

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600



Order Number 9332142

Lost causes: Mass media exposure's empirical meanings in survey research. A critique and introduction to commodity relations. (Volumes I and II)

Nienhaus, Brian Jacob, Ph.D.

The University of Michigan, 1993

Copyright ©1992 by Nienhaus, Brian Jacob. All rights reserved.

U·M·I

**300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106**



LOST CAUSES:
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE'S EMPIRICAL MEANINGS
IN SURVEY RESEARCH.
A CRITIQUE AND INTRODUCTION TO COMMODITY RELATIONS

Volume I

by

Brian Jacob Nienhaus

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Communication)
in The University of Michigan
1993

Doctoral Committee:

Assistant Professor Jimmie Reeves, Chair
Assistant Professor Hayg Oshagan
Professor William Sewell, Jr., The University of Chicago
Professor John Stevens

RULES REGARDING THE USE OF
MICROFILMED DISSERTATIONS

Microfilmed or bound copies of doctoral dissertations submitted to The University of Michigan and made available through University Microfilms International or The University of Michigan are open for inspection, but they are to be used only with due regard for the rights of the author. Extensive copying of the dissertation or publication of material in excess of standard copyright limits, whether or not the dissertation has been copyrighted, must have been approved by the author as well as by the Dean of the Graduate School. Proper credit must be given to the author if any material from the dissertation is used in subsequent written or published work.

© Brian Jacob Nienhaus 1992
All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The general pattern of social and causal thought structuring this work was developed in the many stimulating seminars I attended in the University of Michigan Sociology Department's Center for Research on Social Organization and the Center for the Study of Social Transformations. I can make attributions to social agents only so long before I need to refer to the bodies within, and I would particularly like to thank Professors Jeffrey M. Paige and William Sewell, Jr., along with Akos Rona Tas, for their help in opening up the social to a novice.

Throughout my graduate career my interest has remained centered on mass communication, even as mass communication has become a mostly cognitive affair, and Professor Richard Allen's seminars effectively kept the door open to questions of socially located causes of individual effects. This work is mostly a response to questions about the conceptualization and measurement of mass media exposure that he laid out some years ago. I'm only sorry it took me so long to respond; on the other hand time sometimes works soothing magic when the response potentially disrupts the flow of accepted thought. As the effort drew to a close, Professor Hayg Oshagan fulfilled a similarly important role.

Before designing this mostly empirist study, I had worked roughly the same underlying ideas into an historical account of Father Charles Coughlin. Completion of that work is one of my highest priorities, and it, rather than anything I could say now, would count as my thanks to Professors John Stevens and Jimmie Reeves, the former for opening the doors of historical inquiry, the latter for insights into cultural studies and the general linguistic and textual turn in the social sciences. Most of what they

offered now incubates; Professor Reeves was able to switch research designs in midstream and chair this work's committee. For their patience and flexibility I would like to thank them both along with Professor Sewell, in words, as the deed is now done.

Much of one's learning takes place among one's fellow students. For their years of challenge and stimulation I would like to thank Richard Pietila, David Vest, Ann Harrington, Nancy Kotzian, Young-Eum Lee, David Brimm, and Leah Waks. The ideas no longer float over a chessboard. They're fixed on paper--have at 'em.

Despite all the support I received at Michigan proper, I would not have completed the degree had it not been for the years I shared with the members of Harry's House in the 1980s, the help I received from my parents and brother Tom always, and for the last four years from my wife, Kathleen and her family. I hope the good memories of our time together will push away the frantic moments; Kathleen, I especially hope the credential turns into a job and thence a house with a big extra room where I can store my piles of paper. In the future, we will sit triumphantly together on our uncluttered sofa, almost like normal people. Until then, may we all make our peace with the normal we seek, and may we remember each other in our accommodations and our play.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

LIST OF FIGURES viii

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION 1

The General Problem 3

Addressing the Barrier Problem. 8

 Genesis of the Problem 8

 Why Mass Media Exposure? 14

An Empirical Explication of Mass Media Exposure 26

 Definitions. 26

 Mass Media Exposure 26

 Mass. 27

 Simple and Complex. 28

 The Lifespace 29

 Procedure. 34

Notes to Chapter 1. 39

SECTION I. SIMPLE MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE

Introduction. 44

 Content. 44

Notes to the Introduction to Section I. 52

2. CONTENT ANALYSIS 53

Introduction. 53

The Shaky Foundation: Content 'Itself'. 56

 Information. 59

 Other Operational Definitions. 64

Referential Approaches to Content 66

 Causal Inference with Referents. 72

 The Government. 81

 Affiliated Individuals. 84

 The People. 84

 The Media 86

 Summary: Causal Inference with Referents . 88

Representational Approaches to Content. 90

Notes to Chapter 2. 107

3. STRUCTURALIST APPROACHES TO CONTENT. 111

Cultivation Theory. 113

Summary: Content as an Independent Variable	
Domain.	137
Notes to Chapter 3.	141
4. MESSAGE DISCRIMINATION	143
Introduction.	143
The Early Research Context	146
The Message Discrimination Technique	147
Message Discrimination: The Academic Model.	148
Reconstructing Message Discrimination: Finding the Mass Communicating Agent.	158
Conclusion.	162
Notes to Chapter 4.	170
5. THE MEDIUM	172
The Medium in Audience Research	174
The Medium as a Dimension of Mass Media Exposure.	176
Position (a): Cue-Card Media Typologies.	179
Position (b): The Medium as Shadow of the Social	182
Position (c): The Medium as Retreat to the Sensory.	193
Empirical Problems with Sensory Media Categories.	197
Experimental Research Designs.	197
Television as a Construct.	204
Conclusion.	207
Notes to Chapter 5.	210
6. TIME	212
Introduction.	212
Temporal Externalities and Mass Media Exposure	214
Temporal Attributes of the Individual	225
The Benefits of Individual Time.	227
The Conceptual Costs of Individual Time.	229
Paul Hirsch and Cultivation Theory.	235
The Reanalysis	238
Learning from The Reanalysis	254
Notes to Chapter 6.	259
SECTION II. THE EXPLODING DOMAIN OF COGNITION	
7. COMPLEX EXPOSURE	262
Introduction.	262
Individual Subjectivity: Where Hope Meets Expanding Explication.	266
Complex Exposure from an Empirical Perspective.	270

Visualizing General Empirical Problems	271
Dimensions of Complex Exposure.	276
Cognition.	276
Individual Processes or Individual Agency?	280
Individual Agency.	282
Individual Interaction	294
Promising Conceptual Regions.	298
Attention and Salience	298
Dependency and Orientation	299
Notes to Chapter 7.	301

SECTION III. COMMODITY RELATIONS: THE SOCIAL IN AUDIENCE RESEARCH

8. COMMODITY RELATIONS IN THE LIFESPACE	302
Introduction.	302
Definitions	304
Commodities.	304
Commodity Relations.	306
Commodity Relations: A Tool for Audience Research.	309
Intermediate Considerations	317
Commodity Relations and Content.	318
Commodity Relations and Individual Agency	320
Commodity Relations and Mass Media Exposure .	326
Notes to Chapter 8.	330
9. COMMODITY RELATIONS AND MASS COMMUNICATORS . . .	334
Introduction.	334
Internalization.	335
From The Lifespace to The Social.	335
From The Social Back to The Lifespace .	336
Measurement.	338
What Are Mass Communicators?.	342
Representations.	342
Empirical Referents.	346
What Do Mass Communicators Do?.	348
First-Order Mass Communicators	350
Second-Order Mass Communicators.	360
News.	360
Entertainment	369
Advertising Content	381
Non-Commodified Mass Communicators	394
Notes to Chapter 9	401
10. COMMODITY RELATIONS AND MASS MEDIA EFFECTS . . .	405
Introduction.	405
A Basic Commodity Relations Model	409
The Knowledge Gap in Daily Cyclical Time .	409

An Extended Commodity Relations Model	415
Knowledge Gaps and the Life Cycle.	415
A Full Commodity Relations Model.	430
What Is Knowledge?	430
Commodity Relations and Mass Political Beliefs.	433
Conclusion.	446
Beyond Surveys and Ethnographies: Recapturing a Distribution of Meanings . .	447
Notes to Chapter 10	460
BIBLIOGRAPHY	467

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1.1.	A simple bullet model of the mass communication process.	4
1.2.	Two approaches to explication.	22
I.1.	Approaches to content in audience research	50
2.1.	Content analysis and audience research: The referential domain	68
5.1.	Approaches to the medium in audience research	177
6.1.	Television viewing times from three NORC datasets, with ideal-typical cultivation partitions	241
6.2.	A cultivation differential and an ideal-typical interval outcome distribution	245
7.1.	The domain of complex exposure	271
8.1.	Commodity relations: Empirical indicators and constructs.	315
9.1.	Commodity relations and mass communicators.	344
9.2.	Two models of advertising's function	383
10.1.	A basic commodity relations model.	414
10.2.	An extended commodity relations model.	421
10.3.	A full commodity relations model	434

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study argues that conceptions of mass media exposure in audience research leave mass communicators unobserved, resulting in theoretical confusion and possibly serious underestimation of causal forces in mass media effects models. Chapters 2 through 7 support this claim by reviewing the empirical meanings of mass media exposure has had (see also McQuail, 1969, pp. 52-3 and 64-7; Wright, 1959, p. 77).

The study then introduces a way to observe mass communicators and capture more of their causal force in research models that use audience data. Chapters 2 through 7 indirectly begin this process by noting difficulties and teasing out promising leads, but chapter 8 moves directly to the task by introducing the concept of commodity relations as an alternative to mass media exposure. Since it is a new concept, its operational feasibility for survey research will be stressed first.

Chapter 9 then defines the three types of mass communicating agents using the concept of commodity relations. At that point, at least formally, an exhaustive taxonomy of mass communicating agents will be available for use in survey research.

The kinds of causal force conveyed by these social agents to audiences will be developed by reviewing the relatively sparse literature on audience feedback (Gans, 1977, 1979; Lewis, 1966; Pool & Shulman, 1959; Singer, 1973; Turow, 1984). Media firms operating in different financial environments (defined by the types of commodity relationships engaging them with others) tend to gather qualitatively different kinds of audience feedback which

they act upon in different ways. Chapter 9's key argument will be that in most instances, U.S. mass media firms are neither interested in discovering the symbolic needs of their audiences nor in transferring content to them, so that theories of mass media effect that posit content as the starting point--or an information function as defining the communication process--seriously misapprehend their object (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Blumer, 1959; Gerbner, 1958; McLeod and Reeves, 1980; Reeves & Anderson, 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 1990).

After proposing the feasibility of commodity relations for audience research and suggesting its influence on feedback to mass communicating agencies in chapters 8 and 9, the study returns to the audience in chapter 10 and briefly explores the types of effects¹ these agencies may be observed to have. The knowledge-gap hypothesis will be used to consider the question of effects in general (Donohue, Tichenor and Olien, 1986; Donohue, 1975; Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1970), and Converse's controversial model of mass belief systems (1964; 1970) will bring the discussion of effects into the more specific semantic domain of political cognition. These phenomena are familiar to audience researchers; unfamiliar may be the degree to which mass communicating agents can be implicated as a major causal force in outcomes in which a population is divided into knowledge-rich and knowledge-poor subgroups on the basis of their media behaviors present (as measured by exposure) and past (as measured by media-related dispositions).

In sum, this study is a consideration of mass media *causes*, undertaken through a critical review of the concept of mass media exposure as it is found in the mass media *effects* literature. Its goal is to suggest that notions of causal force have become too disorganized--primarily because mass communicating agency is unobserved--

so that the most likely findings of contemporary inquiries into media effects are those of general weakness within numerous contingencies that follow no discernible pattern (Carey and Kreiling, 1974; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986). Commodity relations is then offered as a means to reassert the existence of mass communicators, theoretically and operationally, for audience research.

Though the discussion remains within the tradition of survey research, its approach to cause is unusual in scope and intensity. The explication of mass media exposure is critical in tone; the taxonomy of commodity relationships is novel in form and intention: to exhaust a domain of causal force within mass media exposure's theoretical domain and wrest even more force from long-standing third-variable domains (education, socio-economic status). For these reasons, thorough theoretical treatment of mass media exposure and commodity relations define the limits of the present work. A future program of empirical research may be anchored in the theoretical lines laid out in the present study.

The General Problem

Figure 1.1 is a simplified bullet model of the mass communication process. Mass media agencies gather or originate, encode and distribute messages; the messages appear on or are emitted from the surfaces of devices, whence they are actively witnessed or actively appropriated by individuals.

Even this brief description surpasses Figure 1.1 in complexity. Mediated contents remain concealed within a thin, unidirectional line. Neither the gathering, originating, or compositional activity of mass media agencies (Breed, 1955a; Cohen & Young, 1973; Ettema & Whitney, 1982, 1987; Glasgow University, 1976; 1980; Tuchman, 1978) nor the activity and passivity of individuals (Biocca, 1988a; Levy & Windahl, 1985) have been represented

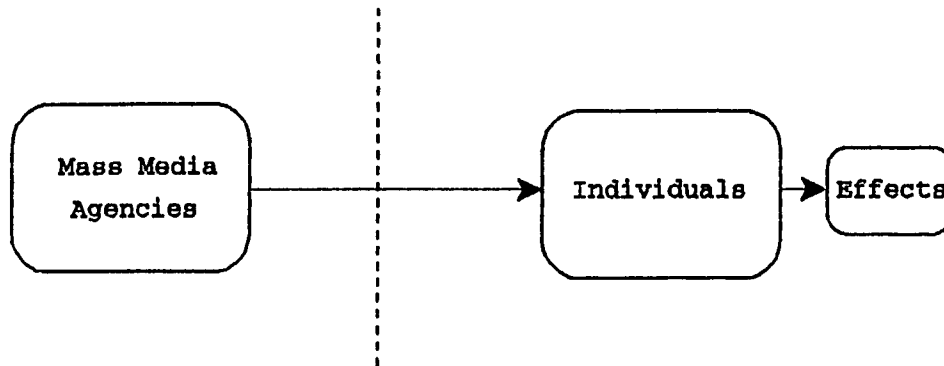


Figure 1.1. A Simple Bullet Model of The Mass Communication Process.

in the Figure, nor is the transactional character of mass communication acknowledged in the Figure's overall form (Bauer, 1964; Graber, 1984; Rogers, 1986). All such embellishments have been left out to call attention to one central problem: the tendency for mass communication research to divide its empirical labors into halves.

To the left of the dashed vertical line in Figure 1.1 one finds the object of media institutional studies. This object may be approached in critical, curious or celebratory ways. A researcher's theory may require further specification of the object as a set of interacting firms, individually occupied professional roles, or industry segments; as an institution in interaction with other social institutions in society, or as an entire national-state media system in interaction with other systems (Adoni & Mane, 1984; Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; Bennett, 1977; Golding & Murdock, 1980; Gurevitch, Bennett, Curran, & Woollacott, 1982). Whatever the scholarly approach, the objects denoted by "mass communicating agents" will tax conceptual and observational power and draw further attention to themselves, forming a self-sufficient domain of inquiry (Nass and Reeves, 1991; Reeves, 1989; Reeves &

Anderson, 1991).

Close study of media institutional data allowed Bagdikian to argue that the U.S. media system was overly concentrated (1983, 1985). Study of the same institutional object by Compaine (1985) resulted in the development of a concept of media "outlets," and through it the argument that the U.S. media system provided a diverse range of contents to its audiences despite concentration in ownership (see also Cantor, 1980; Hirsch, 1985; Tunstall, 1991). This debate carried important implications for and about mass media audiences, but it provided little guidance to audience researchers who might have wished to specify and observe a variable representing concentration or diversity at the individual level of analysis.

At the institutional level, for example, "outlets" might mean the number of daily newspapers available within a standard metropolitan statistical area or the combined number of independent, network-affiliated and cable television firms operating in that area, or both. (And, if outlet numbers made available by newspapers and television seems insufficient, one can add radio stations, magazine firms, producers and distributors of audio and visual recordings, and book publishers or authors.)

At the individual level the notion of outlets might translate to the number of newspapers actually reaching a residence, the number of radio receivers strewn about the house, or even to the number of channels available on one's television set, but then again, something might have been lost in translation. Does an argument about the television industry lose something when, through the term 'television,' it is picked up by a survey researcher to represent an electronic device that sits in the corner of the respondent's living room (Salomon & Cohen, 1978)?

This study offers an emphatic yes to the question--much is lost--, but the answer is not developed through

discussion of the procedural consequences of movement from one level of analysis (the institutional) to another (the individual) (Chaffee, 1987; Eulau, 1986; McLeod & Pan, 1989; Pan & McLeod, 1991; Price, Ritchie, & Eulau, 1991; Reeves, 1989). A more empirically productive answer results when we simply notice that arguments made about media institutions, or about media and politics, or about the media in society, end before their empirical implications for audiences--or for those who observe audiences--are fully developed (see esp. chapter 9).

The area to the right of the vertical line, the principle locus of this study's attentions, represents that part of the mass communication process observed at the individual level in audience uses and effects research. The term "individuals" in Figure 1.1 again greatly underrepresents the cognitive complexity of biological individuals, the variation in their social surroundings, and the conceptual difficulties associated with the fact that what is really at issue in audience research is the distribution of individuals actually reached through acts of mass communication.²

The magnitude and complexity of the object represented by the term "individuals," in turn, may account for why audience researchers feel compelled to focus virtually all their energies on conceptualization and analysis of audience data alone, avoiding excursions into the reality of the mass communication process that exists on the other side of the vertical line (Chaffee, 1991; see also Figure 7.1). Audiences are where effects are found; 'effects research' is another name for audience research, but causes, unfortunately, exist beyond a barrier in another empirical realm.

Despite its simplicity, Figure 1.1 remains a useful representation of the mass communication process for this study's purposes. While it may not adequately depict

the complexities of either media institutions or media audiences, it does emphasize the side-by-side, segregated character of mass communication research. Institutional scholars assume audiences as they observe media institutional structure and occupational activity.³ Audience researchers assume, or rather ignore, institutional structure and activity as they observe individual appropriation of mass media content. To the extent that this pattern holds within the field of communication research, Figure 1.1 becomes interesting despite its simplicity, as it centers on a barrier that seems to inhibit the development of empirically informed syntheses of findings from either side.

More importantly, the barrier makes it impossible to either confirm or disconfirm theories of mass media effect where the causal agent is located to the left of the dividing line, primarily because one cannot state the degree to which one's independent variables represent the domain of relevant causal forces that reside there.

Since the site of observation in audience research is already determined--the distribution of individual households--any correspondingly complete specification of causal force that implies a location outside the household must be accomplished through carefully developed conceptual and observational strategies embodied in survey instruments. However, conceptualization, no matter how carefully undertaken, will lack the discipline of empirical reality if the reality of mass media institutions cannot somehow be accessed. The problem, in essence, is that the empirical agents of causal force are not found where individuals are. Figure 1.1, despite its flaws, captures this problem well.

To give just one example of how causal forces remain unknown in domain and magnitude, and how unevenly they are handled in relation to an effect, consider violent television content as a causal force. Effects studies do not

indicate how representative violent content is from a domain of all mass media content or how television represents the domain of all mass media. Even surrogate measures of exposure to such content, such as time with commercial television or a list of television programs, remain silent on time's domain (Gerbner, 1976; Hirsch, 1981; Slater & Elliot, 1982; chapter 6).

Domain uncertainty does not extend to the effects of violence, however. Whether the effect is cognitive, affective or behavioral, one encounters a variable that will pretend to exhaust a range of outcomes: one is either alienated or not, or falls gradationally between; one either behaves violently or not, or more or less so in relation to other individuals. There is always a place to put an observed individual outcome; the researcher is always able to make statements about outcomes for the distribution of individuals. As for causes, notions of content, medium, time, and cognitive action are pulled--perhaps out of habit or convenience--out of domains of unknown scope, producing mixed and incommensurable findings across empirical studies, even studies employing concepts of the same name undertaken within the same theoretical framework.

To say roughly the same thing more simply, the study notes that the object represented by Figure 1.1 is the mass communication process that audience researchers only partially observe. Their observations are cut off by a barrier roughly denoted by Figure's vertical line. That barrier constitutes the fundamental problem for this study.

Addressing the Barrier Problem

Genesis of the Problem

The division of scholarly labor among media institutional and audience studies is accepted as normal. It would be misleading to suggest that the barrier problem arose from direct reading and critique of the empirical literature. It did not. The problem is only barely

discernible in contemporary epistemological discussions that seek to recover basic knowledge or first principles (Chaffee, 1987, 1991; McLeod & Pan, 1989; Nass & Reeves, 1991; Pan & McLeod, 1991; Price, Ritchie & Eulau, 1991; Reeves, 1989) and would not likely emerge inductively from a reading of that material. To even perceive a problem like this one's motive will likely come from elsewhere.

To explain how the barrier problem actually arose--and how the concept of mass media exposure was selected as the means to address it--I must refer to what amount to accidents of personal history in lieu of a vibrant literature. Though the substantive issues raised in this account will play little role in the review of mass media exposure, they will directly influence the definition of mass communicating agents in chapter 9 and related effects in chapter 10.

As indicated above, the central problem of this study is the division of communication research into institutional and audience realms. What would evolve into this problem started out as a belief, held during my lay years, that the U.S. mass media failed to give the people what they wanted.

I brought this unadorned belief into my graduate work in communication, and it led me to the literature on normative press theory (Commission, 1947; Schwarzlose, 1989; Seldes, 1940; Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956).⁴ Having staked out a claim that the mass media performed poorly, I used this literature not only to find out why, but also to find appropriate scholarly words through which to express the claim.

I soon discovered that my initial position was associated with a populist element that was often reflected in the writing of libertarian press theorists (Compaine, 1981, 1985; Owen, 1976; Pool, 1976; Siebert, et al. 1956). Libertarian press theory seemed to believe that reason

resided in the people (Cirino, 1971; Fiske, 1986) and that the media system that worked best was the one that served the people most directly. I shared these assumptions.

However, libertarian theorists often suggested that the mechanism ensuring such service was the marketplace and further, that problems with the U.S. media system were likely a result of government interference with marketplace mechanisms. Maybe I had got things turned round in my lay years, but this faith in the marketplace did not square with my experience. Having lived in a country with a media system highly constrained by government direction (Spain under Franco), it never occurred to me that the U.S. system was particularly fettered by government controls. I actually thought that marketplace mechanisms were somehow implicated in the disservice I had observed.

Of course, any questioning of the adequacy of marketplace mechanisms will lead one to theories of the press's social responsibility (Commission, 1947; Gans, 1979; Herman & Chomsky, 1989; Lemert, 1989; Siebert et al., 1956). Social responsibility theories acknowledge the complexity of modern social institutions in structuring daily life and further assert that it is the responsibility of professional communication personnel to monitor this complex environment closely and create information products that adequately inform people about it. A key tenet of social responsibility theory is that the media should give people not what they might *want* but what they actually *need* in order to more fully understand and act within the complex social environment. Again, I found much that was acceptable in this normative position, but I also found an assumption with which I could not agree.

Left to their own inclinations, what might people want from the mass media? Social responsibility theorists could answer by referring to the popular media--commercial television, the tabloid press, mass circulation magazines

(e.g., Postman, 1985; Rosenberg & White, 1957)--and suggest that their contents reflected popular desire. If the content of these media were found wanting, it was because the media would pander to the interests of the lowest common denominator. This was the marketplace at work. People were submitted to stories of the latest indiscretions of politicians (rather than to talking-head round-table discussions of the fiscal crisis of the state) because that's what they wanted. People also wanted to see microphones thrust in the faces of those who had lost loved ones or homes. How did social responsibility theorists know this was so? Because these were the contents that survived the competitive struggle and continued to appear on the surfaces of newsprint and television screens. Social responsibility theory assumed a working marketplace of ideas in these instances and in doing so assumed something more: that reason might not reside in the people.

While contemporary challenges to the elitist tone of social responsibility theory attack the assumption of popular ignorance (Cantor & Cantor, 1986; Cirino, 1971; Hoggart, 1970; Rucinski, 1989; Fiske, 1986, 1991), the notion that these popular media contents are indeed responses to popular desire has not come under similar scrutiny. The present wave of populist literature sheds little light on how media agents would even come to know the desires of the people, let alone serve those desires (an exception here, though not populist in orientation, is Radway, 1984).

My conclusions from my initial reading of the normative press literature were two. One, I realized that mine was neither a libertarian nor a social responsibility position, as I accepted neither the adequacy of the marketplace nor the idiocy of the people. Two, I felt that I would benefit substantially from a better understanding of just what idea markets were. My original, unadorned belief

in poor media performance had become a more straightforwardly empirical question regarding the structure and function of idea markets.

I turned next to the institutional literature that relied on solid empirical data to construct its arguments--to Bagdikian, Schiller, Compaine, Owen, Turow, Gans, Tuchman, Schudson, Ewen, Tunstall and others--and there I encountered the phenomenon outlined in the introduction: the tendency for institutional studies to end at the moment of distribution of media content. With the exception of Turow (1977)--an exception that will be explored in chapter 9--institutional media studies did not move far enough in the direction of audiences to give insight into the problems I had encountered in normative theory. Content was being distributed, but under what conditions? Was this content what the people wanted? Many scholars implied that this was so and alternatively celebrated or condemned the flow of output based on their normative views concerning the market system and popular reason.

A marketplace, like a marriage, is a term denoting a relationship between two parties. The institutional literature was empirically solid with respect to content-producing parties but consumers remained an mystery. A full marketplace relationship was not observed in this literature; not only was it inadequate to the original task of learning about how idea markets actually worked but it shared the same assumptions about markets that informed normative theory. The media institutional literature was empirical, but it was not empirical enough.

At this point I was not certain just what I was after. Just what was an idea market? What, indeed, was a market (Reddy, 1986)? I continued to believe that better understanding of the empirical character of idea markets was essential to the improvement of normative theory, but I was at a loss to see how such an understanding could be achieved

if not through the institutional literature. One thing was certain: Media institutional studies did not encompass the activities of individual people who were not members of media firms.

One other thing was happening: My graduate courses were by now leading me in the direction of audience uses and effects research where, as Chaffee notes, people (the "individual") are the primary focus (1991).

Audience research is not about idea markets or about the relationship between producers and consumers but about ostensible acts of consumption of media 'products' and about the consequences of that consumption that may be observed in individuals (Chaffee, 1980). Even the vision of the social that accompanies audience research says nothing about media production. In audience research the social is equivalent to the aggregation of observations made of individuals. Social structure is distributive in one of the senses outlined by Eulau (1986; see also chapter 9): It is an emergent phenomenon inferred from patterns found in aggregated audience data. Social structure is thus a property of the aggregate audience itself.

This vision of the social has a troublesome consequence for mass communication research. Mass communicating agencies are extra-individual phenomena. That is, mass communicators are agents that exist not only outside the individual's body, but also outside any aggregation of individual bodies that constitute an audience. Yet the essence of audience research is its empirical focus on the individual and its subsequent data-aggregating strategies: It makes its bigger things (like populations or population subgroups) out of sums of littler things (individual people).⁵

Bigger things like mass communicating agencies thus escape the empirical net of audience research. My first impressions from the audience research literature were that

it, too, was not empirical enough to shed light on the structure and function of idea markets.

I was perplexed. If I studied idea markets I had to have data that encompassed both producing and consuming agencies. Yet the empirical communication literature gave only one or the other. Any combination had to be made in the scholarly mind. Responsible combinations were made by merging the disparate empirical literatures with the aid of the field's canon of normative press theory, yet normative press theory itself contained major inconsistencies regarding the existence of market relations and the status of the participants in those relations--an overall circularity that was fine for generating perpetual discourse but not for my need to find out how idea markets worked.

As best I can recall, the above is an account of the genesis of the barrier problem as depicted in Figure 1.1. If there is a tendency to deviate from habitual patterns of discussion of communication concepts in the chapters to follow, one reason is that I am essentially bringing an alien perspective to the audience research literature, pushing it to give what it was likely not intended to produce to find what I cannot find elsewhere. In defense of the deviations I will only add here that what follows attempts to be systematic within the possibly strange lines that opened up from this initial orientation. What remains to be explained in this personal account is why the audience research literature was chosen to work against that barrier.

Why Mass Media Exposure?

The principal reason was that audience research possessed an interesting conceptual region, one unlike any I had found in the media institutional literature. That region was mass media exposure. Within it I found concepts that were formed by taking something from the individual and combining it with something from outside the individual. The

result was a relational concept (Hague, 1972) that would usually be located in the most exogenous position within a formal model of mass media effects (for other-than-exogenous positions see Allen, 1981; Allen & Taylor, 1985; Kline, 1972; Hirsch, 1981; Hirschman, 1981).

What was so interesting about these relational concepts? At the outset it was only their potential. Since a concept of exposure could not be totally formed with indicators taken from individuals--say their time--but required in addition something from outside the individual--often something like a television set or a newspaper--it seemed to me that mass media exposure was the place to look for concepts that might have captured more of the difficult empirical object comprising mass media institutions and individuals. In addition, mass media exposure seemed to magnify and draw attention to the substantive character of the barrier itself which, in Figure 1.1, is simply a vertical line.

I did not expect to find complete conceptions of a set of marketplace relations between individuals and institutions in any particular exposure concept--that would have been quite a concept! Audience research's singular focus on individuals and its reliance on notions of one-way causation suggested I would find nothing of that kind. However, my initial thoughts were that somewhere within a literature as large as that of mass media uses and effects I would find conceptions of exposure where the extra-individual side of the relationship would extend backward beyond the phenomenal presence of television sets or piles of newsprint to touch the reality of media institutions. Were not these institutions responsible for the flow of contents on the television screens and the piles of paper accumulating in residences? Would not someone have worked something of the reality of these institutions into their concepts of exposure in order to test their causal force? I

expected the answers to be yes.

These expectations were not met. The uses and effects literature, in itself, cannot be used to learn about the relationship between mass communicating agencies and their audiences. Mass media agencies, I found, were not an effective presence in this research.⁶

The vertical line in Figure 1.1 took firmer shape as a formidable barrier. In the context of mass media exposure and the effects research tradition, however, this was an interesting finding--more so than my own curiosity about idea markets, more so even than my own normative concerns about media performance even though these concerns have grown larger over time. What I had encountered in my review of the field's principal empirical literature was a research agenda that had become so focused on questions of mass media effect that it had left unaddressed the question of mass media cause. From what I could gather from my investigations into mass media exposure, the extra-individual forces being brought into relation with individuals were empirically truncated (at the vertical line in Figure 1.1) and thoroughly disorganized.

It has since been my feeling that the cause of this conceptual anarchy is the lack of a definite empirical object standing as a means to validate conceptions on the extra-individual side of mass media exposure.⁷ Beyond the individual, what is there to organize thought? Not very much, it turns out. The one object that could organize thought--the mass communicator--is missing.

What, then, constitutes the domain of causal forces in mass media effects research? The best initial glimpse is provided in an essay on causal inquiry by McLeod and Reeves (1980; see also Roberts & Maccoby, 1985). They proposed the following framework, hereafter referred to as the "forward model" of media effects research:

- (1) Assess the *media content* in relation to the expectations about how media have an impact...
- (2) Control the *exposure of the audience to content*. In naturalistic settings this is a major problem.
- (3) Assess the *effect* of the media content...The question is then to determine which [effect] can be identified as functionally related to the message...
- (4) Elaborate the *conditional processes* that help interpret or specify the relationship...(1980, emphases in original).

Since, as will be argued in chapters 2, 3 and 4, it is not clear what content actually is or represents in most instances of audience research, the forward model finesses the question of the domain of causal force, and leaves similarly unaddressed the crucial role exposure should play in the construction of a causal argument. There is no producer of content on which to hang a causal hat. That is perhaps why component (4) of the model has become so important in contemporary effects inquiry (Bryant & Zillman, 1991; Hawkins & Pinegree, 1981, 1989; Roberts & Bachen, 1981; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; Zillman & Bryant, 1985; chapter 7): In effects research, causes have to come from somewhere, and the use of conditional processes in effects models helps audience researchers, but only to interpretively conjure individual subjectivity or immediate individual ecology as the locus of cause.

The forward model's fixation on content, avoidance of theorization of that content, and quick forward movement in search of individual agency work together to express contemporary audience research practice quite elegantly. I could not appreciate that elegance, however, as to me the model offered no perspective on the domain of causal force. It grasped individual agency only in desperation and by

empirical default. What the forward model also meant to me was that the field was not in a position to determine whether an observed effect was large or small, as there was no way to determine the size of the force producing it or the proportion of that force one may have sampled with one's operational measures of mass media exposure.

At this point I asked myself whether it would even be possible to observe the agency of a supra-individual mass communicator within the context of audience research. The anxiously abstract tone of contemporary epistemological discussion suggested to me that I was on some sort of quixotic journey. However, an answer came rather early (with the assistance of Smythe, 1977), and it was not particularly difficult to formulate. One can specify the causal force of mass communicating agents rather exhaustively by bypassing mediated contents and using the dimensions of medium, individual time, and the commodity form to construct a concept of mass media exposure in a relatively simple procedure given in chapter 8.

That answer does not come in a chapter 1 or 2 for a number of reasons, but primarily for these: One, given the ubiquity of exposure-like conceptions in audience research and the lack of synthetic summaries of the concept, one could not immediately determine just what had or had not been specified or implied as the causal force producing mass media effects. Second, since commodity relations is intended to help bring the reality of the mass communicator back into audience research, the absence of that agent had first to be established.

Establishing such an absence was not easy. One does not find sustained discussion or explication of the concept of mass media exposure anywhere in the audience research literature. Nowhere are its theoretical or empirical boundaries clearly staked out. One will find a conception of something like exposure in most empirical

studies, and one will occasionally find extended commentary on a particular conception or operationalization, but one does not find any clear indication of the broader domain of possible conceptions. In order to say what was new about commodity relations the domain of meanings of the old had to be established. The need to produce something like an explication of mass media exposure became compelling.

Why "something like explication?" Why not simply "explication?" The answer lies in the consequences of the tangential character of my exploration of the uses and effects literature. As I move through existing conceptions of mass media exposure I am only secondarily trying to lay out the meanings it has been given by audience research, as many of the meanings I find would be better forgotten than laid out in some expansive multidimensional matrix. In the review of mass media exposure I am after other things.

One, I want to see how the absence of the mass communicator has come about. My initial assumption was that the practical exigencies of audience research were responsible. Survey research is not easy; researchers must quickly interact with hundreds of individuals in order to gain data that will represent a complex and expansive object. Observing mass communicators may simply have been too impractical a thing to do--something better left to those who dedicate themselves to media institutional study. My review of exposure is intended to acknowledge this difficulty wherever I believe I have encountered it.

Two, it is also my intention to discover what may be promising conceptual innovations with respect to a broader goal of bringing the mass communicator back into audience research. While believing I had found such a tool in commodity relations I did not see it as the only tool, nor was I confident that my initial rendering of the concept would prove adequate for audience research. In the review of exposure I wanted to gather whatever I could to bring

forward to chapters 8 and 9, not only to make commodity relations better on evaluative criteria that might be recognized by audience researchers, but also, and more simply, to make the concept of commodity relations more familiar. Especially valuable tools are uncovered in chapter 4's discussion of message discrimination and in chapter 6's review of Hirsch's critique of cultivation theory.

It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of the task of rendering the review of mass media exposure familiar. Accidents of personal history led me to review to concept for what it might say about cause and what it might allow one to say about the existential status (and causal force) of mass communicators. This angle on exposure colors all that follows, first by making a previously unexciting conceptual area generally interesting, but then by leading me to pay great attention to conceptual matters that most audience researchers tend to ignore, while invoking scant interest in other conceptual regions--primarily individual cognition--that others have found fascinating.

The divergent patterns of the interesting and the uninteresting make intersubjectivity difficult. They are, I believe, attributable to one thing--my interest in grasping the reality of the mass communicator in mass media exposure in contrast to the field's general interest in grasping more of the reality of the individual in that same conceptual region. Though there is undoubtedly a tension between the social and the psychological as explanatory forces in what follows, the tension unfolds as a contrast between one and the other side of a relational concept, or between a research agenda that says 'always move forward' and another that suggests 'moving back' across the divide marked in Figure 1.1. The poor concept in question, mass media exposure, is not the usual site of such attention.

One means of handling this tension and divergence has already been essayed. From time to time in what follows

I will use the first person in the review. This tool is not used to call attention to myself but to indicate the existence of a position on mass media exposure that is different from the normal. I can state what the differences are in seemingly objective fashion at the outset: This study seeks the existence of the mass communicator, privileges notions of direct causation until they are demonstrably exhausted, and challenges the necessity of separate spheres of media institutional and audience research. Audience research privileges notions of effect, explores the agency of individuals in models of conditional and contingent causation while ignoring the agency of mass communicators, and is generally more comfortable with--and even militantly promotes (Reeves, 1989; Reeves & Anderson, 1991)--the division of scholarly labor as depicted in Figure 1.1.

Yet these differences are easily forgotten in the context of an extended literature review. For long stretches the discussion seems to coincide with traditional explication but then a divergence occurs in very particular theoretical contexts. Rather than repeat the sketch of the differences that stand between myself and the field, I occasionally refer to my existence as an outsider, sometimes embellishing the position with an image of one who stands in a room where audience research takes place, where I peer over the shoulders of these researchers, looking at their terminal screens and examining their questionnaires and coding sheets. These images are used lightly, as I have tried to employ them in such a way so that my outsider's position intrudes minimally upon the meanings at issue.

A more important and perhaps controversial step I have taken to minimize the confusion entailed by an outsider's perspective resides in the principle evaluative criterion I use in the review of mass media exposure. As will be explained below, I have developed an empirical

rather than a more epistemologically or semantically sensitive approach to exposure. In general, my position is that depicted in the upper right circle in Figure 1.2 rather than the more typically found upper left position.

