposes the analysis of either in terms of 'the use of emotion for cognitive ends' [8]. By this token we could ask of our popular culture, how it provides for the perpetuation of certain feelings. But this might seem either too voluntarist or too functionalist, as though we maintain a given practice because otherwise the desirable feelings for which it was the set of imports might lapse. No doubt this *does* happen, in part; some people go to church in order to respond with the appropriate feelings to the rhetorical tropes, the strokes of alliteration and assonance, the grand cadences which have no literal meaning for them; others deliberately exercise themselves on a June Saturday a couple of hundred feet sheer up Avon Gorge on the edge of two steel pegs in order to experience the thrills of danger in a culture which has made the rest of the week happily safe and sound. Without matins and mountaineering religious feeling[9] and the feeling of danger might substantially vanish from the available range of intelligible feelings.

But to understand such institutions and practices as intended for the prompting occasions and the expressions of deep feeling is to understand them on the terms of the standard definitions and meanings of feeling. The ambition of this paper is not to imagine that a revolution of human nature may be so boiling up that benign feelings can, with a little pedagogic help, reoccupy the citadels and redoubts of the mind now occupied by the ice-cold rationalists of the books of numbers. Rather, it is to give a small reminder to teachers of the human sciences that the interpretative frames which are what we all have for the understanding of human action and which, in a crude synopsis, we may be said to fit over events in order to bring them within the concepts of our experience, are themselves partially ordered by the quality and inevitability of our feelings about that action and experience. Thus to understand matins or mountaineering requires us to sympathise (in a very strong sense of a now commonplace verb) with the intentions and motives of those who are practising worship and climbing, and although not to be obliged to experience the same feelings as the practitioners (clearly, we may try to understand people's actions without remotely being able to know what they felt as they performed them), certainly to seek to situate the action within the contexts of as large a realm of sympathetic feelings as possible.

It may be that 'sympathetic feelings' as a phrase has too pious as well as too banal a ring to it. Let us say that sympathy *is* the modality and focus by which many different feelings find specific form in relation to a particular object and subject. Putting the claim so has first, the merit of restoring the notion of sympathy to a central place in the hierarchy of moral-emotive terms, secondly, of refuting the evasion of the difficulty which some theorists attempt through the neoligism 'empathy', and finally, of suggesting that sympathy is a conductor for the various feelings which flow between subjects (and are altered in their reciprocal passages) in the essential motion of interpretation. No doubt, as aestheticians have vigorously claimed since Romanticism, it has been in art and our response to it, that this reciprocal motion is first developed and educated, but it is fundamental to life itself.

Now I have already insisted that a clash between cognition and feeling isn't resolved by handing victory over to the senior faculty, according to your ideological preferences. But the power of the claim is that sympathy and its cognates, compassion, pity, mercy, all stand on the essential ground of interpretation and understanding; the further claim is that it is a characteristic of human nature to recognize such ground as its own epistemic domain. Hermeneutics attempts to make a sufficiently stable and continuous method of this endless human state of being. The drastic weakness of such hermeneutics is that it can only make methodical the first half of 'the science of human affairs'[10], that which permits us to understand backwards, to show how we come to be in the position we are in at the present; lacking a critical theory of human interests, it has no means of thinking forwards, of telling human beings *what to do* — which may be one reason why contemporary liberalism finds hermeneutics so attractive. But this chasm stands happily beyond the terminus of my argument. Here it is sufficient to say that, like any other intellectual discipline, hermeneutics seeks to order and comprehend (another large concept) the incessant inanity of ordinary everyday life by finding ways of stopping it still for long enough to permit reflection.

Stopping life, by my token, means enclosing (comprehending) an action within a larger context of sympathy. To do this, the interpreter requires a sufficient capacity for that enclosing movement of

the sensibility. He or she must be capable of (have the capacity for) the necessary feeling and its direction by sympathy, if there is to be any movement of understanding and compassion. The familiar, reassuring conclusion must be that an understanding person must have a large capacity for feeling, and be wisely practised in the articulation of that feeling so that the smypathy is not mute (even if its speech may be heard in the eloquence of sympathetic gesture rather than words). It is impossibly difficult to predict whether a particular person will be enlarged in his or her capacity for intelligent feeling by experience of life, or whether he will be cramped up and closed either by suffering or success. Nonetheless the truism stands that what the Catholic Church long since named as the natural cardinal virtues, justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude, and those dependent and detailed ancillaries amongst the gifts of the holy spirit which include humility, joy, peace, patience, benignity, mildness and modesty[11], are connected in both essence and substance with right and true feeling, and that the free and relevant play of each upon the other just *is* the proper way of studying mankind.

None of these rather preaching adjurations can do much more than prepare the good man for thinking about society. And in any case, goodness is not enough by itself. A sufficient social theory begins, no doubt, from a picture of the good life, but must proceed by way of some account of how to bring it about. It follows that the wise and learned interpreter comes to human performance with a relevant sense of what feelings are needed to understand what is going on, and in so doing is bound to criticize that performance for the feelings it lacks or distorts which, being present, would have made up a more compelling version of the good life.

This comes out most simply in the practice of the great novelist, who is great in virtue of the prose expression she finds with which to summon our sympathy as the medium of our understanding. In *Felix Holt,* George Eliot presents a moment at which Mrs. Transome, the elderly, haughty, bitter and pitiful mother of the secondary hero, knows herself yet again trapped by her scheming, bland lawyer, once her lover, to whom 'moral vulgarity cleaved.... like an hereditary odour'. After Jermyn's speech, George Eliot goes on:

> 'Every sentence was as pleasant to her as if it had been cut in her bared arm. Some men's kindness and love-making are more exasperating, more humiliating than others' derision, but the pitiable woman who has once made herself secretly dependent on a man who is beneath her in feeling, must bear that humiliation for fear of worse. Coarse kindness is at least better than coarse anger; and in all private quarrels the duller nature is triumphant by reason of its dullness'[12].

The first sentence, in its understated plainness, makes the reader shrink for very sympathy –'cut in her bared arm'– so long as his attention is full upon the page (the movement must be mutual; he must be, in D.W. Harding's phrase, in a 'bond with the author'). The subsequent generalizing of sexual relations in power and dependence turns on that sympathetic wounding. If the novelist cannot win it, or the reader does not give it, the moralizing is vapid. If both do, the opacity of moral statement clears into the transparency of fact.

I am claiming that such are the processes and procedures of interpretation and judgement: in life, literature and social theory. First, that feelings themselves are *initially ethical*[13], and intimate and central to cognition and recognition of the social and public world; second, that these feelings must be incorporated into that revised account of theory and practice in the human sciences which has been their main preoccupation for a decade; third, that such revision is necessarily conducted and made methodical by close attention to the rhetorical tropes (metaphor and metonymy) by which writers of all kinds engage with our sympathy with the predicaments of others; fourth, that this hermeneutic helix criticizes the actualities of life in terms of an imaginary but plausible good life, and must of its nature capture what is desired only in its immanence as visible in what is actual. This is the political heart of all social theory[14], and the only point of that education which is intended to reproduce the culture, and strive for its improvement.

IV

It now remains briefly to vindicate such criticism in praxis, and to show some of the ways in which a deep blankness as to certain feelings leaves British popular culture at the moment impoverished and deadly. If my argument is true, the criticism can only be made by someone able to feel for himself those feelings largely absent from the culture, and these he must have learned from whatever opportunities he could make to discover and name them. Thus and thus is the process of all education, seen as the mutual advance of edification and criticism.

Edification, in its etymology, connotes a building up of personal capacity – for experience, thought, feeling, life itself. Criticism, in the structure of its meaning, denotes a movement of thought towards a subject from a position outside that subject. Taken together in a reach-me-down definition, education allows an individual (or a class) to identify the defects of the subject in the name of a better alternative in past or future.

Now there are innumerable ways of living good lives; the great contribution of the historical anthropology and ethnographies which have been such an astonishing achievement of Western human science in the past half-century has been to exemplify this truth. Consequently, any criticism of our present life and life-in-death – that criticism without which there could be no future – may take one of a large number of perspectives, the roughest grouping of which may be said at first glance to be either conservative when comparative criteria are taken from the past, and radical or Utopian when the criteria are taken from the future. But this, in turn, will hardly do. I have already argued that we can only think forward after understanding backwards[15]. We think forwards in terms of our version of future forms of life immanently discernible in past and present. How else could it be so? In a formula, therefore, we criticize the present in terms of the best imaginable versions of that present (itself inevitably a product of its past) which may be feasible for the future.

Such criticism-with-edification typically proceeds by narrative. I characterized earlier the conventional narratives recounted of present emotions and what they are. On the method proposed here, understanding human action itself (inclusive of the emotions it expresses) is a product of completing its idiosyncratic finitude from an infinite number of possibilities. That is to say, we interpret and understand by trying out against the facts how they might have been otherwise. For examle, contemporary narratives of the emotions largely exclude such feelings as fervour, ardour, idealism, passion; *my* criticism of, for instance, the contemporary hero and heroine would be in terms of their exclusion of these youthful and desirable emotions, themselves the product of Romanticism and all indispensable to anyone committed to imagining a Utopia and tearing up the roots (radicalism) of a presently wicked way of life. Of course, in historical perspective, these same feelings and the qualities which they shape in expressive action were called to far from admirable causes, particularly in the defence of some of the more horrible forms of imperialism. But to acknowledge this truth is to make my point: understanding human action as the only ground for praxis involves bringing to bear as round and full a grasp of feeling as possible (compassion once more; and compassion is not necessarily to be expressed by looking sad and sweet-faced, and speaking in a very low voice). We can understand the best of past ardour and idealism as missing from the cool, uncommitted, unreflexive hero and heroine of the mass media – Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway – without falling into the error of supposing these feelings to be best directed into praxis in the lives of Tom Brown or Will Ladislaw, or even Alexander Blok. Inasmuch as the stars look down on our culture and are (in a phrase) looked up to as life-models, then the wry, uncommitted, nice, well-off but mobile, invulnerable (really), feelinglessly sexual and narcissist characters represented by as mixed a crew as the local heroes of *Local Hero,* Paul Newman, Dustin Hoffman, Meryl Streep, Jeremy Irons,[16] Mary Tyler Moore, Sebastian Coe, Chris Evert, Mike Brearley, and the Prince and Princess of Wales, express a main stream of feeling for the times.

The feelings and imports of the situations and actions these men and women dominate are clearly incapable of teaching a grasp of the good. (Well, Yes!) The contexts of each are placed in the realms of gold, where the glamour figures of wealth, prestige and enviable hedonism wave to us from the stairs leading up to the door of Concorde. To grasp the meaning of these events requires little movement of sympathy, little completion from the larger stores of feeling recorded in the culture, only a spasm of that attenuated, intense but colourless longing we call envy, which at once fuels mimicry and helplessness.

Such cultural commination is familiar enough. In conditions of the loss of power, of deep confusions in national identity, in the face of the incredibility of capitalism, we drastically lack, in both Western Europe and in the USA, sufficient and frequent images of good lives. This conclusion transpires contingently from the examples I glance at. My main intention however is to convass the view that, at the present conjuncture, the called-for move from hermeneutics to critical theory will identify the hideous failings of present feelings as registered in the narratives of our actions, not merely from a political position, which is tautological, but from a political position emerging from the best versions of revisionist socialism. In other, less unctuous words, the hermeneutic method outlined here rests on absolute presuppositions which identify capitalism as incapable of bringing about a decent life. The absent quantity in this conclusion is destruction itself. Criticism of the present by drawing cheques on the millenium is the proper, indeed only, business of teachers and intellectuals; but unless they see plainly the structural exterminism[17] of the world they criticize as pressing headlong towards the end, their work will lack the critical emotional dimensions of fear and urgency. The means of production are now and globally the means of destruction, and social theory, which simply is, in turn, the forms of knowledge, must inscribe in its dynamics the emotions capable of feeling and thinking this deadly fact.

Notes

1. A history of ideas finely retold from within European literature by Lionel Trilling in *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Oxford 1972.
2. Richard Sennett: *The Fall of Public Man*, Cambridge 1976. Christopher Lasch: *The Culture of Narcissism*, Warner Books 1979.
3. A term I take from Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Basil Blackwell 1981), where he wants, reassuringly, to render the German *Bildung* with some less fatally anaesthetized word than 'Education'.
4. I am crucially indebted in this second section to an unpublished paper by Charles Taylor 'Self-interpreting animals' which he gave to my seminar series at Bristol 'Interpretation and the Human Sciences'. I am, as always, immensely grateful to him for his ideas.
5. Wittgenstein implies this in saying that giving reasons for liking a poem is the same as giving further descriptions. See *Conversations on Aesthetics*, C. Barrett ed. Blackwell, 1969.
6. See for each version, Thomas Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, Oxford 1970; and Ian Suttie, *The Origins of Love and Hate*, Chatto & Windus, 1935.
7. Although he over-priveleges initial feeling, this is a process explored with wonderful subtlety by Jean-Paul Sartre, in *Sketch of a Theory of the Emotions* (1939), Methuen 1962.
8. Clifford Geertz, 'Notes from the Balinese Cockfight' *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Hutchinson 1975, pp. 444-5.
9. This commonplace, I take it, animated the list of worthy atheists who joined Anglicans in the petition to the Church of England Synod not to replace the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorised Version with Series III and the *New English Bible*.
10. R.G. Collingwood's great phrase in his *Autobiography* (Oxford 1938) where he summarizes an account of its first outline.
11. I ought to make clear that I am not practising Christian apologetics under cover of social theory, but speak, non-polemically as an atheist.
12. *Felix Holt* (1866), Penguin 1972, p. 202
13. A case implied but disappointingly understated by Bernard Williams, in 'Morality and the Emotions' *Problems of the Self*, Cambridge, 1973.
14. This slogan carries me over from hermeneutics to critical theory, this latter phrase meaning not literary criticism, but politics in earnest. Most of what I say derives ultimately from Hegel, but more latterly is summarized by Gabriel Kortian, in *Metacritique* (Cambridge 1981) and Raymond Geuss in *The Idea of a Critical Theory*, Cambridge 1981.
15. It is an argument more fully developed in the chapter on R.G. Collingwood in my *Radical Earnestness: English Social Theory 1880-1980*, Martin Robertson 1982.
16. Two names suggested by *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, whose moral is exactly mine.
17. 'Exterminism' is a term coined by E.P. Thompson in the title essay to the collection edited by him and many others, *Exterminism and Cold War*, New Left Books/Verso, 1982. The concluding point, on the urgency of theorizing violence, I take as it stands from Anthony Giddens in an unpublished paper. I am in his debt, as we all are.

Appreciation: Reno C. Borg

by Professor Joseph M. Falzon

Like so many others who knew him and valued his friendship, I was deeply shocked to learn of the passing away of Mr. Reno Borg, Director of Education after a career in the Department spanning 37 years. I first met Reno at St. Michael's Training College in 1949/50 when we were both students; even then, he was already showing qualities of leadership which were to stand him in good stead as he successively occupied posts of increasing responsibility - from a primary school teacher with a class of 30 children to the Directorship of the Department of Education with a complement of over 3,000. It is one of the unfortunate facts of life that as people assume greater responsibilities, they tend to lose friends faster than they make them; Reno was an exception: he lost very few friends. On one of the last occasions I met him, a few weeks before his death, as he and I were thinking of organising a reunion of the St. Michael's College 1949-50 year groups, he rattled off from memory the names of most of the members of that year group and was looking forward to meeting them all again.

Mr. Borg was an active member of several committees and boards, among which were the Commission for the Development of Higher Education, the Advisory Council for Education and the Foundation of International Studies. His wide experience of matters educational will be sorely missed during the meetings of these committees.

As Reno enters a new life, he leaves to mourn his passing his wife Laura, his sons Geoffrey and Andrew, and his daughter Lorraine - a graduate of this Faculty - as well as a great number of friends.

Video Violence: *Cognitive and Cultural Implications*

Joe Grixti

'Violent publications and films... may be an expression, rather than a cause, of an undesirable state of society' – Bernard Williams (ed), *Obscenity and Film Censorship: The Williams Report* (Cambridge University Press, 1981, p.59)

Narrative, Medium and Culture

There is nothing unprecedented about the peak of popularity which is currently being enjoyed by horrific stories and films depicting violent situations. Given the fact that there is a tradition of this type of fiction, however, there are a number of significant changes in just what is today taken to constitute the horrific and shocking, as well as in the manners in which this subject is handled. In this essay I propose to place the phenomenon of contemporary horrific fiction within the context of a wider cultural debate. This will involve the alignment of some of this fiction's underlying assumptions and concerns with some of the theories, beliefs and anxieties which have dominated our century's attempts to understand itself, and with some of the images which contemporary society has found fit to express its conception of itself and of its habitat. The arguments developed here, therefore, build on the understanding that our perceptions of the environment both determine and are expressed in the myths of our times.

The understanding of horrific fictions which I adopt here includes all forms of narrative, irrespective of their medium of transmission. It should be stressed at the outset that this generalisation is not meant as a negation of the importance and implications of the medium through which fictions are transmitted. Indeed, much of what follows underlines the critical roles played by the nature of different media in relation to the methods in which we understand, experience and react to this type of fiction. Though the examples discussed here are taken from films and television programmes, it is important to remember that horrific fictions are transmitted through a variety of other channels — including everyday conversation, books, periodical publications (comics, popular magazines, etc.), paintings, photographs, radio, theatre, songs and recorded lyrics, and even computer video games.

It should be clear that each of these media brings its own set of connotations and cognitive requirements which will have very important implications for the variety of methods in which the stories which are told through them will be presented, interpreted and evaluated. But though the media of transmission vary in critical ways, they can be said to have in common the fact that they transmit to a potentially large and diffuse audience redescriptions of reality and projected eventualities of a specific (horrific) nature. Partly because of the nature of specific media, and largely because of the orientations of the authors, these redescriptions and fictional projections also come loaded with evaluations which variously invite us to consider their subjects as disturbing, entertaining, nauseating, adventurous, threatening, humorous, etc. To take a fairly self-evident example, the playing of computer video games which involve us in galactic violations, or in helping Mr Pacman to evade or devour his would-be annihilators, can be seen as a form of traffic in fictional horrors. But it is a very specific form of traffic, and one which is very different from the types of cognitive, perceptual and emotional activities which are involved when we sit at the cinema to watch a horror movie, or when we switch over a television channel to watch a late night horror show, rent a video-recorded horror film, or curl up in bed to read a tale of terror on a cold winter night. And it is not just the media of transmission which become operative here: the conditions in each of those cases and the expectations which we bring to each of those exercises are of critical importance to our methods of decoding and responding to the narratives.

The eclectic approach adopted here is intended to underline the function and uses of these social products as institutionalised methods of contemplating experience and projected eventualities. Fiction (in whichever medium) is here understood to constitute what Harding[1] terms

> 'a social convention, an institutionalised technique of discussion, by means of which an author invites us to join him in discussing a possibility of experience that he regards as interesting and to share with him attitudes towards it, evaluations of it, that he claims to be appropriate'.

The satisfaction which millions of readers (or viewers) appear to derive from horror fiction is here therefore taken to indicate no more and no less than the nuances implied by the fact of this social convention. It is in terms of a constantly qualifying awareness that such satisfaction is experienced within an institutionalised convention that its implications are here contended to be of significance. As Harding notes of the relation between spectator and author:

'Implicitly we think of a work as being offered to us by someone, as having had significance for another person and not being an impersonal accident like the flickering of flames. Part of our own satisfaction is the sense that some other human being found it satisfying to contemplate such and such and such possibilities of experience and evaluate them in such and such a way, that when we share his satisfaction some mutual sanctioning of values is occurring, and that we have this quasi-social relation with him even if he is dead or totally inaccessible.'[2]

Horrific narratives propose the contemplation and evaluation of diverse areas of experience which are frequently found disturbing because they fit no easy categories. They invite us to consider situations which elaborate and conjecture about the fact that human beings at times act in horrifically destructive manners. They project images which have our vulnerability and superstitions as their points of focus — the discomfort we occasionally feel about our own psyche and what may lurk in its dark depths; our worries and qualms about our own creations and about the technological advances which might be turning *us* into helpless robots in a ruthless world; our anxieties about the ways in which our bodies can let us down, about pain, death and the dead, and about all forms of hostile forces which may at any moment (or so we are told) intrude into our uncertainly patched-up social and personal worlds. The roots and ramifications of such fears — both as they are revealed, explored or exploited in the social products themselves, and also in the reception such products are accorded by those who decode them — constitute an important component of contemporary reality, and of the tools we have developed for reading and dealing with it.

In this sense, there is much which an examination of fictional horrors can tell us about the workings of popular culture and about the types of significance ascribed to reality and fantasy in the habitual modes of discourse and consciousness which the popularity of such fictions implies. This does not mean that the texts of horror fiction (or any fiction, for that matter) can be taken as straight blueprints of such elusive and impossibly generalised notions as those described in terms like 'the collective unconscious', or the conglomerate (and often hazily and condescendingly discussed) 'mass culture' or 'mass consciousness'. For one thing, wide as is the appeal and following which this type of fiction appears to command, it cannot be claimed to cover anything like the majority, even of the so-called masses. Further, the reading and viewing of horror fictions, even among the most avid of fans, is but one of a large variety of cultural activities and influences which operate on a concurrent basis and which form a broad and complex context of awareness, within the perspectives of which horror fiction usually plays a limited and constantly qualified role. This is one of the reasons why arguments and claims about a direct series of effects (corrupting or cathartic) ascribed to this type of product cannot but be inconclusive and of limited applicability.

Concerns and Claims

Narratives of terror have held a peculiar fascination from time immemorial. There is also nothing unprecedented about the claims which frequently appear in the press about, say, the 'video nasties' being the plague of society and the soul-soilers of the young. Very similar claims were made about horror comics before these were banned by Act of Parliament in Britain in the 1950s — often, as Barker[3] points out, with little justification or proof beyond impassioned references to 'commonsense'. Popular concern about the possible bad effects which the cinema and (later) television might be having on the young were also given great prominence and paralleled by all types of experimental and field investigations when these particular media started to reach a wide audience[4].

Recent concern about the consequences of 'mass media violence' and marketed horrors, however, is insistent that there are disturbing developments within the industry, and that the types of horrors to which the young are being exposed today have reached a level of nauseatingly graphic detail and putrifying corruption which is unprecedented. The proponents of this view appear convinced that the influence which such fare might have on impressionable children and corruptible adolescents is of a kind which calls for and justifies very grave, passionate and (to be effective) legislating and punitive concern. At the same time, the arguments and claims made *in defence* of the horror genre (by its exponents and producers, by 'horror buffs', and also by a number of social theorists) have kept pace with the moral crusaders and have attained a level of relative complexity which also manages to combine the assumptions of 'commonsense' with scientific-sounding and often subtly-worded assertions about (most frequently) the 'vicarious satisfaction' and the 'cathartic release' provided by the experience of violence and horror in synthetic forms.

Such claims (whether in favour or against the representation of horrific subjects on different media) and the fact that all manner of exercises in horrific fantasy continue to enjoy great popularity (though not, it should be stressed, exclusively

among the young) need to be placed in a coherent perspective. This is not only because these phenomena raise very pertinent questions about the way we live now, the ways in which we see ourselves, and about the type of future in which we would like to live, but also because the tones and thrust of the arguments surrounding contemporary horror fiction form part of a much broader cultural debate and are based on assumptions of wider resonance and implications.

Even though simple equations between cultural products and generalised consciousness can only stand their ground if they are willing to concede a host of qualifications, the reading of works of popular fiction as reflectors and affirmations of social and cultural realities remains valid and profitable. A work of horror fiction is (of its very nature) an exponent of genre — it works within a set of conventionalised parameters which constrain it towards a norm. As Tudor[5] puts it,

> 'A genre is a relatively fixed culture pattern. It defines a moral and social world, as well as a physical and historical environment. By its nature, its very familiarity, it inclines towards reassurance'.

It bears noting that among the claims made for horror fiction by one of its foremost contemporary exponents (Stephen King) is the assertion that 'its main purpose is to reaffirm the virtues of the norm by showing us what awful things happen to people who venture into taboo lands', and that the finest representatives of the genre 'tell us truths about ourselves by telling us lies about people who never existed'[6]. Such claims embrace an assumed set of shared values and ideas about what constitutes the norm and about which 'truths' will apply within the conventions of that norm.