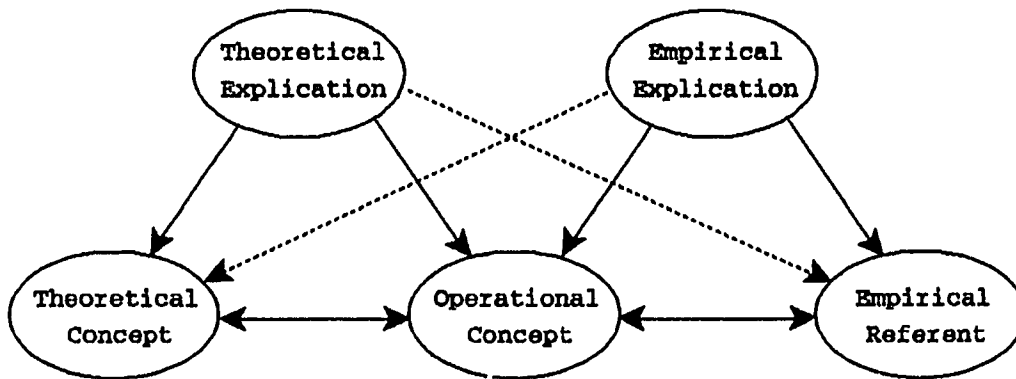


Figure 1.2. Two Approaches to Explication.

In this study "empirical explication" means that each conception of mass media exposure is viewed as a word or phrase that stands for an empirical referent, and my evaluations of the words revolve around the scope of their referents and the adequacy with which the words represent them. I am, in short, reducing the meaning of words to their primitive or "lower level" (Hague, 1972; Chaffee, 1991; Hempel, 1952) meanings and beyond: to the empirical realities to which they point. I assess the adequacy of conceptions of mass media exposure in terms of their external validity.

What this procedure entails will be discussed below; important to note here is its difference from what is

currently promoted as explication in the field (see, for example, the empirical explication of McLeod, Rucinski & Pan, 1986; and the plan for concept explication in Chaffee, 1991). The tools of explication can themselves be tedious and complex (Sartori, 1986), and even more so when the concepts in question are based on distributional phenomena (Eulau, 1986) and involve human communication. Though again I must refer to personal history, I believe that my approach to the review of exposure may be more accessible (more understandable, more easily seen in its flaws) than it would otherwise be were I to translate it into the language of contemporary explication.

In reading about mass media exposure I had become disenchanted the ways it was conceived in the existing literature. These conceptions did not reach out for the reality of mass media institutions--the external regions of these relational concepts were fragmented and incomplete. In consequence, my attitude toward this conceptual field was critical in what were likely unconstructive senses of that term. Kaplan (1964) had argued, quite cogently, that a strongly critical impulse often led one toward abstract epistemological territories where room could be found to articulate one's criticisms more freely. While it was not clear to me what theories or concepts and related criticisms Kaplan had in mind, I had encountered numerous instances of what I thought were errant criticisms of empiricism (e.g., Allen, 1987; Slack & Allor, 1983. Lang & Lang, 1983, also note the lack of meaningful novelty in many contemporary critical postures). I was also struck with the potential relevance of Kaplan's general argument in my case. Not only was I disenchanted with the field's existing conceptions of mass media exposure, but "existing" overstates the tangible presence of exposure as a commonly shared conceptual domain.⁸

For example, I use exposure to refer to

conceptions that include notions of individual use. Many in the field of audience research would reserve separate conceptual compartments for exposure and use in deference to the idea that they imply different positions on the question of individual agency within the mass communication process. But this is just the tip of a huge iceberg of major and minor differences in assumptions and conceptions that are strewn about the audience research literature with respect to mass media exposure. Combine my own attitude with an obscure object of suspicion--what is mass media exposure?--and I had every reason to believe that mine would be a conceptual train passing mysteriously by in the night unless some means could be found to establish common ground.

To find and maximize that common ground I developed my review of exposure around two criteria that--I thought--would maximize clarity and minimize controversy: (1) the empirical meaning of concepts and (2), when needed, the theoretical meaning of those concepts within one-way causal models. Chaffee's recently published work on explication suggests that my decisions here may not minimize controversy. He argues that one cannot adequately reduce communication concepts to their empirical referents (1991), while McLeod and Reeves' earlier seminal work on notions of cause deal with definitions of contingent and conditional specifications of a causal model that I in the main eschew (1980).

Nevertheless, my decision has been to accept a degree of potential controversy in exchange for clarity. While communication concepts may not be completely reducible to their empirical referents, the reduction is still useful: Performing it allows one to see the part of the concept that is grounded in observation and the part that remains empirically ungrounded and, therefore, subject to various non-empirical forms of faith. One may not want to see one's concepts parsed in this way, but one can follow as someone

else does it.

Similarly, while measurement and data-analytic tools allow many sorts of specifications of causal models, and while the bullet model of media effects is continually referred to as primitive or outdated, my argument is that these complexities are taken on in large part because of basic conceptual and empirical inadequacies that can be laid out within the context of much simpler one-way causal arguments--and therefore in the context of the bullet model depicted by Figure 1.1, where the barrier represented by the vertical line exists prior to anything an audience researcher might do with the palate of typical individual-level variables embedded in models of the latest statistical design.

In selecting these criteria I lay myself open to the charge that I miss complexities involved in the creation of communication concepts, in the specification of causal models and in the conduct of multivariate analysis, but those charges are in themselves less important than arriving at an agreement as to just what it is that I am missing. To reach that point the critic must understand what I am saying about the mass communication process and about mass media exposure, and the best way I can see to ensure that the critic will understand what I mean is to give my terms empirical referents wherever I can.

Thus, the evaluation of mass media exposure in the chapters to follow is undertaken with minimal methodological tools. It relies on the empirical meaning of concepts and the use of those concepts in epistemologically simple causal arguments. Still, that reader will note considerable complexity at times in the ensuing text. That complexity, as best I can tell, has two sources: (1) the objects that stand as empirical referents to communication terms, and (2) the existence of numerous metaphysical regions within the theoretical domains surrounding communication terms (I will

discuss the role of metaphysical regions below).

In sum, the use of mass media exposure as a means to observe mass communicator agency within audience research, the problem for this study, is itself the result of the evolution of a layperson's concern over media performance. The journey through normative theory led to a need to understand how idea markets worked and to the empirical media institutional literature. That literature's silence on media audiences, combined with a turn to audience research literature and to the concept of mass media exposure, led to the present study, where (1) Figure 1.1 represents an empirical object called the mass communication process, (2) the vertical line is a barrier to empirically informed and synthetic understanding of that process, and (3) all that follows is unified by an attempt to work against that barrier.

An Empirical Explication of Mass Media Exposure

Definitions

Mass Media Exposure

'Mass media exposure,' 'media exposure' and 'exposure' will always stand for a relational concept formed when something from an individual is combined with something else within the mass communication process but beyond the individual's body and subjectivity. The concept may actually be observed in relational form, as in individual time with television, but it may not be observed at all, as is often the case in research designs that directly observe and measure mass media content and later use surveys to gather data on individual cognition (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; see Shoemaker & Reese, 1990). Problems that may arise in explication when exposure is not directly observed will be handled in their substantive contexts; contexts will generally be in the form of the causal argument guiding the concept's use.

The term 'exposure' tends to imply individual

passivity in the literature, especially in relation to 'use.' In this study 'exposure' has no inherent volitional meaning. When individual volition is at issue it will be brought in as an analytic and substantive concept (usually as a source of causal force) and not as an assumption coloring an entire conceptual domain.

Six classes of objects related to mass media exposure are initially drawn from the uses and effects literature for explication in this work. These classes are called 'dimensions' of mass media exposure and together they constitute the study's working theoretical domain. Three dimensions, content, medium, and time, are explicated in a five-chapter section entitled 'simple exposure' (see McLeod & MacDonald, 1985). A second, one-chapter section called 'complex exposure' will take up the dimensions of cognition, individual agency and individual interaction.⁹

An instance of simple exposure is found when two or more objects from the dimensions of content, medium and time comprise the concept. Complex exposure is encountered when one or more dimensions of simple exposure are combined with one or more dimensions of cognition, individual agency or individual interaction. That is, in the presence of any of these latter dimensions, the researcher's concept will be considered complex no matter how many simple dimensional elements accompany the term. Thus, if 'television viewing' is encountered as an individual's time with the medium of television it is considered simple exposure. If a concept by that same name includes an individual's attention, involvement or some other form of cognition or activity with the medium, it will be considered complex exposure.

Mass

The notion of 'mass' as it occurs throughout the study will not be specifically defined. It is assumed that whenever a cross-sectional survey seems to be an appropriate vehicle for observing an audience created by an act of

communication, then an empirical mass communication process such as that depicted by Figure 1.1 is the object of study.

One of the most striking capacities of mass communicating agencies is their ability to distribute copies of the same content to large and spatially diffused numbers of people (Brecht, 1983). Just how large the numbers or how diffused the people must be in order for a phenomenon to be considered 'mass' in character is a concern (see Menzel, 1971), but this study gains little by attempting to give precise meaning to the term.

The study moves forward on the question by assuming that the large numbers of people and their spatial diffusion as media audiences are themselves implicated in the rise of survey research, and that the reality of these audiences is now embedded in standard sampling and data-gathering practices (Kalton, 1983; Kish, 1965). By limiting the scope of the present inquiry to conceptions of exposure as they arise within the conduct of survey research, the present study takes advantage of the embedded empirical meanings of these practices and forgoes further definition of the term 'mass.'

Simple and Complex

The classification terms 'simple' and 'complex' are an extension of an idea contained in the title of a study by McLeod and MacDonald (1985). Specific meanings are elusive due to the theoretically undeveloped character of mass media exposure, but the classification can be given historical meaning at the outset: Content, medium and time have long been used in audience research. Insofar as contemporary audience researchers look for something more from their conceptions of exposure, they can usually be found to refer to something more than that offered by working with these three dimensions. The additional meanings they seek to give to exposure can usually be described in terms of cognition, individual agency or individual

interaction.

The Lifespace

One final concept is of central importance to the explication of mass media exposure. It is called 'individual lifespace,' 'lifespace,' or, more colloquially, the individual's living room (Lewin, 1951; McLeod and Chaffee, 1972; Neuman & Pool, 1986, note 2).¹⁰ Individual lifespace refers to an empirical object against which all dimensions of mass media exposure are held and evaluated. Since empirical assessment is the main point of this explication, it is important to describe the object referred to by individual lifespace in more detail.

Lifespaces are empirical in two ways: (1) as objects literally reached through the activity of survey research and (2), as the referents to concepts researchers employ when they speak with an empirical researcher's authority about mass communication. Perhaps unfortunately, both senses are crucial to empiricist discourse. Though some meaning will be lost as a result, this study will favor a definition of lifespace in the second sense, as an empirical referential domain for concepts audience researchers use when speaking about mass communication processes and effects.

The first sense will not be ignored but after speaking briefly about it here it will be pushed into background. To note that lifespaces are objects of research practice means that researchers observe people--face-to-face or by phone or mail--in definite places and contexts. Whether they are ready or not theoretically, researchers implicate an empirical instance of the lifespace with each person they call on the phone or reach by mail or in person.

If a scholar manages to design, fund, organize and carry out a survey then she has dealt with the empirical reality of lifespaces in the first sense. Many scholars are keen on this accomplishment: "By p. 135 in Erik Wright's

book *Classes*, we have not yet encountered any data," writes Stinchcombe. "For an old-fashioned positivist like me, that's a long time without contact with the world, with the flow of facts of some kind." (1989, p. 168). Talk, even empirically oriented talk, is viewed as somewhat cheap, while action, meaning the administrative activity of going out and gathering data, is empirical and honorable.

It may be that the need for honor and its to now successful acquisition through the conduct of a survey has led to the kind of sensibility Stinchcombe demonstrates. Yet some scholars have noticed problems with the concepts used in these honorable acts. In communication (and likely beyond) a sense of general uncertainty may lay behind Chaffee's claim that the field has no good empirical concepts, and may explain in part why he decided to edit a series of monographs to explicate communication concepts (1991).

Nevertheless, Chaffee chooses a mode of explication that privileges discussion of researcher activity--of what researchers say about the data they have gathered--over discussion of what, after all the differences in conceptualization have been put to uneasy rest, has actually been observed (Chaffee promotes the 'theoretical' position in Figure 1.2 above).

The position of this study is that many conceptual problems stem from a lack of attention to the empirical adequacy of concepts in relation to the lifespace in its second empirical sense--where it is the locus of empirical meanings of words used in audience research.

In this second sense the lifespace is not just a term implicated in actual research activity or even in procedural discussions dealing with that activity. It is also, and primarily in this study, the object the scholar has in mind when he creates a survey question. It is also the more massive object, really an empirical repository or

domain, that one sees when one scans an entire survey questionnaire or a group of questionnaires. Assessment of a concept in terms of this domain might not constitute an act of empirical research but it is certainly empiricist discourse, though perhaps in a sense, acknowledging Stinchcombe, both old and out of fashion.¹¹

The lifespace in the first empirical sense, then, is the object implicated by acts of survey research. In the second sense, it is the object that encompasses all of the things to which all survey questions refer. But still more must be said about these two meanings in relation to each other.

Each act of observation implicates the lifespace. A researcher encounters a person, observes phenomena, asks questions, requests information. In one instance the researcher speaks to a woman on a car phone. He finds out she's on her way to work, she's married with two children, lives in an owned home, is Catholic, daughter of Irish Catholics--the father an engineer--, she reads a newspaper daily for fifteen minutes, watches two hours of television in the evening, and so on.

Another act of observation results in contact with a retired man, widowed, perhaps no children, no religious affiliation, parents American farmers, non-reader, watcher of six hours of television per day.

Through these two instances we can reconstruct how the lifespace will appear as an empirical object to an audience researcher and how that appearance may create conceptual difficulties. One thing these examples suggest is that even a single instance of the lifespace can be empirically rich. These individual descriptions could have been extended, becoming case studies, ethnographies, or biographies. In audience research they do not become any of the latter for a simple reason: After an hour the researcher must move on to the next phone number in the

randomly generated list, or to the next site in a suburban block, to repeat her observations and request for information from the next person. Exigencies attributable to the first meaning of the term affect the empirical richness of the lifespace as a repository of observed meanings.

In moving on and repeating observations, the researcher gives up phenomenal depth but begins to acquire variation, a "flow of facts of some kind" that Stinchcombe missed in his reading of an explicatory work. The young woman was thirty-two years old; the retired man sixty-six. Others are younger, older, in between. At the end of his observations--and only at the end--the researcher has an age variable replete with variation that he can associate with other phenomena that also become variables through repeated observation--television viewing time, for example.

Militating against any clear fix on what the lifespace is as an empirical object, then, is a concern that each question asked in each individual contact with a respondent will later function well as a variable in the finished dataset. Courses and monographs in measurement abound, testimony to the degree to which empirical researchers are concerned for future commensurability in the traces of their separate observations. So habitual has this concern become that for sensibilities such as those evinced by Stinchcombe and Chaffee the datasets themselves threaten to become empirical reality. Empirical findings are those that emerge when, for example, all of the ages are totaled against all of the viewing hours and both are entered into a regression analysis inquiring into a cognitive effect. The variables 'age' and 'television viewing time' are thus more normally seen as the researcher's empirical objects, and not the individual ages and viewing times that went into the making of these variables.

Considering datasets as empirical reality is not a habit to get rid of. If one's observations are done well,

many individual observations will aggregate well. Mass communication creates massive audiences; mass distribution systems implicate the activities of numbers of people (Bell, 1976) and create observational positions like that of the survey researcher (Beniger, 1990), who is charged with or internally called to make sense of the aggregate reality. Good measurement practice will recreate something of what reality has wrought.

Nevertheless, this aggregate vision needs to be supplemented with another, one that scholars like Wright may work with when they produce 135 pages of text without any data (1989). Before any aggregation takes place, before variable concepts are available for analysis, before findings are offered about aggregate reality, researchers must visit individual homes and there observe and request information. It is at these quiet points that the researchers' concepts remain closest to their simple empirical referents--the objects encountered in individual lifespaces (Payne, 1951). Through the survey the researcher asks an individual for her age, her occupation, her media habits. The words used in these questions have meaning for both interviewer and interviewee. They point to phenomena in and around the person, phenomena that the researcher has planned to observe through a sense of their potential importance for later analysis (substantially or because of their easy measurability--see individual time in chapter 6), phenomena that are nevertheless there within the researcher's empirical grasp and accessible to outsiders curious to find out what the survey researcher actually sees.

These simple objects, in their uneasily describable totality (as reflected in catalogs made available by the Inter-University Consortium or the National Opinion Research Center) indicate what is meant by the lifespan in this study. By looking, often directly, at

actual survey questions operationally defining mass media exposure we can see what lifespace objects the researcher has deemed important to observe. Most acts of empirical evaluation of mass media exposure concepts will unfold against this repository of identifiable objects. In this way the lifespace constitutes the objective criterion against which individual conceptions of exposure are evaluated.

Procedure

What words do researchers use in their interactions with individuals? To what do those words refer? How 'far' in or around the person do they point? What is the empirical reality implicated in the individual's response? What is television? Print media? Violent content? What are all these things, what are they not, and in what classes are they arranged?

These questions must first be posed and answered before one can offer a new concept that asserts that more of the mass communication process may be observed than has been observed in past survey research. Both the sense of past limitations of possible gains against that past must be made in reference to something, and the concept of lifespace as a singular, though varying, empirical entity provides the means to these ends. The lifespace will function as mass media exposure's effective empirical domain.

For each of the dimensions of simple exposure a range of examples are gathered and evaluated against individual lifespace. In the simplest case, a concept of medium, represented by the terms 'television' and 'newspaper,' is immediately found to be inferior if the researcher does not theoretically justify the selection. There are many other objects in the lifespace that are classifiable under the category of 'medium,' and if the researcher refers to the general category in discussion the study will note that discussion is not empirically sound. To formalize the procedure used in this example,

within an overall range of empirical possibilities found for each dimension of exposure an attempt is made to determine which conceptualizations are adequately grounded in observation and which are not.

Normally, empirical evaluation will not be so simple as it was in the example above. While grounding is first sought in object domains within individual lifespaces, the empirical meaning of exposure is not always exhausted in reference to it alone. In these instances the concept is more closely evaluated to see if another empirical object is implied. If so, the concept is evaluated against that object. This procedure is especially important for the evaluation of content in chapters 2, 3, and 4.

After empirical grounds are sought and discussed the explication will turn to meanings concepts acquire as the result of their position within a causal argument. In some instances these causal meanings will be quite important, as the concept in question will either have too many empirical referents, in which case the causal context functions to *delimit empirical meaning*, or no empirical referents, whence causal theory *must provide substantive meaning* to the term. Overly rich empirical meaning accompanies the dimension of time (chapter 6); my concern there will be to find out how causal inquiry might be used to fruitfully delimit its empirical meaning. Lack of empirical referents influences the discussion of complex exposure in chapter 7; I will try to show how the lack of an empirical base confounds causal inference. Incomplete sampling from an available empirical domain, uncertain delimitations of empirical range and ungrounded assertions of causal locus and force describe most of the critical evaluative comments that will be made about mass media exposure in the chapters to follow.

The notion of ungrounded locus of causal force is also the study's central conclusion regarding mass media

exposure: At least as is reflected in contemporary conceptual practice, the field of audience research is moving--albeit unevenly--toward a position in which the major and occasionally sole source of cause in effects research is individual subjectivity. Accompanying this position is a feeling that the domain of the cognitive is intrinsically interesting--that it is the field's best hope for conceptual gain.

Where this study diverges from contemporary audience research is in the notions of what is intrinsically interesting and where conceptual gains will be found. To help indicate what lays behind these different feelings I use a byproduct of the empirical explication. As I move through existing conceptions of mass media exposure I will note and name a number of metaphysical regions other than individual subjectivity that currently inform audience research.¹²

The empirical explication of mass media exposure gave me something I had not anticipated: the realization that audience research, as currently practiced, fights against textually and cognitively semantic, mathematically analytic, historical and social realms of the unseen in addition to the cognitive. This family of metaphysical regions provides the most parsimonious way I can find to express both my global critique of mass media exposure and the range of opportunities an audience researcher may have for conceptual gain.

It may be that the mass communication process, so easily depicted in armchair fashion in diagrams like Figure 1.1, is so difficult to observe that researchers must needs incorporate numerous metaphysical assumptions into their concepts even though they claim--and likely warrant--authority as *empirical* scholars. Nevertheless, in seeking metaphysical regions embedded within current conceptualizations of mass media exposure the study's

argument will be that mass communication researchers have much more than individual subjectivity to work against to improve their concepts. One may try to apprehend more of individual subjectivity if one wants to, but this is not immediately or essentially required by the empirical object of mass communication, and it is a rather awkward metaphysical region to work against with survey technology and the variable object of individual lifespaces (see also Chaffee, 1991).

It is in this context that the main critique of mass media exposure and the potential gains to be attained from commodity relations will be laid out. If one grants the empirical adequacy of media institutional research (the granting of this proposition might be made easier if one works with some levels-of-analysis-type idea, but I do not think the epistemological crutch is necessary) then the social, unlike individual subjectivity, is an unobserved region that scholars have actually had a hand in creating: The region to the left of the vertical line in Figure 1.1 arose out of a commitment, articulated as such by Klapper (1960), that the lifespaces be the site of primary focus for audience research. This commitment *makes* unseen an empirical region that institutional scholars regularly observe.

This study will suggest that through a concept like commodity relations the scholar need not be limited to observation of individual phenomena alone, or consider the metaphysical region of individual subjectivity as the only site from which empirical gain must be had. An alternative exists next door: There are ways to specify mass communicator agency within individual lifespaces. The conceptual means are empirically adequate and not overly difficult even for mass audiences observed in cross-sectional research (Becker, McCombs & McLeod, 1975).

Such gains are available if audience researchers recognize the existence of metaphysical limitations other

than individual subjectivity as informing their work. My more positive recommendations in chapters 8 through 10 imply a particular choice among metaphysical regions to work against, but the reader of this work need not agree with that choice. All the present work asks is that attention be given to the empirical scope and meaning of the dimensions of mass media exposure currently used in audience research. On the basis of these meanings one will be able to acknowledge that there are, at present, unseen realms other than the cognitive that could inform innovative inquiry. The identification of these realms not only clarifies just what commodity relations can offer to audience research, it is an invitation to others to develop their own ways to see more of that difficult object depicted by Figure 1.1 than is captured by the concepts to which this study now turns.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

¹At the end of the study we will have an essentially cybernetic formulation of the mass communication process, yet we will continue to seek knowledge of that process expressed in terms of cause and effect. This blending of two ways of seeing (one-way causation from the physical sciences; systems-like formulations as found in the life sciences) is not supported by epistemological discussion but by a rather simple vision from interpersonal communication: We may speak of a marriage as a system comprised of two interacting agents, yet we can also, and at the same time, posit and observe the effects of marriage on either of the individual agents. See Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson (1967).

²The distribution of individuals made relevant by mass communication is the main reason why this study limits itself to the survey literature and mostly ignores exposure as it might be conceived and observed in controlled or familiar settings. In experiments a scholar clearly specifies and manipulates a stimulus and hopes that her findings will *generalize* to the mass communication process. Researchers who see the mass distribution of individuals as framing their inquiry at the outset face a different problem: the *particularizability* of their usually aggregate findings for discrete individuals. The combination of short visits with subjects, the gathering of discretely defined responses to requests for information (Lazarsfeld, 1944; Converse, 1987); and the use of aggregated emergent phenomena from datasets to define findings (Rogers & Dearing, 1988; Przeworski & Teune, 1970; Eulau, 1969, 1986) all work to make statements of process or cause difficult to translate back into real individual contexts (see also the discussion of "lifespace" below). Yet the distance from real individuals and the need to interact with a sample of them quickly are, to a large degree, a result of the existence of mass communicating agencies. Unlike the experiment or the forms of field research coming into the field from cultural anthropology, the survey follows behind and attempts to grapple directly with what mass communication has wrought--the creation of mass numbers of real people about whom someone must speak empirically. Experimental control and the taking of time to closely observe are luxuries not available to the scholar who contemplates a mass audience. It is what a scholar is able to do without these luxuries that is of interest in the present study. To face and

acknowledge the empirical fact of millions of people one will likely never know or control may be key to the development of knowledge about the mass communication process that best reflects our position as outside observers. Particularizability, and not generalizability, is the compelling problem posed by mass communication; survey research is at present the best means to face the problem. It does so by admitting that its initial empirical object is a population of millions of distant and unknown souls (see also de Certeau, 1985).

³See Bagdikian (1983), Herman and Chomsky (1989), Hirsch (1985), Owen (1976), and Schwarzloze (1989). It should also be noted that media professionals themselves generally assume their audiences rather than observe or interact with them. See Gans (1979), and Pool & Schulman (1959). A notable exception is Radway, who not only observed industry and audience together in one study--the romance novel genre of the paperback book industry--but also presented data on the way the industry and its authors gathered and acted upon reader feedback (1984). The present study aims at comparable levels of comprehension for all media forms and audiences. The goal is accomplished at the expense of depth. What must be given up--the point of chapters 2 through 4--is content, and what may stand in content's place are the commodity relations that define larger sets of mass communicators and audiences than those given by Radway.

⁴This literature also brought me into contact with the broader and more sociologically oriented debate on elite versus mass culture: Adorno & Horkheimer (1979); Bauer (1963); Bourdieu (1986); Cirino (1971); Fiske (1986); Gans (1974); Hoggart (1970); Kornhauser (1960); Rosenberg & White (1957); Shils (1957); Wilensky (1963). I generally avoid reference to this literature in the present work as its problematics unfold at too many steps removed from those of audience research. Questions of mass versus elite culture do enter into the field of discussion, but only after commodity relations has been theoretically and operationally developed (chapter 10), providing an angle of entry into and movement through questions concerning broad social phenomena.

⁵The social is emphatically not a vision of a world that extends outward from an individual's body, encompassing vast distances, complex organizations, and modes of interconnection that the individual knows exists but cannot see. McLuhan's notion of a "global village" played on this alternative vision (1964). He saw the world made immediate and visible for a single individual through electronic media. The present study seeks something less grand though much more difficult to observe: the agency of a social entity known as the mass communicator as that agency might be observed in one home and then aggregated across the

distribution of individuals actually reached by electronic media.

⁶One may refer to the concept of the mass communicator essayed by Hovland and his associates (1949; 1953) against the text's definition: The mass communicator was a biological person who actually voiced or wrote bylined words. This definition of the mass communicator is rejected for reasons that will be most evident after the problem of delimiting exposure's full domain for survey research is fully laid out, and after a definition of mass communicator agency that handles the problem is offered in chapter 9. For now one might note that when an individual media professional retires from broadcasting or leaves a newspaper organization the results are neither empty airtime nor blank white spaces on the surfaces of newsprint. Individual media professionals come and go but something else remains. That something else should be specified and observed.

⁷I might here add that what was missing was an object that was not a scholar. Selecting content-fragmenting independent variables reflects the idea that a scholar, like a program producer or an author, might control content flows or have a hand in policy. Iyengar and Kinder's (1987) agenda-setting study may have seemed convincing for this reason--they had controlled the onset of news content in a naturalistic setting and in doing so had put themselves in the position of a program producer, much as Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach and Grube (1984) did when they arranged a great American values test over commercial television.

It is interesting to see isolated instances of scholarly control over content, but it is less realistic to imagine that scholars would influence content regularly, and risky to draw conclusions about media effects on the basis of occasional gestures and naturalistic experiments. Scholarly research teams and commercial media firms are different entities with different goals. Standing in place of commercial firm means that scholars cannot observe them and therefore cannot trace media effects back to the more typical social agency they represent. Chapters 8 and 9 will essay a strategy that keeps our own scholarly agency out of the research design and leaves empirical mass communicators in.

⁸The index to the *Handbook of Communication Science* contains no entries for exposure, media exposure or mass media exposure, two single-page references each to selective exposure, selective attention, and selective reception, and an excellent chapter by Ward on Krugman's notion of involvement (Berger & Chaffee, 1987). Notwithstanding numerous calls for more attention to the conceptual region of mass media exposure, it still manages to slip quietly through the webs of scholarly discourse.

⁹Were this review of mass media exposure being undertaken by a more properly socialized audience researcher, the allocation of chapter space among simple and complex versions of exposure would likely be reversed, with complex exposure receiving more chapters than simple exposure. In deference to the status complex exposure has in the broader field I have placed the chapter on complex exposure in its own section. In recognition of my own incapacity to speak intelligently or at length about complex exposure I have limited that section's length to one chapter.

¹⁰Since Lewin (1951), the concept of lifespace has evolved from the totality of an individual's surroundings into something like cognitive structure (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Lewin's employment of spatial language and referents includes features that I feel are more useful for survey research than are contemporary cognitive renderings. People are encountered by researchers in definite places. These places include the raw material from which an account of the observed person will be constructed. Part of that raw material is the person's subjectivity, but it is the vulgar spatial region outside that subjectivity from which the external portions of exposure are drawn. It is particularly important, then, to keep this spatial aspect of the term. In doing so one has to struggle with the variability of lifespaces across large populations--the paragraphs in the text are a struggle--but it is just this variable and mixed spatial/individual object that researchers encounter in survey research. Lifespaces are cognitive but they are not merely cognitive.

¹¹There is a mode of meaning analysis that avoids discussion of empirical referents to terms and in doing so evokes considerable sympathy in me toward Stinchcombe's position. Consider the following:

Hempel considered empirical analysis of a concept the ultimate goal of explication in the physical sciences. He envisioned the formation of concepts that, through empirical research, would eventually be specified in operational terms. The concept of *hardness*, for example, was operationalized by the scratch test: If one material can cut a scratch in another, it is harder by definition and fact.

No such hard-and-fast definitions are at hand in the study of human communication, nor are they likely to be. Despite considerable enthusiasm for "communication science" (Berger and Chaffee, 1987), attempts to reduce any concept in communication to a set of empirical referents have met with frustration: Human beings are too various, in their behaviors and in their meanings, for us to arrive at a single fully satisfactory operationalization of any concept.

We do, however, have empirical definitions of a more modest kind...(1991, pp. 29-30)

The modest definitions to which Chaffee refers abound in the chapters to follow, but so does the attempt to perform the very reduction Chaffee plays down. That attempt will follow not Hempel's operationalism, as individual researchers cannot normally manipulate independent variables associated with mass communication, but it will acknowledge his insistence that the meaning of a concept be rendered in empirical terms (1952). Nothing is wrong with making do with empirically weak concepts, but little can be said in favor of a strategy that closes off understanding of those weaknesses.

The point is that if one does not make an empirical reduction, if one's concepts always mean more than what others can see in one's research, then those others remain dependent upon the subjectivity of the researcher. Differences in conception become difficult to adjudicate through research, as what is at issue are the ways of thinking and basic metaphysical beliefs of two or more scholarly individuals. While it is interesting to follow these clashes in modes of thought and expression, after a time the debate will move to abstract procedural matters that Kaplan had warned against, and readers will seek refuge somewhere else--perhaps in "the data" that Stinchcombe so misses in Wright.

¹²In identifying these metaphysical regions and naming them as such my purpose is not to criticize audience research practice on some stridently empiricist criterion. The decision to conduct an empirical explication was originally based on a desire to manage biases associated with an alien reading of the literature. Even the new dimension of commodity relations will be shown to have metaphysical weaknesses if used too strenuously.

SECTION I. SIMPLE MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE

Introduction

Section I contains three chapters on content and one chapter each on the medium and time. The plan for the empirical explication of content, the most important of the dimensions of simple exposure, is presented immediately below. Plans for the explications of the dimensions of medium and time will be placed at the beginning of their respective chapters 5 and 6.

Content

Bernard Berelson claimed that the principal tasks of empirical communication research were the defining and counting of objects from the flows of mass media content (1952). "Content," George Gerbner wrote six years later, "is the coin of communication exchange (1958a)." The comments went hand in hand: Any good currency had to represent solid value and be its measure.

This sense of content's central value is still with us: McLeod and Reeves placed it at the start of causal inquiry (1980; see also chapter 1); Becker and his associates lamented its absence in national cross-sectional surveys (1975), and Shoemaker and Reese exhorted their colleagues to observe content more directly in audience research (1990).

The tone of plea and exhortation in works promoting the authority of content is interesting. It suggests that Gerbner's was not the last word on the matter. A metaphor more appropriate to the use of content in audience research would not have stopped at the equating of money with content but would have added a third element--trouble. The original analogy, so easy to make, was not so

easy to follow in practice. Even highly regarded things, like gold, will lose their luster and, in some circles, their value, if they cannot be measured. In a nutshell, this is the situation in which audience researchers now find themselves when faced with the task of handling content in their research. It is regarded as the authoritative dimension of exposure yet its proper measure has remained elusive.

Chapters 2 through 4 are designed to highlight the measurement problem,¹ or the uncertainty as to what is actually captured in a specification of a content variable for an exogenous position in a causal model.² Different approaches to content are evaluated for their capacity to resolve this problem. I will suggest that those means are inadequate and conclude that content should not play a central theoretical or empirical role in most audience research despite its authoritative stature.

More substantively, the general conclusion amounts to the assertion that a focus on content makes it highly unlikely that an observed effect will be attributable to a specific causal force (Espinosa, 1982; McQuail, 1969; Wright, 1959). Skinner made a similar claim for stimuli in experimental research, and operant conditioning models enjoyed moderate success for a time as a result, but survey research has not given up on semantic stimuli despite the strong likelihood that they may require unattainable research designs.

When one observes the lifespace one finds that content flows so massively in so many different manners through so many devices that one can virtually guarantee that no general understanding of the effects of the mass media on people will be effectively conceived, let alone found, when content is categorically asserted to be the means through which causal force reaches the lifespace. If one begins with content one will not be able to convincingly

respond to questions of *how much* there is of *how many kinds* or *how much was sampled* in any instance. The italicized terms denote rather basic matters for empiricists; even more basic at this stage in the history of empiricist audience research may be ridding oneself, through proper socialization, of the urge to talk about them (Blumer, 1959; O'Keefe, 1974).

This study has not lost that urge, and in posing these basic questions it finds content a very poor dimension to work with, one that, on the basis of its demonstrable merits, deserves little of the authority it is repeatedly given. In saying this I do not claim that content has little place in communication inquiry. It is central, and appropriately so, to humanistic study and to the humanistic classroom, and as I will suggest in chapter 4 it is also useful for certain administratively oriented research tasks (Gitlin, 1978; chapter 4).

These administrative areas have had marked impact on the field of audience research. They have supported the growth of the field (Morrison, 1988; Borchers, 1988), produced theoretical results with general pretensions, notably on processes of diffusion (Rogers, 1962; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) or on the success and failure of campaigns (Hyman & Sheatsly, 1947; Mendelsohn, 1973), but for those who are interested in knowledge of the media's more general causal force--and such curiosity takes us well beyond the immediacies of political or marketing or 'development' campaigns--content performs abysmally, and audience researchers seeking general knowledge of media effects should seriously consider leaving it unobserved.

This critical claim is sweeping and the supporting discussion is long and, of necessity, selective. Still, one chapter alone could have been given to a dimension of content were the scope of inquiry limited to instances where it was actually implicated in exposure-like conceptions (see

chapter 4). To limit discussion to those instances, however, would have left the review of exposure incomplete. Content is often handled at a moment apart from observation of the audience, whence it is crafted into a stimulus variable. That is, content is often observed and counted prior to its use in the construction of relational concepts of mass media exposure. Indeed, the specification of content alone is often offered in lieu of exposure (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Gerbner's comment is apt--content is regarded as *the coin*, even if, like money in pre-Glasnost Europe, it may often buy very little.

As a consequence of content's authority and detachability from surrounding contexts, chapters 2 and 3 differ from the rest of the discussion of mass media exposure. They are too much about content and not enough about exposure. More accurately, though perhaps more indirectly, these chapters are about exposure in a negative sense: The interesting and perhaps insurmountable problems they pose for audience research may help explain why the conceptual field of mass media exposure has received little systematic attention. Once one identifies, observes and counts a reasonably complex stimulus--no small accomplishment--it might seem natural to give exposure the residual function of guarantor of stimulus witness (McLeod & Reeves, 1980; Roberts and Maccoby, 1985).

An alternative possibility, seeing exposure as a fascinating space wherein aspects of mass communicating agencies and audiences are observed together, just doesn't happen. Content's supreme authority may itself be cause of exposure's presently impoverished status. To note that it is a 'multidimensional phenomenon' (Allen & Waks, 1986; Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986) is also a polite saying that exposure is a collection of loose and fragmentary considerations. Exposure is boring at best and more typically ignored. It may be hard to be fascinated by perfunctory accumulations of

others' afterthoughts.

Leaving the potential for fascination aside, the discussion is constructed to give some sense of the range of ways content has been employed in effects research. The first topic is content analysis, an approach that assumes that content may actually be objectified and counted and the resulting objects tabulated and classified. After an initial discussion of measurement, Chapter 2 follows content analysis into two important branches. The first uses referents to content objects to define content for use in causal inquiry. Causal arguments in even reasonably complete form are surprisingly rare in referentially grounded content analysis. Rather than remain mute until one was encountered, I develop a hypothetical causal argument with a news topic to illustrate problems with the approach.

A second kind of content analysis, concentrating on representational features, is presented as if it had evolved to address problems with referential approaches. This is not intended as an historical claim, though the idea might support such a study, but I believe that introducing representational approaches in this fashion may enable a reader to see just how content can box causal inquiry into extreme corners. Agenda-setting research will be used to illustrate the approach and its problems.