Signs of Humanity

If the fearful fantasies encoded in works of horror fiction are to be seen as forming part of a larger cultural reality, then an account of the modes of functioning associated with such fiction will need to take on a number of weighty considerations. According to Ricoeur, 'we understand ourselves only by the long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works'[7]. Horror fiction is one of these signs — its texts are social products packed with messages within which are encoded meanings related to human experience.

The task of unravelling the countless configurations assumed by the signs of humanity — whether one chooses to call this exercise one of deconstruction, analysis, practical criticism or interpretation — is (again in Ricoeur's terms) 'the reply to the fundamental distanciation constituted by the objectification of man in works of discourse, an objectification comparable to that expressed in the products of his labour and his art'[8]. It is through following this hermeneutical detour that we can begin to form a clear understanding of some of the systems of meaning with which human thought and action are imbued. To adapt a phrase from Silverstone, these products both speak to and speak of 'the modes of thought and feeling that orient our actions in the daily round'[9]. In this important sense they are (like television, which is Silverstone's subject)

> 'not so much a guide to action, or a guide for the perplexed, but rather a commentary on the categories and boundaries of culture and an exploration of the ambiguities and uncertainties that are endemic to it'[10].

The texts of horror fiction (as of other fiction), therefore, are commentaries — representations which explore and evaluate (and in this sense influence) a set of cultural and cognitive experiences. The texts themselves are made up of messages — coded meanings which constitute what Hall[11] calls a 'differentiated moment, in which the formal rules of discourse and language are in dominance':

> 'Before this message can have an "effect" (however defined), satisfy a "need" or be put to a "use", it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which "have an effect", influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences'.

The methods in which the meanings encoded in such messages are appropriated and decoded are in their turn dependent on our culture's ways of seeing and on what Fiske and Hartley call 'our common experience, our culturally determined instersubjectivity'[12]. Among the many complexities of contemporary common experience which influence our methods of decoding (and hence responding to) messages about violence and horror are the traditions of 'mass media violence' and horror fiction themselves, as well as the controversies which have surrounded them.

It bears stressing that the processes in operation here are manifestly more complex than is allowed for by the assumption that works of horror fiction exist exclusively to satisfy or encourage a sadistic or masochistic delight in bathing in gore.

The shapes assumed by the fictions of the imagination are importantly influenced and structured by the context in which we live, by our perception and understanding of experienced reality, and by the modes of discourse (social

norms, political and moral/religious structures, the various systems of signs, symbols, language and gestures) which mediate and also give shape and meaning to our attempts at understanding and explanation. Viewed from this perspective, broadly phrased assertions about the 'intrinsic value' or 'instinctive need' of the pleasures, thrills and 'escape' provided by fantasy in themselves amount to little more than expressions of a complex set of presuppositions and ideological influences. Fantasy is known and experienced in terms of the shapes which it assumes. It is not an ethereal, mystical or magical quality which serves as a balm for the rigours of science and rationalism, or which belongs to an exclusive and isolateable realm of emotion — and this because such a realm does not exist.

We are more likely to make adequate and constructive sense of the ways in which human fantasies manifest themselves if we recognise their interconnections with common sense understanding as well as with political and scientific speculation. We need, in other words, to recognise human fantasies (fearful or otherwise) as an important index of the concerns, purposes and understandings of reality which predominate in a particular context and time. As Geertz puts it, 'ideation, subtle or otherwise, is a cultural artefact': like class or power it is something to be characterised by 'construing its expressions in terms of the activities that sustain them'[13].

It is time to consider some specific examples.

Psychopathic Violators

Viewed from this perspective, the various themes which seem to predominate in the horror fiction of different periods, or the various cycles which have often been argued to mark the history of horror films[14], reflect complex levels of connotation. To take a recent development, it is worth noting how in the late 'seventies and early 'eighties there has been a growth in the number of films which explore situations and project images involving liberated women being sexually violated by pathologically violent men. Hitchcock's *Frenzy* (1972) in many respects set the tone, and the tide has grown with films like *Looking for Mr Goodbar* (in which a confidently and aggressively promiscuous Diane Keaton is horrifically stabbed to death by a young man with sexual problems),*Halloween, Dressed to Kill, Lipstick, Friday the Thirteenth, He Knows You're Alone* and *I Spit on Your Grave.* According to Twitchell, this trend suggests a fear of women which 'may tell us more than we want to know about the sadistic misogyny engendered by the Women's Movement'[15]. At times of gradual cultural shifts, Twitchell argues, 'people need some "object" toward which they can direct their anxieties'. The implications of this phenomenon when it expresses itself in works of horror fiction like the ones just mentioned are complex and potentially regressive — particularly when they endorse and compound stereotypical and ideologically motivated images like those of non-domesticated women being punished for transgressing traditionally established sexual boundaries (which is a recurring motif in many of these films).

TOBE HOOPER THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE (1974)

The theme of pathological violence as it is explored and evaluated in films like these also raises a number of questions about the manners in which contemporary society explains to itself the origins and nature of destructiveness and violation among humans. Violence is frequently equated with a streak of madness, an allegedly uncontrollable component of our inherited nature which in extreme cases is said to break down all culturally transmitted restraints and to give full vent to blood-lust and chaotic plunder.

The most noted images to which this notion has given rise are the werewolf and Mr Hyde, and it is no accident that the horror film industry has also produced countless renderings and variations of tales involving these figures. Such renderings include the first American film production of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in 1908 (a photographic record of a stage play); the differing portrayals of the

Jekyll-Hyde figure presented by John Barrymore, Frederic March and Spencer Tracy (in 1920, 1932 and 1941 respectively); Lon Chaney Jr's many appearances as the Wolf Man in the 1940s; and so on to more recent variations like the Hammer versions of the 'sixties (which included an early appearance by Oliver Reed as the lycanthropic protagonist in 1961), as well as little remembered efforts of the 'fifties like Herman Cohen's *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957) and Jack Arnold's *Monster of the Campus* (1958)[16]. Arnold's film it bears noting, rather clumsily elaborated on an aspect of the Jekyll-Hyde story which had been made explicit in Frederic March's 1932 portrayal of Hyde as prehistoric savage — a note which has underscored most of the versions made of this tale since then at least. In the opening scenes of *Monster of the Campus* the protagonist, a university professor interested in evolution, explains to his rather dim but pretty assistant that humans have inherited their violent nature from their ape antecedents. In the course of his experiments he is contaminated by one of his prize possessions — a prehistoric fish which has bypassed evolution and retained a grotesque appearance and adjuncts like clawy feet which allow it to walk on the sea bed. The rest of the film is taken up with the professor's transformations from civilised scientist to primate savage — until he is shot dead by the representatives of (civilised) law and order.

There are a number of culturally-based and ideologically-loaded assumptions underlying this as well as more subtle explorations of an allegedly primitive origin to violence and destructiveness. What I wish to stress here is the frequency with which contemporary works of horror fiction project and reinforce a set of presuppositions about the degenerative, diseased and compulsive characteristics of this 'primitive tendency'. Fearful fantasies about the psychopathological destructiveness which is assumed to derive from this tendency are also frequently juxtaposed against a set of stereotypical images of the reassuringly controlling (though equally ruthless) representatives of civilised law and order.

DeFleur and Dennis[17] note that a study of popular American television dramas of the crime-adventure variety (*Starsky and Hutch, Kojack, Charlie's Angels,* etc.) suggests that the most dangerous offenders depicted in these stories tend to be presented as being 'criminally insane'. According to this study[18], scenes portraying acts of horrific violation frequently showed murderers, rapists, slashers, snipers and bombers as having glassy eyes, grimacing strangely or giggling incongruously as they committed their crimes:

> 'Some laughed strangely and sobbed or cried. Others mumbled incoherently and screamed irrationally. Another bared his teeth and snarled as he jumped on his victims to suck blood from their jugular veins. Still another squeezed raw meat through his fingers and rubbed it on his gun as he prepared to kill his next victim'[19].

According to DeFleur and Dennis, the trend of such presentations, and of the popular vocabulary of madness which goes with them, is to use the mentally ill to represent evil. Against this evil the forces for law and order fight and win to protect society. In other words, a culturally based fear of a stigmatised sector of the population is invoked and reinforced, while reassurance is provided about the efficiency and (sane) toughness of the guardians of the *status quo*. It is worth noting here how (in this type of popular fiction as in the early Gothic fictions of the eighteenth century)[20] a fascination with the wild and threateningly unorthodox has been transformed into an exercise in ideological reassurance.

Invading Demons

Titillation and ideological reassurance can also be argued to have been motivating forces in the making and viewing of the series of films about invasions from outer space which were made in the America of the 1950s — i.e. during the height of the Cold War. This trend was perhaps most effectively and memorably caught in Don Siegel's 1956 *Invasion of the Body Snatchers,* but there were other (less accomplished) products like *Invasion of the Saucer-Men* (1957), *Earth vs the Flying Saucers* (1957), *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958) and *The Blob* (a 1958 production in which a young Steve McQueen led a band of quick-witted teenagers in destroying the eponymous alien which had grown from a handful of glutinous substance by absorbing the citizens of an all-American town). As a number of critics have pointed out, such films reflected a growing concern about potential invasion or infiltration by dark forces coming from behind what had come to be known as 'the iron curtain'. It is also worth recalling that films like these were being produced and popularly patronised at a period when interest in space exploration was growing fast, and when the race for space (highlighted by the successful launching of the first Russian satellite in 1957) was on.

Similarly, the spate of films about demonic pregnancies and child monsters produced in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies *(Rosemary's Baby, The Omen, It's Alive,* to name the most famous) reflected a complex set of popular anxieties (superstitious as well as political) about possible

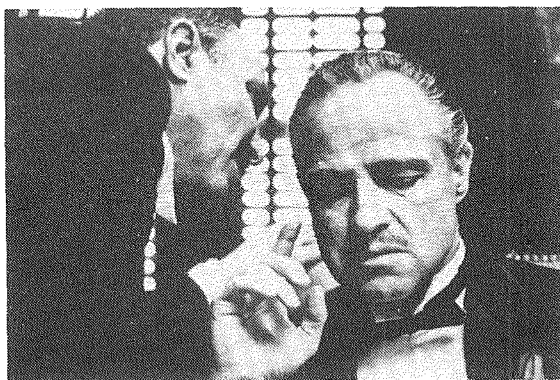
invasion by malevolent alien forces and about the vulnerability of helpless innocence in the face of evil. The successful marketing of these films also coincided with mounting awareness and concern over diminishing global resources and a growing public debate about the widespread availability of effective methods of birth control, the legalisation of abortion, and the long and short term effects of pregnancy-related drugs like Thalidomide and fertilisation pills. As Prawer puts it, 'the gusto with which films like *The Omen* make the audience wish for the child's destruction has something deeply suspect about it'[21]. Yet this film grossed over four million dollars during its first three days' showing in the U.S.A., and eventually made over $100 million at the box office.

The contemplation of horrifically 'possessed' or pathologically violent youngsters was perhaps most influentially conducted in William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973) and Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). It is worth recalling in this connection that most of the complaints and indignation directed against Kubrick's film at the period of its release involved claims about the horrifying and depraving effects it was alleged to be having on the young. The violating protagonists of *A Clockwork Orange* — in contrast to the staid, withdrawn and opulently self-regarding victims — were emphatically young, and they moved about in a psychedelic world which at times had the appearance of a global disco. It was this aspect of the film which projected a highly disturbing but also clearly cognisable vision of futuristic youth gone badly sour, callously alienated and rhythmically antisocial.

The young men in this film were as worrying in their violation of traditional social and ethical norms as was the blaspheming and horrifically transformed teenage girl in *The Exorcist*. Both films appeared at a period of much publicised student unrest, the flower movement, an allegedly growing drug generation intent on hedonistic pursuits, and frequently youthful protest against traditional (largely middle-class) values — popularly caught in Bob Dylan's song 'The Times They Are A-Changing', which exhorted mothers and fathers to admit that their sons and daughters were beyond their command. In this general context, films like *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Exorcist* can be argued to have touched chords of alarm among audiences imbued with ambivalent conceptions of adolescence and the related vigilante anxieties, uncertainties and often beleaguered dreams which in the course of the present century have been increasingly and at times frantically projected onto the young[22].