Structuralism is the subject of chapter 3. It also works with content objects but does much more. Manifestly observable objects are brought into semantic association in order to allow more latent content objects to emerge. Structuralism's goal is not so much to isolate important content objects but to make up for that initial objectification and recuperate more of a symbol stream's total meaning (van Dijk, 1983), often in a quest for social agency (Gerbner, 1958; Lowenthal, 1950). Message systems analysis will be used to illustrate the structuralist approach as it may inform audience research.

No other approaches to content as an independent object domain will be reviewed. Krippendorff's proposal for constructivist content analysis, for example, does little more than point to the interpretive activity of content analyzing scholars (1991), while Stempel's methodological essays are standard content analysis in the light of recent statistical developments (1989). Both say much about what scholars do or may do with content, but they offer little more than what is available here regarding what scholars are actually working with when they study it. Setting aside most matters of self-conscious procedure, we find that survey researchers must still make their peace with manifest and latent meanings, representations, and referents.

Chapter 4 presents a third approach to content that brings the discussion sharply back to what might be regarded as a domain relevant to mass media exposure. The subject is message discrimination, a technique for gathering evidence of content from individual recall (Miller, Morrison, & Kline, 1974). It works with the interesting idea that content need not be specified prior to observation of individuals and thus complements content analysis and structuralism quite well.

For those who hold that major problems in the use of content stem from its treatment as an independently manipulable dimension, undisciplined, as it were, by the empirical constraints of individual observation (Becker, McCombs, & McLeod, 1975; Gunter, 1988; Shoemaker & Reese, 1990), message discrimination might be considered a promising technique for improved audience research. Though the chapter concludes otherwise, review of the early message discrimination literature uncovers an interesting technique that will be used heavily in later chapters on commodity relations and mass media effects.

To summarize, Figure I.1 analytically locates the approaches to content reviewed in chapters 2, 3 and 4.

	Analytic	Structuralist
Prior to Exposure	Content Analysis: Referential and Representational	Message Systems Analysis
Within Exposure	Message Discrimination	[Empty]

Figure I.1. Approaches to Content in Audience Research.

Analytic (objectifying) and structuralist treatments will be reviewed, and within the analytic there will be separate chapters on the handling of content prior to or within mass media exposure.

What, then, about the empty cell in Figure I.1? The combination of marginal criteria seems to produce something of first interest: a vision of the actual activity of individuals creating their own fuller meanings from the raw materials of manifest content. Researchers using more textually sensitive tools--semiotics, ethnography--now occupy it and generate studies of increasing authority in the fields of cultural and textual studies or symbolic anthropology (e.g. Fiske, 1987, 1991; Radway, 1984; see esp. Lindloff, 1991).

Yet that cell will remain empty in this study. In centering their interest on mass audiences, survey

researchers must give up depth of inquiry into meanings actually made. They have much briefer encounters with many more individuals than do ethnographers. In return, however, they may observe something that the textually sensitive may not--something like the mass audience itself. This study assumes that one will find the most important issues for survey research by concentrating on approaches to content that remain feasible when one's objects are like the mass audiences actually created by mass communication. This object is survey research's strength and distinguishing mark. The more fully it is embraced, the more clearly we will see what contemplation of millions of distant souls can offer to the broader field. The more the mass audience is ignored, the less easy it will be to produce important findings or to defend survey methods from approaches more semantically enchanting and, distant souls in mind, unreal.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION TO SECTION I

¹By 'measurement problem' I do not mean those associated with the emergent properties of variables in completed datasets (e.g., as discussed by Zeller & Carmines, 1980), but in a sense that emerged, quite in passing, in Converse's essay on survey-based findings of attitudes versus non-attitudes: "... reliability in our field is...a joint property of the instrument and the object being measured" (1970, pp. 176-177). This joint position is perhaps the best one to take on measurement problems when the object domain permits, as content does, as researcher activity is an empirical aspect of any phenomenon under investigation. I will speak minimally of instruments in this study, however, as my sense is that the most troublesome measurement problems facing audience researchers stem more from inattention to empirical objects than to from lack of knowledge of the meaning and use of measurement instruments. I talk about what researchers are attempting to look at, and move on to questions of how that looking takes place only within the epistemological framework of simple causal inquiry.

²A particular limitation on inquiry results from this epistemological focus. By concentrating on content in formal causal models, I use a simple temporal assumption (causes come first) to concentrate on measurement problems that arise when a researcher contemplates a body of content directly. That means that in chapters 2 through 4 I do not rely on audience cognition to establish a content object, as audience cognition happens only after content is produced and presented.

This results in a setting aside of questions arising from the idea of subliminal persuasion (e.g., Biocca, 1988a; Fink, Monahan, & Kaplowitz, 1989), where evidence taken from individuals is reflected back upon the stimulus domain to discern whether the stimulus was cognitive or affective in character. In this study, effects are not used to establish causes but the reverse, even in the discussion of message discrimination in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2
CONTENT ANALYSIS

Introduction

Many research questions require content analyses (Berelson, 1952; Budd, Thorpe, & Donohew, 1967; Krippendorf, 1980; Lasswell, 1977), but most fall outside this chapter's purview. I am not concerned with analyses meant to establish what there *is* in a domain of mediated content or what there *ought to be* more or less of in future domains. Many content analyses support descriptive and policy discourse, examples of them abound in Holsti (1969, chapter 5), and they are certainly valuable for the issues they pursue.

This chapter is about content analyses in mass media effects research. I wish to find out what content is purported *to do* to the people a survey researcher might observe. Policy implications often arise when questions of media effects are entertained, and accuracy in the description of a body of content will become an issue if one's proposed effect is controversial and well publicized (Blank, 1977a, 1977b; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Newcombe, 1978), but causal inquiry and survey research make special demands on the would-be content analyst, and it is these demands, and audience research's general inability to meet them, that will be the chapter's primary concern.

Let me state the chapter's conclusion clearly (and bluntly) before beginning what will be a long and difficult argument: Wedding content analysis to causal inquiry will produce the most unmanageable offspring one can find in the scientific world. This chapter will not loudly advocate divorce; it will not have to because the marriage act is rarely consummated in actual research programs (Shoemaker & Reese, 1990). Nevertheless, as the chapter makes its

particular arguments a single meta-message will always loom close by: One should not fool around trying to make these kinds of matches as they will end in disaster.

In considering content analysis in audience research, McQuail recently alluded to potential disasters, a bit less bluntly, and without going so far as to advocate the preemptive action this chapter proposes. He employed a metaphor that I have found useful in structuring the chapter as a whole. "One has to be clear," he said, "about the shifting and sometimes shaky foundations upon which much generalization about mass communication rests" (1987, p. 176).

Shortly thereafter he also stated that "good effect research does require a relevant analysis of content which is supposed to have caused the effects in question-- thus something more than simply evidence of 'exposure' to media" (1987, p. 179). This is also the position of Becker, McCombs, and McLeod (1975), Berelson (1952), Gerbner (1958a), McLeod and Reeves (1980), Roberts and Maccoby (1985), and Shoemaker and Reese (1990).

What can one make of this warning about mass media content and the subsequent admonition--which seems brave-- that content remain at the center of effects inquiry? Extending McQuail's metaphor may shed a certain light shed on their connection. Foundations indicate the existence of buildings. If we add the plausible idea that building resources can be scarce we can venture the following: If evacuating a building with cracked foundations meant that one would find oneself homeless, one would likely remain in the building, cracks and all.

For me, the power of McQuail's metaphor can best be discerned in this extended light. If one sees no lines of action other than ones involving content, it might be difficult to look closely at what those lines would actually entail.¹ Cracked or not, McQuail concluded, content is our

building--and then, at least for causal inquiry, he let the matter drop, so that each researcher might continue to keep his or her private room in the shaky edifice a while longer (pp. 179-180).²

What follows stands in full agreement with the idea that content analysis puts generalization (at least about mass media effects) on weak foundations. However, it will almost fully disagree with the persisting claim that content is required for good effects research. Content makes effects research bad; McQuail's imagery suggests this conclusion and not its contrary. This chapter will inspect content's weak foundations more closely, from a perspective that searches for mass communicating agency on the external side of mass media exposure.

In taking up content's weaknesses where McQuail left them I will ask first what might make the foundations of causal inquiry *shaky* when content analysis is employed. An answer will be given in terms of measurement--content gives virtually nothing to measure, information theory notwithstanding.

To find something to measure scholars *shift* foundations and employ referential approaches (Berelson, 1952). I will employ a hypothetical research design to indicate how referential approaches in causal inquiry (1) make taxing observational demands, (2) involve substantial moves beyond the data (often to normative marketplace theory) to reduce those demands, and (3) produce an inadequate set of potential agents on which to pin an inference of cause.

The numerous problems associated with referential approaches to content will be worked into a rationale for more purely representational approaches--yet another shift in foundations. Agenda-setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) will be reviewed as an ingenious though still inadequate attempt to use the idea of representation to bypass inference

problems arising from use of referential content data.

Moving in consonance with McQuail's architectural metaphor, the chapter will conclude that if audience researchers really paid close attention to the role content played in causal inquiry, they might, like many of our previously institutionalized brethren, find homelessness a more compelling alternative. I believe, however, that other, more stable buildings may be found.

The Shaky Foundation: Content 'Itself'

Content analysis aspires to objectivity, not in the sense of fairness that we find in discussions of journalistic performance, but in a simpler scientific sense where an analyst wishes to see content as an object. If she can do so she will be able to proceed empirically, and among the properties she may observe in content objects are their unit size and quantity.

Unfortunately, content is not easily (or is too easily) objectified, and consequently it is associated with no fundamental unit of measure. Holsti, for example, mentions the term "unit" in an introductory discussion of quantification, but the term functions as an empty vehicle within a substantive discussion of frequency counts versus patterns of presence or absence of--units of content (1969, pp. 5-12). Absent any defining unit, Holsti is later forced to give his readers a general sense of what a content unit is by referring to the numerous ways object classifications have been imposed upon content in past research practice (chapter 5).

One may speak of a bushel of wheat, of minutes with a psychoanalyst, or of more or fewer dollars, with confidence in each instance that there is a tangible thing (wheat, a professional's time, money) being placed in understandable units (bushels, minutes, dollars). The object and the unit coexist well, meaning that others can verify the magnitude of the thing measured, make translations among

standard unit measures, and, in general, engage in empirically meaningful discourse about the thing's magnitudes.

When an object measures well, empirical discourse may even be supported beyond the realm of the immediately visible: One may never actually see a hundred metric tons of wheat or any of the aggregate sums constituting the various national money supplies, yet it would take an interesting sensibility to doubt their existence and measurability, and an even more interesting one to act in life as if they did not exist at all. One may quibble with the accuracy of a large aggregate measure, but in quibbling one still recognizes that money and wheat exist and move around in specifiable and often massive quantities.

One frequently sees work with mass media content that assumes similarly easy measurability. Troldahl's review of ten years' research with newspaper content provides a useful example (1965). His work resulted in a three-level metaclassification of content. At the level of greatest magnitude he located categories comprising a newspaper's *total content*. One example of total content might be that produced by editorial and business departments respectively--a dichotomy. Another example, more differentiated but still exhausting of a newspaper's total content, might be hard news, soft news, comics, other syndicated features, opinions, letters, classified and display ads.

At the level of next greatest magnitude Troldahl located instances of *message units*. Here he referred to particular news stories, ads, comics or columns. He also suggested that it was at this intermediate level that individuals might actually experience newspaper content, so that identification of a message unit might be made in with the help of information from individual readers. Since individual reading activity did not attach to all three levels in his scheme, and since the issue here is not what

defining substance a lay individual party brings to content but what content is as an object made in scientific discourse, individual activity will be set aside so that we can continue to pursue the matter of content units and magnitudes. Message units, then, are specific instances from categories of total content--Tuesday's *Blondie* comic strip, yesterday's weather.

At the level of least magnitude Troidahl identified a focus on words, source names, paragraphs, sentences, pictures and other layout features. His category suggested smallness but not the limits of smallness. He did not indicate, for example, whether phonemes or pixels would fall into this or an even lower level. He instead called these small things *message elements* and left us to understand them relationally: Elements were the raw materials from which message units could be said to have been made.

Recent work with content confirms continuing interest in classifications at three levels and more across a variety of media. One can find notions of story type or genre along with thematic frames and nexes above or below the level of message units (Campbell, 1987; Corcoran, 1984; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Livingstone, 1989). One can also find definitions of total content intending to cover all the normal means of conveyance--news, for example, as it might be found on television, radio, in magazines as well as in newspapers (Shoemaker, 1987).

Insofar as one moves in thought to locate content at, above or below Troidahl's three levels, one acts as if content were indeed like wheat, money or time with the psychoanalyst. One proceeds as if content itself were measurable in greater or lesser magnitudes, as if its identified levels could be placed in ordinal relation with guidance provided by adjectives such as "total," "unit," or "element."

The basic assumption underlying this movement in thought is that the ordinal terms share a common underlying substance. There is more of that underlying something in a story than in a word. Troldahl did not state what that substance might be, and his use of "content," "message" and the reading individual inconsistently across his three-category scheme suggested some uncertainty. Uncertainty is still warranted today, much more so than an assumption that content, like money or wheat, is measurable in greater or lesser magnitudes.

What is content? Whatever it is, the idea is that it can be graded into total messages, units and elements. It is mostly what a grading agent makes it to be (Krippendorf, 1991). To work within this study's epistemologically primitive setting, however, we must still ask: Can it also be defined without reference to any particular grading agency or, perhaps the same thing, by reference to all conceivable grading agencies at once?

Information

This question--but not its answer--becomes salient when we encounter the term 'information.' Especially in lay usage, the term seems to indicate faith in the existence of content as a substantial thing, something that can be given or gained, stored, transported, destroyed (Aranguren, 1967). This informal meaning comes closest to what this study is after--an understanding of content as an empirical object.

More formal usage of the term (e.g., in Shannon, 1949; or Ritchie, 1991) indicates that 'information' can also be used in more complex ways, including those that touch upon modern algebra and theoretical nonparametric statistics (Finn & Roberts, 1984; McMillan, 1953).

The meanings salient to communication inquiry stand uncomfortably between the informal idea of a tangible thing and the meanings given to information in more abstract systems of thought. Chaffee (1980), for example, discussed

the question of diversity in national communication systems, given a concern that ownership concentration may have reduced diversity in recent times (Bagdikian, 1983, 1985).

National communication systems are empirical domains (Pool, Inose, Takasaki, & Hurwitz, 1984), and ownership is empirically expressed in a number of ways, including rates of concentration (Bagdikian, 1983). At the heart of the concern for diversity, however, is mass media content, which must somehow also be expressed empirically in order to determine whether ownership concentration has had an impact. Chaffee suggested that content diversity could be described with the aid of Shannon's concept of entropy (H). "It is nondirectional," he noted, and "it yields a single summary estimate of diversity for each system at each point in time, and such estimates would be compared directly with one another" (1980, p. 98).

Were the concept of entropy from information theory actually able to tell us how much there was in a domain of content, a truly remarkable field of inquiry would open up and a number of central questions, such as that of diversity, would be answerable in other than normative terms. In fact, however, the concept of entropy cannot establish either content's domain (it cannot give us a "system") or its internal unit sizes, and the lines of inquiry spawned by formal notions of information are better characterized as lines of hope. We may use Chaffee to see why this is so:

The computation of H for this purpose would require a set of mutually exclusive categories of public opinion that are as a group exhaustive of the total body of opinions possessed by the members of the system. While no such "perfect" opinion-content coding scheme has been devised, we have some reasonable approximations to it--close enough to permit some exploratory research at

least (1980, p. 98).

I have no qualms about using reasonable approximations of an ideal, but Chaffee did not give us any actual examples of what he saw as reasonable, and he immediately underestimated what entropy required by half: A diversity design would demand a taxonomy not only of people's opinions but also of mass media content. Though I can think of numerous typologies of topically bound opinion (e.g., Converse, 1964, for formal political beliefs) or for topically bound mass media content (see chapter 4), I can think of none that are even reasonably exclusive and exhaustive for either semantic realm. Key (1961) likened the crafting of a public opinion object to a search for the holy grail. Chaffee's model would ask us to find two holy grails.

More importantly, the matters Chaffee begged on practical grounds were precisely those that would have provided a link between the idea of information in formal theory and what an observer would be able to make, objectively, from the raw materials of the empirical world. Information, in formal theory, is an observable and measurable quantum of choice behaviors involved in selecting one element from a set of *known* alternatives, weighted for the probability distribution across the choice domain (Aranguren, 1967; Finn & Roberts, 1984; Ritchie, 1991; Rogers, 1986). It assumes knowledge of a decision-maker. Knowledge of a decision-maker and of her choice domain can give rise to a discourse of bits and bytes. A discourse of bits and bytes, however, does not give rise to knowledge of a decision-maker or her choices. One cannot, even in the information age, make flour without wheat.

If one reads the information theoretic literature to find out what information is as a thing, one finds out only that it is a residual category, available once we know the domain of some other class of things. Marital status, getting a job or not, or which of three individuals would be

one's lab partner were the classes of things and decision-making positions Ritchie gave as examples in his recent explication of information for the field (1991, p. 413). One can imagine a finite number of marital status categories an individual or an observer may use, a pile of applications representing a finite number of candidates from which an employer must make her decision, the stark 'yes' or 'no' comprising the domain of the job applicant, or a finite number of classmates from which one selects a lab partner. But as for the amount of information in a nation's media content or "total body of opinion," it is doubtful that Ritchie's lifespace examples could extend: Who is the observer or the observed decision-maker standing behind either of these massive objects, and how many choices would they have? These are not questions that can be begged if one wishes to recast the question of media diversity in information theoretic terms.

Chaffee's application of information theory to the media diversity example only makes one assume what one greatly needs but does not have--a unit by which to measure content. One can create a research design that will allow one to mimic an information-theoretic inquiry (e.g. Miller, Morrison, & Kline, 1974) but, back where the content coding decisions are made, one will find that H did not help answer the question of what content actually was as a thing. The coder still has to confront an array of symbols of uncertain domain and internal categorical boundaries, all emanating from an unspecified decision-maker.

Both the information concept as a thing and information theory fail to indicate content's underlying and measurable substance for audience research. When we see it applied in mass communication we likely confront a mixture of faith in two metaphysical regions. The first is semantic. The idea is that meaning is an apprehensible domain comprised of discrete, measurable objects, and it promotes

visions of research projects wherein one could measure something like diversity.

The second metaphysical region, often found in works that rely heavily on contemporary theories of measurement (Zeller & Carmines, 1980), is analytic. We will encounter measurement theory in a more fruitful context in chapter 6, but it also warrants discussion here as we try to grapple with the objective status of content itself.

Good, general measurement practice suggests that one specify one's variables at ratio or interval scales whenever one can. If we ask why (especially when we want to work with categorical variables like biological gender or formal religious affiliation in deference to empirical reality), we find out that high measurement levels allegedly give us *more information* about an empirical object than would nominal or ordinal measures (Hague, 1972).

One might better defend high measurement levels on the grounds that, for a long time in social research, parametric statistics were much more developed and diffused than were nonparametric statistics, and the former worked much better with, and often required, interval-scaled variables with particular distributional properties (Fox, 1984; Weisberg, 1980).

However, just as information theory does not say what the choices are or who chooses in a domain of mass media content or public opinion, measurement theory is mute on when it would be appropriate to use interval or ratio scales. Few statisticians would categorically assert that one would be better off redescribing biological males and females (a nominal dichotomy) in finer grades of maleness and femaleness, though the idea has not infrequently been presented by way of example in methodological discussions (e.g., Hague, 1972).

Specifying variables merely to attain higher measurement levels, I suggest, indicates a degree of faith

in the power of analysis itself. The act of breaking things down has led to powerful discoveries in other fields, it may do so for content one day. With "reasonable approximations" (Chaffee, 1980) one buys time until the breakthrough.³

The important point is emphatically not to criticize high measurement levels. Some things do exist in numerous and finely graded quantities, and in chapter 6's review of Hirsch and cultivation theory I will discuss some of the problems that can arise when one refuses to measure something that *can* be so measured. The important point, empirically, is that some things do not warrant such measurement. Even though measurement theory may be correct in claiming that higher measurement levels can offer *more information* about an object, it must first be established that content *is* a finely divisible object (Converse, 1970). There are sixty seconds in a minute. How many message elements (words) are there in a message unit (story)? What is content's underlying substance, and what are its units? We still do not know. We do know, however, that black boxes other than individual subjectivity--semantic, analytic--may inform content analysis, keeping us from realizing that what we need--if we take content seriously--we simply do not have.

Other Operational Definitions

A close look at what researchers do when they claim to objectify content will reveal that what they have actually objectified is something else: individual or external time, space, signal analogs.

For example, what is the difference between one crime story and two crime stories? If one assumes no crime stories as a natural zero point, then one might say that two stories would take up roughly twice the reading or viewing *time* if offered in spatial or temporal locations of similar size. Quantity, as Troidahl noted for message units, would best be established by taking something from the individual.

That something is generally not content, however, but time. If that something were taken from a region external to the individual, it would likely be broadcast time or surface space in which content was contained. Spatial and temporal metrics are given to contents, and the resulting constructs are often offered as a face-valid measure of content itself (Holsti, 1969; Pool, et al., 1984).

In what other metric other than time or space could the crime story count be measured? Some purchase could be had by referring to media agent activity (Ettema & Whitney, 1982, 1987; Shoemaker & Reese, 1990; but see Becker, 1991, and Reese, 1991) or to individual cognition (chapter 7). A metric may be gained by associating mercurial manifest content with tangible acts taken by producers and perceivers. These are ways of defining content in terms of external referents, a strategy I will consider shortly. Here I will merely note that in such instances, as with space and time, one is not using a feature of content to establish a metric but a feature of something other than content, i.e., of the organization or individual who produces or perceives it. One counts not content but the acts of its production or dissemination.

The more general point of this brief section is to affirm that at present we have no shared understanding of the empirical character of content itself sufficient to justify its measurement at any level. When we encounter content analysis in published research, empirical explication demands that we try to discern what has actually been observed from what has been brought in on faith from semantic and analytic unknown regions or from some other (often quietly) empirical realm. When we do so we find that there is virtually nothing left with which to define content as unequivocally as money or wheat.

When we see otherwise undeveloped references to more or less information, claims of more precisely measured

content quantities at various levels, or the importation of more plastic dimensions of time or space to give content a seemingly better metric, we encounter practices that have had substantial impact on the field. They have managed to encircle content with suggestions of an existential status that, while acceptable to the degree that we respect the epistemological authority or the metaphysical tastes of those who make the suggestions, we would be vexed to substantiate by looking directly at content ourselves.

The absence of a measurable, thing-like status underlying the term 'content' may be what has made the foundation of causal inference with content so shaky. More interesting for present purposes are how attempts to avoid the problems posed by content's lack of a fundamental unit of measure have made those foundations shift uncertainly about in other empirical directions.

Referential Approaches to Content

An interesting way to avoid having to treat content as if it were a self-sufficient object domain is to adopt a referential approach (Berelson, 1952; Holsti, 1969; Lasswell, 1946). Here one identifies a class of objects whose *representations* one wishes to locate in a domain of mass media content. The objects themselves are *referents*, and their empirical character gives substantial meaning to the representations one observes.

Behind each crime story observed directly in content, for example, one would find an empirical instance of crime or an occasion justifying its representation in media content. One may count the number of crime phenomena that make their way into content and, possibly, the number of crime phenomena to which an individual may have been exposed by witnessing the corresponding representations. With referents, content becomes more like wheat or money or minutes with the psychoanalyst.

What referential approaches to content allow us to

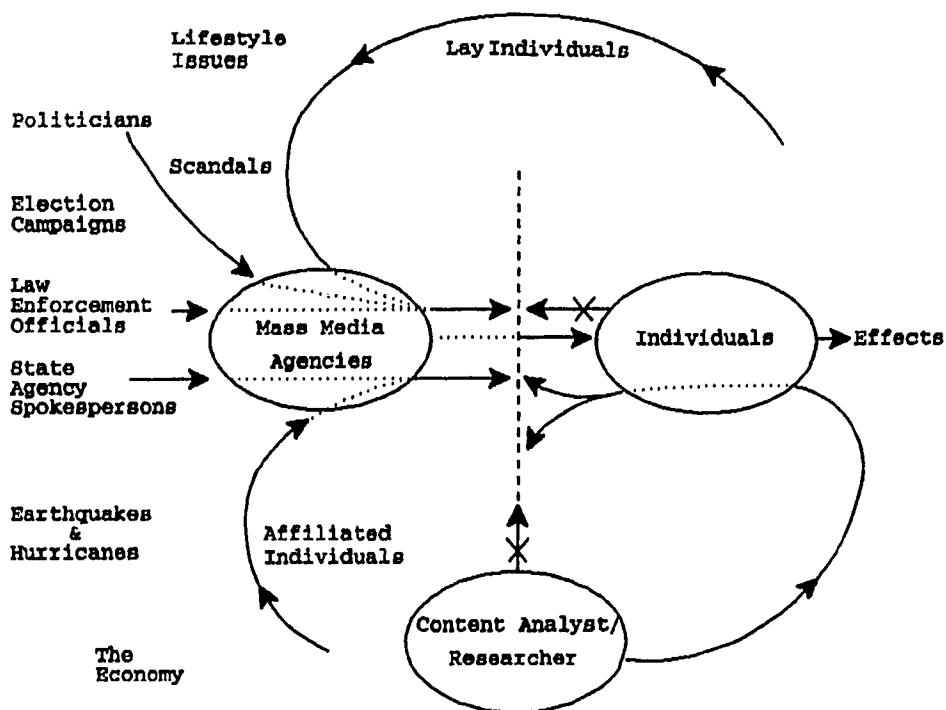
do, for the first time in this chapter, is to move beyond what content is so that we can ask what content may do in effects inquiry, as empirically grounded counts of things like crime stories stand ready for use in conceptions of mass media exposure and subsequent correlational analysis--at least in theory.

In practice, recourse to content referents in causal inquiry, so simple to state as a general strategy, brings a number of problems to audience research, problems not discussed or resolved when the method of content analysis is given by example. We can use Figure 2.1 to help see what these problems are. It is basically a bullet model overlaid with referential paths and interpretive positions.

Considering first the cluttered appearance of the Figure, the most general problem is this: Representations may have numerous and vast referential fields--adjacent representations, a scholar's complex theories, a lay individual's values and schemata, and a world of synchronic or historical objects of discrete or aggregate character.

In addition, different people (lay and professional) associate different referents with the same representational phenomena or give the same referent different representational labels. The content analysis/effects researcher must thus make a considerable number of assumptions and choices to fix a workable set of empirical meanings to a class of representations.

The inherent polysemy of content is too great a matter tackle in empirical explication. Since my principal interest is to find out how well content can function to convey a notion of cause in effects research, I will use general features of research design suitable to this type of inquiry to reduce the number of referential fields to a more reasonable range. Some of the design assumptions are themselves problematic; I only make them to gain access to what I believe are more central issues.



**Figure 2.1. Content Analysis and Audience Research:
The Referential Domain**

I will assume, first, that use of an exposure variable in the research design makes the direct referential path from effects researchers to the domain of

representations irrelevant. This is to say that the cognitive faculties that a skilled observer may bring to content are at best a nuisance (McLeod & Reeves, 1980), and that the point of objective referential analysis for audience research is to give substantial meaning to observed representations that do not require professional training. (In chapter 3 professional interpretation will be brought back into discussion.) Content analysis is being used to specify a stimulus field that lay individuals arguably witness in varying magnitudes.

We now encounter a difficult matter. By removing professional cognitions from the referential domain in an effects design the researcher does not, it should be emphasized, occupy a position that allows content to be defined in terms of lay cognitions straight away. He is proceeding within the epistemological framework of one-way causal reasoning. In this form of reasoning one states one's hypothesis first, in terms of content, and then one prepares a content variable for the most exogenous position in a corresponding causal model (McLeod & Reeves, 1980). Content is analytically conceived as temporally prior to individual cognition;⁴ theories of causal force thus rest on an articulation of that force to content. Only later does one attempt to observe, through surveys, how much of that force has been distributed to individuals and the degree to which it may have been associated with an effect.

This second limiting assumption--the epistemology of one-way causation--is extremely important, and it should be said that it is one that many contemporary audience researchers do not recognize or accept. It smacks of primitive bullet-type thought; it seems to make people passive. McLeod and Reeves (1980) take an indeterminate position. They give the specification of content the first position in their forward model, but they then define this content in terms of later individual exposure and

contingency, and do not speak about external phenomena that may give empirically valid meaning to content apart from individual perception. They thus render their model's temporal order uncertain and avoid the issues we will soon be forced to grapple with.

My insistence on one-way causation makes time order less ambiguous. It effectively relieves individual cognition of the task of establishing content's referential domain. Acknowledging that many would not likely accept this assumption because it arbitrarily removes the individual as a locus of either direct or contingent causal force, let me say that these alternatives will be discussed in later chapters.

For now, I want to bring content's referential domain down from cognitive infinity to workable size in order to evaluate it more effectively. More importantly, I want to see the degree to which contemporary moves to lay cognition as locus of cause (chapter 7) are a result of cumulative findings of limited *mass media* effects (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1982; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Klapper, 1960). That is, I want to see, first with content and later with other exposure dimensions, if the causal forces of mass communicating agencies have been exhaustively specified and successfully placed into variables, so that researchers could conclude that there was little force to be had from them. In using the bullet model I do not mean to suggest that the mass communication process is other than transactional (Bauer, 1964; Beniger, 1990; Graber, 1984; chapter 9) or that people are passive dupes (Fiske, 1991). I want to see how well the force of the other agent has been captured.

Assuming one-way causation and observation of content prior to audience research, I can now situate the ensuing discussion more firmly around the design strategy depicted by Figure 2.1. First, the dashed vertical line

represents the barrier described in chapter 1. It is, for present purposes, made up of representational phenomena. Second, we can pencil Xs through the lines that move directly from effects researchers and individuals to this barrier.

There remains, first, a curved line that moves from the effects researcher to and through the individual and on to the representational field. Content analysts look at content as if they were audience members, hoping, without yet knowing, the degree to which their own perceptual tools correspond to those available to the audience. They may design their entire study with audience perception in mind, but at this point they are looking for stimuli.

A second set of lines begins with various referential fields (the named fields, not meant to be exhaustive, floating mostly to the left of the divide). These lines move briefly through media agency (they have to touch these agencies in some way in order to become representations at all; see Westley & McLean, 1957) and onto the representational field. From this field the researcher perceives, makes his objects and, in various ways we will soon discuss, produces his content and exposure variables.

The points to be made below pertain to what researchers must do with the set of lines that come into the field of representations from the left. These lines depict connections between representations and the referents that empirically ground them. These connections must be made by the researcher prior to audience observation. Once made, content is an empirically grounded stimulus for effects inquiry--a rain of bullets, if you will.

I believe that this design is roughly what is meant when calls for content analysis to support effects research are made (e.g., Shoemaker and Reese 1990, 1991). More important than detailing variations on this general design is to follow what happens when a researcher tries to

use it, or something like it, in causal inquiry.

Audience research with referentially defined content might falter in two ways: (1) by *generally* failing to work with systematic samples from referential domains, and (2) even accepting uncertain sampling practices, by excluding mass communicators *specifically* from the set of empirical agents one would use in making a causal argument. Rather than call for more content in audience research, as do Shoemaker and Reese (1990), I conclude that even incomplete use of this framework makes media agency its first casualty and that, for general inquiry, referential approaches to content should be avoided in audience research.

Causal Inference with Referents

To constrain content's referential range as outlined above is to create something analogous to an experiment's stimulus domain, given the survey researcher's inability to directly manipulate mass media content (Converse, 1970; Hovland, 1959).

Even when we force professional or actual lay cognitions into background, we find that steps must still be taken to reduce the number of referential fields coming into the representational barrier from the left in order to proceed. The manuals are helpful in indicating how these further delimitations are made. Beginning with the vaguely defined domain of external referents depicted to the left of the representational barrier in Figure 2.1, content analysts normally isolate a subset of grounded representations that:

- (1) occur within a definite span of historical time (Eyal, Winter, & DeGeorge, 1981; Behr & Iyengar, 1985): a sampling of days in the year; contiguous days within a few weeks or months (Holsti, 1969);
- (2) are located on or flow through one or two media categories, most typically television and newspaper

- (e.g., McLeod & McDonald, 1985), and
- (3) are further isolated by selecting informally from content domains such as total content, genre, story type, news story or topic, and so on (Holsti, 1969; Troidahl, 1965; Kline, Miller, & Morrison, 1974).

Sampling compromises here are legion and their consequences for theory are likely substantial. Still, defining a smaller stimulus domain through additional topical, medium and temporal constraints reduces the time and money the research team will have to spend to produce the content analysis and related exposure variables.

In the survey researcher's lifespaces setting it is difficult to discount effects attributable to contents not actually observed over other spans of time and in media other than those the researcher chose for analysis. A campaign framework may shore up the time-frame decision (see chapter 4), but the availability of other categories of mediated contents to individuals, along with content's persistent polysemy, makes it difficult to determine just how much potential causal force the content analyst ever captures in her working domain. This problem will reveal itself most clearly against a backdrop of time in chapters 6 and 8. At issue now is what the content analyst/audience researcher can do under the tenuous assumption that sampling is not a problem.

Let us imagine a researcher who is interested in the causal force of television and newspaper news stories of crime on an array of individual knowledge and attitude items associated with the topic.⁵ Let us further assume that the researcher had sufficient command of the media habits of her target population so that she was able to make a reasonable selection of newspapers and television programs on which to perform her analysis. She was also able to obtain copies of

the contents she deemed relevant to her inquiry, and she developed clear instructions enabling her coders to identify and count crime instances with acceptable reliability.

Again much is assumed, but now we can move closer to matters that lie at the center of most efforts to make causal arguments with mass media content and survey research data, as we can now consider what may happen as the researcher works her empirically grounded and quantified stimulus material into a context of mass media exposure.

Mass media exposure is a relational concept formed by taking something from the individual and combining it with something external to the individual. In this instance the researcher would want to bring referentially defined content objects into association with an individual attribute. Ideally, the individual attribute would be some form of evidence of individual recognition or recall about crime to ensure that the stimulus had been perceived as specified and in measurable quantity (McLeod & Reeves, 1980; chapter 4).⁶

Kinder and Sears (1985) and Luskin (1990) have noted that individuals often have difficulty remembering any news story immediately after witnessing a stream of them on evening television news. Similar examples can be found elsewhere (Gunter, 1987; Neuman, 1976; Patterson, 1980; Patterson & McLure, 1976), but we do not need extreme instances of lack of recall to note that this ideal matching situation would be of limited service for observing exposure to television or newspaper contents. How many instances of crime stories should we expect any individual--even ourselves--to recall having witnessed during the past week or three months? At most we can expect that such matching will only occur for extremely short time periods or for highly salient topics. We do not know which topics would be salient to which people at any moment (chapter 4 will review a situation where topics are salient to a campaign agency;

here we assume a topic presumably interesting to a researcher, whatever her reasons). Excepting some highly localized possibilities involving convenience samples or extraordinary events (e.g., Slater & Elliot, 1982; Hirschburg, Dillman, & Ball-Rokeach, 1986), the ideal of matching content-analytic objects with objects from individual memory in a relational concept of mass media exposure is generally unrealistic for survey research practice.

Returning to our hypothetical case, we can assume that, recognizing that the modest temporal scope of her analysis and the unexceptional salience of her topic would militate against a semantic matching strategy, the researcher will have pursued another means to establish exposure to crime content. This second strategy involves a dimension of time. First, she would express the absolute quantities of stories and referents found in her content sample as frequency densities in time--so many crime stories of so many kinds per hour or day of television or newspaper news content (Blumer, 1959; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Holsti, 1969; O'Keefe, 1974).

Re-expression of the stimulus as a temporal frequency magnitude makes it easier for her to create and observe individual exposure. She can now ask individuals how much time they spend reading newspaper news or watching television news during the periods corresponding to her content sample. If her frequency density measure from her content analysis indicates an average of 1.5 crime stories per hour of televised news, and the individual reports watching an hour of that news per day, then her temporal measure of exposure to television gives her a working estimate of the amount of the stimulus the individual may have witnessed, and as she moves from lifespace to lifespace her observations will result in variation that she can use to help explain aggregate knowledge and attitude outcomes.

Following this temporal strategy our researcher would have content units empirically grounded by external referents and an estimate of the amount of content the survey interviewees may have perceived. We now have an example of a way an audience researcher might incorporate content analysis into effects research expressed at a level of operational detail that we do not find in the methodological essays (McLeod & Reeves, 1980; McQuail, 1987; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; Shoemaker & Reese, 1990, 1991). The entire edifice still shakes from the assumptions and compromises we had to make to reach this point, but it will also noticeably shift as we focus in on the inference process proper.

Our researcher, recall, is interested in the effects of stories of crime on individuals, and she has defined her crime story units according to classes of referents that exist beyond the field of representations her coders directly observed and, as best she could do, outside her own idiosyncratic subjectivity or direct knowledge of the subjectivity of those she only later reached by survey. What this means is that her causal forces, empirically speaking, are associated with the referents she used to identify and produce counts of her crime stories--some of the things 'out there' to the left of the divide in Figure 4. These possible causes will indeed cause many problems.

A mean of 1.5 stories per hour is only the first descriptive moment of the content frequency variable. During different hours of television news and on different newspaper publication days we may find more or fewer than this number of stories in each temporally bound content unit. A standard deviation statistic would describe the level of dispersion around the mean value in this example.

Also, and more importantly, a variable distribution of temporal densities in any population of units of time--something we should *expect* to find (Blumer,

1959; O'Keefe, 1974; Kline, 1977)--suggests that something happened in the domain of referents themselves. Our researcher wishes to find the effects of crime stories. They are her stimulus, they are defined by their referents, but she does not control their magnitude (Roberts & Maccoby, 1985).

If the observed frequencies of occurrence of crime stories in her sample move up or down in noticeable patterns during the days, weeks or months constituting her working sample, then she must try to account for these changes. If she does not try, then the effects she will later want to attribute to exposure to these stories--and to the media themselves--will likely be spurious. Something else in the referential domain may have driven the incidence of the stories, individual exposure and, consequently, dependent variable outcomes.

To begin to account for stimulus variation the researcher may consult non-media institutional sources of information on crime in the aggregate lifespace setting--police, hospital, commerce or social service records, for example.

After comparing the frequency variations in her stimulus domain with data on the real-world occurrence of the referential events defining her stimuli, the researcher may find that the observed frequencies and the real-world occurrences varied together. That is, numbers of crime stories went up and down in content with the incidence of crime events in the real world.

With respect to mass communicating agents, positive co-variation would support a mirror theory of the press--the press only conveyed what was out there in the real world. Amid the sea of compromises it took to reach the finding, she would now be in a position to state that changes in the frequency of occurrence of the referents to her crime stories were associated with measurable changes

(or their lack) in knowledge and attitude outcomes for different levels of exposure. A force other than the press, associated with the referential field itself--in this case crime--could be held to drive effects outcomes.

Were stimulus magnitudes further found to be associated with individual media use patterns--say the individual watched no news, read different newspapers, and so on--then individual's habits and lifespace context loom as contingent factors (step 4 in McLeod & Reeves, 1980) in explaining the outcomes.

For cause the researcher now has either crime-related real-world processes or individual witnessing behavior. The media would disappear, though with data showing that the frequency of representation matched the frequency of the event's occurrences in the real world, one would be hard-pressed to challenge such a conclusion. The only potentially clear test of a *media* effect in this situation would be to compare those who watched no television or read no newspapers with those who did (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980b; Hirsch, 1980a; Jackson-Beeck, 1977).

Less than five percent of the population watches no television (Robinson, 1977; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1981a, 1981b), so we need not linger on how the mass communicating agent disappears through mirror theory.

More importantly, for crime and most other hard news stories the researcher will find that the frequency of occurrence in the real world does not usually match the frequency of representation (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Graber, 1977). In the more normal situation the researcher will find that the temporal framing of her stimulus has resulted in a series of samples (in Monday's papers, Tuesday's papers, and so on) from corresponding but distinct referential domains (Monday's incidence of crime, Tuesday's, and so on). The dispersion of frequency measures around the mean value for

her content domain suggests that the entity other than herself has distorted the frequency with which referential categories received representation and worked their way into exposure. Her quest for cause should encourage her to try to find out what that distorting force may be--its name would most likely characterize the cause of the effects she may later associate with her survey respondents' levels of exposure. Where and how might she find the name of this distorting force?

Let me first suggest what she will not do, to help distinguish the empirical content analyst/audience researcher from other approaches that identify distortions and propose distorting agents (Bennett, 1988; Breed, 1955a; Hall, Clarke, Critcher, Jefferson, & Roberts, 1973; Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, 1980; Herman & Chomsky, 1989; Schiller, 1973; White, 1950). The audience researcher wishes to ground her theories of effect in empirically supportable notions of cause. Because she is an audience researcher and not a media historian or sociologist, the observable things she works with must also be at least plausibly observable by audience members. Because, too, she has determined content to be the central empirical dimension conveying causal force, she will not toy with great social structural forces to explain the distortion unless these forces can be clearly seen in content (if she does anyway, see chapter 3).⁷ Instead, her possibilities are located in the referential domains that can be seen in or through the content she has been working with.

We must now consider the options available to the researcher as she looks at her content sample for keys to an explanation of distortion. We will find that she has avenues available, but we will also find that none of them leads firmly back to mass communicating agents.

If one looks at mass media content while hunting for causal force one will see many things--lots of visuals,

color, editing techniques, narrative and representational strategies corresponding to professional practice or to the physical features of paper versus electronic devices.

Let me initially deflect attention away from these surface phenomena and from their obvious grounding in the habits of media professionals or the features of conveyance technology. Our researcher has staked out a referential domain--crime stories--in order to work with an empirically defensible stimulus domain. While crime stories are enveloped in representational and conveyance features, so are all other stories in news and in non-news. Visuals accompany holiday shopping stories as well as crime; bylines accompany printed gardening stories as well as printed crime stories.

If, to explain the cause of the distortion in the frequency of her crime stories, the researcher fixes her attention closely on these phenomena, then she will have defeated whatever her purpose was in selecting a crime story domain to begin with, as such representational features are shared by other unsampled story domains. Quibbling aside, it is relatively easy to distinguish between a crime story and a non-crime story. It is not as easy to distinguish crime-plus-victim's reaction from fire- or plane-crash-plus victim's reaction. Focusing on the journalistic practice of dragging out human emotions for display seems to open up an entirely different line of inquiry involving a now different stimulus domain. One can pursue this matter, and I do so in chapters 8 through 10--but not with the unwieldy dimension of content.

To maintain a position that supports her topical crime focus, she will look beyond the representational surface, not to unseen social forces, but to referents associated with crime that remain visible in representation. Her most workable possibilities comprise the named referential fields to the left of the divide in Figure 4.

Globally considered, we might call all of these fields 'sources.' As individual categories I have singled out (1) the government, (2) "affiliated individuals" (Whitney, Fritzler, Jones, & Mazzarella, 1989), (3) the people, and (4) the media. Let us look briefly at each.

The Government

In 1979 Gans noted an absence of studies of patterns of source attribution in news. This absence has since been addressed. In a study of sources of news stories about central American insurgency in the early 1980s, government was found to be the story source about 85 percent of the time (Detray, Elsberry, Gilliom, Leonard, Livingston, & Steinhorst, 1986). A combined government/political source category in Whitney, et al. (1989) was home to over 40 percent of all television network news stories. Another study of newspaper news sources made government the locus of 55 percent (Brown, Bybee, Wearden, & Straughan, 1987). Though the absolute proportions vary by topic and medium, state-related sources stand out as the largest in all of these studies.

The findings do not surprise. They reaffirm a watchdog function that normative theory has long attributed to the press (Hulteng & Nelson, 1971), and they affirm through the study of content what has been known for some time from studies journalistic practice (Gans, 1979; Hall, et al., 1973; Siebert, Peterson, & Schram, 1956; Tuchman, 1978). Heavy proportions of state-related source attributions--one may take one's choice here--come from the press's watchdog function, from its need to reduce news costs (Ettema & Whitney, 1982, 1987), or because the media are an agent of power (Altschull, 1983; Bennett, 1988; Herman & Chomsky, 1989; Shoemaker, 1987), with power somehow concatenating the media and state sources.

The same empirical finding--reliance on state-related sources--can support distinct and distinctly toned

normative theories, but it offers much less flexibility to the content analyst/effects researcher. Looking at the strong empirical presence of state-related sources in her crime stories, her most careful, empirically grounded assertion of the cause of distortion in content frequencies would likely make use of this presence. What agency might distort the incidence of crime news stories? Government is a suspicious possibility.

To act systematically on this suspicion, the researcher might look more closely at the particular sources found in the stories during time periods of great distortion. I have not found a study that has done this for state-related referents, but I also think that the lack of such a study is itself understandable. Resource requirements for the inference process would have been substantial by this point, and given the numerous sources of measurement error already taken on with her content sampling decisions and her temporal measure of individual exposure, she will do well to cut inquiry off by (1) noting the undeniable presence of state-related sources and (2) fitting this finding into a general concern about government.

In response to Reese's desire to incorporate media firm activity into agenda-setting research (1991), Whitney (1991) and Becker (1991) expressed strong concerns on empirical grounds, and Whitney recast media agent activity as "strategy" in order to bring attention back to the importance of government. Given empirical caution and the room content makes available for inference, Whitney's position makes the most sense: One cannot see many of the things associated with journalistic or organizational strategy in content, nor is it easy to link these activities to individual exposure with content, but one can see government officials: political candidates, elected officials, law enforcement agency personnel--peppering stories about crime. Why work through a difficult inference

process when the available evidence already supports a long but comfortable inferential leap in the direction of government?

When Janowitz observed a preponderance of government sources in the news some years ago (1978), he suggested that journalists shared a generalized suspicion of government with the population (1978). Robinson's videomalaise thesis also associated professional and lay cognitions with a shared object of government, but he also argued that the media somehow led the way in promoting suspicion (1975, 1976, 1977; Holz-Bacha, 1990).

If one asks what *causes* government sourcing, one steps into institutional and normative theory and, more importantly, one steps away from the lifespace. There one considers social structures and occupational strategies, but one now stands at a distance from things that individuals might ever witness in content in their living rooms. If one asks why the *effects*, if any, on individuals, of contents effectively observed, one remains closer to the original distortions found in the representational domain and its corresponding referents and one is able to work with one of agent categories visibly present in the stimulus stream that reaches the lifespace. Politics or the state are somehow involved in the uneven frequencies of crime stories and the outcomes that covary with them. Robinson's videomalaise thesis was riskier and more controversial than was Janowitz's gesture toward shared cognitions.

For government sources in referential approaches to content, I suggest two conclusions. One, state-related sources provide the most viable means to theoretically explain a cause of distortion for crime and most other hard news content categories. Two, for those who, for whatever reason, feel that government is not an adequate locus of cause, the path toward solid alternatives is not so clear, as the preponderance of attributions to state-related

sources across media will continue to stand in the way.

Affiliated Individuals

In the recent source attribution literature the affiliated individuals category included news stories whose source referents were not state-related but who had authority by virtue of their credentials and occupational position--legal experts, professors, authors, professionals of various sorts (Brown, et al., 1987; Whitney, et al., 1989). The numbers are smaller than were those for government (25 and 19.3 percent, respectively), meaning that we can expect an affiliated individual to be cited as source in between one in four and one in five stories.

Since this is not the most frequently found source category it would be more difficult to characterize an overall flow of news and related distortions in reference to it. One would need to determine whether moments of distortion in the content were disproportionately associated with affiliated sources in order to venture inferences through content to an effect. Again, I have not found an audience research study that has investigated the possibility, but affiliated individuals are found in studies of media professional values (Efron, 1971; Lichter, Rothman, & Lichter, 1986). At present the category stands ready to support more sociologically oriented suspicions about the way a professional class might be asserting its values on a general public through the media.

Projecting this suspicion into an effects research framework, I would note that with careful work, content would make affiliated individuals available as a possible locus of cause, but the boundary between media and non-media professionals would be obscured insofar as both could be shown to possess similar backgrounds and training. As a result, pinning effects on media-related causes through content and this source category would be difficult.

The People

For newspapers, Brown et al. (1987) found source attributions to lay individuals only in only 4.3 percent of their sample, while Whitney et al. (1989) found references to lay individuals in one in every four network television news stories. One may preliminarily conclude that lay individuals stand ready to help explain distortions in television content, but are less available for newspaper distortions, with the matter remaining uncertain for other media categories and non-news contents.

However, the people remain a plausible causal force even for newspapers:

Crime news receives ample attention as compared to other types of news. By social significance criteria, it is excessive. However, if current notions about audience preference are accurate--and the readership and viewer data seem to support them--then the large numbers of stories about crime news can be justified as supplying a consumer demand (Graber, 1977, p. 91).

The people, as a category, stand ready to explain variations in content and, subsequently, exposure and effect. While we may once more imagine a tediously thorough effort to match distortions and attributions to lay individuals in television content in order to be certain that government was not the distorting force, we would leave less to the imagination if we noted that the people or often brought into theory by longer inference. In the cited passage Graber chose to assert that content existed in response to consumer demand. Equally popular is recourse to the marketplace and informal criteria of newsworthiness. In this argument journalists are seen as selecting stories on the basis of their market-honed sensibilities as to what would be of interest or importance to their audiences (Graber 1977, 1984).

Acknowledging the theoretical direction and savings in research resources that can be had by referring

to normative marketplace notions in the middle of a tedious empirical project, I can still say that, on empirical grounds, arguments such as that offered by Graber are warranted neither by content-based nor survey-acquired audience data. In chapter 9 I will draw from the mass media feedback literature to more directly contest Graber's claim that readership and viewer data can be interpreted as indicating responsiveness to market demand. Here, with the raw materials of referentially based content, and without the aid of unseen marketplace notions, I will suggest that the people are only one among several potential sources available to explain distortions in content frequency. They are the least likely of the three source categories reviewed so far to survive if the question were tenaciously pursued, as stories are more frequently attributed to state-related or affiliated individual sources.

The Media

Figure 2.1 reflects the idea that all news stories appearing in all media are, in some sense, products of mass communicator activity. One is never sure who the mass communicator is ontologically, but one can now know much more about the dispositions of journalists and the organizational constraints that influence news story selection, production and dissemination than one could two decades ago (Altschull, 1983; Bennett, 1988; Breed, 1955a; Cohen & Young, 1973; Epstein, 1973; Ettema & Whitney, 1982, 1987; Gans, 1979; Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, 1980; Hall, et al., 1978; Herman & Chomsky, 1989; Meehan, 1984; Tuchman, 1972, 1973-4, 1978; Turow, 1984; White, 1950).

This literature reveals what goes into the making news from the production side proper if we leap over the divide staked out in Figure 2.1. If we remain in the position of the audience researcher, however, we immediately return to the problem that initiated this entire study.

Audience research often reads quite differently than media institutional research. In the former media agency is everywhere and tangible, in the latter it is generally missing. The external side of exposure variables is somehow shorn of available knowledge of media agency. Why?

A complete answer takes nine chapters, but for studies that begin with referentially grounded content, we can state, simply, that many of the findings in the institutional literature leave little definite trace in content.⁸ If we look at content from the position that loops through a hypothetical audience member who may then look at content, what do we see? First we see the news events themselves--incidents of crime, statements of prosecutors, actions taken by retailers, innovations by crime prevention firms, studies of a murderer's personality, and so on. Second, we see statements by state-related officials, by professional experts, and from perpetrators, neighbors and victims.

Third, we see the image of a television reporter, we hear his or another's voice, or we see bylines to individual journalists or to wire services in print. Fourth, we see traces of reporting and editing activity. Recalling the difficulties working with these mannerism would entail, I suggest that the third category might give the researcher the safest and most logical material with which to construct empirically informed accounts of how the media might be involved in the observed frequency distortions--the reporters and broadcast talents one sees in content could somehow be associated with cause.

The content analyst/audience researcher would still find the attribution to media difficult, however. Virtually all news stories exhibit empirical traces of the presence of a reporter or talent. One would best treat these referential fields as givens in all news contents (except C-Span), meaning that they present us with no variation for an

independent variable. Whether crime stories flowed at 1.5 or 3.5 per hour, a reporter would always be there. What can be done about this?

Parts of news stories occasionally come with no source attribution; if the crime unit were defined with sufficient detail for content analysis our crime news researcher may have accumulated a handful or more of instances where a fact was given or an event reported for reasons attributable to no other agent than the media firm or its employee. The recent source studies do not give data on such a category--they likely did not find many instances once they decided to include a category of unaffiliated or lay individuals (Brown, et al., 1987; Whitney, et al., 1989) in their source typologies.

Even if one had a handful of instances of crime stories without other sources, however, using them to point a causal finger at media firms would make a researcher stand out as if she were on some sort of mission, as the content data, filled as it would be with governmental, professional and lay non-media sources, would suggest that media firms were the least likely agents in any observed pattern of distortion. An individual journalist or talent transgressed standards of objectivity from time to time--a paltry collection of such sins seem an unlikely vehicle through which to articulate the causal force of media institutions.

Summary: Causal Inference with Referents

Absent any intrinsic substance, content may receive substantial empirical grounding through recourse to referents. Referents help indicate what content is for quantitative purposes, but to measure what content does to individuals, or what causal force is conveyed to individuals through content, the stimulus domain is usually recast as a temporal frequency distribution. This reduces stress on individual recall and makes the gathering of evidence of exposure a realistic possibility. Those who hold to the

ideal that an ideal measure of exposure would match content offered with content perceived may balk at this compromise, but it is often made. The alternatives are to limit oneself to small-scale or atypical research questions (chapter 4), or else to complain about the theoretically impoverishing properties of time (Blumer, 1959; Becker, McCombs, & McLeod, 1976; Kline, 1977; Salmon, 1986; Shoemaker & Reese, 1990; but see Allen, 1980 and chapter 6). I prefer to acknowledge the small number of instances where direct measures of exposure to content might work in order to move on consider frequency distributions more closely.

The most striking thing about working with frequencies is the set of causal forces they allow one to use to explain an effect. Undistorted frequencies of representation allow one to immediately discount any mass communicating agent's role in causal inference. Distortions, which we should expect to find more frequently than their lack for most content categories, would be most easily be explained through state-related sources present in content, though professional or affiliated individuals and the people stand as other sources of explanatory power should one ever wish to pursue the matter in detail. Media agency would be difficult to establish: Media employee presence in stories is virtually invariant, as are the more minute expressions of that presence--say, in composition or editing practices.⁹

Empirically, referentially grounded content works well for those who wish to study highly salient, perhaps unique topics, or for those are suspicious of government power. That means that content, at least so far, has not worked well as a means of capturing any essential feature of the mass communicating agencies that exist and operate to the left of the divide in Figure 1.1.

Perhaps the best way to summarize the position referential approaches puts us in is this: As we peer over

the shoulders of our crime researcher we see vividly rendered stories of crime on video monitors and on microfilm copies of newspapers. We see the consequences of crime. We are given victims' expressed feelings and gestures of loss, the statements of prosecutors, the assertions of political officials--some self-serving, some unclear. We may even see techniques that we know are intended to portray vividness or to elicit feelings. But we see neither the compelling need to reduce production costs or to maximize audience attention, nor do we ever see the mechanisms that presumably establish the flow of crime news as responsive to audience desire.

If the forward model of causal inference is accepted as the definitive means to pursue questions of mass media effect (McLeod & Reeves, 1980; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985), available patterns of source attribution will stack the cards against any clear finding of mass communicating agents as cause.

To say this in another way, referential approaches to content push those who would seek to specify the causal force of the media into a conceptual corner.¹⁰ State-related sources dominate and the media fall distantly behind professionals and lay individuals if one looks at content for evidence of causal force. If one is dissatisfied with these options but also holds that content is still the principle means by which causal force is conveyed, two avenues remain open. One is to use more immediately visible representational features to argue for media power. The other is to seek that power 'behind' or 'between' the lines of manifest content with more ambitious interpretive strategies. I will consider a popular version of the first possibility immediately below and the latter in the next chapter.

Representational Approaches to Content in Causal Inquiry

By 1960 the reigning metatheoretical notion in mass communication research was one of minimal reinforcement effects (Berelson, 1959; Cantril, 1940; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1976; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Klapper, 1960). Events in the 1950s and 1960s (the civil rights movement, Viet Nam, marketing culture to baby boomers) led to lay experiences that contrasted sharply with the reigning idea of media powerlessness.¹¹ Contesting visions of positive media power have gained momentum since the late 1960s, and a great deal of effort has been given to developing theoretical and operational strategies that could empirically capture this sense of media power (*Ferment*, 1983).

Though the recent ferment has led to the development or reassertion of research paradigms other than survey-based audience research, the latter has also participated in the search for media power. Near the center of these efforts stands the agenda-setting hypothesis (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Rogers & Dearing, 1988), which has attempted to make a case for media power with representational features of content and survey data.

Past audience research had tended to define powerful media effects in terms of a specific campaign agent's ability to change people's fundamental beliefs or attitudes. Empirical research showed that campaigners had little power to change fundamental beliefs (Bauer, 1964; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947), hence the idea of limited effects (Berelson, 1959; Cantril, 1940; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Klapper, 1960).

Political scientist Bernard Cohen (1963) made an series of observations that would provide a way for media scholars to break free from conceptions of attitude change. His thesis was simple. Media power rested not in its ability to change fundamental attitudes, but in its ability to give people a series of topical matters to think about.

Agenda-setting's prototypical research design made use of topical matters (Westley, 1976). A content analysis was used to identify the most frequently occurring representations in a sample space of content. It mattered little what the representations referred to, as causal attribution was not ultimately made with referents. (Each instance of a representation may have had a recognizable referent to allow comparison of results in replication, but beyond this the referents played no theoretical role.) The point of the content analysis was rather to produce a list of content topics and arrange them in a ranked order by the frequencies of their occurrence within the sample domain.

Secondly, researchers interviewed a sample of the population the content had or would reach. Individuals were asked to recall what they thought were the important issues or events of the moment so that their responses could be aggregated and a ranked order produced after the manner of media content. Researchers then correlated the two ranked lists of content, the media and audience agendas. Time order was an issue in this prototypical design, as the media agenda must have arguably preceded the audience agenda to support the general inference strategy (Eyal, Winter, & DeGeorge, 1981), but the strategy itself was simple: If one found high correlations between media and audience agendas, one could infer media power in the sense proposed by Cohen: The media would be said to have influenced what people thought about, if not what they basically believed. Using a design very much like this simple one, McCombs & Shaw reported correlations of near unity for media and audience agendas (1972).

An issue of heuristic interest or fascination surrounds this hypothesis. Rogers and Dearing (1988) placed over 140 empirical agenda-studies on a time line spanning the period 1972-1987. McCombs affirmed that the prototypical model's use of surface cognitions instead of the more

troublesome category of attitudes made agenda-setting model quite attractive (1981a, 1981b). Surface cognitions are much like content, and that made it easier to match isomorphic entities of content and cognition in the research design (McLeod & Reeves, 1980).

The separation of cognition from attitude is something that takes place in a dependent variable or, at most, on the individual side of an exposure variable, and any facilitating change there may well have made this hypothesis attractive, but this study finds agenda-setting fascinating for the attention it first gave to the other side of mass communication process, and for the way this attention subsequently dispersed across a sea of smaller concerns.

Agenda-setting does not fascinate for the way it operationally treated content in audience research. It rather irritated. In the paradigmatic study (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) content offered was matched with content recalled by the researchers themselves--there was no operational concept of exposure in the survey data, merely a contiguous college community and an election campaign that made it reasonable to infer that, in the aggregate, exposure had occurred.

Considerable effort has since been expended improving upon this indirect means of inferring exposure. Stronger designs are now held to require a matching of contents perceived with contents offered, person by person (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). With increased attention to exposure has come increased interest in

- (1) the character of media agenda units, e.g., as issues versus events (McCombs, 1976; Shaw, 1977; Swanson, 1988),
- (2) the temporal character of individual exposure in relation to the presentation of the media agenda (Eyal & Winter, 1981; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), and

- (3) individual characteristics, other than the contents they could recall, that might be brought into exposure to explain individual differences in outcome variables (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; McCombs, 1976; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Weaver, 1984.

As agenda-setting has evolved from its simple prototypical design into a nuanced exploration of individual differences an interesting thing has happened. While there is general agreement that an agenda-setting effect occurs among media audiences in the aggregate, the finding is somehow taken for granted and a myriad of smaller avenues exhibiting minute changes in operationalization of exposure, in definitions of content categories, or in the incorporation of individual difference or social categorical contingencies, now overlay the original hypothesis and research design.

As happened when, in the presence of evidence of mass panic, Cantril and his colleagues wished to find out who did *not* panic as a result of the Orson Welles radio broadcasts of an invasion from Mars (1940), many contemporary agenda-setting researchers are intrigued with the possibility of separating individuals for whom the media sets the agenda from individuals who seem resistant to the process. A hypothesis with a sense of critical sharpness in its original form and context has, over time, lost that sharpness and, arguably, its theoretical direction. Beyond the aggregate effect, researchers now know that some people, in some settings, reproduce some parts of the media agenda (for certain issues or events), some of the time.

In another audience research context Carey and Kreiling (1974) lamented the aura of 'someness' that often permeated the literature.¹² (An outstanding contemporary example is the volume of studies of cultivation in Morgan & Signorielli, 1989). I share that attitude, but with agenda-setting I would like to try to work toward a more systematic

understanding of how this someness arises. I believe that mass media content and the absence of knowledge of mass communicating agency are involved.

What makes the original agenda-setting design interesting for this study, first, is the way it incorporated content into an argument about media power. If the inference strategies with referentially grounded content make it difficult, if not impossible, to implicate mass communicating agency, then it may be ventured that those who did not accept the idea of minimal media effects had been backed into a conceptual corner. Media agency was not easily seen through content's referents, but perhaps inferences could be made with the foggy domain of representational forms.

If so, agenda-setting was an ingenious hypothesis, as it proposed an influence process that depended on no particular set of referents. Media institutional presence and causal force was indicated by the *ranking* of issues and events and not their more substantive character. The prototypical research design not only split cognition from attitude but representation from referent. Viewed historically, it is as if the suspicious had accepted the challenging constraints of collective wisdom to turn collective wisdom on its head. If referents obscured media agency, and if prevailing notions of media agency were relegated to a domain of surface features of content like style or drama, then agenda-setting would promote a general idea of surface features through a ranked list of news stories to argue that the media were a general causal force. In such a context, the strong correlations between aggregate media and audience agendas found by McCombs and Shaw (1972) could be interpreted as promising and even provocative.

Collective wisdom was and is tenaciously active, however. The initial findings were closely scrutinized and frequently challenged in replication (see especially McLeod,

Becker & Byrnes, 1974).¹³ Scholars insisted that other things were theoretically interesting, such as the distinction between an 'issue' or an 'event' or, whether real-world indicators of content distortion might have something to do with the process (Funkhouser, 1973; MacKuen, 1981). Partial replications confounded theoretical synthesis and agenda setting became a field of research wherein knowledge of the literature became more important than the pursuit of important questions. The elegant prototypical model became a nuanced monster replete with wrinkles and warts denoting various classes of referents, representational twists and audience subjectivities, all found to alter the degree of association between media and audience agendas.

From the perspective outlined in chapter 1, the evolution of the hypothesis is more interesting than the hypothesis itself. How did the promising line of inquiry the prototypical model opened lose momentum? Certainly more is involved than the distribution of sensibilities as to what does or does not constitute an interesting empirical question.

Rogers and Dearing's recent and thorough review of agenda-setting research will be used to seek answers (1988). Written with both a sensitivity to collective wisdom and critical curiosity, it is a thought-provoking summary of two decades of research. Their main proposal is that the original hypothesis be expanded to include the agendas of policy-makers and political leaders and that the three resulting three agendas be more carefully synthesized. On the road to this conclusion they explore a number of research issues in detail, one of which refers to the original and unadorned research design where a media agenda was matched with an audience agenda. I will first reproduce the authors' discussion at that point in order to lay out an important version of the logic of collective wisdom. I will

use the perspective established in chapter 1 to find out, in empirical terms, what happened in agenda-setting's evolution from an elegant and promising hypothesis to a cloud of disorganized concerns.

Beginning with the idea that agenda-setting tests the degree which a ranked order of media contents can be reproduced in an aggregate list of topics recalled by audiences, Rogers and Dearing note a curious meta-analytic finding by Gandy (1982):

The McCombs and Shaw (1972) study aggregated the data on both the media agenda and the audience agenda into just five issue categories...What if a greater number of more precise agenda categories, say 20 or 120, had been utilized? Less information would have been discarded in the aggregating of both individuals' responses (about the public agenda) and mass media content. Unfortunately, "the strength of the correlations between public and media agendas varies with the number of categories or items arranged in any list of priorities--the longer the list, the lower the correlation" (Gandy, 1982, p.6). And, unfortunately, the fewer the number of agenda items, the less useful the findings because of their highly aggregated nature (1988; p.574).

When representations and cognitions float free from referents and attitudes, the ensemble of agenda-setting studies produces a finding clearly identifiable in terms of the basic research design yet very difficult to interpret. Those who see in the design the possibility of demonstrating a powerful media force must either defend a small number of content categories or else come up with a theoretical account of mass communicator agency that would explain why correlations increased as the number of agenda categories

decreased. Neither long story has as yet effectively been told, but it is more informative, for present purposes, to see how those who may not believe the media are powerful have backed away from Gandy's curious finding.

Rogers and Dearing took a first and tentative step away from the finding in the cited passage itself when they referred to measurement theory through the concept of information. This argument is not fully developed in subsequent passages; it likely cannot be, as one would have to discover the underlying substance of content in order to speak of increased measurement precision. I will only note that this argument makes use of the metaphysical region of the analytic unknown and then moves quickly on. More interesting is a second argument the authors made using a notion of utility.

Why is high aggregation less useful and more aggregation more so? Again, recalling the expense of surveys and of reasonably sized content analyses, the authors seem to be making an argument for utility in a proper information-theoretic sense: The more finely one records the natural utterances of individuals or the representational units in content, the more flexibility other researchers will have when they use the dataset. Choice domains are maximized for later researchers. Choice structures in the real world refer to mass communicating agents and to audiences, however, and these domains remain unaddressed. But let us consider the researcher-based argument first.

Scholars already possess means to achieve high levels of disaggregation from publicly available datasets and from public archives of mass media content, though content-oriented audience researchers do encounter limitations in national cross-sectional surveys (Becker, McCombs & McLeod, 1975). The utility argument may be partially appropriate if intended to guide future data

collection practices. However, Gandy's finding refers not to data collection but to something that emerges meta-analytically, conceivably from repeated recordings of the same audience utterances or media contents. If one is after 20 or 120 content categories, means are presently available--they exist in the heads of scholars appropriately sensitized to the consequences of higher numbers. They need merely take the time to inspect the data and find small representational units and corresponding real-world referents to produce such numbers. Do scholars need more categories than the large numbers they could now produce if they wanted to?

I can give no clear answer. Researchers are often called upon to report findings of aggregate tendencies in a population or, as will be seen in chapter 3, a small number of content categories distributed across large temporal content domains. For many agencies consequences flow from the properties of aggregates and not from inspection of individual differences. Political candidates win or lose elections despite the diversity of interpretation of their images and messages. Commercial media firms have found substantial utility from highly abstract and aggregated data in the form of audience ratings, so much utility, in fact, that they may ignore the distinctions that Rogers and Dearing value (Turow, 1977). In short, there are many agencies clearly outside the academy who ask members of that community to aggregate, and the latter have benefitted substantially from their ability to do so.

Rogers and Dearing do not refer to these outside agencies or to the academy's relationship with them. Nor, after the initial gesture given in the cited passage, do they develop the argument for academic community utility in information theoretic terms. Instead, they make a plea for disaggregation based on a subjective norm or value that we, in our scholarly positions, should have or hold. For us,

that is, 120 content categories should be better than 20, and 20 should be better than 5.

This is so, they argue, because a larger number of content categories gives researchers more information on audience subjectivity itself. "Subjectivity," they assert, "which acknowledges the different backgrounds and experiences that each person uses to interpret mass media messages, suggests that the public must be disaggregated by attributes as much as is feasible"(p. 574). One of these attributes is the audience agenda, which is better represented through 120 categories than through 5.

Insofar as the issue is really the acknowledgement of audience subjectivity, I not only agree with Rogers and Dearing but I will make it a central issue in this study's concluding chapter. It is precisely what is missing when scholars speak too long to each other and not enough with nonscholars. However, survey-based audience research in general, and agenda-setting in particular, seems a highly inappropriate vehicle for such acknowledgement. In the first place, disaggregation can destroy individual subjectivity faster than one can say 'postmodernism' when one focuses one's attentions not on individual cases in a dataset but on individual utterances recorded in each case. One may study cognitions related to crime stories for months, with existing datasets, without recreating or acknowledging concrete individual wholes represented by the totality of each row in a datafile. Indeed, insistence on the integrity of these rows would, if anything, impede data analysis and on the relationship between variables using parametric statistics, procedures that audience researchers use (and arguably need) to garner authority. Would vector constraints on their analyses be useful to them? It is doubtful.

Secondly, if a researcher really wanted to acknowledge individual subjectivity she would have to contemplate the actual pile of questionnaire sheets on her

desk or screen, one by one, and try to imagine the person. This is not a bad idea if a researcher has time and a good reason, but if her reason were really to acknowledge individual subjectivity she might quickly realize the general uselessness of her means: The actually interviewed subjects are no longer present, nor will they likely ever be encountered or recognized. They themselves will likely never read *Communication Research* or know the grace of her concern to acknowledge them. To whom, one might ask, is the act of disaggregating audience agendas supposed to count as an acknowledgement?

In other passages Rogers and Dearing insist that mass communication is a transactional process. They even venture that an epistemology of one-way causation threatens the validity of effects research in general. Their recommendation that scholars disaggregate audience data seems less a strategy for cross-communication between scholarly and lay publics and more a reflection of a normative theory of the press that sees our system as diverse marketplace of ideas from the outset. If one takes that perspective and watches a researcher use a small number of categories in his media and audience agendas, he will see the researcher sin twice: Diversity will be defined away by fiat and an empirical exchange phenomenon will be chopped in half.

To reassert individual subjectivity is to partially correct the transgression against this normative vision by encouraging more categories in the audience agendas, while to reassert the idea of marketplace interaction allows for the symmetrical expansion of content categories within the media agenda. When is the number high enough? It is difficult to determine but easy to feel. When the categories are few enough to produce findings of media power they are strange and uninterpretable. They cannot be used to confirm one's larger normative vision. If in the

process of confirming this vision one leaves a cloud of someness around a claim of *media* power, that cannot be helped. In any event, Rogers and Dearing propose the inclusion of policy agendas in future versions of the agenda-setting hypothesis, should one still be interested in issues of power: Policy will bring in questions of government agency.

This version of conventional wisdom is the most compelling and completely articulated one I have been able to find. It combines quick reference to the substance of content and uncertain recourse to individual differences to produce a design that would square with a vision of individual diversity, the marketplace of ideas, and concern about government.

Rogers and Dearing used their normative vision in masterful fashion to give order and sense to a literature that seemed to be losing direction as it accumulated nuanced empirical findings. The problem is that normative theory was brought in to fill an empirical gap in the theory at the precise point where agenda-setting was positioned to make its most salient claim. Instead of power demonstrated by the ability to reproduce the images people have in their heads (Lippmann, 1922), we somehow get diversity of content, acknowledgement of audience subjectivity and a vision of grand and equalizing exchange. All these things we already have as available normative notions. Are they real? Let us consider more closely how collective wisdom avoids this empirical question in the case of agenda setting.

We begin with two sets of representations, the same two presented by Gandy and criticized by Rogers and Dearing--the media and audience agendas in the basic agenda-setting research design. The media agenda can be seen on our immediate left and the audience agenda on our right. We can imagine that we have occupied our central observational position long enough to have observed various sets of these

representations, as if they had been presented to us on screens one set after another. From this position we immediately acknowledge collective wisdom. Different sets of agendas have different topical makeups and referents and are associated with each other to differing degrees. There is a potential for someness but there is more.

Looking to our right we hear a lot of activity and see the screen on which the audience agendas were projected disintegrate before our eyes. We can now see around, through and behind it. We notice a proliferation of concepts referring not to content but to the audience, to the classes of attitudes they possess, to their incomes, their position in the family, their education, social status, religious orientations, and so on. We even see concepts that begin with an individually felt need, move through the shredded screen of their words (mere cognitions) and force our attention back to the still-intact screen that faithfully projects the media agenda. Individual referents are being used to give substantive meaning to the stories on the media agenda screen and to locate causes of effects.

Regarding the tattered screen of the audience agenda one thing is certain: It was never meant to obscure the researchers' view of individuals. A theory proposing to allow their utterances to stand on their own would not withstand the pressure to explain the pattern of their representations through individual differences and socio-ecological contexts. If one cannot see 'midwife' in the observable traces of a person's utterance one pushes those utterances aside to directly observe the speaker, locates the speaker with other midwives or health workers and uses the occupational category to explain differences in the level of the agenda-setting effect obtained, perhaps for certain health-related topics. The screens are shredded and the search for cause is engaged--as long as one looks to the right.

What do we see when we now look back to our left? Topics, lots of them, listed in ranked orders, perhaps reordered here or more finely graded there, grouped here as 'issues, there as 'events' or 'information agenda,' indicating that someone has tried to free observation the vulgar two-dimensional space of the screen.

We also see some conceptual activity that draws our attention away from the screen. "I whole-heartedly agree with the...prescription that estimates of media agenda-setting be controlled for indicators of real-world developments," says Shanto Iyengar, because "Unless indicators of 'reality' are incorporated, agenda-setting effects are bound to be confounded with the effects of direct experience" (1988, p. 597).

The prescription consists in the grounding of content in its external referents, the very thing so brilliantly obviated in the original formulation of the agenda-setting hypothesis. If taken up, the question of media agency will once again be lost in a sea of referents to authoritative sources or criteria of newsworthiness. Media agency will remain lost, and the government or the (lay or professional) people will rise once more as alternative sources of causal force.

Looking back to our left, then, we see pristine screens of representation and sets of referents off to its left and right. There is no area behind, at least as we can see, no conception of media agency, no association of motives with content, either as they appear on the media agenda screen or as they might be conceived to give substantial meaning to the screen of audience representations.

If we wished to discover what was behind the screen of media representations we could, once again, read the institutional literature, but that would be tantamount to jumping over or moving around it, as looking back in the

direction of the audience from our institutional position we would now see nothing. The back of the screen would be in the way.

Alternatively, we could shred the media screen in a manner almost completely analogous to the way audience agendas are shred--in a search for agency, motive, and cause. To do so, however, we would literally have to rip the media agenda up so as to see behind it. Content would be a casualty, however, and it is not yet clear how to proceed when something other than content occupies the exogenous position in a model of causal inference.

Agenda-setting happens to be a hypothesis that places content on both sides of a middle observational position, and because of this position we can critique collective wisdom on empirical rather than normative grounds. The media may be a marketplace and diversity nice, but why the asymmetry? Why does collective wisdom shred the screen of audience representations but insist on an intact and externally valid screen of representations constituting the media agenda?

The simplest answer is that popular forms of content analysis make it difficult to pierce the screen. Patterns of referents associated with media content lead to the agency of government, of credentialed individuals making authoritative statements, or of lay individuals captured while enacting moments of human interest. The boldest recourse to the remaining domain of representational features, the agenda-setting hypothesis, exhibited only uneven interest in arguing for media power through patterns of representation. At present the literature leaves us completely in the dark as to how representations would be linked with a media agent, or even if there are such things as media agents at all (Reese, 1991; Becker, 1991).