In this connection Fraser notes what he terms the paradox that it was Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* rather than Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* which did the most to set off complaints in the early 1970s about excessive violence in movies[23]. Fraser lists the profusion of vividly realistic scenes of violence in*The Godfather* and contrasts them with the stylised and relatively restrained depiction of fewer such scenes in *A Clockwork Orange*. In Fraser's view, it was precisely the 'alienated and alienating style' of Kubrick's approach which was so disquieting, particularly in the much-commented-on rape scene in a secluded country house, in which the violation of the helpless couple was accompanied by the protagonist's chanting of 'Singin' in the Rain', while the hand-held camera appeared to provide stylistic support to the aggressiveness of the young invaders dressed in masquerade costume. Unlike the thoroughly familiar and 'almost respectable' moral ambiguousness of *The Godfather's* depiction of gangsters and mafiosi (of long acquaintance of their Hollywood garbs), the ambiguities of *A Clockwork Orange* were far from respectable.

Fraser notes that while film gangsters have often been ambivalently viewed as 'types of individualistic resistance fighters against society', the stylised presentation of violation in *A Clockwork Orange* appeared to reinforce and in a sense confirm the psycho-pathological vision of the violators, while the victims 'virtually disappeared as



FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA
THE GODFATHER

suffering consciousness'[24]. Kubrick's cinematic style, Fraser continues, converted life into artifice and the whole of the rape scene into 'cinema'. It thus later became difficult to believe that one of the victims had been killed and the other crippled after 'the burlesque-elegant snipping away of the wife's jumpsuit' (which 'began by making it seem as if she too were in fancy dress, a partner in a curious ritual, and ended by leaving her looking like a large denuded doll'), and after the punctuation of the kicking inflicted on the husband with distancing soft-shoe dancing and singing allusions to the Donen-Kelly musical classic. In Fraser's view, it was this 'aestheticising and distancing of violence' (which finds its cinematic sources in the earlier movies of Jean-Luc Godard and in *Bonnie and Clyde*) which made the film so emotionally ambiguous and aroused uneasiness about the psychopathic in 'what may be called the collective intellectual psyche of our time'[25].

Thus, to return to the implications of an argument which has threaded most of this essay, while the violence and horrific violations graphically depicted in films like *The Godfather* are well-padded in their (genre generated and maintained) frame of reassurance, the aestheticising and distancing of violence in exercises like *A Clockwork Orange* paradoxically draws attention to the contours and implications of that frame by taking its licence to its logical ('artistic') conclusions. In both cases, to labour a point, the story's message and meaning, as well as the audience's response, have their roots firmly in the social and cultural concerns of the period of their making.

This is not to suggest that all exercises in horror fiction can be neatly classified as having been directly inspired or instigated by transparent sets of moral controversies, political concerns or public debates. What I have emphasised are some of the functions such fictions perform as institutionalised methods of contemplating experience and projected eventualities, and as commentaries on the categories and boundaries of culture. In this sense, popular horror fictions form part of a complex discursive process which is an integral component of the models deployed by contemporary society (often tacitly and uncritically) to understand itself. In examining and trying to explain a specific set of horrific fictions, this essay has thus been concerned with seeing this phenomenon as an important signifying component of the contemporary mind which, as Harré, Clarke and De Carlo[25] phrase it, 'is a shaping of the activities of the whole person by socio-linguistic influences'.

Notes:

1. Harding, D.W. (1967) 'Considered Experience: the invitation of the novel'. *English in Education,* 1, p.13.
2. Harding, D.W. (1971) 'The Bond with the Author' *The Use of English*, 22, p.311.
3. Barker, M. (1984) *A Haunt of Fears: the strange history of the British horror comic campaign* (London: Pluto Press).
4. See Tudor, A. (1974) *Image and Influence: studies in the sociology of film* (London: Allen and Unwin), pp.92-3; Pearson, G. (1984) 'Falling Standards: a short sharp history of moral decline', in M. Barker (ed) *The Video Nasties: freedom and censorship in the media* (London: Pluto Press), pp.88-103; and Grixti, J, (1985) 'The Controversy over Mass Media Violence and the Study of Behaviour', in *Educational Studies, 11,* pp. 61-76.
5. Tudor, A, *op.cit.*, p.180.
6. King, S. (1982) *Danse Macabre* (London: Futura) 442-3, 282.
7. Ricoeur, P. (1982) *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: essays on language, action and interpretation* (Cambridge: University Press), p.143.
8. *Ibid.*, p.138.
9. Silverstone, R. (1981) *The Message of Television* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul), p.6.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Hall, S. (1980) 'Encoding/Decoding'. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe and P. Willis (eds), *Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson), p.130.
12. Fiske, J. and Hartley, J. (1978) *Reading Television* (London: Methuen), p.38.
13. Geertz, C. (1983) *Local Knowledge: further essays in interpretive anthropology* (New York: Basic Books), p.152.
14. See, for instance, Clarens, C. (1968) *Horror Movies: an illustrated survey* (London: Secker and Warburg); Prawer, S.S. (1980) *Caligari's Children: the film as tale of terror* (Oxford University Press); Punter, D. (1980) *The Literature of Terror: a history of gothic fictions from 1765 to the present day* (London: Longman); and Twitchell, J.B. (1985) *Dreadful Pleasures: an anatomy of modern horror* (New York: Oxford University Press).
15. Twitchell, J.B. (1983) 'Frankenstein and the anatomy of horror'. *The Georgia Review, 37,* pp.41-2.
16. See Clarens, C., *op.cit.;* and Daniels, L. (1977) *Fear: a history of horror in the mass media* (London: Paladin).
17. DeFleur, M.L. and Dennis, E.E. (1985) *Understanding Mass Communication, 2nd edn* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin), pp.395-400.
18. The study reported by DeFleur and Dennis was conducted by Brigitte Goldstein for her M.A. thesis on 'The Television's Portrayal of the Mentally Ill' at the University of New Mexico in 1980.
19. DeFleur, M.L. and Dennis, E.E., *op.cit.*, p.398.
20. See Butler, M. (1981) *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its background 1760-1830* (Oxford: University Press), p. 28; Daniels, L., *op.cit.*, p.8; and Barker, M. (1984) *A Haunt of Fears* (London: Pluto), pp.125-7.
21. Prawer, S.S., *op.cit.*, p.71.
22. See Gillis, J.R. (1974) *Youth and History: tradition and change in European age relations 1770-present* (New York: Academic Press), and Grixti, J. (1986) 'Images of Adolescence', in *Universities Quarterly, 40,* pp.171-189.
23. Fraser, J. (1976) *Violence in the Arts* (Cambridge: University Press), p.14.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 24-5.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-6.
26. Harré, R., Clarke, D. and De Carlo, N. (1985) *Motives and Mechanisms: an introduction to the psychology of action* (London: Methuen), p. viii.

What Medium? What Message?

Smoking Education for Teenagers

Elspeth M. Gray

'I am very concerned. We must intensify our efforts to explain to children the dangers of smoking'.

'I hope teachers as well as parents will be spurred by this report to take even more energetic steps to get the message across to young people.'

(John Patten, Under Secretary of State, Department of Health & Social Security, 1983)[1]

It would seem fairly safe to say that an important purpose of schools is to transmit messages; by their very nature they are in an advantageous position to do this. Schools have captive audiences as Dreeben (1970) states[2], though he is careful to point out that the children may not be in all cases an audience of captives, yet most could be classed as 'victims of institutionalised education' (Gammage 1982)[3]. Many secondary teachers particularly may well feel that they have much in common with prison warders for, after all, apart from prisons which have a selective intake, schools are the only institutions where all individuals are compulsorily incarcerated for part of their lives - an estimated 15,000 hours in the United Kingdom[4].

The extent to which schools function in the transmission of messages in the broadest sense has been the subject of much discussion in the last two decades particularly and in spite of the gloomy picture that emerged from the Coleman report (1966)[5] subsequent findings have been much more optimistic[6]. Schools *DO* make a difference.

In respect of the curriculum - a particularly important message bearing area - there is a frequently recurring question: 'What subjects should be included?' The dilemma, skilfully and eloquently articulated by Benjamin in his 'Sabre Tooth Curriculum' nearly fifty years ago[7], is still with us. Holt's teacher, who asked the question about curriculum content more recently[8] has worries too. From the vast amount written on theories of learning and the somewhat lesser amount on learning in real classrooms, teachers seek guidance on how to help children learn most effectively; time and the lives of a captive audience cannot be wasted after all.

It is within such a context that curriculum decisions have to be made and this article describes the work of a research and development project that enters into this crowded arena.

The Health Education Council 'SMOKING EDUCATION FOR TEENAGERS' project is developing curriculum material for smoking education lessons for 12-13 year olds and had already clear strategies mapped out when John Patten made the comments quoted at the head of this paper. The report to which he referred was undertaken by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in 1982[9] and findings from a sample of 5,000 11-16 year olds in England and Wales showed the proportion of regular smokers rising from 1% of first year pupils to 27% of fifth years. From this same population it was estimated that first to fifth formers were spending £1,000,000 on cigarettes each week.

During the last twenty years there has been much discussion about the potential dangers of cigarette smoking and imporant evidence[10] showed how the smoking habit establishes itself during childhood and adolescence. This trend was disturbing, occurring as it did at a time when smoking among the adult population was declining. The more recent studies[11 12 13] both at national and local level have also given a clear picture of the pattern of cigarette smoking among young people and this evidence was closely examined when considering possible prevention strategies.

What is the message we are trying to get across? With a death toll in Britain of more than seventy thousand expected this year due to smoking related diseases, with nine out of ten lung cancer victims who are smokers, with smoking being the main cause of chronic bronchitis, with smoking causing the loss of fifty million working days each year, the message is clear and simple - or so it seems - **DON'T SMOKE.**

DO SMOKERS READ WHAT IS ON THE PACKET ANYWAY?

But how can we get this message across? Traditionally, approaches to the prevention of smoking have been concentrated upon the dissemination of information about the potential long term health risks. However, such an approach seems to have had limited success in reducing the number of adolescent smokers as evidence has shown[14] that knowledge of the health risks associated with smoking does not always have the desired effect on smoking behaviour. Other evidence too[15] suggests that smokers may place less value anyway on their health than non-smokers. For many young people it is difficult, if not impossible, to see themselves in relation to the long term consequences of smoking; in any case, 'everyone' can quote instances of older members of the family who smoke and 'they're all right'. Perhaps young people do see it as a risk, but for many, risks are worth taking. If knowing about the potential dangers to health in smoking does not necessarily deter children, can we find an alternative to the negative message? What are the values of adolescents? Where do these values lie?

If we are to attempt to tackle the questions in the title of this article in respect of smoking education, we need to look very carefully at the nature of the adolescent and make this the starting point of *our learning* about how to present anti-smoking messages effectively.

Parents and teachers of adolescents know only too well the often paradoxical behaviour that adolescents display, and their rapidly changing allegiances - be it to pop-idols, fashion or causes - are tantalisingly elusive to identify by those adults who are trying to find a point of reference for understanding. It is unfortunate that so much of the attention that has been focused on adolescence during the past few decades has concentrated upon the anti-social outcomes of adolescent behaviour. The word 'adolescence' has come to be almost inevitably linked with the word 'problem' and, as corollary, adolescents with 'difficult'. However, adolescence, as a bridging phase between childhood and adulthood (the word means quite simply, growing up), *is* a crucial state in the development of all young people. Many writers on adolescence now regard it, not as a stage but as a transitional process which generates its own difficulties which individuals have to come to terms with. It could perhaps be said that the paradoxical nature of much of adolescent behaviour is only a reflection of some of the difficulties that adolescents face in adjusting to the process of growing up. There are several important factors in this adjustment process and two of these are particularly important in this context. Coleman (1980)[16] has pointed out how peer groups come to play an invaluable part in the socialisation of young people and group behaviour can be seen to be a powerful tool (some might call it a weapon) in the search for recognition. At the same time adolescents have a growing need to be recognised as individuals in their own right. These two characteristics are not mutually exclusive but in fact complementary and Erikson (1965, 1968)[17,18] maintains that it is in the context of the peer group that individuals can test themselves in new roles and try out new indentities.

These factors can be seen to have important implications for young people's learning in school. As adolescents place emphasis on social acceptance, peer approval and immediate reinforcement rather than on long-term rewards, it is most desirable that these attributes be considered. For if school work concerned directly with personal behaviour - such as smoking - is to have real meaning for adolescents, then clearly it must recognise their characteristic psychological and developmental structures.