By themselves, neither representational nor referential approaches to content seem capable holding mass

communicators in view. Yet perusal of the institutional literature suggests that they may be responsible for the constitution of the daily domain of public symbols, and thus at least partially implicated in theories of mass media effect.

It should be said that the referential and representational approaches discussed in detail in this chapter are both unsophisticated in their treatment of content. Maybe that lack of sophistication prevents successful specification of institutional causal forces. Maybe what is needed is a more flexible approach to content, one that somehow uses representation and referent more ambitiously to support a more complete (or at least more symmetrical) view of mass communication processes and effects. George Gerbner wagered on the existence of a more powerful approach to content, and it is to that approach that we now turn in chapter 3.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

¹I have found no example of effects research that might qualify as good by McQuail's criteria, and this is why I have extended his metaphor. It should be noted that Shoemaker and Reese have also called for a merger of content analysis and effects research (1990), and I take their exhortation to mean that they, too, had not found a good marriage. (Local, topically bounded studies are an exception; I discuss what I believe to be some of the best of these in chapter 4.) They do mention cultivation research (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), and I agree that it comes close, but the Annenberg team interpreted mass media content in ways and for a purpose other than those we normally find in content analysis (see especially Gerbner, 1958a). I have found it necessary to discuss their approach and especially their purpose in a separate chapter.

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) offer their own plan of action for incorporating content into audience research. It is based on Altschull's idea that motives leave their traces in content (1983). Since motives here refer to mass communicators and other social agents, I will briefly discuss the merits of this plan after I introduce a working set of mass communicators in chapters 9 and 10. I know of no general audience research program that uses this motive-tracing strategy.

Cultivation theory apart, it is disconcerting to read so many assertions of the primacy of content but so little work with it in effects research proper. Becker, McCombs and McLeod (1974) blame the national scope of general service cross-sectional surveys for a good part of this absence. The chapter will suggest that many other things stand between the idea of a merger and its effective realization.

²To be fair, I have found no other essay in the audience research literature that lays out the foundational matters to which McQuail at least alludes. I take "foundations" to be metaphor for empirical reality, and Krippendorff's recent work focuses on epistemology (1991). My characterization of the McLeod and Reeves model of causal inference as a "forward model" stems mainly from its almost total lack of discussion of what precedes it and gives it substantial meaning as a stimulus. They do say this: "What is actually needed is a coding scheme whose categories are isomorphic with...the dimensions and categories used to measure the effect on the audience and the process by which the effect is received" (1980, p. 255). This assumes that only one referential field is relevant to the specification of

content--that comprised of the cognitions of lay individuals. The only real problem, these authors suggest, is to ensure that the professional cognitions of content analysts match those of lay individuals. Not only does this forward referent disrupt the temporal order of their model (one specifies content in a step 1 with reference to what one hopes to find in a step 3, so that content is not really exogenous), but its logical outcome, well on the way to realization in audience research, is the disappearance of any causal locus beyond the individual body (see chapter 7).

³There is one empirical sense where a general claim for high measurement levels makes eminent sense. This happens when we include the community of researchers as part of the object defined by the notion of information--in this case as the choosing agent. If variables in a dataset have large numbers of categories, then other researchers, using the same dataset for secondary analysis, will have more variable specification options open to them. For example, one can make any number of dichotomies, trichotomies or a continuous variable with television viewing time if the original observations were taken in units of minutes or hours of the twenty-four hour day. If original observations are instead taken in gross amounts of time, say light- versus heavy-viewing, then other researchers cannot decide to use the viewing variable in this dataset in as many other ways. This is an important matter, especially for those who work with general purpose national, cross-sectional datasets, but it made relevant empirically only because time is amenable to finely graded divisions of known magnitude. I will say more about time in chapter 6. Here I am saying that one cannot begin by assuming the same thing for content, so that notions of efficient measurement practice, even with scholarly usage in mind, are beside the point.

⁴It may well be that individual audience members bring their motives, memories and resources to the sites where they will encounter mass media content. It is likely, that is, that meaning is generated through one's interaction with a text. But, formally and also empirically speaking, the moment of individual contact with mass media content has not yet arrived. A researcher specifies the stimulus much as a media agent must prepare content for dissemination. By clearing the audience from the referential domain, we can see content as it must be contemplated, at least momentarily, by a professional observer.

⁵I offer this topical framework, including the concept of news, at face value. I cannot define news generally or in relation to other total content-type categories--the reason for my reticence is given in chapter 9--nor will I attempt to reproduce a full set of referents and coding strategies that might be used in conjunction with crime. The reader may

wish to consider the position I use to set these matters aside: I assume a competent content analyst who is able to define her materials in ways both adequate for her research purposes and recognizable as such by those who see content as a necessary part of effects research, and at the same time I assume I am not among those who would immediately recognize the validity of the procedure. I am like an outsider who, not quite understanding the things he sees, nevertheless wishes to withhold judgment until a more comprehensive understanding of the situation becomes available.

⁶The original developers of the technique of message discrimination, the subject of chapter 4, thought that they had come close to this ideal (Miller, 1974; Palmgreen, Kline, & Clarke, 1974). However, at least as they described it, the technique did not match audience evidence of content perceived with a separate estimate of content offered for perception. In fact, one of the original purposes the authors proposed was that the technique would replace content analysis entirely--an attractive proposition given the resource requirements and problematic empirical status of content for audience research.

⁷I will work with social structural forces in chapters 8 through 10, but I will not try to move these forces through a prism of content. In different theoretical contexts Reese (1991), Shoemaker and Reese (1990, 1991), and Altheide and Snow (1988) believe that the force of mass communicating agents can be established through more careful integration of knowledge of professional communicator practices and contexts with features of content. I do think that usable variation can be had in this way.

⁸In semiotic terms, one might say that organizational and professional practices may leave traces in representation, but these representations only weakly index this behind-the-scenes activity, if indeed they index the activity at all.

⁹Another possibility, essayed by Hovland and his associates (1953), is to posit a dimension of credibility adhering in varying degrees in media personnel. It is difficult to envision an argument moving from the credibility of personnel to distortions in content frequencies, but, more importantly, a credibility variable is usually developed and tested through, if not actually taken in surveys from, individual assessments. This would involve defining a dimension of content in terms of individual cognition, a strategy that this chapter does not consider.

¹⁰Schudson's (1978) account of the rise of objectivity in U.S. journalism may also be read as the rise of a compelling problem for the audience researcher in search of variation.

Objectivity has also been characterized as a strategic means to deflect attention (of everyone, not just researchers) away from the actions of mass communicating organizations and their employees (Tuchman, 1972). Ignoring the notion of strategy or the variation in source attribution practices that one could only see historically, the researcher who works carefully with content is left with little mass-communicator related empirical material to work with, as media employees have been rather successful at developing means to make themselves and their organizations disappear.

¹¹Gitlin (1978) provides an interesting account of the genesis of the limited effects model and a sense of lay experience of the social upheavals in the 1950s and 1960s and their relation to mass communication in *The Whole World is Watching* (1980).

¹²It should be noted that Carey and Kreiling (1974), like Blumer (1959), see the principal problem of audience research to be inattention to content, a term they use interchangeably with "culture." For them content is something like a synthetic glue that will somehow impede the fragmentation of grand visions that they notice in survey-based audience research. It is true that audience researchers have barely incorporated content into their research designs, and are thus open to charges that point this out. However, the massive character of the empirical object that audience researchers attempt to observe makes closer attention to content infeasible. Since 1974 textual approaches have increased in popularity in the United States and audience researchers have been placed in the increasingly unproductive position of paying lip service to content while they observe something else. (A sustained discussion of content analysis had to use a hypothetical example.) My position is that content simply be given up so that a path can be cleared for aspects of the object that can be more effectively observed and systematically theorized. "Someness" is a problem, but content is not the solution.

¹³See also Benton & Frazier (1976); Iyengar & Kinder (1987), Weaver (1984); Erbring, Goldenberg & Miller (1980); Weaver, Graber & McCombs (1981); Behr and Iyengar (1985); Iyengar (1988); and Swanson (1988).

CHAPTER 3

STRUCTURALIST APPROACHES TO CONTENT

Many approaches to content use concepts like representation or referent but give them different names and embed them in different theoretical structures (Fiske, 1982; Fiske & Hartley, 1978; Newcomb, 1953; Ogden & Richards, 1936; Saussure, 1974). Where chapter 2 used representation, referent, and the awkwardly expressed idea of an adequately grounded or externally valid representation, a semiotic scheme makes use of the terms 'signifier' and 'signified' along with the term 'sign' to more elegantly denote the pair.¹ When something other than a straightforward objectifying strategy is used in this chapter, semiotic terminology will be employed. A representation will be called a signifier and a referent a signified.

Structuralist approaches enable and even encourage one to specify meanings in a given body of content that content analysis might pass by. Students of language have constructed synchronic rules of grammar and syntax that explain the 'behavior' of language as an abstract system (Giddens, 1987; Saussure, 1974). They allow one to work with meanings not immediately visible *within* (preposition) a domain of signifiers and *its* (possessive, referring to 'domain' and not 'signifiers') more obvious signifieds. Students of language-in-use have discovered further properties of sign systems (Fiske, 1982; Newcomb, 1952; Ogden & Richards, 1936; Rochberg-Halton, 1986), most importantly, meanings that emerge through the interplay of signifiers and signifieds or pairs of signifieds.

For our purposes it is not important to assess the general internal consistency of structuralist approaches to language or to enter into discussion of its various

contemporary forms (see Eagleton, 1986; Giddens, 1987; Jameson, 1972; Rochberg-Halton, 1986). Rather, it is important to see at the outset that structuralism, like content analysis, makes content into an object domain, but it does so much more ambitiously than does content analysis. Both signifiers and signifieds can be made into objects and the objects juxtaposed to make discoveries. Though its original object was and is still largely language, the process implicates other objects in the real world, so that by associating signifiers and signifieds one can not only generate linguistic, semantic and pragmatic language rules but also meanings related to objects in the real world that may not be made immediately visible with simpler objectifying strategies. This potential for revealing the unseen will loom large in the discussion of cultivation analysis.

Structuralism can quickly take one on metaphysical quests for meanings below, behind or between the lines of a text. It can also lead to discoveries of emergent meanings of undoubted validity: 'Foggy' is a signifier with obvious signifieds; 'Bottom' is another signifier with its own set of signifieds, yet 'Foggy Bottom' is a new sign with emergent meanings difficult to predict when the original signs are considered separately, but difficult to deny if one knows the Georgetown area of Washington, D.C. The example may be trivial, but it does suggest the existence of a range of structurally derived meanings that might be acceptable to traditional audience research.

It should be noted that structuralist theory is not usually found in the content-related work of audience research. The forward model (McLeod & Reeves, 1980) works with isomorphic pairs of meanings; van Dijk's efforts to make structuralist methods more familiar to audience research (1983) have not had much success. Perhaps the need to relate content to audience perception through short

visits with individuals has kept audience research from straying too far from representations closely indexed to easily identified referents.

Though potentially acceptable, structuralism's infrequent use in audience research would have allowed it little more than passing mention in this study were it not for two things. One, structuralism informed what has arguably been the most famous, if not most important, program of research into mass media effects developed during the last three decades: cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Signorielli & Morgan, 1989). Two, structuralism was employed in cultivation theory to specifically address the major weakness in content analysis discussed in chapter 1: namely, the absence of mass communicating agency in independent variables. Let us consider how cultivation research tried to improve causal inference with this ambitious approach to content.

Cultivation Theory

The context of cultivation theory's emergence roughly mirrored that of agenda-setting. It was a challenge to that collective wisdom which had proclaimed limited media effects when lay experience suggested otherwise (Berelson, 1959; Gerbner, 1958a, 1989; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Klapper, 1960).

As an important and widely publicized challenge to the idea of limited effects, cultivation theory invited close criticism, first by media industry representatives (Coffin & Tuchman, 1972-1973a, 1972-1973b; Blank, 1977a, 1977b) and later by the broader scholarly community (Hirsch, 1980, 1981; Newcomb, 1978), resulting in a large literature that still manages to engage questions of fundamental interest despite the inevitable vagaries produced by partial replication, misunderstanding and the field's march toward someness.

I will broach this literature twice. The second

section of chapter 6 will use Hirsch's critique of the audience research component of cultivation analysis to explore properties of time in mass media exposure (1980; 1981). The present chapter centers on what cultivation scholars called "message systems analysis," or the way these scholars gave meaning to the flow of content that would later arrive at and be witnessed by individuals in their homes.

As explained in chapter 1, this study interested in how the message system is prepared as an independent variable or stimulus domain, and in how it functions in one-way causal inquiry. As with content analysis, the structuralist approach to content taken by cultivation scholars brings an immediate problem of polysemy: There are too many plausible signifieds and, now, latent meanings, for a given signifier, and causal theory must be brought in to delimit inquiry. Structuralism seems to force this problem more uncomfortably into the foreground--it opens the door to regions of the semantic unknown a bit too widely for some tastes--but there may be good reason to open this door.

In the last chapter the interplay of causal theory with representations grounded with straightforward empirical care revealed a number of problems that, on those same cautious grounds, suggested that content analysis might not work well in audience research. I touched upon well-known problems: the vagaries of stimulus size, sampling and uncontrolled variation in referential domains. I believe these problems, if laid out in one place, should suffice to give the would-be content analyst/audience researcher pause, but I did not belabor the issues as I also believe that the infrequent use of content analysis in audience research speaks more eloquently than I can in tacit acknowledgement of these problems.

In passing these matters by my aim was to reach a point where I could discuss content analysis in relation to

this study's central problem--how to observe an object comprised of both mass communicators and audiences in causal inquiry (Figure 1.1). I focused on how the use of manifest contents and their obvious referents worked to make mass communicating agency difficult, if not impossible, to observe.

It is this central problem that makes me take up the matter of content stimuli again. One could not quite find a media agent with content analysis, but media agency is precisely what cultivation scholars, and particularly George Gerbner, sought with their more flexible approach to content. The concern of this chapter is to assess the degree to which that quest for media agency was successful in this important program of research. My claim is that it was not.

In the 1958 article in which Gerbner claimed that content was the coin of communication exchange, he also gave the general outline of a program of research he would pursue with consistency for the next three decades. Positing the importance of content much as would McLeod and Reeves two decades later (1980), Gerbner indicated that he was not going to take the currency at its face value. There was more to mass media content than standard content analyses could uncover. What more? Quoting Lowenthal (1950), Gerbner indicated that "objective elements of the social are produced and reproduced in the mass media" (1958a). He went on to define "the social" as it related to mass communication:

Aside from the formal, conventional "message," *mass media content bears the imprint of the concrete circumstances of its creation.* This includes such things as external outlook and the internal dynamics of the producing industry; its relationship to competitors; its control over resources, facilities of production, and distribution; the position of its decision makers

in the industrial structure; their relationship to audiences, markets, advertising sponsors. Out of these come a series of managerial assumptions both implicit and rationalized--reflected in large systems of content, and performing some aspects of its perception. *The social determinants of the culture industry thus find their way into the consequential meaning of the material. They are expressed not so much in conventional forms and "messages" as through patterns of selection, omission, juxtaposition, through the way things are looked at* (1958a, p.90. Emphasis added).

The passage brought together many major lines of thought from the mid-1900s--Frankfort School culture critique (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979), the sociology of Mills (1959), the organizational notions of March and Simon (1958)--and, against the grain of conventional wisdom, centered critical attention on the mass media as a social institution. It was a far-reaching programmatic statement burgeoning with an intellectual power which Gerbner would develop and refine in later years.

I am concerned with the idea marked in the italicized passages. The claim is that elements of the social could be found in content. I am particularly interested in seeing how Gerbner would construct consequential meanings relating to the list of referents contained in the passage--the structures and imperatives whose grand and singular referent seems to be the mass communication industry.

After this initial statement Gerbner left a trail of studies of media and content themes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He found elements of the social in his studies of magazine romance articles, the world press, domestic news, and media fiction and drama (1958b; 1959; 1961; 1964; 1966), each indicating ways in which consequential meanings

may have been conveyed by institutions of social power.

He had little problem finding elements of the social in these works, but he may have had more trouble synthesizing them, whether as a vision of the social totality or of the identity and aims of the mass communication industry. There were too many elements of the social in too many places, conveying too many different messages to different audiences.

Still, his efforts were bearing some fruit. His work was critical and systematic, and by the mid-1960s he was in a position to articulate his sense of the direction of the field as a whole. He wrote optimistically in 1967 of the communication field's maturation, noting that it now accepted more powerful and consequential analyses of content. What should the maturing field do with this power? "A central concern of the study of communications," Gerbner wrote in concluding his essay, "is the production, organization, composition, structure, distribution and functions of message systems in society" (1967). This essentially repeated the program laid out ten years earlier. Once again the mass communicator stood as the grand social referent and, once again, it remained a rather sprawling vision of the maturing field's central concerns. If the field were really to mature, one might have argued, a more precise focus would likely have to be found.

It appears in retrospect that Gerbner and his associates found a more parsimonious focus in the medium of television in the mid-1960s. Television's impact on children had been subject of a major study at the beginning of the decade (Schramm, Lyle & Parker, 1961) and yet another major study was in production at the time he wrote his summary essay on the field (Baker & Ball, 1969; Surgeon General's Report, 1971).

Beginning in 1967, Gerbner and his associates at the University of Pennsylvania began to perform quantitative

analyses of evening prime-time and Saturday morning children's commercial television content. This "message systems analysis" would be replicated yearly and expanded thematically through the 1980s.

Before looking more closely at the message system, let me point out that nothing in his early programmatic statements suggested that his research would develop around a single medium. If anything his work to the mid 1960s had favored print. On the other hand television had broadly diffused in the decade after 1958, penetrating many households and many hours in the household days and evenings (Robinson & Converse, 1972; Robinson, 1977). The medium was part of a large industry, research support was available, and Gerbner's own program did need focus.

Whatever the confluence of circumstances, some time in the 1960s television became central. To study it would be to study the culture industry's structures, managerial imperatives and consequences of a piece, and not through a selection of topics in newspapers, magazines, film, and the broadcast media. "Television," Gerbner and Gross would write in 1976, was "the cultural arm of American society."

The arm, that is, of a singular body. We have here a glimpse of one of television's consequential meanings, and we will take up these meanings further below, but for now let me suggest that the statement also reflects a singular decision. Through television Gerbner had acquired a unifying focus for his structuralist efforts: to discern the outlines of that powerful social body in the consequential meanings of television content.

Between 1967 and about 1976, message systems analysis and cultivation theory were the same thing. Each year, the members of Gerbner's research team would obtain copies of a week's worth of evening prime time and Saturday morning network television content. They would then identify

and quantify three aspects of that content: violence, the demographic characteristics of perpetrators and victims, and the location of violent acts in story structure (e.g., whether the violent act was central to the story line or not). An act of violence was defined as the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon) against self or other on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing (Signorielli, 1989).

Violence and its demographic and story-positional context were considered to be among the most stable and pervasive features of entertainment television content. In the early 1970s the cultivation team reported that three quarters of all entertainment content contained some violence (Eleey, Gerbner, & Signorielli, 1972-1973a; 1972-1973b). They also noted that three quarters of all leading characters were male, that women were primarily cast in roles of romantic or family interest, that males did not have to be identified with a sexual interest but that women usually were (one in three men had been or intended to marry as compared with two in three women), that women made up one quarter of the television population while children made up fifteen percent, and that sixty percent of the identified occupations were proprietors, managers and professionals, that twenty percent of the occupations were associated with law enforcement and twenty percent all the rest. Violence was interwoven throughout this television world in definite ways:

Violence plays a key role in such a world. It is the simplest and cheapest dramatic means available to demonstrate the rules of the game of power. In real life much violence is subtle, slow, circumstantial, invisible, even impersonal. Encounters with violence in real life are rare, more sickening than thrilling. But in the symbolic world, overt physical motion makes

dramatically visible that which in the real world is usually hidden. Symbolic violence, as any show of force, typically does the job of real violence more cheaply and, of course, entertainingly (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 183).

The message systems analyses provided the kind of systematic observation and presentation of some of television's contents that had been missing up to that time. Newcomb, a critic of cultivation theory, graciously acknowledged their utility, noting that with Gerbner's studies one could replace impressionistic assessments of what television content contained with more precise--and occasionally surprising--quantitative expressions (1978). Even the television industry was ready to acknowledge their value--if only they did not come with social policy implications attached (Blank, 1977a, 1977b).

Early critics of message systems analysis noted the definition of violence allowed inclusion of both acts of nature and actions occurring in comedies, that the content sample itself was flawed because it did not include contents without story lines (like quiz shows), and that there was no audience data to help determine whether the system as described was the same as the system audiences perceived (Coffin & Tuchman, 1972-1973a, 1972-1973b; Blank, 1977a, 1977b). Concerning audiences, the idea these critics promoted was that even if television content were violent, much of that violence might not have consequences, so that one would have to separate the consequential from the inconsequential before making any general conclusions about the importance of violence in television content.

The Annenberg team did not respond well to the stimulus sampling thrust of these criticisms. The reason the analysis included contents with story lines and excluded news, commercials and game shows was given by stressing the power of story-telling forms (Eleey, et al., 1972-1973a,

1972-1973b; Gerbner, 1989). On the other hand, no one using content in audience research has or likely could respond well to such a challenge, and Newcomb, an expert in story lines proper, was inclined to grant privileged status to this form and to acknowledge presence of violence in it (1978). Insofar as his position can be read to speak of content alone (and not audience perception), he merely noted that there were other things besides violence in television stories. As in chapter 2, I will pass on the issue of stimulus sampling--the topic has been brought up by many and there seems to be little one can do about it empirically.

As for the definition of violence and the inclusion of natural events and slapstick scenes in tallies of violent acts, the Annenberg team's response was strong and interesting. Violence in humorous settings may be meaningful, they said, and arguably more so than in dramatic plots (Eleey, et al., 1977a-1977b). At the time the network was discounting the meaningfulness of violence in humorous settings, one of them was circulating a pamphlet to educators stressing the idea that children learned from these materials (Gerbner, et al., 1977a), an idea available within the broadcast industry since the early audience studies of Herzog (1941, 1944) and Wolfe and Fiske (1949). Particularly interesting was their response to the claim that naturally occurring phenomena and accidents should not count in the tallies of violent acts. "...there are no accidents in fiction. The author invents (or the producer inserts) dramatic disasters and 'acts of nature' for a purpose" (Gerbner, et al., 1977a, p. 282). In other words, mass communicating agency was omnipresent.

Just what was television content and, within it, what was to count as violent? Message systems analysis provided its answer, and these early industry challenges aimed to undermine its validity. Attempts to do so by quibbling about sampling procedures and definitions of

violence did not accomplish much, but recourse to audience perception would remain a compelling matter, especially as the debate moved more squarely into academic circles (Gunter, 1981; Slater & Elliot, 1982; Wober, 1978). The quick response to a global claim that television content was violent was that violence did not matter if it were not so perceived--individual agency, in other words, was omnipresent (chapter 7).

The Annenberg team did not have or use audience data during the early years, but they would later, and in the meantime they consolidated their description of television's content by producing and refining violence and risk indices (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, Gerbner, et al., 1977a, 1977b; Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan, & Jackson-Beeck, 1979). In doing so they laid out their epistemological position on what the combination of content analysis and audience data would later entail.

They stressed the stability of television's violent and demographically strange content within their sample domains and over time (Gerbner, et al., 1977a, 1977b; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980b; see also Signorielli, 1986, 1989). They also defended their production of violence constructs as weighted combinations of various violence features. Violence indices as constructs, they suggested, should be accepted as just as valid as other indices, and they offered GNP, weather, and employment indices as examples. "The usefulness of any index is precisely that it combines measures of different aspects of a complex phenomenon. One *must* add apples and oranges if one wants to know about *fruit*" (Gerbner, et al., 1977a, p. 282). Unclear, however, was just what "fruit"'s grand referent would be: television's total content, society's cultural arm, or some other notion of the social totality.

Rather than review just what was an apple and what an orange in message systems analysis, I would like to

emphasize two points. One, the Annenberg team was sensitive to the fact that there was a complex phenomenon to be captured in the first place--the culture industry's structure and imperatives (Gerbner, 1958a, 1967). A space for this broad social reality was most clearly kept open with their intriguing insistence that even the most minute features of dramatic content were there for a purpose (Gerbner, et al., 1977a). Much of their work in the 1960s may be understood as simply preparing content for a role as a stimulus in audience research. However, at least at Gerbner's hand, quantification's tendency to make one think 'forwardly' about the audience and lifespace would not hinder the continuing quest 'backward' for the social agent that stood behind television content. It may not have been love of quantification but need for the authority provided by quantification that moved the Annenberg team to devote their attention and resources to television content's careful and increasingly systematic description. They would need the attention brought by that authority to tell their social story. That social story, in turn, would make the message system substantially more than its simple categorical tallies.

Secondly, in defending their careful, stand-alone content analyses they gave the general outlines of what their epistemological position on audience research would be. Addressing the absence of audience data, the Annenberg team responded by saying that in general, audience research made overquick recourse to the exigencies of audience perception when what they should rather be concerned with was the definition of the stimulus (Gerbner, et al., 1977a, 1977b). This point should be stressed:

Everyone would agree with Coffin and Tuchman that a vital step in the development of any rating system would require "research designed to discriminate between 'harmful' and 'harmless'

[television] stimuli (p. 19)." But there is a basic confusion running through much of the current discussion about a rating system. It is the confusion between research on the effects of televised violence and the reliable determination of violent action in television programs. The latter can provide the basis for research about the role of symbolic functions of dramatic violence in real-life conceptions and behavior, *but not the other way around* (Eleey, et al., 1972-1973a, p. 30, emphasis added).

What was the source of confusion? Well, first the industry and later the academy would confuse effect with cause by passing quickly over the domain of causal forces extrinsic to the individual to seek consequential structures of individual perception and cognition which could then themselves be posited as direct or contingent causes (McLeod & Reeves, 1980; Hawkins and Pinegree, 1989). What the Annenberg team held out for, and what makes their project so interesting for this study's purposes, was an independent variable that was both meaningful and independent from individual cognition. When the time came to do audience research, they pointed out, one should have a notion of cause ready for examination with audience data.

Of course, beginning in the 1970s and continuing to the present the Annenberg team would include audience and other real-world data in their research program, and together these three sources of data would be combined in a theory of television's power to cultivate enduring and global effects. The actual link between the message system and audience cognition and behavior would be made with an exposure variable made up of the category of television and individual viewing time--content itself was not included on the extra-individual side. This variable will be the subject of the last section in chapter 6. For now it is important to

note that the Annenberg team aimed at a reliable description of television content in general. They insisted that over time its message was generally the same, so that measures of viewing time would indicate how much of that general message the individual had actually witnessed (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Signorielli, 1986).

The stability of television's meaning over time has been much criticized (Gunter, 1988; Hirsch, 1980, 1981; Newcomb, 1978; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; Slater & Elliot, 1982). This criticism generally focuses on either properties of exposure time or on topic- or message-specific evaluations made by individuals (e.g., is violence actually perceived as real, and what effects flow from this determination?). That is also to say that most criticism ignored the very point that the Annenberg team held and stressed repeatedly over the years--that there was a causal force to be specified, not in terms of the individual mind or ecological circumstances, but in terms of the social power of television, which could and should be discerned in the evenly flowing consequential meanings of its content.

Furthermore, both the construct character of the violence index and other claims we will soon encounter corresponded to the Annenberg team's view that one should not seek simple isomorphisms between objects identified in a domain of content and objects taken from audience recall:

...why not relate symbolic violence to fear? To learning how to be a victim? To feelings of panic or power? Or to the peaceful acceptance of violence?

Why not assume that by demonstrating power and differential risks in life, violent symbolic portrayals accomplish the tasks of real-life violence in a cheaper and more entertaining way?

...It is obvious that validity in

communications research cannot be assumed to rest in a naive semantic correspondence between a symbol and a certain arbitrarily selected type of behavior. To do so is to beg the very question that communications researchers should try to answer. That question is: What types and ranges of conceptions and behaviors (rather than naive semantic equivalents) do symbolic representations in fact cultivate? (Eeley, et al., 1972-1973b, pp. 34, 35)

It should be obvious that even in posing questions of cause and effect in general terms and with data cast with painstaking objectivity, the Annenberg team was seeking the generally malevolent while passing the potentially prosocial by, and their project could and has been attacked to some degree on this account (Newcomb, 1978). More important for this study, however, are the research design implications of this general position: Does television content have a stable social meaning, and does that meaning march stably into households over time?

The Annenberg team claimed that specifications of content need not be identical with those of effect. One may posit a stream of violent acts distributed predictably among a population of television contents at predictable points in the narrative, but when one reaches audiences with surveys one need not ask about these things directly.² One may instead gain more general measures of anomie or fear, which can then be associated with television viewing time (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

But this conveys only half the story of indirection in combining the message system and audience research--the lesser half. The relationship between manifest content and the social reality that lay behind it would also lack isomorphism. Though I have not seen the defense made in the cultivation literature, one could say that if one did

not need to match objects in content and cognition, one might also eschew their matching in the space between production and display (see also Shoemaker, 1987; and Shoemaker & Reese, 1991).

A second design implication was this: Whatever story--and, in this design, it would have to be a story--one would tell about the social reality that lay behind television content, it would also have to be the same over time. In the absence of any exposure variable actually combining consequential meanings of television content with individual time, one would have to read the texts of cultivation research articles for the meanings allegedly conveyed to individuals in time's uniform flow.

Even accepting the degree of reliance on the interpretive authority of researchers built into this design, one could still insist on *one story*. While one might accept--at least for argument's sake--the idea that there might be social power not directly indexed in manifest content (Gerbner, 1958a; Eeey, et al., 1972-1973b; Gerbner, et al., 1977; Gerbner & Gross, 1976), one could (and can) more aggressively insist on stability of social meanings given in the articles themselves, because those stories arose from an assumption of a stable temporal flow of causal force.

This chapter sets aside questions of stimulus sampling--it is an endemic problem for all research with content in audience research, and it is rather beside the point of cultivation theory--, individual cognition and exposure time. The latter two issues fall to the wayside once we accept the Annenberg team's epistemological position. In my view that position reflects the logic of simple, one-way causation. It seems not only acceptable but indeed necessary if one is to pursue questions of effects with mass media causes.

In setting these matters aside we reach a point

where we can follow the crucial task that Gerbner and his associates set for themselves in their research program: the specification of a causal force in terms of television's consequential social meanings. At this point we must follow message systems analysis beyond its simple counts of violence and demography and into the social realms it attempts to apprehend structurally. It is now after the very same thing this study seeks: the reality of the mass communication process that exists to the left of the divide in Figure 1.1.

In what follows I employ a simple strategy. Given the historical location of the research cited and the kind of data that had been incorporated into cultivation theory by various times, I ask who the social agent is. I will argue that there is always an answer available, but that answer is different at different points in time, generally because different classes of data have been brought, bricolage fashion, into view. On measurement grounds, then, my argument will be that no single, stable meaning is actually available to associate with individual exposure time, but beyond that I will note, with some frustration, that even on looser interpretive grounds, we still do not know who the mass communicator is.

Let me begin with the early findings of a steady flow of violence in content (in Gerbner, 1969, 1972). Taken in themselves, they seem to have indicated the existence of a big, man-like entity with a megaphone shouting an unceasing warning: 'You had better behave, stay in your place, or suffer the consequences that you see in these stories.'

Incorporating the demographic characteristics of the television world into the interpretive field, I note that the image of the social agent changes. It is now more like the collectivity of upper middle-class and white males who dominate in society. The consequential message seems to

be that those who fall outside this stratum should defer to it or fall victim (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1981b). Interest in gender-related images conveyed by television content suggested a gendered mass communicating agent. Interest in race-related images suggested that gendered agent was white.

These meanings are easily available by interpreting the message system itself, though one may quibble with my less-than-careful rendering of them. I move quickly because the meaning of the message system would continue to evolve as other data were brought in. Adding real-world measures of incidence of violence and demographic context indicates that television's own world is a distortion, as the two sets of data do not correspond. Now the message is not one of a dominant stratum of white males giving voice to its own dominance, but of some more broad and singular agency that lay behind a distorted facade.³

To the earlier assertion that no feature of content was given without intention, Gerbner added his insistence that the overarching frame of television entertainment content was narrative realism, as if to emphasize the point that the facade was somehow intentionally faked while remaining real for the audience (1976). He called realism a general characteristic of western narrative. Accepting this speculation, however, means that the social agency responsible for the malevolent message system is not a big, man-like entity or a social stratum but western civilization itself, with television as its cultural arm (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; the theme is repeated in Gerbner, 1989). The agent is expanding in size and age.

The incorporation of audience data brought further changes in the meaning of the message system. Cultivation differentials were dependent variables that showed the degree to which television viewers took the frequencies they

experienced through television as real when they were in fact false (Gerbner, et al., 1981b). These mis-estimates of real-world frequencies were observed along with variables of anomie and alienation, and together they were mapped back into the message system as a new sets of signifieds (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). While the message given to the audience indicated general violence and real-world data indicated fakery, the audience's own responses indicated that they had perceived an isolating and scary message. The social agent was powerful, deceitful, big, and socially isolating.

When attempts to replicate findings of scariness and anomie partially failed, the Annenberg team produced the concepts of mainstreaming and resonance, the point of which was to explain unanticipated differences in outcomes among some subgroups (Doob and Macdonald, 1979; Gunter and Wober, 1983; Hughes, 1980; Gerbner, Gross, Martin & Signorielli, 1981).⁴ The message was still scary, distorted and isolating--but now only to a degree. The grand social agent was now a deadly serious faker who could show constraint and, in a curiously Durkheimian way, be a causal force for sad but social integration.

Finally, when cultivation analysis was applied to political orientations in the 1980s, we see that the centralizing and distorting character of the social agent was carried forward while its more immediate scariness was played down. The message system now suggested the existence of a social agent that encouraged independent (really anomic) political self-identifications alleged to be moderate but actually right of political center (Gerbner et.al., 1984). With the concept of mainstreaming and the findings of distributions of political cognitions, the social, whatever it is, was, through the arm of television, herding everyone into a muddled ideological middle.

Over time the meaning of the message system has maintained elements of straightforward distortion and

manipulation but it has developed nuanced undertones of a less directly coercive or evil hegemonic force. The evolution will not likely stop there. "While cultivation analysis has already clearly moved beyond violence, the range of issues and dimensions that may be fruitful areas for cultivation analysis will continue to expand" (Morgan & Signorielli, 1989, p. 30).

Did the message system "bear the imprint of the concrete circumstances of its creation" (Gerbner, 1958a)? Yes and no.

If by "concrete circumstances" one means the circumstances of the agencies responsible for the production television content, the answer is no. Over time the image of social agency in cultivation theory seemed to vibrate across a conceptual space marked on one side by media firms (the content analysis was of the entertainment fare of the three U.S. networks; it was always the product of intention) and on the other by the power of a socio-historical totality.

This space remains heuristically compelling--there is likely agency somewhere there--but it was never recognizably specified. Notions of media institutional structure and process and of the relationship between media and society abounded in the theoretical sections of the Annenberg team's empirical articles much as we should have expected in a design with such heavy interpretive requirements, but just which of those structures were relevant was so vague and changing that the Annenberg team themselves may have got lost. They could not make use of a definite understanding of social structural differences that may have influenced uneven findings of effects in other countries (Doob & McDonald, 1979; Gunter, 1981; Wober, 1978). They also had trouble fixing consequential social meanings within the U.S. Hughes' reading of the meaning of social agency in cultivation theory led him to predict that, by the theory, heavy television viewers would support U.S.

involvement in foreign affairs. Cultivation researchers responded by saying they predicted the opposite outcome (Hughes, 1980; see also Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Gross & Jeffries-Fox, 1978), but, unfortunately, there was room in their social structural visions for both outcomes.

The concrete circumstances of the message systems production were never successfully worked into the theory and fixed; they remained tucked away within much broader categories of the social, resulting in a vision of agency in the mass communication process that was both expansive and, like a hurricane, unobservable in its center. Despite the decision to focus an enduring research program on one medium and one message system, social agency defied singular specification. Even the simplest question one could ask about a stable feature of television's message system--why all the violence?--is given response in words that diffuse critical attention across a vast social totality. One is left with the nagging notion that there may well have been some much more immediately located and less majestically social agency involved in the production of the message system, an agency whose story either did not get told or got told and then lost in a sea of social stories.

Since, as Chaffee recently indicated (1991), audience research is inclined to accept only the individual as its primitive term and the living room as its ready empirical domain, any lack of clarity as to who the social agent is and what it does will likely lead to its disappearance from audience research discourse. We need not even refer to other literatures to see this. The agenda for future cultivation research given by Morgan and Signorielli (1989) is striking for its absence of concern for social agency. It focuses on interpersonal and psychological processes associated with cultivation, types of individual effects, qualities of individual experience and orientation, and specific programs and genres. The only potentially

social categories in their agenda are "other media" and "new technologies" which they describe briefly, not in terms of industry structure or managerial imperatives (they do mention industry ownership concentration) but in terms of potential individual effects. That is to say that their vision of the future research agenda is undistinguishable from one we would expect to find for any audience researcher operating from the psychological social-psychological perspective that fixes its attention on the individual alone and seeks not only effects but the causes of those effects with phenomena in and around the individual body. The social agent has slipped out of the inference process.

In only one way can the message system be said to have born the imprint of the concrete circumstances of its creation. During Gerbner's reign at Annenberg the 1958 agenda continued to manifest itself in empirical articles through an insistence that the data be prefaced with or accompanied by interpretive gestures toward the social. Indeed, these were more than gestures.