The Health Education Council SMOKING EDUCATION FOR TEENAGERS project has paid close attention to these issues in the development of 'SMOKING AND ME', a teacher's guide to five lessons on smoking for 12-13 year olds. This guide is adapted from one of three curriculum guides produced by the University of Minnesota as part of the Minnesota Smoking Prevention Programme and which was known as the Minnesota Peer-led Social Consequences Curriculum. This owed much of its theoretical background to the work initiated by Richard Evans at the University of Houston which had demonstrated some promising results in the reduction of adolescent smoking through what has come to be known as a 'resisting social pressures' approach. Evans concentrated on what he refers to as a 'behavioural version of McGuire's concept of inoculation against persuasion[19] in which it is supposed that by exposing adolescents to a preliminary version of the typical social pressures to smoke, it is possible to increase their defences against such pressures by providing them with counter-arguments and behavioural coping strategies. It is within such a framework that 'SMOKING AND ME' - which also embodies an important concept of a 'peer-led approach' - has been developed.

In Britain, for those teachers who were familiar with the spirit of the Plowden report[20], and who supported the belief in children as 'agents of their own learning', the notion of a peer-led approach might cause little difficulty but among secondary teachers whose own background and professional training has a different orientation such a structure may seem less easily acceptable, involving as it does a redefinition of their role in the classroom. Yet there is much evidence to support the argument that adolescents should be *involved* in their own education for 'youth needs responsibility and power' (Gammage, 1982)[21]. This point is

acknowledged in 'SMOKING AND ME', in which the children themselves take an active part in leading discussions, in organising group contributions and in presenting information to their peers. The strategies employed in the adaptation of the Minnesota curriculum guide have been fully described elsewhere (Gray et al, 1985)[22] but it is important to emphasise that whereas the American material was designed predominantly as a research project, the British version is essentially an exercise in curriculum development in which teachers have assisted at all stages in the writing of the material through a process of consultation and revision by holding workshops and sending out questionnaires.

'SMOKING AND ME' is now in the pilot version and is currently undergoing a formative evaluation in many different schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This style of evaluation is an integral part of curriculum development and its main purpose is to help to improve and better match the curriculum to the learner. Johnson (1982)[23] has pointed out that no successful programme can be completely predetermined; the establishing of effective curricula often necessitates asking questions during the development of those curricula. Information about the implementation of 'SMOKING AND ME' in the classroom is being sought through discussions with teachers and through the use of a simple questionnaire. Opportunity is given to the teachers to make qualitative judgments with respect to the particular context in which 'SMOKING AND ME' is being used. Discussions have been held with children too and they have their own questionnaire in which they can give their perceptions of the approach and content in 'SMOKING AND ME'.

The feedback that we have received so far has been most encouraging. Difficulties have not been ignored; time, for example, is always at a premium in an overcrowded curriculum and anxieties may be expressed about the time taken for discussion-based work. Adjustments to the traditional role of the teacher have not always been easy but teachers tackled the work with enthusiasm and determination and felt rewarded when their pupils responded well. The following are examples of comments made by teachers:-

> 'A different and stimulating way of looking at the subject. It had more impact for the children as they "ran it" themselves'.

> 'Children enjoyed the project tremendously - appeared to be very effective in encouraging children to work out their own responses in a positive way.'

> 'Although I was initially concerned by the responsibility being put on group leaders it worked very well particularly because *every* member of the group became involved.'

The children too have responded to the challenges and they highlighted some aspects of 'SMOKING AND ME' that were particularly important to them.

> 'I think it was a good idea because we could talk to each other about it and could say things to your group members that you couldn't to a teacher'. (Girl, 13.1)

> 'The good thing was you were allowed to put your point over.' (Boy, 12.3)

> '(I liked being a group leader) because I liked having the chance to take charge of something myself.' (Girl, 12.8)

> 'I enjoyed the lessons, it makes people think why do they smoke. (Boy, 12.9)

We must proceed cautiously. Such an approach may well be a promising one in promoting healthy adolescent behaviour as a recent process evaluation study has indicated[24] but in the words of Johnson (1982) we must

> '... examine our assumptions ...accept only with the greatest scepticism the causal relationship between any operation we have performed and the effects we have produced'.[25]

Schools and the work done in them *may* make a difference, but we must not expect too much in terms of immediate school outcomes from a smoking prevention programme for example. Within the school years we can only have a limited view of how far we have succeeded in a field which is concerned with lifelong human behaviour.

'SMOKING AND ME', with its emphasis on the social concerns of adolescents towards smoking, on role-playing activities to rehearse the strategies of refusing the offer of a cigarette, on listening to others' arguments and preparing one's own, is offered as another, but *not* the only approach to smoking education. Health risks information is important, of that there is no doubt, but that approach is not definitive either.

The questions that headed this article may not have definitive answers but in recognising the complex web of curriculum content, classroom climate, processes of communication and characteristics of the learner, the claims by Gammage (1982)[25] that 'the clients have a voice' and 'the medium may well form the message' are ones that should surely be seriously considered.

Note:
I would like to thank Professor Philip Gammage, University of Nottingham, England, Director of the SMOKING EDUCATION FOR TEENAGERS project, who commented on an earlier draft of this paper.

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Media Education in Church Schools in Malta

Joseph Borg

During a discussion I had with a class of 15 year old girls about the use they make of t.v. I found that in spite of the fact that they were preparing for the G.C.E. examination they watch approximately an average of 2.5 hours a day. (This is a bit lower than the national average which according to a study made by GALLUP LTD. in 1984 is 2.64 hours daily.) This amounts to 38 days a year. We tried to compare this with the time students spend at school. They have 175 school days a year with 5 hours every day which gives a total of 36 days a year. Both the school administrators and the students were greatly surprised with the result.

This little incident helped me a lot in my meetings with different heads of schools while discussing with them the need of introducing media education in their schools.

1. Media Use by Children

Survey in Church Schools

In April 1986 the Secretariat for Social Communications (here referred to as SSC) surveyed 417 boys and girls attending the lower forms of four church secondary schools. These were questioned about their media use. The study gave the following results:

TV VIEWING

	During School Days	During Holidays
Watch every day	95%	100%
Watch under 2 hrs. a day	76%	28%
Watch over 2 hrs. a day.	19%	72%

It's interesting to note that older children watch more than younger ones. During the holidays boys watch more than girls.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

	Girls	Boys
Read a newspaper every day	46%	71%
Read a magazine regularly	69%	80%

The most popular newspaper page with both girls and boys is the t.v. page.

RADIO AND CASSETTES

Listen to radio every day:	79%
Listen to radio for less than an hour:	84%
Prefer music and singing programmes:	84%
Listen to music on cassettes:	91%
Listen for more than an hour every day.	37%

The survey confirms the incident quoted above. An average student spends many an hour using the media every day.

MEDIA VS SCHOOL?

The media are in competition with the school on at least three counts: time, method and content. They take more of the children's time than the school does. They provide an "alternative education" based on a non-directive method of story telling, music, bright colours, movement etc. They portray a value system many times in contrast with that taught at school. Another aspect of the media which contrasts sharply with the school system is the fact that one uses the media on one's own free choice, whereas attending school is compulsory. It would be a bit more difficult to dispose of an annoying teacher in the same way!

How should the school react to this challenge? How can it help students cope with the media dominated world?

There are those who advocate abstention and opposition. They believe that the school should do its utmost to persuade the children to use the media less and less. This generally betrays an alarmist mentality. On the other hand there are those who advocate media education instead of abstention. They say that as school would be a failure if its students are not able to read and/or write, it should also be considered a failure if students are "illiterate" in today's media.

2. Church's Option: Media Education

The Catholic Church has opted for media education.

In 1963 the Second Vatican Council in its Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication (Inter Mirifica) stated:

> "The wise use of the mass media of social communication (press, radio, t.v. films) which are so accessible to all ages and levels of culture, depends on proper habits of reading, listening and viewing being taught to different categories of users. Hence, methods of media education especially when designed for young people, should be encouraged, developed and orientated according to Christian moral principles. This should be done in Catholic schools at all levels.." (para. 25).

In 1971 the Pontificial Commission for Social Communications issued a Pastoral Instruction which had been mandated by the second Vatican Council. "Unity and Advancement" (Communio et Progressio) was approved by Pope Paul VI and ordered to be published and put into effect immediately. This document stated:

> "The Church considers it to be one of her most important tasks to provide the means for educating recipients of the media in Christian principles. Catholic schools and organizations cannot ignore the urgent duty they have in this field. It is never too early to start encouraging in children artistic tastes, a keen critical faculty and a sense of personal responsibility based on sound morality. This sort of training must be given a regular place in schools curricula. It must be given, and systematically, at every stage of education." (26)

The word "immediately" in Church circles does not have the same ring of immediacy as it has in secular circles. In many countries the urgency proposed by Paul VI was not felt with the result that very little happened.

The local Church has only now officially adopted the work that the SSC has been doing in Church schools these last few years and included a provision for media education in its PASTORAL PLAN. The PLAN states:

> "8.9 Media education should be an integral part of the educative programme given in school. For this reason:
> (i) this type of education should be integrated in the curricula of all Church schools."

3. Schools Teaching Media

Media education will this year be systematically taught in 26 Church schools. These will be using MEDIA WORKBOOKS entirely produced by the Secretariat for Social Communications for Grades 4, 5 and 6 of the primary level. The number of schools teaching media this year is slightly more than the number of Church schools which had started teaching media education last year as part of a project launched by the S.S.C. This increase means that almost all Church schools having Grades 4, 5 and 6 will now be teaching media education. Thirteen schools will also be teaching the subject in Form I. Four schools which had joined the S.S.C. experiment from the very beginning will also be teaching it in other forms as well.

The project had started on an experimental basis in October 1981. The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition introduced the subject in the curricula of Senior 2 of their school at Raħal Ġdid, and at Senior 3 in their schools at Blata l-Bajda and Sliema. St. Aloysius College, run by the Jesuits, and Savio College, run by the Salesians, followed suit.

In just over four years (1981-1985) the number of Church schools teaching media has increased from three to twenty-two. Four other schools have joined the project this year. This increase shows the success of the programme worked out by the S.S.C. The programme aimed at increasing awareness of the important role that the media are playing in the lives of contemporary men, and proposed media education as an answer to this phenomenon. The awareness and the need to do something was gradually recognised by the heads of Church schools and has now been adopted in the PASTORAL PLAN as the official policy of the Maltese Church.

4. What the Programme Needs

Reflecting on the experience gained during the years that I have been responsible for the project, I propose that for any media education programme to succeed it needs to involve all interested parties, co-ordinate their effort and produce needed resources. In this case the interested parties are school administrators, teachers, parents and students. The main resources are the textbooks, teacher's handbook and supportive material.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The SSC decided from the very beginning that it would not try to impose the programme on the schools but that it would try to persuade school administrators of the usefulness and necessity of such a programme. An imposition without a conviction leads nowhere. This option implied that the school administrators had to be party to the basic policy decisions guiding the project. Otherwise the programme could have been very easily aborted.

The first contact with the heads of school happened during a talk I gave in 1980. Several heads were interested in the project but the grave difficulties that government was creating prevented many from moving ahead. Fortunately some schools courageously went ahead.

A temporary agreement was reached on the church schools question in April 1985. This gave the SSC and the schools the breathing space that they needed. The SSC held a seminar for heads of schools in June 1985. During that seminar the heads saw the positive results achieved by the schools that were pioneering the project. In the light of this, important policy decisions were taken regarding the objectives of the programme, place in curricula, years to be taught in, and help needed.

OBJECTIVES

The basic aim of the project is to transform the media user from a passive consumer to an active media partner. The student should be helped to become someone who "uses" the media to suit his needs and fulfil his aim in life rather than be someone who lets himself be used and perhaps abused by the media and their owners. This aim is reached when the students are able to:

1. "Read" the media: acquire the knowledge, the capabilities and the attitudes to understand their message:
2. Assess critically the message that the media present and be able to judge the values and life styles portrayed;
3. Learn about the process that is involved in the production of different media;
4. Know how the media influence society and how society influences the media;
5. "Write" with the media by being given the possibility and the opportunity to express themselves through their own productions.