Imagine once more that there is a screen to our left, full of representations constituting television's message system. Next to this screen we see a team of scholars headed by Gerbner. They show us its contents on a manifest level. They draw our attention to one or another of its field of signifieds and then move us back to the screen, where, we find with their help, there are now deeper social meanings to be had.

Though there was no theory to delimit and organize the realm of social signifieds to be associated with the message system's manifest content, there was a stable set of theorists, and because of them the cultivation program long stood as a unified whole. Morris (1938) claimed that a complete semiotic system consisted not only of signifiers and signifieds, but also of the position of the interpretant, the one who engages in the reading of signs.

What we may see in the cultivation program as a whole is the message system as starting point and a series of excursions outward from there into various realms of signifieds. While each particular excursion was an act of empirical research and challengeable as such, the Annenberg team occupied a position that enabled them to bring both positive and contradictory findings back to the site of the message system (which was not a layperson's home), there to reveal yet another aspect of its latent meaning. If violence was reproduced from audience memory, the finding was brought back, along with real-world data, to ratify the system's distorting character. When deviant findings were obtained among audience subgroups, they were immediately brought back to show the message system's unifying tendencies.

It is an interesting process to follow, but where has it lead?

Generally, it has led back to the position on mass media effects that Gerbner wished to leave, a return he could not prevent even among his own team after retirement (Morgan & Signorielli, 1989; Gerbner, 1989). That position combines blindness to social agency with an expanding interest in matters cognitive.

There are many lessons to be drawn from the history of this research program, but foremost among them for this study is to understand why the mass communicator disappeared once more. I believe there are two related reasons.

One, cultivation theory relied too strongly on content, both as repository of the meaning of the mass communication process and as the conveyor of causal force. As repository of meaning both manifest and structural, it allowed one move from the message system out and away to any number of fields of signifieds and then back.

Two, the process apparently stopped when the director of this movement stopped directing. The position of

an interpreting director may have become a double-edged sword. Through Gerbner's energy and vision we came to see things we may not have seen before, but, perhaps because his vision implicated two difficult regions simultaneously--the semantic and the social--the result was an evolving proliferation of social meanings. Content can have many social significands; an interpreter is hard-pressed to know when to stop making them or how to order what he has constructed. The problem becomes larger the larger the vision and motivation of the interpreter.

I have no doubt, for example, that the definition of media agency I will provide in chapter 9 could be found among Gerbner's commentaries on the culture industry. Yet it is not immediately visible as a definite, stable presence in the message system, and once we move away from that immediate visibility my notion of agency must fight among a crowd that includes such heavyweights as western civilization for a place in the discourse on the social that can be constructed in and through the message system.

As with any metaphysically charged region, the problem of the social is two-fold: One must find it but one must then delimit its meaning, as it is, like the analytic, the semantic and the subjective, a realm replete with images of fire and smoke. Cultivation theory accomplished the first task, and this was no small accomplishment for audience research, but it did not delimit the potential range of social meanings.

I do not yet see a way to accomplish the second task with content except by fiat. Dorothy showed us the little wizard behind the curtain by pulling it back--whence we no longer had to look at the curtain and imagine the force on our own. (Her interpretive agency, I might add, was minimal.) Cultivation theory leaves the curtain in place and speaks to us of monstrous forces behind. An element of mystery can add much to the telling of a good story, and

cultivation is, if anything, a story well told (Gerbner, 1989). But it was and is also intended to be a sober discourse with policy implications, and allusions to monstrous forces could, if successful, support monstrously unnecessary actions.

I said at the outset that the story of cultivation research was frustrating to follow. Given the tone of many critical articles I assume it has been somewhat so to others. Those feelings have been around for awhile, meaning that others have had a chance to use them to develop more objective theoretical positions on the course of this research program. As best I can tell, however, there is as yet no theoretical position within audience research that objectively expresses frustration with cultivation theory's inability to achieve its own central goal--to find the consequential social meanings of content whose grand referent is, as best one can tell from Gerbner's early programmatic essays, the culture industry.

I bring up the matter of frustration now because cultivation theory came close to addressing this study's central concern, yet it is only a moment in the broader field's own march toward the discovery of mass media effects. When a deviant line of inquiry mis-steps, the field returns to its familiar course, which is forward to the individual and then circular within the lifespace.

Knowledge of collective wisdom means that when we offer a negative assessment of the deviant line of inquiry we immediately know its corollary: With structuralism the social meaning of television content is too much a function of a professional individual's interpretive agency. The principal way audience research avoids this problem, therefore, is to refer to lay individual cognition. The next chapter reviews a means to do so with content, and later chapters will review means employing other dimensions of exposure. This is to say that Gerbner's general aim, which

is also my own when stripped of dramatic qualities, will recede from view for a while without my having reached any definitive conclusions as to what one could do to delimit the social in ways that would not depend upon the unique insights and energies of a professional interpreter.

Let me nevertheless suggest this much at this point. One might try specifying the mass communicating agent first, even before looking at content. Only then should one move on to repositories of meaning--if, indeed, one's knowledge of the mass communicator's existence or imperatives would allow one to claim that these repositories are an issue at all. If one has reason to believe that they are not, one might look for something else to place on the extra-individual side of exposure. If one believes that intention resides behind each moment of content, for example, but one cannot actually find a big, white-man-like entity with a megaphone, one might look at what can be found behind each moment before constructing a speaking entity and moving its force, muted between lines of manifest meaning, into the lifespaces.

Summary: Content as an Independent Variable Domain

Audience research is empirical and its theoretical framework generally causal. Within audience research content is considered the means through which individuals come into contact with the media and, through models generally voiced by the field, it constitutes the point of departure for research. To consider content as an independent domain we look at the point of departure itself, considering its objective qualities and how those qualities can function within a causal argument.

Looking at content itself, we find no empirical basis for accurate quantification. The idea that content may someday be objectifiable is marked by the term representation and by referring to a theory of information. Neither establishes the empirical character of content; both

indicate a level of faith in a region I have called the analytic unknown in deference to the frequent use of measurement theory and other procedural strategies to sidestep its empirical emptiness.

Content receives empirical backing when one marries the notion of representation to an empirical referent, to something that may be verified as existing outside of content and the immediate representations with which one works. An immediate problem here is that representations receive too much empirical backing, as one representation may have many referents.

Bringing the causal framework in to delimit the empirical scope of representations works imperfectly--exceedingly well if one believes that causal agency resides in government or in individual people, not at all if one is exploring the agency of media institutions. Patterns of attribution to sources are involved here, and they help render invisible or invariant both the structuring environment of media institutions and the decisions and actions of media institutional personnel.

That invisibility may in part explain how a major theory of mass media effect, the agenda-setting hypothesis, was constructed on the basis of patterns in representation alone, a tactic that side-stepped the meager possibilities for causal inference held forth by observable referents. Close consideration of the evolution of the hypothesis suggests that patterns of representation themselves do not produce a view of media agency sufficiently clear or compelling to overcome inertial interest in phenomena that stand to the right of the dividing line in Figure 1. In recent meta-theoretical discussion we can see just how opaque that dividing line has remained (Rogers and Dearing, 1988; Becker, 1991).

A content domain defined by objectively independent sets of representations and referents was felt

to be too limiting for the author of one of the field's most important recent theories of media effect. That limitation was felt to relate to a too cautious approach to content. Referents and representations together were held to constitute only manifest meaning (Gerbner, 1958a). Structuralism, which encourages one to generate new combinations, seems to open up a path to objects otherwise unapprehensible, principally, objects related to the force of the culture industry.

It opens this path this dangerously, by courting two major metaphysical regions--the semantic and the social. It is to Gerbner's credit that the grand narrative about television known as cultivation theory held together as a story for so long (Gerbner, 1989), but it must also be said that no clear specification of the mass communicator, and consequently no compelling inference of causal force, resulted from this program of research.

When causal reasoning is brought in to limit content's straightforward referential domain, evidence of media agency disappears. When structuralism opens up content's potential range of meanings, media agency disappears again, this time in a sea of social possibilities. These two convergent outcomes suggest that there may be some middle ground between the caution of content analysis and the daring of structuralism, somewhere wherein one might find a range of emergent meanings related to the object depicted in Figure 1.1, and which could, conceivably, support research on individual effects using media-related causal forces.

In any event, in view of the cultivation program's mercurial interpretations of the message systems it may be appropriate to conclude that expanding the empirical scope of content, an increasingly popular idea among communication scholars, if not yet among survey researchers, is not needed nearly as much as some initial form of empirical discipline

enabling one to delimit the range of extra-individual objects that must be taken into account in pursuing a media effect.

To now the task of delimitation has been performed by referring (1) to the temporal requirements of one-way causal inference, (2) to general categories of the semantic and the social, or (3) to the theoretical vision of an individual scholar, as we have been considering approaches to content undertaken virtually independently of audience witness behavior. It is very much an open question whether this approach will produce means to systematically sample content and invest it with meanings and causal force inarguably stemming from the mass communication process.

I am not optimistic, but to this point my skepticism rests on a review of procedures that, in the end (even if that end never actually comes), would only load content's causal force into one side of a relational concept of exposure. Another group of scholars, working in the 1970s, proposed a simpler and more directly empirical strategy to delimit the range of representations and referents relevant to audience research. They argued that scholars should resist the urge to give any meaning to mass media content themselves and, essentially, make audience members perform the task of delimitation. Let me now take up this third approach to content before moving on to other dimensions of mass media exposure.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

¹Neither the referential system nor the version of structuralism discussed in chapter 3 would be fully semiotic. Most semiotic theories employ a third term corresponding to the position of the interpreter of the sign or, in Morris' scheme, a theory of pragmatics to augment theories of syntax and semantics to accompany the study of signifiers and signifieds (1938). Leaving the third term out understates the complexity of semiotic theory. On the other hand most semiotic theories, even those that make their way into mass media texts (e.g. Fiske, 1982) seem to have either a person and a single text or two people as their implicit empirical object, meaning that they, too, leave the pragmatic position aside (Constructivism brings this position back in. See Krippendorff, 1991). I leave pragmatics out during the first part of the chapter to reduce the overall complexity of semiotic theory. Gerbner and his associates seem to have done so, too, possibly to improve clarity. I bring this position back in later in the chapter, but only to suggest why the Annenberg team was ultimately unable to fix a set of stable meanings in the contents they used for causal inference in audience research.

²Cultivation and other scholars have asked for opinions about the incidence of events in daily life that directly correspond to themes in content. They have generally found that heavy viewers of television tend to see the world as having demographic characteristics and action patterns similar to those found on television. These are called 'first-order' cultivation effects to distinguish them from more global (and problematic) dispositional effects of fear or anomie (Hawkins & Pinegree, 1981; 1989).

³There are two potential agents here. One is the collectivity of middle and upper middle-class white males, the other a not-yet-visible but more singular social agency that, a la Althusser (1971), interpellated white males as perhaps unwitting agents of interpersonal domination. The latter specification would have better corresponded with cultivation theory's claim, through its continuing institutional allusions, that the culture industry through television was a singular force and that the audience itself was a singular entity (Gerbner et al., 1976; 1979; 1986; Gerbner, 1989). Middle-class males, after all, are a major portion of U.S. television audiences. The interpretive requirements of such an argument would be great, however, and would likely have arrested some of the authority the

cultivation team was gaining in incorporating various classes of empirical data into the research program.

⁴The replication by Doob and Macdonald was in Toronto, Ontario. Wober (1978) and Gunter and Wober (1983) studied cultivation Great Britain, while Pinegree and Hawkins (1981) did so in Australia. Giving Gerbner's insistence that television was an institutional phenomenon, the central arm of society, it is surprising to note that he did not discuss the possibility that countries like Canada and Great Britain were likely different societies with entirely different cultural arms. Having perhaps decided that the key features of a media institution and of society could be perceived in content, Gerbner may have thought it unnecessary to look directly at these countries' respective television institutions and notice that two of them were not primarily commercial ventures.

CHAPTER 4 MESSAGE DISCRIMINATION

Introduction

Message discrimination was developed in the early 1970s. Along with agenda-setting and cultivation theory, it can be seen as part of a broader effort to address dissatisfaction with the idea of limited mass media effects (Berelson, 1959; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Klapper, 1960).

A group of researchers associated with the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research formulated their own response to the problem of finding media effects in audience research. They suspected that poor conceptualization, especially measurement-related conceptualization, had something to do with the field's inability to find substantial media-related effects (Clarke & Kline, 1974; Miller, 1977; Miller & Cannell, 1977). If, as McLeod and Reeves (1980) would suggest some years later, content had to be specified in order to study an effect, and if content were, in practice, being poorly specified and observed, then findings of limited effects would follow as if logically.

Improving measurement-related conceptualization did not mean showing how content conveyed the causal force of social power. Unlike much agenda-setting and cultivation research, there was little suspicion of mass media institutions in this literature. Instead, the early message discrimination researchers wanted to develop ways to help find out when, and to what extent, specific content categories had been perceived by theoretically relevant audiences (Clarke & Kline, 1974; Kline, Miller & Morrison; Miller, 1974; Miller & Cannell, 1977; Miller, Morrison, & Kline, 1974; Miller, 1974).

According to the early message discrimination researchers, the problems with content in audience research were these: (1) Researchers often used a dimension other than content when they observed individual media behavior (Clarke & Kline, 1974; Miller, Morrison & Kline, 1974; Kline, 1977), and (2) even if they did perform actual content analyses, these analyses established only a *potential* for exposure--what people *actually* perceived was still up in the air (Palmgreen, Kline & Clarke, 1974).¹

The researchers thought that message discrimination might solve these problems, and a tone of optimism crept into their papers as they discussed its possibilities. They suggested that message discrimination might ultimately replace measures of exposure constructed with poor proxies for content (Palmgreen, Kline, & Clarke, 1977), or research designs that merged content analysis with audience data by long and uncertain inference (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974).

Nevertheless, message discrimination has not lived up to its initial promise (Salmon, 1986; Finnegan, Visnawath, Hannon, Weisbrod & Jacobs, Jr., 1989). Content continues to be interpreted apart from audience perception; exposure to content continues to be implied or measured by proxy; audience research still produces tentative, conflicting and unconvincing findings of media effects related to unsystematically sampled content categories. Interest in message discrimination has mostly waned in the 1980s. It was mentioned in Roberts and Maccoby (1985), but only as a means to challenge the weakness of the link between content and audience perception in cultivation theory. It was not mentioned at all in Shoemaker and Reese's recent call to put content back into exposure variables used in audience research (1990).²

To discuss message discrimination fully one must needs be attentive to issues beyond what can be contained

within empirical explication and the epistemology of one-way causation. One issue is the obvious history of hope and failure that describes the technique's reception within audience research. In addressing this question without moving to heavily epistemological terrain, the chapter will suggest that technique failed because it simply did not provide a better means to establish the empirical character of a content variable or illuminate content's role in one-way causal inference with audience data. Despite its initially straightforward appearance, and with exceptions to be noted, the message discrimination technique will be shown to require significant research resources while offering little in return.

This study also seeks means to incorporate the causal force of mass communicators into audience research, and this goal leads to a second overarching issue, one that complicates the chapter to some degree. From this study's perspective, message discrimination is not one story but two. The first is about a research design strategy offered to the broader scholarly community that did not include knowledge of any mass communicating agent. It turns out that my empirical critique of message discrimination's intractability for audience research really refers to this model.

The second story is about the research design strategy actually followed by early message discrimination scholars and the different empirical object it implied. The early ISR researchers actually made use of--but did not discuss--knowledge of a mass communicator. Furthermore, that knowledge allowed the early researchers to clearly delimit a domain for both content and cognition, effectively making the technique work well for causal inquiry. From a perspective that insists that mass communication involves both mass communicators and audiences, this second, unarticulated model will be offered as the best example of

how content could be successfully incorporated into an effects research design on empirical grounds.

On their face, these two larger issues do not combine well, and herein lies this chapter's special problem. In tracing out the second, mass-communicator-inclusive model we see how content can function well in audience research, yet the fact remains that message discrimination was not embraced by the broader community of audience researchers--for reasons seemingly best explained in relation to the first, communicator-free research design. The only way I can see to make sense of this combination, and hence of the technique as a whole, is to refer to matters outside the domain of message discrimination concepts and their empirical referents.

These matters deal with the way the second, mass-communicator-inclusive model implicates its academic user. I will argue that to use the technique effectively one must adopt an external agency's interests as one's own. To the degree that the scholar cannot accept the external agency's interests, the technique itself may lose its charm.

On empirical grounds alone message discrimination will not be rejected as weak; on the other hand its capacity to discipline a domain of content in causal inquiry will not be loudly trumpeted. Instead, I will ask whether aspects of the second, mass-communicator-inclusive model might be employed in research designs that do not tie a scholar to the interests of an external agency. I will suggest that one aspect of the second design has promise on that score, but that to realize that promise in research one might have to leave content behind. Chapters 8 through 10 will essay one possible strategy, employing the lesson learned from the second model in a content-free design pursuing media-related individual effects.

The Early Research Context ✓

The survey data used by the ISR team was gathered

from two midwestern cities, one of which was about to embark on a campaign to reach adolescents with information on family planning, occupational planning, and drug and alcohol use. The interviewed subjects were themselves adolescents; questions included the typical array of individual difference and social categorical variables one might expect to find in surveys tailored, as one can see from these information questions, to matters of adolescent socialization (Clarke & Kline, 1974; Kline, Miller, & Morrison, 1974). The ISR team would contact these subjects twice, once before and once after the information campaign.

During the second interview wave the early researchers wished to find out what adolescents knew about family and occupational planning and drug and alcohol use, and they also wanted to know whence that knowledge had come. The operational tool they developed for this worked well, so much so that they teased it out of its original research context for special consideration and possibly general application.

The Message Discrimination Technique

Miller formally introduced the message discrimination technique with an ideal-typical survey question, numbered here to ease later reference:

- (1) What have you (read, heard, seen)
- (2) in a (specific media channel)
- (3) in the (specific time frame)
- (4) about (a single topic)? (Miller, 1974)

Even though content comes from the individual in (1) and attaches to the medium in (2), the early researchers considered these components a reasonable operational measure of exposure to content (Palmgreen, et al., 1977).

In a causal context, at least at first glance, content would normally be placed into exposure's extra-individual side. This switching of positions, however, was just one of many things the early researchers would have to

sort out. The technique itself was comprised of these four steps together, and it was relatively novel (Miller, 1974; Carter & Troidahl, 1962), so that just what it was and how it would fit into existing strategies for research could be taken up in later theoretical and empirical work. Indeed, the need to sort out this technique's implications for research may have constituted the major part of its initial charm.

Setting these initial temporal and relational considerations aside, let me note that the technique, as a whole, provides the first actual example of an exposure variable in this study--the only one that implicates content. Perhaps because they saw mass media exposure as a problematic conceptual region for audience research, the ISR team's interest seemed to center on its exposure-like properties.

Message Discrimination: The Academic Model

A first point stressed in the early papers reflected concerns best seen in the light of cultivation theory's heavy reliance on interpretation. Here content--things read, heard or seen--is directly associated with an individual; neither scholarly interpretation nor the vagaries of distribution or perception seem to stand in between. One researcher was emphatic about the absence of scholarly interpretation. "You tell me," Palmgreen et al. implored for us, "what you have gained from the media" (1974, emphasis in original). With message discrimination there would be no grand semiotic journeys, no analyses of a culture industry's central meanings. While content would still reign supreme in research, it would now be built brick by empirical brick from messages actually recalled by respondents during interviews.

"You tell me" emphasized the measure's novel character. One could certainly appreciate the novelty, especially if one kept a more ambitious interpretive

approach in mind, but beyond this simple negation what did the technique have to offer? What did it allow one to see? What kinds of causal inferences did it encourage one to make? These were open questions, as the technique, at least in its introduction to the scholarly community, was theoretically quite bare. As we follow the early researchers' attempts to dress the procedure in meanings, we may see why the results did not become an enduring scholarly fashion.

The theoretical work we will see below revolved around two themes. The first was to establish the empirical domain in which the technique could be effectively applied, and here the lifespace, and particularly the individual within that space, would be employed. Once a reasonable determination had been made as to what message discrimination's empirical object was and was not, the early researchers would employ it in causal inference strategies associated with activist ontologies that were, with uses and gratifications (Blumler & Katz, 1974), becoming fashionable in audience research at that time.

Looking first at the ideal-typical message discrimination question we can see that delimitation of empirical meaning was a substantial matter. A world of things can be read, heard or seen or defined as topics; there are many media; time may be defined a virtually infinite number of spans and unit gradations.

With respect to component (1), a logical question was to determine how many messages a researcher should expect to obtain from individual memory. Miller noted that it would have been absurd to ask individuals to recall all that they had learned from television or from their newspapers in a preceding period (1974).³ A lot of content flows into individual lifespace in any given time.

Miller suggested that the notion of a topic, component (4) of the technique, would help delimit the

stimulus domain being reconstructed from individual memories. In this way the selected topics of family planning, occupational planning, and information about drugs and alcohol was introduced and justified (Miller, 1974; Kline, Miller & Morrison, 1974). To simplify discussion, this section will use family planning as the exemplary topic.

The early research relied on the empirical research context to further delimit the range of phenomena under discussion. The adolescent character of the population meant that there would be little variation to worry about on a range of demographic variables (e.g. age, education, occupation). It also fixed recall time at one month and provided a range of media sources in a list for individuals to use to aid and delimit recall. An implication here was that to successfully employ the technique, one would have to use general features of research context to initially fix topical, media, and temporal ranges. The number of messages recalled would vary from there.

Accepting the delimiting capacity of a research context on its face, one can still see that the general applicability of the technique would still depend on how, and by what units, one would identify and count units of messages recalled. Clarke et al. (1974) mentioned in passing that content, even when coming from individual subjects, had no identifiable unit (see chapter 1), but one striking feature of this research was that the absence of a content unit did not seem too big a problem. Units were somehow generated and counts of messages recall made. When first reading this literature, I was inclined to accept the validity of their counts without really knowing why. Accepting them for argument's sake, however, let me move forward to more puzzling matters related to causal inference.

First of all, these researchers had content, not

from their own perusal of newspapers or television screens but from acts of audience recall. Individuals were not actually observed in the act of perceiving the content, but their successful acts of recall implied previous or "actual" mass media exposure (Palmgreen, Kline & Clarke, 1974).

But this, too, was not necessarily a problem. One does not catch an individual in the act of completing sixteen years of education over the phone or during a visit to their home. One merely asks the individual to report past experience and hopes that the report will be reasonably accurate--that the individual experienced her reported sixteen and not fourteen or nine years of education, for example.

Message discrimination seemed to ask one to see content's presence in the lifespace in the same way. Even though it was taken from individual memory, it could still be used as an independent variable in an effects model. Palmgreen et al. (1977) noted that others had alluded to the potentially tautological character of effects arguments made with content obtained from individuals in this way, as the same empirical datum (component 1) gave evidence of both content and effect.

On the other hand, the procedure itself was strikingly similar to what McLeod and Reeves would develop as a model for causal inference some years later. They said that content and effect should be isomorphically specified, preferably without undue interference from a professional interpreter (1980). Message discrimination did these things well.

It did not, however, contain a separate step dedicated to the assurance of exposure. The most obvious candidate, component (1), was already defined in terms of content and effect. Perhaps logically, the early researchers used theory in an effort to analytically establish what it was about the technique that specifically related to mass

media exposure.

Palmgreen and his colleagues (1977) suggested that cognitive theory could be used to establish exposure's separate role in the context of the technique's components, though just how this would be done would remain unclear in published work. An unpublished paper by Miller (1974), suggests a line of theorizing Palmgreen et al. may have seen as promising.

Borrowing from the work of Tulving (1972; see also Postman, 1972), Miller asserted that there were at least two components to individual memory. There was a semantic component, a meaning space of some kind, which memory researchers following Tulving also considered to be long-term memory. When individuals successfully recalled messages, Miller suggested that they had drawn from their long-term or semantic memories to do so.

The idea of exposure to content was associated with another part of memory, this time Tulving's category of episodic memory (Miller, 1974). Episodic memory was short term, just as exposure to any particular message might be thought to be. Thus exposure's locus, not immediately apparent in the original formulation of the technique, was given empirical life as a more ephemeral component of individual memory.

The safest observation one can make in retrospect about Miller's work is that he operated by analogy. Content and exposure were made analytically separable things with eminently sensible categories found in memory research--semantic and episodic memory. Interest in categories of memory has, if anything, grown since the early 1970s, when they functioned primarily as a means to defeat black-box behaviorist approaches to the organism (Neisser, 1976). Beyond--or rather below--the analogy, however, the theoretical scheme had problems.

Miller did not discuss the empirical implications

of his purely cognitive rendering of exposure. Up to that time (and in much effects work since, including the bullet model in chapter 1), the assumption was that content originated not within subjectivity but from some location outside the body. Mass media content might be found in memory, but one need not imply that it came from there. Miller's formulation, however, implied just that.

This empirical point needs stressing because Miller posited an intra-individual location for content and exposure and moved quickly on without ever considering the empirical status of the thing he had created. After invoking memory categories he pursued quite another idea, one concerned with where causal forces in mass communication came from. As have many media scholars since, he asserted that individuals were active in the mass communication process (see also Blumler & Katz, 1974; Swanson, 1979), and that message discrimination was well designed to capture this reality (1974). Individual activity will be discussed in chapter 7; here I take it to mean only that individual effects are posited to have individual causes.

My formulation of individual activity begs many complexities, and it may have been these complexities that deflected Miller's attention away from the lower-level (Chaffee, 1991), even operational character of the empirical switch in locus that had taken place.⁴ He and other early researchers may have seen the individual locus of content and exposure as unproblematic because the individual was, theoretically, becoming the locus of cause. Whatever the effect, the causal force originated in the person.

Further evidence of individual causation may be found in Kline et al.'s (1974) report of an interesting contingent finding. Without preparing or prompting the adolescent subjects in the two cities, they asked each for a definition of family planning. They reported that roughly half of the adolescent sample could give a definition that

corresponded to their own. Those able to give an expected definition could, on average, recall twice as many messages about family planning as those who could not. These researchers suggested that positive response to the definitional query may have indicated the existence of a cognitive schema that facilitated recall. A cognitive entity, in other words, was implicated in differential effects outcomes. It was at least a contingent cause (Markus & Zajonc, 1985; McLeod & Reeves, 1980).

Neither the empirical shift underlying the effort to distinguish exposure from content and effect nor the general move to activist ontology would seem to suffice to make message discrimination unpopular. Locating content in memory seems no more problematic than trying to locate it on a screen or paper surface. The fuzzy conception of exposure to content accompanying this location hardly stands out as poor in relation to what was found in chapters 2 and 3. And the activist ontologies the location encourages have proliferated since the early 1970s. There were other problems, however, not immediately visible when a specific research context accompanied the technique, but quick to emerge when one began to consider message discrimination as an all-purpose tool.

For example, in the initial research the topic of family planning was a given, but when Kline and his colleagues probed adolescents for a definition of the term, they effectively found that it was no longer so (1974). Some adolescents either did not know what it was or else gave it non-standard meaning.

In addition, while topics were invariant for each line of inquiry into topically related recall, the fact remained that the original research had investigated four of them. Across these four topic domains the researchers found evidence suggesting that these cognitive structures varied in more complex ways than the simple pattern of

presence/absence they could use to code definitions of family planning. It seemed, for example, that many adolescents had less extensively internalized information about family planning than they did for drug and alcohol use. Though they could posit a cognitive structure as a contingent causal force, they could not say what part of that structure they had effectively observed (Miller, Morrison, & Kline, 1974).

What did this internal variation add up to? Well, even in limiting one's interest to phenomena located in the lifespace, it meant that researchers exploring a topical domain would need some indication of the topic's "information environment" within that space (Miller, Morrison, & Kline, 1974; Salmon, 1986). Before one was able to trace how topic-bound messages might be traced back to media sources, one would need to have some sense of the internalized semantic fields the subjects brought to their media behavior in the first place, as what they recalled might well be a function of those fields.

To obtain such knowledge in the early message discrimination research, the ISR team would have had to have had a theory of adolescent culture enabling them to design survey instruments with questions aimed at capturing that culture. Without commenting on the availability of such a theory, I would venture that to the extent that measures of an information environment were needed for proper inference, the technique now seemed to demand substantially more resources and theoretical effort than was apparent at first glance.

Perhaps to try to find a way bring the kinds of data one would need back into reasonable bounds, Miller, Morrison, and Kline (1974) attempted to theorize the medium in a separate paper. They posited a concept of "media channel effectiveness," which they defined in two ways.

In a first strategy they suggested that one could

assume that an individual was equally likely to recall a message from any media category in a list. With this assumption one could create a theoretical rendering of a distribution of outcomes for any topical domain. Each outcome's probability would be equal; a chart of these outcomes would be rectangular. This rectangular distribution, in turn, was posited as interesting because it corresponded to an ideal choice domain in information theory. Actual data on recall could be compared with this information theoretic model to determine how each media category might have fared.

This first strategy was called "deductive," and a second "inductive" means to theorize the medium was then offered. Here one could simply inspect the patterns of message recall by media category within the data, and make simple inductive inferences about media channel effectiveness from there. If adolescents recalled more family planning messages from radio than from television, one could venture that radio was a more effective medium.

Theory on media channel effectiveness was at times difficult and highly strained in this paper. The need for information theory was never established, and the simpler inductive alternative reopened questions that the original research context had effectively closed. If, for example, it was found that adolescents recalled more messages from radio than from television, one would have to do at least one more thing before moving on to assert radio's relative efficacy: One would have to determine how many messages radio had originally delivered in comparison with television.

It was possibly the general issue of how to make inductive inferences with survey data that made Palmgreen et al. (1974) note that when using message discrimination, one would also need some form of content analysis. They mentioned knowledge of family-planning information in films at school in the midwestern cities, and from there they

suggested, quite logically, that before one could assess the efficacy of film or radio or any medium, one could not avoid the task of determining how much information each medium had conveyed. Even when one held to topic and temporal domains for all the delimiting power they could give to a research design, one would still have to perform some type of analysis of content not yet located in adolescent memories.

To summarize, then, once we move from the simple four-component technique to its position within a more completely theorized research design, we find that what the early researchers had offered the academy was a model that:

- (1) went against the grain by locating content in individual subjectivity;
- (2) used the same empirical datum to define content and effect;
- (3) gave no clear indication of what exposure was or where or how it could be observed;
- (4) required knowledge of an 'information environment,' or consequentially present cognitive structures that might be expected to vary across lifespaces and topics and facilitate or impede quantity of recall;
- (5) required knowledge of topically related content actually produced and disseminated to the target population within the time frame stipulated in one's research design; and
- (6) gave no insight into what content's metric should be, whether taken from the surface of a media device or, now, extracted from individual recall.

The early researchers had managed to theoretically dress the bare technique, but the results could hardly have been perceived as fashionable. In retrospect, there appears to have been substantial grounds for non-acceptance of message discrimination despite the favorable reviews it has continued to receive since the early 1970s (Finnegan, et al., 1989; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; Salmon, 1986). This

could be because audience researchers, faced with examples of sophisticated interpretations of content in the broader communication literature, bring to the technique a desire for a simpler way to effectively incorporate content data into audience research (Shoemaker & Reese, 1990, 1991). This is what the technique promises at first glance, but only at first glance. Salmon (1986), for example, reviewed message discrimination sympathetically, then noted the need to develop the accompanying concept of "information environment," and, finally, asked what "topics" and "messages" might be. He found no answers in the lifespace and offered no answers in his article.

These questions do have answers, however, and they can be made with materials found in the early research--an empirical object slightly larger than the lifespace--, but they take further effort to uncover and polish up for display. Let me reconstruct them and then return one final time to the question of this technique's potential for incorporating content into audience research.

Reconstructing Message Discrimination Research: Finding the Mass Communicating Agent

In this section I wish to argue that the message discrimination technique did not leave such a trail of unfinished theoretical gestures and unclosed semantic domains as was found in the model they presented in scholarly journals. They used the research design reported above, nevertheless its purpose was not to support later cognitive theory but to reflect a social reality encompassing their own activities in relation to a mass communicating agency.

Consider first the two-wave, two-city design. As Kline et al. (1974) would note, this was a field experiment with controls. The researchers did not actually select treatment and control groups nor apply the treatment themselves, but they knew that an information campaign would

take place, and thus could design a field experiment around that fact.

When we take the existence of this treatment agency into account, we can see the message discrimination technique in a different theoretical light. Locating content in the head, for example, did not have to imply a turn to activist ontologies. That location was the treatment agency's goal. When the ISR team visited lifespaces to gather evidence of recall, they were effectively assessing the degree to which the social agency had attained its goal of message transfer to its targeted adolescent population. There was no necessary tautology in using component (1) as evidence of both content and effect--that was precisely what the social agency desired.

We can also see that the memory-based attempt to distinguish content from exposure was added some time after the recall data were gathered and reported to the social agency charged with disseminating family and occupational planning and drug and alcohol use information. That agency did not need those memory formulations. The early researchers may have felt that the scholarly community did not share that agency's specific goals, so they essayed memory structures in their place.

For their part, the social agency did not need to be concerned with identifying a separate moment of exposure. They were acting as a mass communicating agency charged with the responsibility of content transfer. They were thus in a position to see their relationship with their target audience in a different way. They knew when their own actions would take place, and through which media, and for what purpose. They could thus bypass issues related to a (probably unobservable) intermediate point in the relationship and focus on the degree to which the end result was attained.

With knowledge of the social agency we can also

see that the decision to fix time at one month in the second wave original research design was likely not based on knowledge of rates of memory decay, as Finnegan et al. would suggest in 1989. It could rather reflect knowledge of onset and termination of the campaign.

Nor, too, was there really a need for blind induction or ornate information-theoretic strategies to understand and use the media component of the technique. Researchers could find out which media had been employed in the campaign, and with measures of communicator effort, perhaps specified in terms of money spent, they could assess media channel efficacy (compare with Miller, et al., 1974).

Perhaps most important, both for the early researchers and for those who would wish to reflect upon their efforts, was how knowledge of the mass communicator guided the incorporation of content into a program of audience research.

As I mentioned above, there was a striking absence of trouble with content's lack of a fundamental unit of measure. The ISR scholars mentioned the matter but then moved on. Why could they do so, especially when they were so sensitive to issues of variable construction and measurement (Miller & Cannell, 1977)?

Recalling Salmon's request for a definition of topics (1986), we can infer that their grand referent was the social agency responsible for the information campaigns. The agency was somehow charged with providing adolescents with information about family and occupational planning and drug and alcohol use. That charge, in turn, could be followed temporally through the information campaign process.

After taking on the dissemination task, the social agency would develop campaign themes and hire production and advertising agencies to create information spots and place them in various media. There would be a paper trace of this

activity in memos and scripts; there would also be copies of spots produced records of their placement in the treatment city's media. With these data a researcher need not have been mystified as to what would constitute a message recalled: The unit could have been whatever the agency deemed it to be, and all the researcher would have to do would be to recognize its reappearance within the natural variations in the ordinary utterances of adolescents.

With knowledge of the mass communicator there would remain some concern regarding the respective semantic domains of content and adolescent information environments, but these concerns would not be so intractable, nor would they require such extensive data for inference purposes.

Considering first the overall flow of contents in the two cities, the social agency did not need to determine the degree to which messages about the selected topics also occurred in other media unless they suspected a difference between cities. They could posit the activities of other sources as background interference and focus on the degree to which their own efforts had produced increments in the desired outcomes.

If they found out that features of the adolescent information environment aided or impeded the outcome, they would have a number of ways to proceed. Consider Kline et al.'s (1974) finding that adolescents who could provide a formal definition could also recall twice as many family-planning messages as those who could not. The social agency would not need to ponder the contours of the surrounding semantic field (Salmon, 1986). Rather, and really only if they had further campaigns on their agenda, they could take the information into account and pass it on to the production and advertising agencies they would later contract. Assuming that the ability to recall a formal definition of recall meant fuller integration into a middle-class adolescent environment (availability of two parents,

active participation in the education process, for examples), if the social agency wished to reach those they had not reached so effectively before, they might employ less formal language or images with fewer referents to standard middle-class adolescent lifespaces when producing and disseminating future spots. Outside the academy, information environments are not so much a matter for theories of social cognitive structure as they are tasks for focus-group research, the point of which is to find natural forms of language and expression the social agency might not currently have.

Overall, it is interesting to note how well the message discrimination technique actually works when a social agency is found at the other end of the mass communication process. On the content side there is no need for a scholar to interpret the meaning of messages beforehand. There is instead an ability to determine who wishes to communicate what, to whom, through which media, and for what effect (Lasswell, 1977). The 'what' in early message discrimination research was information about family and occupational planning and drug and alcohol use. Topics, to respond to Salmon's query (1986), were shorthand names for agency goals; the information recalled could be identified and assessed against the larger evidential trace of these goals in agency records. In such a situation, message discrimination and surveys provided solid empirical evidence of the degree to which a content-defined effect had been attained. Without knowledge of a social agent's intentions, the technique became something of a theoretical mess.

Conclusion

Knowledge of a social agent's communicative activities and goals guided the early message discrimination researchers from the moment of conception of a field experimental design through the accumulation of two waves of

survey data. The overall design appears to have embodied the oft-expressed goal of merging content and audience research data (Blumer, 1959; Becker, McCombs, & McLeod, 1975; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; Shoemaker & Reese, 1990). The laundry-list of problems accruing to the communicator-free model likely had a hand in discouraging adoption, but the communicator-inclusive model reconstructed in the last section was hardly unavailable. In fact, Miller dealt with this model head on (1974).

Beginning with Troldahl's three-level typology of media content (1965; see also chapter 2); Miller noted how Troldahl linked the individual with content at the message unit level of his scheme, and suggested that audience researchers should strive to incorporate content into audience research at this level. If one could do so, then one's efforts would correspond to Carter and Troldahl's (1962) call for more "meaning analysis" in audience research. Miller argued that meaning analysis was generally lacking because audience research too often used measures of individual time with media rather than exposure to content.