PLACE IN CURRICULA

Two different trends were brought forward during the discussion: Should there be a period assigned to media education or should this be integrated with different subjects? Both possibilities had their own pros and cons.

During the discussion it was clarified that the outlined objectives had three aspects: the "formal" aspect, the "contents" aspect, and the "social" aspect. The first consisted mainly of the "language" of each medium, e.g. use of different shots, editing, colour in t.v. and film; and the use of particular headings, placement in paper for the print media. The second treated mainly the values portrayed by the content. The last aspect concerned the influence of the media on society and vice versa as well as media structures and ownership systems.

It was agreed that the "formal" elements should be taught on their own while the "contents" and "social" element could be integrated with such subjects as civics, religion, languages and life skills. There was also a possible element of integration for the formal elements, e.g. during art or language classes.

YEARS TO BE TAUGHT IN

For a practical and pedagogical reason, it was agreed that the subject would at first be introduced in Grades 4, 5 and 6 - the higher classes of the primary schools. Several secondary schools have a pre-secondary level consisting of Grades 5 and 6 generally called Prep I and II. This decision meant that media education was being introduced in both the primary and secondary schools at the same time. From there it was thought that it would be easier for the subject to "filter" down the lower grades and move up to higher forms as the children are promoted to the same forms.

This option has also a pedagogical foundation. It was decided to highlight the formal aspects in the primary school years and in the first three years of the secondary school. This decision could be considered as paradoxical. Integration was easier to achieve in the primary level since only one teacher was responsible for all tuition. In the secondary years different teachers were teaching different subjects. This meant that integration on this level implied coordination between more people and the training of more teachers. But we concluded that there were more advantages. The main one was that it was important for the children to be introduced to the formal aspects from a very young age. This would make the children more familiar with the language of each medium.The "content" and "values" of programmes could be judged in the light of a medium's language. The "contents" and "social" aspects would be introduced to a very limited extent in the lower grades and would be emphasised more and more in higher grades or forms.

HELP NEEDED

It was also decided that for Grades 4, 5 and 6 workbooks were more adequate than textbooks. These workbooks were to contain enough exercises and material on different media to help the teacher throughout the year. The teacher should also be provided with a handbook.

The heads also agreed to set up a Media Education Library at a central place. The offices of the SSC were chosen and the schools contributed financially towards the setting up of this library.

5. TEACHERS

After these decisions were taken with the heads of schools the SSC called a meeting for the media teachers. The reactions of the teachers varied from one of enthusiasm to one of fear. Several confessed ignorance of the subject, lack of training and material.

After these reactions were vented, a number of teachers who had taught media education gave their experience. These teachers explained how together with SSC a plan of action was adopted so that the difficulties they had foreseen before starting teaching media could be overcome and unexpected difficulties tackled.

It was agreed that a similar plan of action be adopted. This plan had to cater for training; and continuous support.

A training course was planned to take place between September and December. The days on which to meet, times and content of the course were agreed upon by the 90 teachers who were involved in teaching the subject and who participated in the course. This consisted of ten two-hour sessions. There were lectures and audio-visual presentations explaining aspects of the different media featuring in the children's workbooks. The exercises found in the same workbooks were explained and sometimes worked out by the teachers themselves. Very useful throughout the course were the constant discussions about the progress of the programme. The teachers had the opportunity to bring forward difficulties they were encountering and listen to how other teachers were coping with similar difficulties. Several teachers also brought charts which they or the children had produced.

At the end of the course it was decided to hold periodic meetings for teachers according to grades. It was also agreed to hold another more intensive course to a smaller number of teachers. The aim was to have a "more" qualified teacher in each school who could help the other teachers. This course was held as planned between January and March. One of its results was the formation of a core group of three teachers who agreed to work with me on the revision of the children's workbooks.

6. Parents

The heads and also the teachers were preoccupied with what the reaction of the parents was going to be. This preoccupation was strongest in those schools which prepare children for a competitive entrance exam into a secondary school. It was feared that parents in general and the parents of these children in particular would look upon media education as a waste of time. To try and obviate this difficulty it was agreed that the schools would organize meetings for parents during which parents would be able to discuss their difficulties with members of the SSC and the media teachers. Several such meetings were held with very positive results. The vast majority of the parents reacted very positively to the programme.

We proposed to the teachers to use some of the parents as resource persons. From among parents the teachers found journalists, musicians, camera persons, t.v. producers, printers etc. They gave talks, made demonstrations and helped in practical projects. This, besides enhancing the programme increased the support from parents.

7. Students

The aim of the media education programme is to help students to be intelligent masters of the media and so be able to cope better with the environment they live in. Our evaluation of the programme showed that the students appreciated this, so much so that their reaction was very positive and encouraging. At first this perhaps was because watching t.v. or writing about their favourite actor or "comic" hero is the kind of homework that no child would object to, but as time went by the students realized more and more that the exercises they were being asked to do during the media classes were not mere games.

Teachers commented that media education soon became one of the favourite subjects of their students. Even students who were not considered to be bright students and were generally not very co-operative participated fully in the programme. "Media education brings out the most creative elements of the children", commented one teacher. This creativity was witnessed in the vast number of projects that many children compiled. One class produced a tape slide presentation. They wrote the script, took the photos, acted the story, recorded it etc. The audio visual was presented to the parents and was received very well. Another class did a model of an outside broadcasting unit "transmitting" a football match. After an EgyptAir plane was hijacked in Malta another class collected newspaper reports and pointed out differences in the reportage of the story. Others collected pictures and photos showing signs and symbols for the section on non-verbal communication. Still another group went round different schools involved in the project, interviewed teachers and students, took photos and made a report on how media education was developing in the schools. A selection of these and other projects were exhibited in an exhibition held in May 1986 at one of the schools.

Teachers commented that the children, after following the course, could distinguish more clearly the difference between reality and fantasy, news and comments. They recognize stereotypes and understand the use of different shots and editing in t.v. as well as headlines and photos in newspapers. It seems that the subject opened a new world for the children. For the first time they were not simply being told "don't read this" or "don't see that". Instead they were being helped to demystify the media, understand them better, let them influence less and become more mature media users or partners.

8. Workbooks and Handbook

The June 1985 seminar held for heads agreed that workbooks should be produced for the children and a handbook for the teachers. The SSC through its MEDIA EDUCATION GROUP promised to produce these WORKBOOKS, one for each grade, for use in October 1985. This was a very tough commitment considering that none of the group was working full time on the project. The Group consisted of two teachers, three heads of schools (two of them were also teaching media) and myself. The books were produced with the understanding that after one year they would be evaluated and where necessary re-written.

The Grade 4 Workbook had sections on signs and body language; comics; television and radio. The Grade 5 book also featured a small unit about newspapers besides the topics taught in Grade 4. The Workbook for Grade 6 did not include a section about signs and body language but included more material about comics, t.v. radio and newspapers.

The Workbooks were evaluated by means of a detailed questionnaire sent to teachers of media education as well as by means of discussions with some of the teachers. The results of the evaluation showed that:

1. Comics were not as popular as we thought them to be. There were many schools where children hardly bought any comics;
2. The section on newspapers was too difficult for the children in Grades 5 and 6. Many teachers were also afraid that

discussion on newspapers in class could lead to quarrels among children and "mis-understandings" from parents. Teachers expressed their fear after considering the political bias of most Maltese newspapers and the state of political polarization the country is in. This fear made some discard the section and others treat only little parts of it.

3. The section on t.v. proved to be very popular though some material was found to be difficult for children.
4. There were no problems with the section on signs and body language.
5. The section on radio was described as very short and the reaction to it was that it should remain so.
6. The teachers agreed that workbooks were better than textbooks but several expressed the idea that information about different media should be included in the same workbooks.

The core group mentioned above worked on the revision of the workbooks in the light of the evaluation made by the teachers.

It was decided that there would not be a section called comics. This was replaced by a section called "picture stories". In this way the exercises given can be done using comics, picture books (e.g. classics or lives of famous people or historical events in cartoon/picture form) or even t.v. cartoons. This section helps the children understand the basic elements of picture language, learn how it is used and how to use it, and also discuss their "picture story" heroes and their values. Several of the picture stories in this section were modified to correct a bias in favour of the boys. Now both sexes are better represented. A general introduction on communication in general and the mass media in particular was added to the workbook of Grade 4. The section on newspapers was changed and references to the local situation were kept to the minimum possible. Some of the new exercises make use of a children's newspaper. The Grade 6 Workbook though has a direct reference to all Maltese dailies and weeklies. The section on television was changed where necessary e.g. sections from Grade 5 were "upgraded" to Grade 6; more pictures and graphics were introduced and the local element became more evident. This section still remained the largest single section in each workbook. Every section of each workbook now has an introductory page consisting of information about the medium under discussion, an illustration and the objectives of that unit.

The Workbook for every grade was sent to several teachers, some teaching boys, some teaching girls and some teaching a mixed class. The final edition reflects the comments of these teachers.

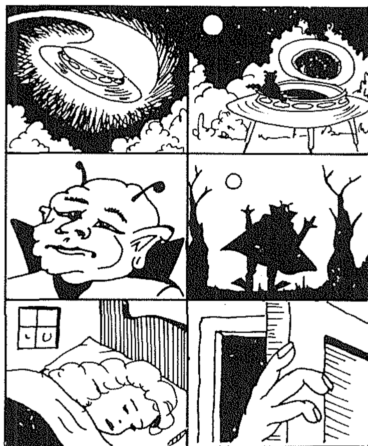
MEDIA WORKBOOK
GRADE SIX

TELEVISION

MAN FROM OUTER SPACE STORY

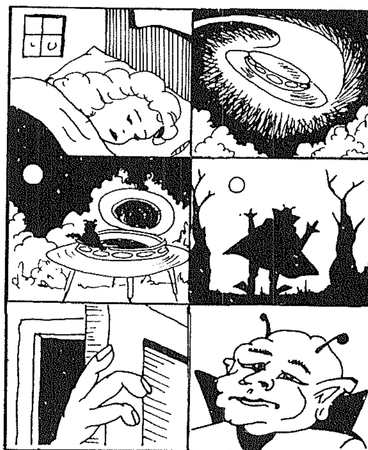
An editor can juggle camera shots and tell a story in one of several ways. This is called editing. Look at these two versions of the MAN FROM OUTER SPACE STORY. Which is the most dramatic and why?

VERSION A



Why do you think it is more dramatic?

VERSION B



Describe some of the shots and camera angles.

TEACHERS HANDBOOK.

The SSC also published a MEDIA TEACHER'S HANDBOOK FOR GRADES 4, 5, AND 6 to accompany the workbooks. The Handbook gives the teachers directives and directions of how to use the workbooks in a better way. It gives supplementary material and background information. It was decided to include the material for all three grades in one Handbook. This helps the teachers have a better overview of how the subject is covered during those three years.

Areas for Future Developments

Presently the SSC is working on two projects vis-a-vis the parents. In the near future short media courses will be organized for parents whose children are studying media education. These courses were asked for during meetings that SSC officials had with parents last year. The SSC is also studying the possibility of publishing a booklet for parents. The aim is that the booklet will be the parents' "companion" to the children's media workbooks. The parents will be given background information to be able to help their children. Games and exercises that the family can do together will also be proposed.

Form 1 of the secondary level is one other area of work in the future. Since October 1986, 13 Church schools are teaching media education in this form. The MEDIA EDUCATION GROUP of the SSC has produced notes and handouts for the teachers and planned a six session introductory course. This will highlight newspapers, advertising and television. It is planned that a core group of media teachers will be chosen from those attending the course. Their task will be to evaluate the teaching of media done in the year 1986/87 and produce a text book for Form 1 by October 1987.

The Media Education Library is a resource that the SSC plans to develop further during the year. At present the library has a number of books and tape slide presentations. More locally produced tape slide presentations are planned for 1987.

The SSC has up to now been experimenting and working with Church schools. Now that the project has, at least in some areas, passed the phase of experimentation the SSC will be offering its experience and service to the government's Education Department. The introduction of this subject in government schools will make media education accessible to all Maltese children.

Maltese Educational Broadcasting:

Education through the Media and the Media in Education

Charles Xuereb

Broadcasting

Educational broadcasting has formed part of the broadcasting scene in Malta since 1948. Over the years it has passed, as far as responsibility is concerned, from the hands of one to another, including the Department of Information, the Malta Broadcasting Authority, Xandir Malta (Malta's state broadcasting system), and, as it is at present, the Department of Education, which falls under the Ministry of Education and the Environment.