We have encountered this argument before, but not the wrinkle that followed in Miller's rendering. He first suggested that message discrimination constituted a continuation of meaning analysis--messages recalled were essentially the same as message units perceived.

Nevertheless, according to Miller there was one difference between the 1970s message discrimination research and the meaning analysis that preceded it. The early research used knowledge of a mass communicator. Carter and Troldahl had investigated what audiences of a public television program could recall. They reported their results to the public broadcasting agency and had even passed judgement on the memory capacity of individual audience members (1962). Message discrimination research would be different:

...we ask not whether a respondent saw or heard a particular program or article, but whether he perceived *anything about a particular topic*. Thus, while the message unit is defined in the early studies by a communicator product, it is defined in the case of message discrimination in large measure by the respondent himself...what is recalled in message discrimination is not subjected to a test of *accuracy* with respect to actual content...This difference...reflects a profound shift in the focus of inquiry from the earlier studies (1974, emphases in original).

The shift was toward an activist ontology. It did not occur during the research design or data accumulation stage, but sometime afterward. Consequently, its meaning in this research was, at the very least, ambivalent. While they may have viewed the adolescent audiences as active, such a view did not interrupt their broader efforts to gain access to them and report their findings back to the social agency charged with influencing their knowledge of family and occupational planning. Thus, they did not have to judge the cognitive competence of any individual who may have thought 'family planning' referred to a week's shopping and menu designs; they could merely pass the information along for the agency's consideration.⁵ Individual activity was not a fundamental aspect of the message discrimination technique or the overall research design. Rather the reverse.

I would also argue that the distinction between "programs" and "topics" did not enable Miller to accomplish the distinction he desired. Many of Carter and Troidahl's findings revolved around what one could have called topics; programs were essentially a part of the initial research design. In the same way, topics did not prohibit the ISR team from working in conjunction with a message disseminating agency. Campaign research works with topics

all the time (Carter & Chaffee, 1969; Finnegan, et al., 1986; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947; Mendelsohn, 1973). They do so while also working with campaign agencies, and knowledge of these agencies makes topics behave.

In view of the role played by a social agency in the early message discrimination research, both the turn to individual activism and the distinction between programs and topics correspond to something other than empirical reality. Here I clearly speculate, but they seem to be part of an effort to construct a fictitious research design. The unreality of this design can be easily demonstrated; why it was offered as such to the scholarly community is another matter.

As Ealey et al. suggested in the context of message systems analysis (1972-1973a, 1972-1973b), whether fictional content is real or not, the intentions behind it are. Absent access to the early message discrimination researchers themselves, I will reconstruct an intention here by looking at the consequences of the communicator-inclusive design for academic audience research. More than any of the problems detailed above, it is this intention that makes even the communicator-inclusive design an unattractive alternative.

In order to gain knowledge of which messages would and would not be associated with a topic (and of which topics in the daily massive streams of content to pursue at all), one would have to have access to the employees and or records of a mass communicating agency. To gain this access, one would likely have to cooperate with that agency to some degree--the researcher would have to internalize its goals, if only to recognize whether those goals had been attained when observing the lifespace later on. Cooperation is fine if there is only one agency and if one agrees with that agency's goals. But if there are more, and if one does not agree with their goals, then one may not gain (or even want)

access.

If a secular social service agency were to mount a family planning campaign today, for example, we would expect other social agencies to respond with campaigns of their own. Their contents, too, would relate to the topical focus of the first agency, so it would be difficult to define one's interest as if in a topic alone even when gaining quiet access to one of the involved agency's records.

Of course, one could still cast one's lot with the agency granting access, and one could still produce interesting research to report in academic journals even if it came from one's service to an outside agency. By this I mean that administrative research (Adorno, 1945; Gitlin, 1979) is not necessarily bad or its reported results inherently uninteresting. But it does leave in limbo the question of just what the academic researcher's own interests in observing the mass communication process might be.

Miller's efforts to throw away information about the mass communicator in the early message discrimination research can be best understood in light of this purpose, I believe. Recognizing that knowledge of the mass communicator's information dissemination aims would reduce the researcher to the status of a campaign agency's feedback monitor, he struck out in more positive direction, first by leaving the real agent behind, and then by grafting notions of cognition onto the object that academic audience researchers regularly see--the individual in the lifespace. I do not think his particular choice of means was adequate, but I do share what I believe to have been one of his goals. The curious shift away from the mass communicator seems to have been about defining a position from which academic research could look out at the mass communication process and find something interesting. Chapter 8 will essay another strategy for this same purpose, but this time without

content.

The initial assumption in this particular program of research was that content would be part of whatever would emerge as interesting. Nevertheless, in the communicator-free model, content ended up floating aimlessly in external and cognitive semantic fields so that, in the end, it can be said that the utility of the communicator-free model is doubtful.

I would also note, however, that detailed records of mass communicator purpose and activity may only have been required in the message discrimination program because content was going to be observed at the level of lay individual utterances in the lifespace, and these utterances were to be observed in relation to relevant message units and elements the social agency had created. The social agent's purpose was stated in the coin of content because content was to be observed in the lifespace, or vice-versa.

If an academic researcher did not assume beforehand that content had to be the vehicle of causal force and manifestation of individual effect, a number of different design consequences might follow. One, the researcher might not have to look so closely at the content-related records of any particular agency or campaign. She could posit and look instead for more general orienting principles defining the motives of groups of mass communicating agencies. She would not necessarily be tied to the interests of a single agency.

Second, and as the early message discrimination researchers did for a single social agency, she could *internalize* knowledge of the motives of these groups of mass communicating agencies, and then return to the lifespace to observe their consequential traces in the lifespace. If she had not initially defined those motives in terms of content categories isomorphic with a knowledge transfer effect, she might find a point within the lifespace, but clearly outside

of individual memory, with which to create an observable half of a concept of mass media exposure, and thus forge a link between the external groups of agencies and the individuals they may have reached. I will pursue this strategy in chapters 8 and 9.

This alternative strategy is premised on indifference to actual content categories and an ability to internalize knowledge of the motives of general classes of mass communicating agents. Indifference to content, I believe, should be considered more seriously by audience research as a general position. Excepting designs that aim at government agency (chapter 2) or which work in concert with external agency interest, I suggest that, overall, content has not worked well in audience research.

As for the study's goal of observing mass communicators and audiences together, the internalization strategy used in message discrimination research and in campaign research in general might well be carried forward. Cultivation theory's ambitious interpretive approach did not, in the end, specify a consequential social presence that could be observed in the lifespace itself, and in relation to this problem an internalization strategy might have helped. The central position taken in chapter 2's critique of agenda-setting was itself something of a fiction, as, realistically, there is likely no such position from which one could observe social agency motives and audience reception simultaneously. Here again an internalization strategy suggests itself.

The broader field of audience research has not adopted this strategy, nor has it given up an initial assumption of content's centrality in an inference process. It has, however, used means other than content to observe mass media exposure, often grudgingly (Becker, McCombs & McLeod, 1975), and usually as a supplement or proxy for content. To the question 'If not content, then what?' the

field has accumulated many responses. Chapters 5 and 6 review two of the most important ones.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

¹Slater and Elliot (1982) and Gunter (1981, 1988) used the second argument against cultivation theory. Slater and Elliot focused on violent content and attempted to assess the degree to which young audience members saw the violence in a selection of television programs as realistic. Their research design paralleled message discrimination in some ways (Roberts & Maccoby, 1985), but they did not note any special content-related innovations for their design.

²The term 'message discrimination' occurs infrequently in titles of research articles, but I suspect that seeking information about message discrimination by that name in the communication literature might lead one to underestimate its use. I am not familiar with the field of campaign research, especially the research that leaves little trace in the standard communication journals. I suspect it is more frequently used and reported in marketing and other applied research journals. Secondly, message discrimination may exist in the communication literature proper, but under a different name and informed by slightly different theory. Hawkins and Pinegree (1989), for example, discuss Shapiro's concept of 'memory dumps,' which is operationalized by asking individuals to recall everything they can about a topic and then to trace what they recall back to one of eight sources. The theoretical context in this work referred to cognitive processes that may be at work in a cultivation process. From an operational perspective, memory dumps are virtually indistinguishable from the message discrimination technique that will be described in the text.

³Finnegan et al. (1986) would broach and answer this question inductively and procedurally. They argued that researchers using message discrimination would gain little if they accepted more than three recalled messages per "cycle," a procedural term they do not clearly define but which I believe corresponds to a fixed combination of topic and medium. They leave unaddressed the more basic empirical issues that Miller and his colleagues attempted to address in the early papers. The question was not 'how many recalled messages do we want to work with?' but 'how many recalled messages are there to be had?'

⁴To establish an extra-individual location for one of exposure's components, Miller could have tried to work with the technique's component (2)--the medium. If content and effect were still located in the head, then the force of an

external locus of cause would have had to have been attached here (see chapter 5). Content could have been associated with this external locus in some way, but in either case Miller may have been at a loss for how to proceed with the data in hand: The academic research design did not give any great theoretical role to the medium. A few media categories were presented to subjects to help them recall messages about topics, but beyond that the meaning of the medium was unclear.

Some of the early papers combined discussion of message discrimination with detailed discussion of the actual administration of the technique during a survey (see esp. Miller & Cannell, 1977). The Michigan researchers looked closely at the relationship between interviewer administration of positive feedback and the number of messages subjects recalled during the interviews. Positively framed probes after one successful instance of a recalled message, for example, might encourage a subject to recall more messages, while a subject recalling no messages from a medium about a topic, receiving no positive encouragement, might stop. If steps were not taken to administer the surveys carefully, the positive feedback probes might artificially inflate the difference between successful and unsuccessful recallers of messages.

The point here is that these seemingly procedural matters correspond strikingly to Skinnerian operant conditioning, a research orientation that was still popular in the 1970s. Too, just as operant conditioning was designed to obviate the need to define a stimulus, message discrimination's original aim was to replace content analysis. Operant conditioning was particularly useful in animal learning studies as the latter could not report what they had perceived. In the early message discrimination research, what individuals had actually perceived was not observed. Instead researchers observed messages recalled and voiced by subjects--a behavior, and the discussion of survey administration was an attempt to prevent systematic biases in the administration of a potential reward in association with that behavior.

Despite the activist individual ontology in the early papers, the research itself was strongly informed by knowledge of a technique developed for purposes of social control. All of this is not to chide the early researchers for administrative tendencies (Gitlin, 1978), but to indicate that there was a serious absence in what was offered to the academic community for theoretical consumption. Had the early design been theorized so as to include the actions of the researchers themselves, the activist individual ontology may have been seen in quite a different light.

CHAPTER 5

THE MEDIUM

In comparison to content, the medium has been given little attention in audience research. It has fared much better at the hands of some of this century's great social thinkers. To Mumford, McLuhan, Williams, Innis, Ellul and to many contemporary writers, the medium is often central to schemes to understand contemporary society. *Something* about the institution of mass communication--grand theorists differ; we mark a generic conceptual space for this something with the term *medium*--is changing other great social institutions, is altering what many thought were categorical modes of perception, is revealing frightening new facets of evil, is leaving us breathless at new utopian possibilities.

The most striking characteristic of the medium in audience research is its colorless and generally atheoretical character. Terms like 'television' are often treated as if they were valid on their face. If researchers report the wording of their survey questions something more than face value may be discerned, but then one finds that 'television' is neither a cultural arm nor an agent of cultural implosion through a surfeit of amusement (Postman, 1985), but something that the individual may or may not have watched, after 5:00pm on weekday evenings (McLeod & MacDonald, 1985). The newspaper is something the individual never, occasionally or often reads. Whatever one infers from these frequency estimates, the object producing them seems an unlikely source of force for integration of anomic urban masses. The medium tends to be something grand in grand theory, something pretty unremarkable in audience research.

The chapter will review popular usages of the

medium in audience research and attempt to indicate where conceptions of the medium are empirically sound. The empirical analysis is relatively easy, so much so, in fact, that many audience researchers might reject my analysis as overly simplistic. I will argue that the domain of empirically sound usage is quite small, so that audience researchers may not observe much of the social reality of mass communication to which grand theory refers--at least through a concept of medium.

In holding the limited empirical meanings of audience research-based conceptions of the medium against the expansive social meanings of grand theory, I aim to suggest that audience researchers may have something to offer to grand theorists, namely, that *the medium may not be the appropriate vehicle through which to express the meaning or power of contemporary mass media institutions, or, for that matter, historico-social totalities.*

Nationally aimed or sponsored policy research has been focused for three decades on the term 'television' (from Schramm, Lyle & Parker, 1962, to Murray, 1991). Yet one does not find 'television' specified as a social institution in audience research in any recognizably valid way, nor can one find more powerful and usable conceptions of 'television' from the often mercurial pages of grand theory (see, e.g., Levinson, 1981).¹

Against this impasse I will suggest that if, perhaps like Gerbner, an audience researcher wishes to observe something of the social power of mass communication within individual lifespaces, then a dimension other than the medium (and other than content) may well have to be used for that purpose. Audience research has much less investment in the notion of medium than has grand theory, and may in consequence be more receptive to new suggestions regarding what that something else might be, especially if the new idea does not come bound in long discussions of corporate

interlocks or excursions into the mysteries of the social unknown.

The Medium in Audience Research

As with content, the medium may be handled as an independent stimulus domain, subject to specification prior to actual observation of individual media usage. Such treatment of the medium is relatively rare in audience research. We have no detailed manuals to guide the conduct of *media* analysis, nor any enduring research program beginning with a Lowenthal and proceeding through a Gerbner wherein elements of the social are asserted to be inscribed in the *medium* and read in some form of structural media systems analysis.² Nor, it should be noted, do we find the medium located in the most exogenous position in the forward model of causal inference (McLeod & Reeves, 1980; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; see also chapter 1). This is all to repeat the claim that the medium has not yet challenged the authority of content in audience research.

However, the situation may now be changing. Consider the following:

The way media appear, or their essential form, provides a kind of intelligence and interpretation to specific points of information, or content, that they present. We refer to the nature of this appearance as format, or the rules and logic that transform and mold information into the recognizable shape and form of a specific medium (Altheide & Snow, 1988).

The broader work from which this definition is taken combines cultivation-like gestures toward the social with the idea that somewhere within the meta-semantic or representational features of content one will find forms that essentially define a medium's specific powers. These meta-semantic features--or, less awkwardly, "format" features--refer to both visible features of content like the duration of broadcast soundbites, the construction of a

visual scene, the layout of a printed page, and to a structuralist idea that somewhere among or between these features one may discover rules of media logic corresponding to rules of grammar in linguistics or to rules of semiosis in interpretive theory.

The list of potentially observable media-related format features and structural rules is likely quite long. If given sufficient time and attention, the idea of media formats and logic could generate its own ornate theoretical traditions and manuals. However, it seems not unreasonable to note that at present, notions of media logic tread little new ground, as they call to our attention features of content's structure and flow that are presently also accessible through the idea that content has representational features. Soundbites shape television the way montage shaped Eisenstein's cinematography the way iambic meters structured the sonnets of Shakespeare. There are always identifiable elements in any stream of content that seem to point to its more immediate mode of representation.

The key question is whether a renewed focus on forms of representation, undertaken now from the angle of media logic, will lead to new insights into how a causal process may be at work within mass communication, or whether it leads to clearer specification of those mass communication agencies that exist but defy specification in audience research. At present we have little evidence on this score, as theories of media logic, like many structuralist theories, favor the independent inspection of a (now noticeably mediated) content stream, observed independently of any particular communicator or audience.³

The way something is said may always influence the meaning derived, but do notions of medium constitute *essentially* specifiable ways of speaking? Is 'television' really the agency of shorter soundbites (Smith, 1989,

August), striking visuals, or themes of amusement? It was not so in pre-Glasnost Eastern Europe, or even today in many western European states (where television, if anything, is stodgy and often unhurried). If there are essential features to newspapers, how does one explain the turn toward more visually striking layouts in the 1970s and 1980s? Radio's long central essence as a dominant medium disappeared almost overnight; today its formats change at the drop of a rating point or two. (There were also cinematographic methods other than montage and poetic meters aplenty.)

By accepting the idea of media formats, audience researchers may once more cast their attention upon content's representational features. But it is unclear just what the essential representational features will turn out to be, just as it is still difficult today to state content's causally significant referents or representational features. While one may legitimately hold that definitive rules of media grammar or semiosis may be found in the future, one may equally hold that the relationship between mediated content and rules of media grammar are *essentially* indeterminate (see note 6, chapter 8). Between the notions of determinacy and indeterminacy there now lies a conceptual foundation as shifting and shaky as any that may support independent interpretations of content. Rather than revisit the terrain mapped out by theories of media logic, the present study considers them to have been substantially addressed in chapters 2 and 3.

The Medium as a Dimension of Mass Media Exposure

We now consider the medium as it is encountered in audience research, where it functions as the external component of relational conceptions of mass media exposure. The lettered locations in Figure 5.1 represent three identifiable theoretical strategies associated with the use of the medium as a part of exposure in audience research.

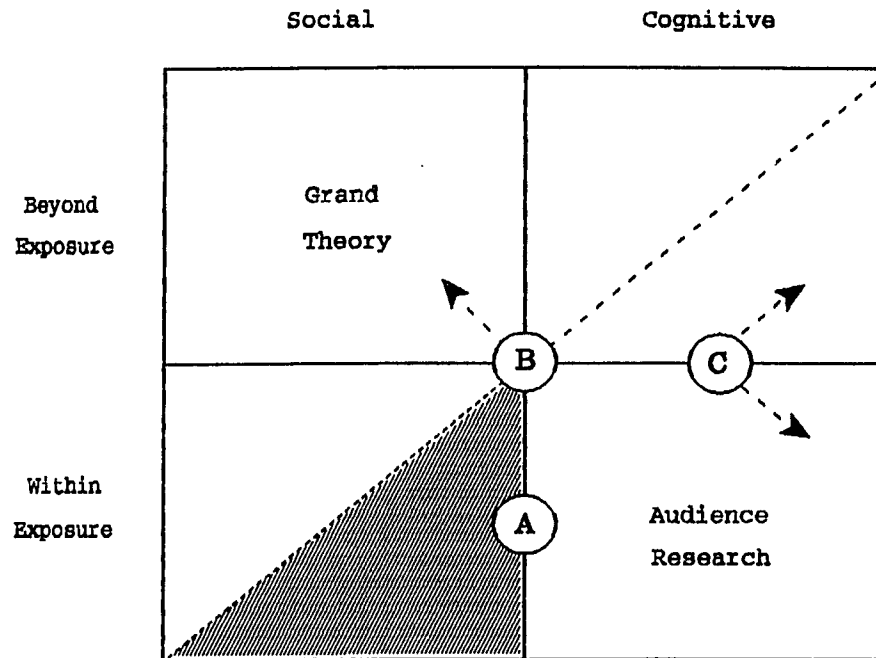


Figure 5.1. Approaches to the Medium in Audience Research

The chapter will review each in alphabetical order.

The horizontal axis is comprised of social and cognitive domains, reflecting possible locations for both observation and theoretical definition. The medium itself is, at minimum, external to the individual. Any conception of individual exposure to a medium, I assume, must at least touch the edge of a social domain.

Similarly, something from the individual is brought to the medium in order to form a relational concept; this something is usually associated with observable individual activity (usually time, see chapter 6) or subjectivity (often attention or involvement, see chapter 7). The cognitive domain stands as repository of these individually located phenomena. I initially assume that the social and cognitive regions include both safely observable and metaphysically troubling subregions.

In audience research, the meaning of the medium in exposure often depends on the availability of descriptions of variables contained in datasets, while elsewhere one may occasionally find further meanings given to the concepts represented by those variables. These additional meanings often suggest phenomena that exist beyond the moment of exposure, and to capture the direction of these additional meanings I have placed exposure and non-exposure categories along the vertical side of Figure 5.1. The dashed lines in the Figure refer to particular examples of this theoretical activity; they are represented as broken lines to indicate that the theoretical activity takes place at a distance from what is successfully observed in research.

As one can see in Figure 5.1, all three operational conceptions of media exposure share a bias toward the individual and minimal extension into the external or social realm. Though two approaches are located on the dividing line between the social and the cognitive, virtually no social and institutional aspects of mass communication are effectively observed via conceptions of media exposure. The shaded region in Figure 5.1 is essentially empty. The only excursions into the social we will encounter are located at (b), and these excursions are made outside the context of exposure and systematic observation.

Another location, (c), aims to conceptualize the medium as an essentially subjective phenomenon, hence its initial location and the cognitive location of its more purely theoretical context as represented by the dashed lines. Though it will be summarily reviewed in this chapter, it is appropriate to note that (c) is arguably the most important site of attempts to give theoretical definition to the medium in audience research.

For the purposes of this study, the simplest and

yet most interesting conceptualization of media exposure is (a). It represents an approach to the medium that has few theoretical pretensions and correspondingly few empirical problems. It will be discussed first, then set aside while more socially (b) and cognitively (c) oriented conceptions receive review, and finally taken up again in a general consideration of the role the medium plays in mass media exposure.

Finally, any discussion of the medium after McLuhan (1962; 1964) takes place in the shadow of great social speculation. Nothing will be said about the substance of grand theory below, still, it seems appropriate to at least attempt to indicate the relationship that may exist between grand theory and audience research with regard to the concept of medium. We may tentatively locate grand media theory above and to the left of the diagonal line in Table II. Its principle focus is on the medium as a social institution. While one occasionally finds references to individual contact with, and more frequent reference to possible cognitive effects of, that social institution, they are usually made unsystematically and without sensitivity to the constraints within which audience research takes place.

The area below and to the right of the diagonal line corresponds roughly to the domain of the medium in audience research. Its preferred object is individual cognition; one would be hard-pressed to encounter any empirically grounded conception of media exposure that clearly reaches into the domain of social phenomena, and especially to social phenomena that comprise mass communication institutions (see, e.g. Webster & Wakshlag, 1985). Again, the absence of the social in audience research is indicated by the shaded region under the diagonal line.

Position (a): Cue-card Typologies

A recent operational discussion of message

discrimination used in a major health information campaign described the use of a cue card during survey interviews. On the cue card was a list of terms: "television," "radio," "newspaper," "magazine," and "pamphlet" (Finnegan, Visnawath, Hannon, Weisbrod & Jacobs, Jr., 1989). The cue card list was shown to individuals to help them recall topically relevant messages from each of the listed media categories. In using this cue card the health campaign researchers formally introduced a media component into their observation of individual exposure, and they did so in a very popular way: operationally, nominally, and unremarkably. Point (a) in Table II represents this cue-card approach to the medium.

We may acknowledge right away that other cue cards in other studies might have included longer or shorter lists of terms (see, e.g., Pool, Inose, Takasaki, & Hurwitz, 1984). Candidate terms that come immediately to mind include 'book,' 'film,' 'video recording,' 'audio recording,' 'bulk mail,' 'billboard,' 'computer network' or 'terminal,' and, possibly, 'telephone' and 'first-class' and 'bulk' mail.

In identifying a cue-card approach to the dimension of medium, however, one encounters strategy wherein the actual number of terms on a list is not important. In this approach one finds little effort to define lists exhaustively or to ensure that boundaries between included terms are empirically or analytically obtainable. One further finds little success in defining the lists theoretically or as a synthetic whole. There is often no discussion of the terms at all after their initial insertion into a research design. Media categories are added to the dominant forward model of causal inference as an afterthought, perhaps to produce contingencies for later data analysis (McLeod & Reeves, 1980).

It costs little conceptually to include nominal media categories in a research design. It is as simple as

adding a component to a message discrimination procedure, after which the interviewer asks the individual about messages recalled for each topic, during a specified time and, now, for each included media category.

As a practical matter the inclusion of each nominal media category in a research design may double the gross number of questions to be asked of an individual; projected across an aggregation of individuals this could substantially increase research costs. Though categories may be added to cue-card lists at a whim, resource limitations may tend to keep lists short in survey research.

It should be noted that cue-card approaches to the medium are often used in conjunction with a dimension of time (Kline, 1977; Hirsch, 1980, 1981; Gerbner, 1976), through a procedure in which the individual is asked how much time she spends with each specified media category during an average day or week. The resulting relational concept, which marries a nominal media category to ratio-scaled measure of individual time, is often offered as a face-valid measure of individual exposure to a mass medium.

Buried below the level of articulation in these instances is an assumption that exposure to a *medium* has itself been measured highly (Hague, 1972)--that more individual time with television is roughly the same thing as more television. One might consider this practice an instance of careless or incomplete conceptualization, but it occurs frequently right alongside the most careful considerations of other concepts, usually of individual dispositions or perceptual apparatuses located in mediating or dependent-variable positions in causal models. A critical charge of carelessness, I believe, would probably be off the mark. More likely, the quick equation of television and television viewing time has more to do with faith in the analytic unknown and a need among adherents of that faith to obtain high measurement levels, something individual time

can easily give when matched with a nominal category in exposure. I will discuss this use of time in chapter 6; for now I will merely note that the procedure has helped leave the empirical meaning of 'medium' undeveloped in much audience research.

Cue-card approaches to the medium are those that employ untheorized yet nominal media categories from a domain of indefinite scope in relation to more highly measured individual attributes. With little accompanying consideration of their scope or meaning, their best location in Figure 5.1 seems to be within the domain of exposure-related conceptions, squarely on the border between the social and the cognitive--a point on a line, like any in geometry, that has no width.

Cue-card approaches to the medium in exposure are curious. Despite all I have done here to indicate how loosely and even accidentally media categories are employed in audience research, I nonetheless find it difficult to dismiss an empirical article that reports cross-media-category differences in observed effects. Quite the contrary. Somehow, on its face, it does make sense to wonder about differences in information gain between television and print, and to accept an empirical researcher's findings as interesting and, in some way, externally valid.

Of interest here is just how it is that cue-card typologies of media categories may stand as empirically valid entities. What empirical objects stand behind terms like 'television' or 'newspaper' in audience research, allowing them to make sense? I will venture an answer to this question further below, as before an answer is given the cue-card approach remains atheoretical, a status it should maintain as we turn to the field's major efforts to give the medium more substantial definition.

Position (b): The Medium as Shadow of the Social

"Allegations that television has harmed the

channels of political communication," wrote McLeod and MacDonald, "are widely accepted if imperfectly documented...The research evidence is less convincing..." (1985). For present purposes an extensive review of the general research evidence would be less illuminating than continued examination of this single work, as it so well exemplifies the authoritative and tempering influence that audience research has brought to bear upon media discourse since the 1930s.

At that time, and in the face of evidence indicating a radio program's ability to induce mass panic with a fictitious account of an invasion from Mars, research evidence from empirical audience analysis produced a theory of radio's limited effects (Cantril, 1940). Not everyone panicked, it seemed, and it was deemed interesting to find out what personal resources individuals possessed that might have prevented them from panicking. Radio was an object of suspicion then as was film before and as comic books, popular music, and television would be on numerous occasions thereafter. Cantril worked to belay suspicion and open channels of discovery by positing interesting questions about the limits of media power; McLeod and MacDonald do much the same in their 1985 study.

In both instances, new questions are opened once empirical inquiry demonstrates a pattern of mixed findings. Such findings are held against more ambitious and empirically undisciplined claims of media influence. When suspicions begin to reside, audience research proceeds with its focus on the individual's traits and activities and on its singular research agenda: to predict different subgroup outcomes from exposure to various categories of mediated content on the basis of those traits.

The present inquiry does not challenge this pattern on normative grounds. Rather, it needs this pattern in place to pursue its line of empirical explication of mass

media exposure. It finds evidence of that pattern in the cited statement, which begins a piece of audience research on political attitudes and items of political knowledge attributable to television and newspapers. The effects found were indeed mixed (see, e.g. Robinson, 1975, 1976, 1977; Erbring, Goldenberg, & Miller, 1980), the results added well to the now long legacy of uneven findings associated with media exposure variables in survey designs.

More interestingly, the statement was made during one of the handful of occasions since the late 1950s when television was regarded as a suspicious *social institution*. Interest in cultivation theory was quite high in the early 1980s and psychologists and social psychologists were engaged with television industry researchers and their colleagues over the interpretation of research evidence on violent television content and the behavior of children (Milavsky, Kessler, Stipp, & Rubens, 1982; Cooke, Kendzierski, & Thomas, 1983). The institution was in question and, arguably, the institution stood as a grand referent to the statement of McLeod and McDonald.

The referent did not stand firmly. One would not find a variable specifying television as a social institution in the 1985 article or in the earlier research on videomalaise. A reader cannot know how much of the industry or which of its commercial relations, production exigencies, or managerial imperatives these authors had in mind. As we will see in the case of McLeod and McDonald further below, the empirical data provide no clues, perhaps because, since the invasion from Mars, matters social have become too deeply internalized.

To be fair, I should note that it has not been customary in audience research to define social referents for television or other media. McLeod and McDonald were speaking briefly and in a familiar way about a familiar term. It is safe to say that the most salient social referents (at

least to an outside reader) accrue not to the term "television," but to the utterance of the term by recognized communication researchers. The audience for careful empirical articles with such parting shots would include people interested in public policy. In the presence of this audience for empirical studies one can assume that social referents may accrue to media terms somewhere beyond textual levels, as both writers and readers are presumably quite concerned with and knowledgeable about the media industry. Otherwise, looking at the article itself, one finds that social referents are missing, though the veneer of skepticism might allow one to recuperate social meanings of more or less positive character.

Though I would not make the claim in this specific case I would venture that social referents to terms like 'television' or 'newspaper' have remained internalized for so long by so many in the collective audience research literature that they have likely been forgotten. Even when audience research moves toward policy arenas, where habits of interaction with representatives of commercial and other television agencies make institutional referents to the term 'television' more immediately accessible, audience researchers may not wish to pin down the social meanings their interlocutors may actually hold. For their part, policymakers, inspecting the survey data, would be at a loss to know how to broach the subject of institutional meanings with survey researchers. To do so, as we will shortly see in the case of this particular study, would be to move the conversation to areas where audience researchers seem to have claimed no special authority or interest. To make a researcher comfortable, or to benefit from a researcher's knowledge, a policymaker would do best to talk about "the research evidence." To stray away could signal anything from 'time out' from formal discussion to a challenge or threat to the researcher's credibility. When audience researchers

leave social meanings internalized, systematic straying will likely be rare. If social meanings of terms like 'television' do emerge--in comments such as the above--, they loom as ghosts or shadows above, below or beyond the research evidence.

What are the empirical referents to terms like 'television' or 'newspaper' in audience research? In discussing positions (b) and (c) I will first establish what is not meant (or what remains unarticulated even if they could be shown to have been internalized). Then, returning to cue-card or nominal typologies, I will state my best guess as to the available empirical scope of media terms in audience research.

In the case of McLeod and McDonald, we have evidence of the empirical meaning of the term television because the researchers reported their survey questions and questioning strategies (1985, appendix A). They asked subjects about television and newspapers in the context of gratifications sought, attention paid, and reading and viewing time. The questions tapped five of the six dimensions of exposure reviewed in this study, as their concern was not primarily political communication policy but the general contours of mass media exposure.

Their content categories are not theoretically or empirically defined. I see no content feature not covered in chapter 2, and their other non-media dimensions will be discussed in later chapters. My concern at present is to find out what objects may stand as empirical referents to the study's media terms. I will use television to shorten the investigation, as the operational strategies for the study's two media categories were similar.

The researchers reported the following survey questions containing the term "television":

Television Viewing

What would you say is the average number of hours you watch television after 5 p.m. on a weeknight?

Public Affairs Content Index (Television)

About how often do you watch the following kinds of television programs?

National news programs?

News specials and documentaries?

Local news broadcasts?

Interview and news magazine type programs?

Attention to Public Affairs Content Index

Television

When you are watching television news programs and the following kinds of stories about current events and politics appear, how much attention do you pay to them? Stories about...

National government and politics?

State government and politics?

Local government and politics?

Gratifications Sought (Surveillance)

Here is a list of reasons that different people have given us when they asked why they read newspaper stories or watch television programming about current events and politics...

To see how elected officials stand on the issues.

To judge the personal qualities of elected officials.

To see what elected officials do.

Gratifications Sought (Communication Utility)

Here is a list of reasons that different people

have given us when asked why they read newspaper stories or watch television programming about current events and politics...

To give you something to talk about with others.

To enjoy the excitement of politics.

To use what you learn in political discussions.

To get information that agrees with your political position (1985, appendix).

The research evidence obtained from the administration of these questions was used to support the cited challenge to more ambitious claims of television's influence on the political process. What is the empirical meaning of television in these questions?

In television viewing it is *something* an individual watches for periods of daily cyclical time. In the content index question it is *something* on which a selection (of typically indefinite scope) of news content categories is displayed for witness and, in the attention question, we find that *something's* news may have been witnessed at varying levels of individual attention. In the context of the idea of gratification, it is *something* to which the individual brings not only his time or attention but his reasons for watching.

Television, we find in sum, is *something* the individual watches in varying modalities and spans of time. It is arguably something more. That it is a technology enabling a communicating agency to reach millions of individuals simultaneously is not reflected in these questions, but this distributional reality is arguably reflected with empirical adequacy in the survey research design. The authors asked these questions repeatedly to hundreds of individuals; in the presence of sound sampling

procedures the aggregate data would provide adequate representation of the audience as a reality created by technologies of mass distribution. Many individuals watch many instances of that *something*.

The media, however, are also complex organizations, guided by orienting principles, articulated with other organizations, possessed of human and capital resources of definite scope and limitation that are put to use in the production of news, other content categories and aggregate audience attention. The institutional reality of television, sketched out well by Gerbner in 1958, has not disappeared from the world. That reality arguably influences the activities of local, state and national politicians, not just in the course of their political activities but in their personal affairs as well, as one sees daily in local, state and national news content. One would be hard-pressed, however, to see any of this reality in the cited survey questions. They are simply not there.

Let me draw the relevant empirical conclusion. Allegations of television or media malevolence may be made speculatively, loudly, prophetically (e.g. Mander, 1978) and they may even be wrong. However, insofar as these allegations refer to social institutional phenomena, then "research evidence" such as that offered by McLeod and MacDonald is irrelevant in response. These researchers may have been correct in their initial challenge of television critics, but we cannot use even their own research evidence to help us decide on the matter. Even the mixed results they report themselves and refer to at large are beside the point. Given the limited scope of the television variables they used in their research (what is that *something* the individual watches?), the best we can do is trust in the still internalized meanings the researchers may have had in mind when they made their initial challenge.

A worse and more delicate situation would have

occurred had these researchers actually articulated the institutional meanings they might have had in mind when speaking about television in general or while creating the television exposure and use questions. Had they stated social meanings one may well have had to assess a theoretical discussion of social shadows--television is a mass distributional technology, a big business, a cultural arm, and so on. One would then have had to pass subjective judgement on whether the researchers' theoretical statements were adequately linked to their operational indicators (Blalock, 1986; Chaffee, 1991). One's endeavor to speak of the adequacy on another's vision of the world would inevitably gravitate toward the personal adequacy of the seer.

Let me stress here that my aim is not to chide audience researchers to make their social meanings explicit, even if their research aims at policy audiences. Rather, the purpose is to call attention the absence of social meanings attached by observation to media variables and, if possible, to garner interest in a smaller question: What is the *something* to which terms like television may be safely said to refer in audience research? In contexts with social pretensions we make little headway by looking at either operational definitions or their accompanying theoretical gestures. Perhaps further light can be shed on their meaning by considering the causal context of research using exposure to media terms.

In approach (a) terms like 'television' or 'newspaper' are offered as face-valid nominal categories. In approach (b) one finds pretensions of social meaning, and often the selection of these particular categories from a longer list of possibilities. Why these two?

What may distinguish this particular two-category typology from others is its seeming ability to maximize the contrast between ideal types of causal force. Television is

a broadcast medium. The newspaper is a print medium. It is possible that the time, attention and uses that individuals make, as well as the content that is conveyed, vary categorically across print and broadcast media, the availability of which have varied substantially over time (Eisenstein, 1978; Postman, 1985). The contemporary research evidence is mixed--even in the study by McLeod and McDonald--but interest in the question remains strong, buoyed by continued lamentations for the passing of print culture. Mixed or not, what is the causal force at stake in a print versus broadcast typology?

This is a difficult question to answer. A print versus broadcast dichotomy suggests that a causal force is reflected in an ensemble of individual activities and content features attributable to each category. Print media, for example, may be associated with longer or more developed stories, with greater levels of attention, or with different classes of gratifications sought. Mean differences in individual outcomes might be significant for groups of individuals who use print or broadcast media for similar periods of time, for similar purposes, or even under similar levels of attention paid.

A complex matrix of possibilities confronts the researcher who seeks to specify the causal force informing an observed print versus broadcast distinction. In the meantime, observation, even lay observation, suggests that difficulty in working through the possibilities to a clear statement of cause may be increasing. Advances in the invention and distribution of electronic recording devices are bringing new levels of temporal fixity to streams of broadcast-like content. Media scholars take advantage of these technologies and repeatedly pour over streams of broadcast content likely never intended to support sustained scrutiny (see chapter 6). Through the emergence of multimedia systems what was once electronically conveyed can

be transformed into print at the touch of a switch and vice-versa. Books and journal articles can be produced and distributed more quickly, their themes can and have become more ephemeral. It makes sense to speak today of instant books.

My point is that many of the dimensions one might reach for to claim categorically distinct differences in causal force between print and broadcast media are themselves in noticeable historical movement. Unless one has a compelling theory to handle the flux, it might be wise to refrain from deep excursions into the underlying and possibly social phenomena driving these changes, especially if one wants a synchronic classification scheme to take back to the lifespace. One way to prevent one's excursions from moving too far is to posit the habitual print versus broadcast dichotomy as an ideal typical scheme, to select 'television' and 'newspaper' as examples of each type, and to offer empirical findings stemming from the distinction as if they were a theoretical alternative to cue-card typologies.