Educational productions (on radio only until the establishing of a local television station in the early sixties) have been handled mostly by a small staff of producer-teachers who, having the academic qualifications and training of teachers plus the experience and/or training of broadcasters, are in the best position to tailor their programmes for a specific audience, i.e. students, many times in a class-situation. This staff has been organized into a small section which, after years of giving useful service, changed its name and orientation from Schools Broadcasting Unit to Media Education Centre. This recent development has taken into account the new interdisciplinary subject of Media Studies, a branch very closely connected to broadcasting. This subject is being disseminated in state educational institutions through efforts of the newly reorganized Centre. The present Centre is also catering for general education through the media, that is, not only narrowcasting for schools but also broadcasting

for the general public on both radio and television outside school hours. Current examples of this are programmes on the media and the classics on television, transmitted weekly between 6 and 7 p.m., and a programme about the environment on radio scheduled, also weekly, at 5.15 p.m. Both programmes are aimed at a general audience, with young people in their early and late teens particularly in mind. On more than one occasion the section in charge of broadcasting has also collaborated with the University of Malta and other educational institutions to produce programmes meant for a specific audience. The subjects covered included the modern sciences and literature.

All primary level radio programmes are accompanied by a colourful publication, with texts of poems or songs and relevant illustrations. A Guide for Teachers is given free to all class teachers. "Il-Merżuq", the pupils'magazine, is read by over 20,000 children in both state and private schools.

In countries which I have visited, Educational Broadcasting seems to take various forms and reaches its audiences through different channels. Sudwestfunk in Germany, for example, produces a large amount of school broadcasts in consultation with the education authorities of the region and in direct collaboration with experts. Our Centre is not technically equipped to produce television and radio programmes since, traditionally, the Centre has almost always made use of facilities offered by the broadcasting contractor, in our present case, Xandir Malta. Facilities include filming, editing, recording and transmission. Obviously these arrangements, though made with the best of intentions, do impose certain limitations. Any outside producer to any broadcasting station knows very well the amount of effort one has to put in so as to fit into a rigid timetable as regards the use of video equipment, transport and studio availability. All contacts with participants also have to fit into a tight schedule - and such "participants" include the weather!

However, the Media Education Centre still manages to produce not less than sixteen radio series, ranging from English and Maltese to Science and Arts programmes for primary level students. Two weekly television programmes for the general public are also produced. As is the case of the United States and Switzerland, television school broadcasts have not been found as practicable as educational broadcasts outside school hours. Besides the economical dimensions of the problem (like the number of colour T.V. sets required for every class in all schools), programmes will no doubt clash with secondary school subject timetables.

Media Education

What about Media Education itself? Media Education is a relatively new subject and so far, in Malta, it has only been introduced in certain secondary classes and in sixth forms in state schools, and at other levels (primary and secondary) in private schools. At sixth form level, students are following a three month programme of lessons as part of their enrichment course, while all students are free to become members of a Media Club, which provides academic activities. The Centre is also producing a weekly media studies slot on television, and this has proved very popular.

The Education Department, through its contacts with the Council of Europe and several other national institutes in Europe, is busy preparing a series of seminars (with guest foreign lecturers) for teachers. In the meantime a curriculum for primary level is being drawn with the help of foreign experts and text books will soon be available. It is hoped that the subject will be taught at primary level, as interdisciplinary and "en direct" for 15 minutes weekly.

In the past few years the Education Department and Ministry have embarked on a series of projects to open Resource and Documentation Centres for use by state and private schools. Some of these, including one for the French language, another for German and another which should soon be opening for the teaching of Arabic, have premises at the New Lyceum, Msida. These centres are offering reference facilities to students and teachers and are, at the same time, coordinating the teaching of the subject within the Department. The Media Education Centre is another link in this chain. The Media Education Centre is rapidly preparing a library of documents and video tapes to reach its fast growing number of users. A number of state and private schools are already equipped with video machines and the service is becoming quite popular. It is envisaged that the library will shortly be able to offer a series of about 30 slots on Media Education itself for later use in schools.

Educational Broadcasting in West Germany

Francis Cachia

Production Principles

The producers of educational broadcasts in West Germany[1] do not expect their productions to be the only ones used in the class-room situation. Nor do they produce only for class-rooms or lecture-halls. Some of their productions are for children of the pre-school going age, and others are intended to interest people who are long past their schooling days. In other words, educational broadcasting is conceived of as including the home as well as the school. Moreover, it is directed at recipients of all ages who are interested in increasing their knowledge and enriching their culture.

Not only the recipients, but also the particular qualities of the different individual media are carefully taken into account in the planning stage. The first consideration is to decide which subject fits which medium best. It is not surprising that *music*, for instance, should play a prominent part in radio broadcasting and that such subjects as *biology* and *computer technology* should feature prominently on television.

Familiarity with the Media

The best way to learn a language is to speak it yourself. The best way to learn the techniques of writing is to take up the pen yourself. The producers of educational broadcasts realize full well that the more recipients know about how the media work, the more effective the communication between boadcasters and their listeners or viewers will be. Not surprisingly then, 'Schulfunk' producers feel that the best way to ensure that their productions achieve their educational goals, is to involve as much as possible the people for whose use they are intended in the production process itself. In practice this means involving teachers and pupils.

Involving Teachers

Here, if I may, I will refer to my own personal experience to show how careful the Head of the Production Team, Dr. Heide-Rose Verderber, is to seek the views of teachers and profit from their practice in the class-room when it comes to planning the broadcasts. This is the procedure followed. The idea of the programme itself, its contents and its structure are thoroughly discussed. An article is then written for the W.D.R. 'Schulfunk' Publication (in my case, the booklet 'English for Seniors'), where advice is given to teachers about the most effective ways of employing the particular broadcast in class. I then go ahead and use the broadcast in my lessons to see how my own preformed theories work out in practice. Later on, after the programme has gone on the air and everybody interested has had the chance to use it in the class-room situation, a meeting of teachers is held in which one can compare notes and exchange ideas. The results of these consultations are taken into account if and when the time comes for putting the broadcast on the air once more.

Several of the series of broadcasts for 5th and 6th Formers of Grammar Schools *(Gymnasien)* which I helped to produce, such as short plays by Harold Pinter or Eugene O'Neill, BBC productions of short stories and American political speeches have been repeated on the air after an interval of three or four years. Each time, I was asked to take another look at my article in 'English for Seniors'to see if it could be improved on the score of the experience gained and gathered in the meantime. No automatic reprint of the article concerned therefore appears in the apposite issue of 'English for Seniors'. On the contrary, whenever this is considered advisable, a revised or an entirely new article is published before the programme is rebroadcast.

Media as a Subject

While on the subject of the 'Schulfunk' publication for teachers, it is well to note that a special edition for this year 1986/87 deals with precisely: "How to deal with the Media." It should be noted at this point that on the national level, the study of the media is not considered a separate subject in the curricula. This is the result of a decision made by the Federal Minister of Education in Bonn after much discussion and consultation throughout the Federal Republic. Media education rather than being considered as a subject on its own is expected to find an appropriate place in a number of different disciplines, e.g. sociology, languages, etc. Such an attitude should in no way be taken to mean that media education is not in fact taken seriously enough by German educators. At least as far as 'Schulfunk' is concerned, this is clearly not the case.

The fifty-six page 'Schulfunk' booklet entitled, *"Vom Umgang Mit Medien"* ("Dealing with Media"), has very wide ranging contents, as one can gather from the rough translation of the titles of the articles which follows:

1. From Records to Videoclips
2. How Radio began
3. Nazi Manipulation of Radio
4. Development of Broadcasting in Post-War Germany
5. The Future of Radio
6. The Most Successful Local Radio Station in Switzerland
7. Commercials on Television
8. The 'Sky Channel' Television Network
9. How about a 'Stock Exchange for News' in Bonn?

Students as Producers

The W.D.R. television branch of educational broadcasting has not neglected the media either. As it happens, in fact, they have a special section for 'Media Education'. The TV producers too, then, are active in promoting a keen understanding of the media and their functions in society and culture.

Television 'Schulfunk' has brought out a series called "Brave New World of the Media". The title is ironical, so that it is clear that no uncritical exultation of the media as such and of their products was attempted or intended. On the contrary, as the producers themselves pointed out to me, their purpose was 'to shock and to provoke' by overstressing the negative aspects and emphasising the cautions. They hoped that the viewers' reactions to the shock would be to realize deeply how necessary it is to discriminate carefully betwen trash and worthwile productions. These are the ones which utilize skilfully the potentials of the media to promote genuine cultural values.

To balance off the critical appraisal of productions - especially commercial ones of the well-known American style and variety — 'Schulfunk' TV gives practical advice and help in encouraging schoolchildren to try their own hand at producing their own TV-programmes. A leaflet has been sent to all Grammar Schools promising support, technical advice and the lending of necessary equipment. As I myself am giving a course on 'Television' to Sixth Formers, I was informed that a studio, a camera and even editing and cutting equipment would be made available to my students. This generous attitude is fully in tune with the recent trend in media evaluation and research. Sociologists in the field now insist it is the production process itself that should be thoroughly investigated. Previously, research was concentrated simply on the effects of the media, which are so hard to assess accurately anyhow. Having experienced at first hand all that goes into the making of television programmes, the students will be better able to reap the greatest advantage from what is offered them day by day on the screen of their TV-set.

Questions and Answers

Contact with pupils and students does not end with putting the programmes on the air for them. There are questionnaires to be filled and exercises to be sent in by pupils who wish to take full advantage of the educational broadcast. In the case of students following the 'Telekolleg' (corresponding roughly in method to the Open University) with the intention of gaining a certificate at the end, clear proof is required that they have been following the broadcasts assiduously and written answers to the set questions are expected from them. Before they are awarded the certificate or diploma they are naturally required to sit for the apposite examinations.

On the Radio Waves

In order that teachers may have ample time to plan their lessons, they are informed of the programmes to be broadcast as early as possible. On request, they are sent 'gratis' by post all the accompanying material. About 5,000 copies of the booklets for teachers already referred to are sent out by W.D.R. each half-year.

The radio programmes offered in the 1st semester 1986/87 cover the following areas:

Primary Schools:

German:	Handling the language
Music	We sing Music for Primary Schools Producing music
Learning for Life:	Talking about peace Daily living Rheinland and Westfalia

Secondary and Grammar Schools

German:	Sharing responsibility Narratory Stories from Latin America Literature German for young Turks
English	English for Beginners English for Juniors English for Seniors Your Friday Song English Anyway
French:	Aimez-vous la chanson? Parlons francais Branchez-vous!
Geography:	Rhineland and Westfalia Landscapes of the Earth Weather Reports Homeland and the World
History:	The way things were History The Living Past
Media Education:	Dealing with Media
Music:	We Sing Producing Music Music Entertaining Music Music from different countries Great Composers Contemporary Music Pupils play Music Concert for Schools
Science:	Nature and Technology
Philosophy:	Thinking hard
Religion:	Religion
Sociology/Politics:	Learning about Peace Responsibility Political Training Economics The Working Man It happened this Week
Kaleidoscope:	Varia
Languages:	English German for young Turks French
Funkkolleg (Radio-college)	Psychobiology The behaviour of human beings and animals.

'Schulfunk' programmes are actually integrated with the daily fare offered by the three W.D.R. Radio Channels. It works out in practice that fifty-five different Radio programmes are broadcast twice on Channel 1 and once on Channel 3. Each 'Schulfunk' programme goes three times on the air for the convenience of teachers and pupils alike. On Channel 1, the time from 9.05 to 10.00 is devoted to 'Schulfunk', and on Channel 3 the time from 11.05 to 16.00.

On the Television Screen

In all areas of the Federal Republic of Germany, there are three television channels, the First (ARD), the Second (ZDF), and the Third. The Third Channel is local and much time on it is devoted to education and culture. The WDR which runs the 3rd Channel in Northrhein Westfalia devotes all the time from 8.10a.m. to noon and from 5.00p.m. to 6.30p.m. to educational broadcasting on week-days,and on Saturdays, from 9.00a.m. to noon and from 4.30p.m. to 6.30p.m.

More Feedback Sought

Wide-ranging and varied as the educational broadcasts in Germany are, both on Radio and Television, they do not by any means exhaust all the potentials that the media can offer for use in the class-room. It goes without saying, for instance, that Radio or Television plays based on classical works are educational in their own right and are well-suited for class-room use by teachers with an imaginative approach. Videorecorders and tape-recorders give broadcasts a flexibility and an independence from the time factor that make effective use all that much easier.

A thorough-going widely based research into all the ways the media can help teaching would be very welcome both to the teachers at school and to the producers in the studios, and ultimately to people everywhere who still wish to increase their cultural wealth.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the individual schools and the individual teachers enjoy much freedom of action, both as regards the syllabus and pedagogical methods. It is probably because they are afraid of possible interference by people whose criteria for judging successful teaching has not advanced beyond the 'chalk and talk' stage that they are little forthcoming with precise details about how exactly they employ the media in class. Be that as it may, the producers of 'Schulfunk' have put it to me that they would welcome more feedback from teachers and pupils alike. This would help them to make educational broadcasting still more effective.

Note 1: When I talk about West Germany, I have in mind in particular the State of Northrhein Westfalia, where I live, and its own broadcasting network, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (W.D.R.) In the Federal Republic, there is an overall Minister of Education, whose task it is to co-ordinate policies throughout the country. Each 'Land' otherwise runs its own educational establishments and each regional parliament has its own 'Kulturminister' answerable to his own local Prime Minister and Parliament. Therefore, whatever I say about the situation in Northrhein Westfalia and about the W.D.R. does not necessarily apply throughout the Federal Republic. I wish to thank the Head of W.D.R. Educational Radio, Dr. Heide-Rose Verderber and Dr. Lothar Humburg, the Head of Educational TV at W.D.R., both of whom I consulted before writing this article and who furnished invaluable advice and information.

I Programmi RAI del Dipartimento Scuola Educazione: *Valutazioni e Prospettive*

Rosetta Finazzi Sartor and Alberto Agosti.

Abstract

The DSE (Dipartimento Scuola Educazione) was set up on the 14th April 1975 with the objective of making the best possible use of educational and school broadcasting in Italy. It produces radio and television programmes for different age groups and in line with the educational needs of contemporary society. In particular, the DSE aims at:

a. *updating teaching and learning methods within the school framework;*
b. *training and upgrading various professionals;*
c. *broadcasting educational programmes which reflect the political, economic and cultural concerns of the past and the present.*

In following these aims, the DSE is responding to a public demand for programmes which provide a social service. Constant attention is paid to technological and scientific innovations, to research on communication patterns, and to the study of child and adolescent development. The DSE is also concerned with bridging the gap between school learning and the workplace, and with seeing education as an ongoing lifelong process.

I programmi a carattere educativo della radio televisione italiana sono stati oggetto di particolare cura dal punto di vista delle implicazioni didattiche. Essi si caratterizzano in un quadro di proposte volte a valorizzare la cultura *dell'*immagine e *per* mezzo dell'immagine, secondo una serie di tematiche che tendono a tralasciare gli aspetti ludici del linguaggio iconico, per puntare all'informazione scientifica mediante vari ambiti di intervento. Se inseriti in un contesto scolastico, sopratutto quando si favoriscano nei giovani le *chiavi* di lettura per sviluppare processi di interpretazione critica, possono promuovere, sia pure indirettamente, l'innovazione dei processi educativi.

La notevole varietà dei programmi e i percorsi di lavoro indicati tendono a conferire alla comunicazione televisiva la possibilità di tradursi in esperienze culturali valide. Per ragazzi ed adulti l'immagine in quanto portatrice di significati aumenta la fonte delle conoscenze soprattutto se offerta con scelta preventiva di programmi da visionare ed inserita nell'ambito di un percorso didattico preordinato.

La finalità del Dipartimento scuola educazione è quella di fornire lo strumento televisivo (col relativo materiale di programmi disponibili) come mezzo di notevole potenzialità educativa.

Infatti il Dipartimento radiotelevisivo delle trasmissioni scolastiche ed educative per adulti (DSE) è stato istituito con la legge di riforma della RAI del 14/4/'75 "al fine di valorizzare le attività scolastiche ed educative del mezzo radiotelvisivo".

Il DSE si articola in quattro strutture di programmazione in relazione con le diverse fasce d'età del pubblico al quale sono destinate le proposte trasmesse via radio e via televisione.

La fascia degli adulti (oltre i 18 anni) si caratterizza per una notevole presenza di programmi sia di aggiornamento culturale e professionale, sia di integrazione della preparazione già acquisita, con una attenzione particolare alle aree di nuova professionalità.

L'area dei giovani (14-17 anni) si distingue per l'offerta di programmi incentrati sui problemi scolastici e di orientamento e formazione professionali.

La fascia dell'obbligo (6-14 anni) comprende proposte indirizzate sia agli studenti (la maggior parte è a carattere didattico), sia agli adulti che sono in rapporto diretto con gli studenti stessi: insegnanti, genitori e operatori scolastici.

L'area dell'infanzia si differenzia invece per la produzione e la trasmissione di programmi per giovanissimi (fino ai sei anni) che tendono però nello stesso tempo a fornire informazioni ed indicazioni agli adulti (genitori ed educatori) sul modo di educarli.

In una recente intervista Luciano Rispoli, direttore del Dipartimento, ha definito il DSE "quarta rete televisiva". In realtà esso non possiede un suo canale come le altre reti ma, utilizzando queste ultime, effettua le sue trasmissioni distribuendole orizzontalmente secondo uno schema orario settimanale che presenta notevole regolarità nel ripetersi degli appuntamenti, collocati quasi tutti nella fascia pomeridiana e in quella serale. La trasmissione delle 20.05 su RAI 3, che viene effettuata tutti i giorni escluse le domeniche, è forse quella più seguita, anche se si sovrappone al TG 1, mentre di più difficile "praticabiltà", considerando i ritmi di vita del pubblico medio, risultano essere le trasmissioni proposte in chiusura di serata (oltre le 23 e spesso oltre la mezzanotte).

Il problema della collocazione oraria delle trasmissioni non è certo di facile risoluzione e comunque a tale problema si è in parte risposto con l'istituzione di un servizio vendita dei materiali audiovisivi della RAI che si avvale delle *sedi regionali* quale rete di distribuzione. Tale servizio, iniziato nel 1983, ha comportato la creazione di vere e proprie medioteche (raccolte di nastri fonici e audiovisivi) presso tali sedi, consentendo una circolazione più decentrata delle iniziative del DSE. Per il mondo della scuola in particolare sono disponibili *cataloghi* che permettono agli insegnanti una scelta anticipata e un uso ragionato delle videocassette, non più fruibili solo negli orari stabiliti dai programmi TV, ma utilizzabili in sintonia con i temi previsti dai piani didattici e, quel che interessa forse maggiormente, situabili armoniosamente in relazione ai ritmi di svolgimento di tali piani.

I programmi di aggiornamento educativo e didattico, visti collegialmetne dagli insegnanti, possono costituire ottime basi di discussione, proponendosi quali termini di paragone per valutare le esperienze vissute nella prassi scolastica di tutti i giorni. E' un'ipotesi forse non molto lontana dalla sua possibile realizzazione. Occorrerà che le scuole vengano dotate di un videoregistratore e di un televisore a colori; (recentemente Mauro Laeng ha chiesto al Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione di assegnare tale attrezzatura a tutte le Direzioni Didattiche italiane).

Un discorso analogo può essere fatto in relazione ad altre categorie professionali. Rispoli, nell'intervista sopra segnalata, specifica : "abbiamo prodotto varie serie di aggiornamento professionale dedicate al personale paramedico degli ospedali italiani che hanno ottenuto consensi tangibili nel settore, così come sono andate molto bene sul mercato le video cassette acquistate e inserite nei vari corsi per gli infermieri". Nei primi due anni di commercializzazione il DSE ha venduto 25.000 cassette. Tenuto conto che gli appuntamenti radiotelevisivi sono in anno circa 1200 e che, sempre ogni anno, vengono realizzati dai 500 ai 600 prodotti nuovi, si può ritenere il DSE una delle maggiori agenzie del Paese per la creazione di audiovisivi educativi e di integrazione scolastica. L'emissione radiotelevisiva diventa così un mezzo per valutare le proposte, con la possibilità di acquistare successivamente le cassette.

I programmi si differenziano molto gli uni dagli altri: alcuni sono di carattere generale, altri diretti a gruppi e classi scolastiche, ad associazioni culturali e sociali, altri ancora sono a carattere monografico, altri infine sono impostati su temi specialistici. Si tratta comunque di trasmissioni specifiche che necessitano di fasi di progettazione e di realizzazione apposite, richiedono, per la loro preparazione, procedure molto diverse da quelle solitamente impiegate per le normali trasmissioni televisive; ciò spiega, almeno in parte, il fatto che il DSE tende a porsi sempre più come settore autonomo, esigenza questa determinata anche dalle circostanze (scarsa possibilità da parte del DSE di utilizzare i mezzi di produzione degli altri settori RAI).

La grande eterogeneità delle problematiche affrontate è funzionale sia in rapporto all'esigenza di una cultura allargata alle varie fasce sociali, sia in relazione con l'accresciuta domanda di sapere specifico che caratterizza la società attuale. E' una richiesta determinata anche dalla necessità di una maggior capacità di controllo da parte dell'uomo su una realtà divenuta assai complessa. Il DSE contribuisce, accanto alle altre agenzie educative, a rispondere a questa domanda di sapere sia in termini quantitativi che qualitativi. I programmi sono infatti realizzati con la consulenza di esperti dei vari settori e campi disciplinari.

Ricostruire una "mappa" delle proposte del DSE richiederebbe uno studio approfondito e, per la sua esposizione, uno spazio ben maggiore di quello concesso ad un articolo, tuttavia è opportuno indicare qualcuna delle tematiche e dei contenuti sui quali sono stati impostate le più rilevanti e recenti proposte. Le due rubriche radiofoniche *"La salute dei bambini"* e *"Infanzia come e perchè"* affrontano temi pedagogici, temi legati alla salute della madre e del bambino prima e dopo la nascita, con un'attenzione particolare per ciò che concerne lo sviluppo infantile fisico e mentale, gli interessi e la vita del bambino in seno alla famiglia, alla scuola e alla società. Sempre in rapporto alle prime fasce d'età, sono stati preparati cicli di trasmissioni televisive di educazione sessuale, incontri sulla psicanalisi, sulla psichiatria e sulla psicologia infantile.

Ingente il materiale didattico indirizzato agli scolari e agli studenti dalle scuole materne alle scuole superiori e ai loro educatori ed insegnanti.

Per gli adulti vanno ricordati i corsi di lingue straniere, i colloqui sulla prevenzione delle malattie, i *corsi di aggiornamento* dedicati a svariate categorie professionali (medici, operai specializzati, artigiani, addetti all'agricoltura, addetti alla sanità (personale paramedico), impiegati del terziario, ecc.) e quelli rivolti alll'inserimento e alle condizioni delle donne nel lavoro.

Difficile è tentare di fornire un quadro sintetico e nello stesso tempo esauriente delle proposte educative a carattere più generale, ma, tra queste, vanno senz'altro segnalate quelle intese a promuovere nelle persone un accrescimento della loro sensibilità verso i problemi della tutela dell'ambiente nelle sue poliedriche sfaccettature: patrimonio naturale, artistico, ecc.

Si avverte comunque sempre lo sforzo perchè anche la semplice divulgazione culturale superi il livello da pura informazione. Indicativa la scelta di accompagnare spesso le videocassette e i nastri audio con altro materiale (libri, dischi, ecc.) in modo che la multimedialità dei mezzi di comunicazione aumenti le probabilità di effettiva efficacia presso il pubblico al quale essi sono destinati. A questo proposito va rilevato il ruolo di vero e proprio *servizio* svolto dal DSE, inteso a favorire il raccordo tra scuola e mondo del lavoro, secondo un progetto educativo ad ampio respiro che inizi dai primi anni di vita della persona e la accompagni nella sua crescita culturale e umana anche oltre i confini delle istituzioni scolastiche.

Sono dunque oggi disponibili una serie di programmi, di materiali di sussidio didattico e di informazione scientifica di buon livello che possono permettere una scelta adeguata.

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