Doing so avoids the problem of isolating and identifying the particular dimension or cluster of underlying dimensions that might theoretically inform the distinction by leaving this work undone. At the same time, the use of the typology holds out the possibility that something is there, perhaps to be theoretically defined at a later date. At this point, however, and in terms of identifiable social referents, print versus broadcast typologies do not advance knowledge of the empirical character of the mass communication process beyond that available through simpler and more open cue-card typologies. 'Television' and 'newspaper' may be selected from one list, where each stands as shining exemplar of a print something in relation to a broadcast something in association with an effect. Alternatively, 'television' and 'newspaper' may be

taken from a longer list, their categorical brethren left behind for purposes of expediency and their contribution to observed effects offered as interesting--which they are, especially if we beg the matter of what actually produced the observed effect and close our eyes to the abundantly evident empirical flux of convergences across media categories.

Whether the point of departure is a nominal typology or a socially aimed dichotomy, the result is the same: Scholars, both audience researchers and others, know well that there is more to the process than has been captured in observational and theoretical use of these terms. What more does 'broadcast medium' give than 'television' or 'radio' with respect to issues of cause? Substantially more, as will be argued in chapters 8 and 9, if we consider that 'broadcast' implies the existence of a broadcasting agency, and not merely some thing an individual watches or attends in time. In the meantime, let me now review a more popular response to the quest for more meaning for media terms in audience research. It is represented in Figure 5.1 as point (c).

Position (c): The Medium as Retreat to the Cognitive

Nominal or cue-card media typologies are occasionally synthesized according to the individual sensory channels the entities associated with the nominal terms are considered to activate or engage. Television is visual and aural; the newspaper is visual and tactile; radio, *sans* fine cabinetry, is aural alone.

In this approach the original nominal media typology is replaced with another. Instead of producing and testing empirical outcomes for television versus newspapers, for example, one explores differences between aural and the visual, the visual and the tactile, and so on.

And so on, but in this new scheme not too far, as an outstanding feature of sensory media typologies is the

comparatively small number of relevant categories they present. Ignoring the occasional elitist allusions to the poor taste or olfactory qualities of popular media fare, and barring advances in pituitary theory, sensory media typologies are effectively limited to the aural, the visual and the tactile, and one will turn few eyebrows by ignoring the tactile. When nominal media typologies are redefined in sensory terms the result, though rough around the edges, is a dichotomy.

More effectively than can be done with a print/broadcast dichotomy and a domain of potential social differences distinguishing them, nominal media categories may be broken down and resynthesized in relation to two channels of individual perception.

We know immediately, for example, that newspapers and television are both visual but that the former is not aural. We know, too, that by ignoring the tactility (or even aurality) of a newspaper or the visuality of radio we make delimitable empirical compromises in the interest of analytic clarity. That we know all these things means that the sensory approach may be providing us with something more, and perhaps more fundamental, than what is available from their definitions as face-valid nominal categories. We know the media as objects because we know the human sensory channels that they may engage.

The order in the previous statement is important to stress. Audience research tends to use the easy association of sensory channels with media terms as a path for further observation into individual subjectivity. Once individual subjectivity becomes the central object (Chaffee, 1991), questions and observation become more challenging.

Television is a watchable and listenable *thing*, and therefore usable in studies of human watching and listening. Radio is a listenable *thing*; through it one may study human listening. Newspapers are readable *things* and

when they (or other print media) are employed in conjunction with television or film one may explore distinctions between human watching and human reading.

It is difficult to overstate the challenges posed to research in identifying and sorting out these distinctions. Nevertheless, I have placed italics in the previous paragraph to beg attention away from them. They are added to note that something not essentially cognitive remains part of the empirical domain involved in sensory media research that expands into the cognitive realm. The issue in this chapter is not to review what cognitive theory offers in general to audience research, but (1), to determine the empirical meaning of media categories when employed in cognitively-centered research, and (2) to determine if the now cognitive causal context further illuminates the meaning of media terms.

No drama is intended in this analysis; my findings are negative on both counts. Cognition adds nothing to the empirical meaning of media categories and, moreover, beclouds questions of cause and the possibility of gaining further understanding of media categories through reliance on a context of causal argumentation. Even the location of the approach in Figure 4 reflects this conclusion: I have assumed throughout the chapter that a media category is, at minimum, *something* external to individual subjectivity, something observed in relation to the individual in a concept of exposure. By locating both cause and effect in individual subjectivity, however, sensory approaches minimize the role played by externalities and load both parts of an exposure concept with subjective phenomena. This is the first time we encounter this tendency in the present study. Much more will be said about it in chapter 7. Here I mark the tendency with a position (c), where the medium is treated, in essence, as something not directly observable.

To illustrate empirical problems associated with approach (3) I will use what I originally thought was an absurd hypothetical example that emerged from my readings of contemporary literature on levels of analysis. The point of the example is to argue that the combination of nominal media categories with individually located notions of cause and effect makes it difficult to distinguish a domain of media phenomena from any other domain of observable phenomena. Criteria for such determination remain beyond the purview of the observable, so that, empirically speaking, a medium could be anything.

The initial discussion of empirical issues will assume a cognitive position in its strong form, where the exigencies of measurement of cognitive phenomena place pressure on researchers to give up survey methods for more closely controllable experimental designs. Some of the literature in that section will thus be from experimental research.

A weaker form of cognitive definitions of the medium will be taken up in discussion of an explication of television by Salomon and Cohen (1978) which has been important to audience research. Through the range of meanings they attributed to television I will argue that a focus on cognition has left an unfortunate mark on conceptions of the medium in audience research, forcing researchers to locate cause in individual subjectivity precisely because there is literally nowhere else to locate it.

Rather than accept this state of affairs, the final section takes up the empirical domain suggested by Salomon and Cohen, locates the empirical meaning of nominal media categories within, and suggests that the resulting empirically sound meanings are themselves too impoverished to support attributions of causal force. Once we strip away social and cognitive shadows, a residual of meaning remains.

Those meanings, I will argue, are empirically solid, unremarkable, and adequately represented in a list on a cue card. They only contain great messages for those attuned to the murmuring of ghosts.

Empirical Problems with Sensory Media Categories

Experimental Research Designs

When one explores the effects or mediating influence of sensory media categories one is particularly interested in the individual. It is the individual's senses that the media categories invoke, the individual's perceptual apparatus that are associated with sensory channels and mechanisms, and the individual's cognitive structure and processing capabilities that stand between perception and a later behavior. Even if the stimulus is held to be something external to the individual (say, content) and not something also cognitive (a gratification sought; a schema activated), the individual is already a demanding empirical object by itself. Millions of individuals remain in interaction with complex extra-individual institutions in mass communication, but much of this larger empirical object must be bracketed away to enable the sensory media researcher to devote sufficient observational resources to the individual as a cognating agent.

Citing the growing literature on cognitive reception and processing of media-related stimuli, one communication scholar asserted that this subfield, as well as the field of mass communication research at large, would benefit if means were developed to organize research around bracketing decisions (Reeves, 1989). In a 1990 essay Nasser and Reeves suggested that these means might be available through the notion of levels of analysis (see also Berger & Chaffee, 1987).

The idea of levels of analysis suggests that there are different realities that are analytically separable.

Mass communication is one reality at the institutional level, another at the individual level. If there were problems with mass communication research, Reeves suggested, they may have stemmed from attempts to observe phenomena at more than one level simultaneously. A better way might be to more radically separate these domains of observation (1989; see also Nass & Reeves, 1991). One's concepts and variables should concern either mass media institutions or individuals, not both. One domain should be bracketed away in the interest of achieving clearer focus on the other.

With such bracketing, all institutional referents to television, presumably a troubling presence in past research, are set aside. What is left is *something* an individual may watch, *something*, too, that the researcher may directly manipulate in the context of an experiment. Television invokes two sensory channels; with manipulation it may be made to invoke only one or another.

It is as if the researcher stands directly behind or even now in the wall in Figure 1.1. Media institutions are at his back, forgotten. Immediately at hand are mediated contents--a manipulable stimulus domain--and directly in front of this domain sits the individual. The individual may have galvanic skin meters or EEG monitors attached in order to register physiological or brain-wave responses to sensory channel stimuli (Rothschild, Thorson, Reeves, Hirsch, & Goldstein, 1986; Thorson, 1989), the entire ensemble evidencing the researcher's fuller ability to control and observe once the domain has been bracketed to include the individual and a small external domain.

In reading this literature I was puzzled by the empirical status of media categories. Detached from their institutional moorings, what were television, radio, film, newspapers? What were they not? If, for example, television was defined as an immediately manipulable combination of auditory and visual stimuli, then what made television

different from an act in which a researcher would swat on a wall in the immediate presence of the individual? Like a laboratory manipulation of a cathode ray tube with speakers, swatting a fly would produce visible and auditory phenomena the individual could arguably perceive. Perception could arguably invoke other interesting cognitive structures and processes and produce an observable effect.

I thought my question absurd. Television was clearly different from swatting a fly. Nass and Reeves (1991) seemed to anticipate the question, too. They noted that the use of media stimuli in such closed settings were interesting because they provided "ecological validity" to questions of cognitive structure, process and outcome associated with individual perception. Neisser (1976) was cited in reference to the idea of ecological validity.

In turning to Neisser (1976), I found out that the idea of ecological validity was developed in response to a strain of cognitive research that employed semantically nonsensical stimuli (e.g. Sternberg, 1969) in order to produce outcomes that were not confounded by meaning associations an individual might make carry into the laboratory and apply to meaningful stimuli. In this line of research one was interested, for example, in the purer contours of individual processing activity for items held in short-term memory (see also Greene, 1985). Neisser considered the price paid for the ability to focus directly on meaning-free cognitive phenomena to be too high. Non-cognitive scholars might not recognize the importance of the research. Cognitive scholars, Neisser argued, should make use of more recognizable stimuli in order to produce more recognizably relevant findings and promote the legitimacy of the cognitive turn against a predominant behaviorism.

"Ecological validity" in Neisser's work, as best I can tell, meant that the work of cognitive scientists should be recognizable by a broader spectrum of others. He used to

term to prod cognitive science to replace research with nonsense stimuli (valuable, perhaps, to only a few individuals who worked for the phone company) with meaningful stimuli.

Nass and Reeves, on the other hand, used this notion without further specification (1991) to throw available meaning away. These meanings were social, and, as I argued in the preceding section, not adequately represented in media exposure variables. Thus, their recommended strategy for handling phenomena like 'television' could be interpreted as one in which difficult meanings are set aside and replaced with more definite and accessible ones.

'Television,' then, was *something* that engaged individual audition and vision and that was, for some unclearly stated reason, interesting. Unfortunately, this meant that my absurd question was not so absurd, as Nass and Reeves had merely used the concept of 'ecological validity' to affirm that 'television' was interesting. They did not use it to state, empirically, what 'television' was in any way that would allow it to stand apart from other visual and auditory stimuli--including the swatting of flies on walls.

Yet the phenomena do stand apart. Media researchers do not confound the swatting of flies with the presentation of a televised stimulus. Unfortunately, the mechanism by which the separation is maintained leads the present discussion to uncertain empirical ground, as the mechanism is not located in the phenomena in question but in the activities of media researchers. Media psychologists do not, in fact, measure people's reactions to the swatting of flies, but they do measure people's reactions to the image of fly-swatting and other violent acts when they can project them on a cathode ray tube. Their reasons, including those that would provide a theoretical distinction between the two classes of stimuli, remain internalized.

Following Neisser's notion of ecological validity, one would have to argue that a researcher chooses television over the swatting of a fly because doing so is more recognizably interesting. The assumption is easy to accept--television, whatever it is, is likely a more recognizably interesting phenomenon than many others. Unfortunately, it is not the only assumption accompanying Neisser's notion. He was talking about using real-world phenomena in place of artificial phenomena in experimental settings. He did not refer specifically to mass communication. The importation of his strategy and the experimental method into mass communication resulted in the need to assume something more substantial than the notion that television was interesting.

Placing 'television' in a controlled experimental setting does not merely set the mass communicator aside, it *replaces* the mass communicator with the activities of a researcher. The researcher does not merely internalize knowledge of a mass communicating agent's motives, as happens in campaign research (see chapter 4), he internalizes the role itself (see also Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984). He defines a stimulus domain and attempts to control its projection (on a television screen) in order to observe consequences of his projection activities closely.

Empirical problems with sensory definitions of the medium, then, are of two kinds. One, terms like 'television' or 'book' remain reduced entities that a researcher may manipulate. As external objects, they are small and unremarkable things. This is not a major problem for empirical explication. We have encountered these minimal meanings with respect to nominal typologies and socially aimed media exposure variables. We encounter them here, too, and will deal with them directly further below.

The more important empirical problem involves the position of the researcher, an assumption imported quietly

in to mass communication research in the turn toward the study of cognitive phenomena. Is it empirically valid to hold, as does this approach, that the mass communicator is specifiable as a biological individual? Does the individual researcher adequately embody the role of the mass communicator? Do his actions adequately reflect the actions of mass communicating agencies that exist outside the context of controlled settings? Is what he does television?

It is difficult to say yes in response to these questions, though Reeves (1988) implies the affirmative when he notes that both individual audience members and individual journalists are cognating agents in individual bodies, just as Hovland and his associates assumed some decades before when they defined the source as the projected image of a person in a stimulus field (1953).

The problem is that mass communicating agencies are more than instances wherein biological individuals produce flows of symbols that others will perceive as stimuli. Grand media theorists may refer to this broader domain in ways unacceptable for audience research, but in such instances the problem to work on is poor specification, or discerning what is relevant and systematically observable about mass communicating agency when one's immediate empirical focus is the individual. This problem is not resolved, and knowledge of mass communication processes and effects are not advanced, if the troubling empirical reality of the mass communicator is defined away or replaced with the body of an individual researcher.

Moreover, if the researcher is not a mass communicator, if he cannot do what a mass communicator does, or if he is not constrained by the forces constraining mass communicators, then his findings of effects for, say, television, will imply an unusual and possibly irrelevant causal force. Gunter (1988) reports a convergence of independent academic studies around the idea that the

formats of televised content may be manipulated to increase news comprehensibility. He concludes that researchers armed with such findings might "show the way" toward more efficient methods of news production (p. 115).

Gunter immediately follows with qualifications: such ways have to do with "specialist broadcasting," designed to have "a certain kind of impact" via "programs" with "intended objectives" (p. 115). These qualifications reduce the range of meanings one may give to the idea of a communicator. Taking them into account, it is not at all evident that most contemporary news production agencies would be included as among those interested in producing specific impacts with specific programs. Rather, Gunter has produced a vision of a communicator that corresponds with the scope of activity undertaken by the media researchers he cites: the individual charged with the task of writing ad copy, designing a page layout, editing the visual and auditory mix of a television story.

Such people might follow the lead of researchers who "show the way" toward increased knowledge gain, but they might also not, as it is not clear that the organizations for which such people work would recognize these means or the overall goal of improving news comprehensibility as relevant, let alone central.

Unfortunately, this is an awkward question to assess empirically. One way to test the validity of scholarly actions as representing those of a media agency would be to define those actions and then note the degree to which they were adopted in the non-academic world. However, one would then have to sort through two difficult reasons for nonadoption: poor dissemination practices on the part of researchers or irrelevance of the recommended activities to agencies who may possess other or more general goals. The scholarly activities that lead to this impasse-- investigation of outcomes of media-related manipulations in

controlled settings--infuse those settings with sets of interests that are difficult to disentangle from each other.

Consideration of the meaning of one term, the medium, in one line of inquiry, leads to a confrontation with the researcher as an empirical phenomenon capable of manipulating media variables. This line of inquiry led to what could be construed as an challenge to the epistemological character of experimental designs. I emphatically do not intend this meaning. In experimental designs in mass communication inquiry the researcher happens to fill a vacuum. Whether he does the job well or not is a secondary matter. Identifying his actions as such is rather intended to call attention to the vacuum itself. The next example, an explication of 'television' for less controlled observational settings, indicates that this vacuum is not so easily attributed to a particular research strategy. It may be symptomatic of a more basic empirical problem.

Television as a Construct

What is the *something* that an individual watches when she watches television? In posing this question Salomon and Cohen (1978) suggested that the term had more meaning than what was usually reflected in operational measures of television exposure. They were interested in establishing a domain of meanings for television in audience research, and he offered the following meanings to outline this domain:

- (1)Television as a social-situational factor involving choice behavior between activities;
- (2)television as a transmission of a content repertoire, implying decision-making regarding messages;
- (3)television as a source of content-messages with recall, comprehension, and attitude change;
- (4)television as a "language" pertaining to the

process of encoding messages in the service of extracting knowledge (Salomon and Cohen, 1978).

In this domain television exhibits properties of transmission but there is no mention of a transmitting agency. It follows, logically, that decision-making refers not to the missing transmitting agency but to the individual. The "source" characteristics of television are immediately subsumed under discussion of individual cognitive categories, as, absent any other agency, the individual must be the source of any decision taken.

In domains including a mass communicator a theorist will typically allocate to it the encoding function (e.g., Hall, 1980). The idea, unremarkable in itself but troublesome to handle operationally in audience research (see chapter 9), is that encoders are employed individuals involved in the production and dissemination of symbolic forms.

In audience research this notion of a mass communicator is absent, and Salomon and Cohen make the absence a kind of virtue. They attach the encoding function to the active individual, one who produces her own meanings. Missing here is the notion that individuals also decode, but this function could easily be incorporated by positing that individual media activity, as one might observe it in the living room, is part of a multifaceted process (see chapter 7).

The placement of scare quotes around language follows the implicit empirical domain Salomon and Cohen are forced to work with: It is little more than a disembodied presence on the surface of a screen or a speaker--behind it there is no living or active presence. Language comes from nowhere, it remains dead until taken up or encoded by the individual.

Finally, there is a social reference with respect to the explication of television viewing, but it, too, refers to something other than a mass communicator. The social is the set of contextual variables the individual might bring to the setting wherein he is observed to watch television. Perhaps he is an educated, married, unemployed, happy or healthy watcher; perhaps he is a child or on the couch with a child.

Salomon and Cohen's explication of television viewing provided audience researchers with a way to handle observed audience phenomena that has since become quite popular--it is the 'apples plus oranges equals fruit' strategy mentioned in chapter 3 (see also Gerbner, Gross, Eeley, Jackson-Beeck, & Jeffries-Fox, 1977a, 1977b).

A researcher conceives television viewing as an ensemble of things including watching, attending, reading meaning from, witnessing with an educated mind, and so on. For each conception the researcher creates at least one operational measure, then combines the operations into a global construct with epistemological guidance of factor analysis, measurement theory, and construct validity. The meaning of the global construct produced by a set of factor loadings must be made by the researcher, who interprets the particular loadings associated with the highest eigenvalue or eigenvalues the factor analysis produced.

Again, the path toward a vision of "television viewing" as a theoretical construct opened up by the work of Salomon and Cohen indicates how important the metaphysical region I have called the analytic unknown (see also chapters 2 and 6) is to contemporary conceptualization. In this instance, reference to constructs and measurement take the place of another unknown. While ensembles of indicators tapping the domain sketched out by Salomon and Cohen may produce fuller or richer meanings for television viewing than one or two survey operations by themselves, it is also

the case that the entire approach grows out of a vacuum: The social, comprised at least of those social agencies responsible for the production and transmission of contents that the individual is intensively observed to receive is somehow subtracted from the empirical object of mass communication, and in the void cognitive and analytic flowers spring forth. Here the researcher creates entities from datasets that will function as agencies; in experimental work the researcher himself becomes the agent. Both activities are eminently honorable, even beautiful, but neither alone seems to be able to use a concept of medium to increase the empirical scope of observation of the mass communication process. The constructed flowers look nice, but they are artificial.

Conclusion

What, then, is the medium in audience research? To what have all the *some things* in this chapter actually referred? Beyond, or rather quietly below, the social contextual and cognitive meanings given to the medium in audience research, when we look at operational observations of media in relation to an individual--when we look, that is, at the medium in exposure--we see that 'television' is a device in the corner of the individual's room. 'Radio' is the thing at the head of her bed, in her car or affixed to her head. A newspaper is the thing that sits on her kitchen table. Underneath it are magazines, piling up in the back room are more of both. A film is something she rents or goes out to see. Books she has in boxes, on shelves, and occasionally in her hands.

As empirical phenomena, media categories in audience research refer to devices of storage and conveyance of content available to the individuals in their lifespaces. They are recognizable as such in these lifespaces, immediately. There is no question of their confounding with the act of swatting a fly or with a civilization's cultural

arm, nor is there any indication of what more these devices might represent as we observe them in individual lifespaces. On empirical grounds, media categories are at present best defined as unpretentious nominal categories, as things which a researcher, a subject, and a reader of research will immediately recognize when they see the categories listed on a cue card.

If there is more to the medium than is given in this empirical range it is not available from observations made in the audience research literature. There one finds more about individuals who use these categories--about their perception, attention, retention, and so on--but not about the media categories themselves.

Similarly, there is much more to the concept of medium in grand theory than this same object domain implies. Grand media theory is beyond the scope of the literature this study reviews, but an interesting way to read that literature is from the perspective of an individual who sits in her living room, or better, from the perspective of an individual who must visit and observe individuals in first one living room and then another, briefly, and in need of information about the mass communication process that has unfolded in each. In these brief visits, as well as in the pages of grand theory itself, the notion that media are devices of storage and conveyance existing in an individual's presence is not without merit. Whatever else television may be, whatever the individual does with it, it is always already a television set.

'Television' connotes much more than a device in the corner of an individual's room, but it does not do so well. That is the chapter's principle argument. Rather than attempt to graft additional meaning on to television or to other nominal media categories, audience researchers might consider embracing this one small area of sound empirical meaning, keeping it definite and clear, and turn instead to

the task of observing either other things in individual lifespace or institutional imperatives that can be carefully internalized and brought back to the lifespace. More meanings are available, meanings that possibly leave their trace in the lifespace as one moves quickly from living room to living room. At present we do not know precisely what they are, but we can say that little seems to be adhering well, at present, to the devices of storage and conveyance of content that surround individuals.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

¹The difficulties of working with McLuhan's notions¹ of "hot" and "cool" media and with many of the speculative probes in his more popular writings are well known (Levinson, 1981). These difficulties continue to affect grand media theory in the 1980s. Postman (1985), for example, follows Altheide and Snow (1988) asserting that media technologies impose essential forms on a flow of content, and then goes on to say that "A technology...is merely a machine. A medium is the social and intellectual environment a machine creates" (p. 85). Not only would an audience researcher be at a loss to figure out how to observe "the social and intellectual environment" attributable to television in empirical survey research, but Postman himself fails to do so in the balance of his engaging work. While television signifies a grand social phenomenon on p. 85, on virtually every other page one reads "television" seems to refer to something much smaller--a thing much like that which an imaginative graduate student used as an emergency source of reading light (p. 83). Postman chides (even draws amusement from) the innocent and vulgar materiality of this notion of television--one very close to the meaning one usually finds in audience research--yet his own discussion not only fails to transcend it, it cannot do without it. It may be time even for grand theory to stop trying to graft meanings onto media terms that cannot be empirically supported.

²It should be noted that a resurgent version of cultivation theory, centered not on the message system but on the medium of television, is a distinct possibility. Empirically speaking, and despite the variation in interpretation of the message system, cultivation theory was based not on time with a television's message system but time with television (see chapter 5). It is a small step from here to regard television itself, and not the message system, as the locus of cultivation effects. The main text will argue that once we specify what "television" can mean empirically in audience research, it will seem a less likely candidate for central conceptual status in an ambitious program like cultivation theory.

³Notions of social agency are available in Altheide and Snow (1988), but they proliferate and defy specification much as they did when the Annenberg team read the message system in cultivation studies (see chapter 3) for audience research. Interestingly, one reviewer took exception to the occasional

social tinge in Altheide and Snow's essay, suggesting that they should develop the general idea of media logic as means to pay increased attention to content, as a medium's "format" was really a continuation of the idea of content's "form" (Gumpert, 1988).

The present study agrees with Gumpert: it is difficult to distinguish between the two ideas. For that very reason, however, and because the social is not viewed as something to be avoided, this study considers the structure and substance of theories of media logic as having been addressed in chapters 2 and 3. Neither content nor the medium will do.

CHAPTER 6

TIME

Introduction

What empirical object does a concept 'capture'? How well does it do so? Does 'radio' mean an industry or something worn on the head? If it means both in theoretical discourse, does it also mean both when a survey researcher asks, 'During an average day, how much time do you spend listening to radio?'? These are the kinds of questions we face when we assess the empirical rather than the more consensual or abstract meaning of concepts (Chaffee, 1991; Hempel, 1952).

As Chaffee (1991) predicted, empirical adjudication of communication concepts has brought unsatisfactory results: most conceptions of content are unfit for causal inquiry; the medium works marvelously as long as it refers to those little devices strewn about an individual's living room. Do such results suggest that the empirical assessment of communication concepts is wrong-headed?

This is a difficult question for which I have no ready answer. I can say, however, that the dimension of time puts a halt to the conceptual destruction wrought in previous chapters. Relying once more on the empirical meaning of concepts and their causal context, this chapter concludes that there is *more* available from time than is captured in existing conceptions of mass media exposure, more, I will be ultimately forced to argue, than can be observed in mass media exposure's effective domain itself (see also chapter 10). Given the wide range of empirical possibilities held out by the dimension of time, the important question may be to determine just what more it be

used to give to audience research.

The chapter's first section is based on empirical characteristics of the external region of the lifespace--the region from which researchers draw and later combine with individual phenomena in constructing relational concepts of exposure. Though time may empirically come into exposure from an external region--the living room, the surface of an electronic device--this external region is, at present, not defined with sufficient clarity to enable us to systematically apprehend external phenomena defined in temporal terms.¹ My discussion of "temporal externalities" in this chapter's first section will, therefore, be brief and my conclusions tentative.

The second section of the chapter reviews conceptions of time based on what is brought from the individual to exposure. Here we find the most important uses of time in exposure, and to handle them I divide the section into three parts.

The first two recover what I believe are the field's positions on the strengths and weaknesses of individual time in exposure. After discussing strengths and weaknesses separately I put them together in a conceptual package to help explain why the field generally avoids discussion of individual time.

As with the medium, time is frequently found at operational levels in audience research but rarely discussed in any detail. The reasons for conceptual reticence with time, however, are different. One says little about the medium because there is little to say. One says little about time because, like a family member who engages in an unflattering business enterprise, it performs necessary work that is less than enchanting to talk about.

To try to find some way to give a measure of enchantment to better measures and conceptions of individual time in exposure, the third subsection returns to

cultivation theory. The Annenberg team used television viewing time to empirically link individuals with the causal force conveyed by the message system, and this aspect of cultivation research was given careful scrutiny by media sociologist Paul Hirsch (1980, 1981). I will retrace Hirsch's path through individual exposure time so that when I draw my inevitable empirical conclusion--that time can be theorized more ambitiously--I will be able to make my statement not against the virtually infinite sea of possibilities that individual time in the lifespace might empirically support, but by holding the claim closely against the circumscribed and devastating pattern of conceptualization that Hirsch outlined and exploited so well in his controversial exchanges with the Annenberg team. The field needs more from individual time, I will argue, because Hirsch has convincingly shown it to have grasped so little.

Temporal Externalities and Mass Media Exposure

With this section we will have finished with the dimensions actually found on the external side external of relational concepts of mass media exposure in audience research. The individual uses, is involved with, attends or is exposed to *mediated contents*. That term comprehends the domain of chapters 2 through 5. With this short section we merely add the observation that mediated contents may be observed to have temporal attributes, and we create a formal conceptual space for the possibility with the awkward phrase, 'temporal externalities.'

Neisser (1976) insisted that perception constituted the bridge between individual subjectivity and the world outside. This definition might suffice for psychology, but not for mass communication. On the one hand, we must deal not just with subjectivity but with behavior, which involves the body as a whole. On the other hand we have to observe these bodies in relation to a rather extensive and specific social institution, the mass

communication process, roughly conveyed by Figure 1.1. Mass media exposure is the means we use to observe something of these two objects together, at their point of contact. At a minimum, the concept of exposure forces us to pay attention to an extra-individual realm, and in previous chapters we have found that content and medium allow us to do so only fitfully--with selected referents here, objects of conveyance there, and somewhere behind or between the occasional social monster or benevolent marketplace god.

To this uncertain external realm we now add consideration of the dimension of time. Some mediated contents seem to have temporal features. The observation will gain us precious little; what it will actually do is put in place--a very messy place--the final piece of the narrative on simple exposure begun in chapter 2. With the dimensions of content, medium, and now extra-individual time, exposure's external or extra-individual domain will reach a kind of maximum point of fragmentation. Rather than try to find some way to organize this domain (so that, at the very least, one might know *how* one's operational selection of mediated contents might stand as a sample of a whole), let us instead try to see the disorganization itself and then move on. The following survey questions, taken from a recent empirical study designed to empirically explicate a conception of complex exposure, will suffice:

Television Exposure

How often do you watch the following kinds of television programs? Would you say you watch these programs FREQUENTLY, SOMETIMES, RARELY, or NEVER?

- a. Morning news programs
- b. National news at 5:30
- c. Local news

Television Viewing Time

On the average weekday evening, how many hours of television do you watch after 5 p.m.? (McLeod, Rucinski & Pan, 1988).

These exposure questions arbitrarily focus on a particular medium and particular classes of contents, but they are not for these constraints unrepresentative of general operational practice. In fact they are fully representative of the unsystematic way that relational concepts of exposure are operationalized in audience research.

From a perspective on extra-individual lifespace, all that one does by even noticing temporal externalities is to further fragment and obscure the stimulus domain. In the cited instance "television" has been sampled from a media dimension of uncertain scope and substance, and the presence of "news" along with less clearly differentiated contents that occur on television after 5 p.m. on weekday evenings constitute gestures toward content. Quantitative variation is established (in inexplicably distinct metrics) by referring to the individual side of the exposure relation. The frequencies in the first question and the hours in the second come from the individual and are then attached to a grab bag of mediated contents.

If we may presume some association between the verbal temporal categories in the first question and the hours metric in the second, then a dimension of time could be said to have brought some measure of organization to observation. That organization, however, comes from the individual side of the relation, so let us set these potentially commensurable metrics aside for now. What, then, remains for our consideration?

Both questions contain instances of what I have called 'temporal externalities.' Some television news has morning character, other television news is 5:30ish, and, possibly, other television news may be associated with the

flow of televised contents during the average weekday evening. Once we move away from the surface of the individual's skin, nominal temporal things crop up here and there on the external side of conceptions of mass media exposure.

The general problem these externalities offer to one who wishes to understand mass media effects research is that causal force, divided among mediated content categories of uncertain scope, is now further distributed across a third dimension, time, for what appear to be accidental or serendipitous reasons. Why is the morning character of news specified? Why the 5:30 news? How would such temporalities compare to those we might find with the newspaper, the magazine, the radio, records, films or books?

I ask these questions not for answers, but to indicate the absence of theoretical weight that these temporal phenomena bear. They actually come into exposure questions because a particular town has a morning or afternoon daily or because archives now make certain classes of news flow available or because local news organizations follow each other in slotting a small set of half-hour times in the afternoon and early evening. Since these reasons are neither seen in the lifespace nor made meaningful by a previous act of internalization (chapter 4), corresponding temporal externalities enter into exposure questions by accident or serendipity. They only play a positive role in inquiry when we try to move to synthesis of findings. They then become active, preventing us from comparing findings across empirical studies.

Mediated politics constituted the subject matter of this particular study. One might expect politics to be bound up in content' mediated temporal flow in ways other than those the authors have specified: Political ads can happen any time of day, even on weekends (Patterson & McClure, 1976), and political themes abound in entertainment

contents (Swanson, 1989). Politics would also invoke media other than television or the newspaper, the two media categories in the cited study.

Yet the authors of that study had critics of television's impact on the political process in mind in designing their work. Among these critics were Michael Robinson (1975; 1976; 1977) and the political communication scholars Patterson and McClure (1976), both of whom explored the effects of television on the political process and who made television vary in distinct ways. In Robinson's case television exposure was expressed as reliance, which bound individual time by use of other media and the twenty-four hour day. Patterson and McClure did not bind the medium in this temporal fashion, but did try to link individuals with more specifically political flows of contents, not all of which corresponded to news or to the temporal locations for news and non-news given in the above questions.

From Robinson's mid-1970s efforts to McLeod et al.'s 1988 study, one learns little about the influence of television on politics. Instead, one finds an oft-repeated claim that television exposure is different from television reliance. Beyond this claim there is little effort to specify the basis of this difference as it might relate to 'television,' as the scientific referent to 'reliance' and 'exposure' is the individual. If one focuses on that external region where television sets are found, however, one learns something more: The region lays in shambles, a television set or two among the uninventoried rubble. The fragmentation begun by content and media devices is substantial, but a focus on temporal externalities shows just how much more disorganization one can achieve in observing this domain.

Morning news programs imply afternoon, evening, night-time and late-night news, not all of which actually happen, though the time-slots are mute as to why. News on a

half-hour implies other news on other half hours. Weekday evenings imply other weekday parts and complete sets of weekend parts. What is more, when the McLeod et al. study later compared outcomes on these exposure variables to the newspaper exposure variables, their design gave birth to a media variable, and not just an investigation of television. Nevertheless, there was no corresponding newspaper on the half hour, morning versus evening recorded music, morning versus evening radio, morning book, after-5 p.m. magazine, weekday evening national film. Neither politics, news, content in general, or the medium varies in any recognizable way, selections just happened, and some of the selections came tagged with temporal attributes.

This is all to say that there is no matrix yet developed that specifies the current fog of things that float around in the external regions of individual lifespace. All that temporal externalities do is turn wispy lists like 'news' versus 'entertainment' or 'television' versus 'newspaper' into thick clouds of uncertainty.

To make the same point less metaphorically: Such temporal externalities as one finds in existing research are not wrong or misconceived, they are merely incomprehensible. Having now looked at extra-individual lifespace from the third of the six dimensions of exposure--the last one, I should emphasize, that represents any reality outside the individual body--we may say that incomprehensibility is a general characteristic of this subregion. This is also to say that there is more to be had than is captured in current conceptualizations of exposure, though it is difficult to discern what that more may be from the present dimension of time.

As was the case with media categories, the temporal externalities found in exposure suggest a level of organization and measurement might possibly be had beyond nominal levels. There is a late night before every morning,

for example, with afternoons and evenings following thereafter. Similarly, 5:30 is situated before 6:00 and after 5:00. Can an ordinal arrangement of time organize the stimulus domain of exposure? I think not, but this is also to say that in facing this domain we have no help from theories of mass communicator motive or activity to help us order the more immediately observable temporal externalities. They are at most a part of opaque fabric of that same screen we encountered in chapter 1 that prevented observation of anything that lay behind.

Perhaps some other conception of time might order these temporal externalities. Consider time as a continuum bounded by notions of ephemerality and permanence, for example. One could isolate out media devices from the stimulus screen and systematically reorder them on this continuum, with books representing permanence, television and radio anchoring the ephemeral end, and other devices falling in somewhere in a statistically induced between.

Unfortunately, if one actually applied such a continuum to the assortments of media objects found in individual lifespaces, one would likely find that the total population of devices would not fall cleanly into temporal zones within the continuum, nor would its metric be clear. Many books, we would find, are readied for disposal upon crossing the individuals' doorsteps, while certain recordings of television or radio programs would take their place in family archives along with saved magazines and clippings files. That device groups might cluster in some respect on certain locations on such a continuum is possible, but I think that researchers would find less workable variation here than they might imagine, and without a compelling theoretical reason relating to the mass communication process, constructing such a temporal ordering might not be worth the effort. Indeed, the means we would use to order media devices in temporal terms would likely

involve individual users, and as we will see later in this chapter and in chapters 7 and 8, there are much more interesting and tractable individual phenomena to work with.

Even as I strain to make use of temporal externalities for exposure purposes in this last example, I find that the extra-individual domain itself must be given up as a source of organizing power. In its place the individual emerges, this time as that which will determine what is permanent and what ephemeral among the mediated content objects in the lifespace. Moreover, if we look back at the cited exposure questions, it is easy to use the individual to give meaning to the observed serendipities: doesn't the period of time that occurs after 5:00 p.m. on the average weekday really mean the *individual's* evening time during *her* average weekday? To what other agency could these average weekday evenings belong?

It is, of course, this other agency that I am after in this study, and it is the search for this other agency that has rendered the external region of individual lifespace so visibly and disenchantingly disorganized.

I should note that one *can* work with this admixture and create links from the lifespace to entities without, and one can do so without much effort. National news 5:30 in the exposure question cited above likely refers to the activities of three national organizations. But the aims and efforts of these agencies do not get worked into observation or theory. Rather, they just happen to be the sites from which the observed contents, for that part of that question, originate. As we move to other parts in other questions tapping other types of contents and media devices, a broader range of organizations is implied, though which, how, or why remain mysteries. Like referents to content, temporal externalities give us sporadic references to the world beyond the lifespace, but they do not give us references that would translate back into the lifespace in

any way that would allow systematic reordering of the stimulus domain.

To gain more from time than is now had, I believe that researchers will need to consider the extra-individual domain's present state of disorganization more concertedly than they have in the past. To bring order to this domain they will likely have to explore the world outside the lifespace entirely with the problems of extra-individual lifespace in mind. (What beyond the living room can help us organize our observations of the living room?) The purpose of these excursions outside the lifespace should be like those essayed by the early message discrimination researchers: to find something that can be internalized and then brought back to the lifespace in order to render observation there more systematic.

Even though time has made us confront the full reality of the state of disorganization of the stimulus domain, the external side of relational concepts of exposure, it is still too early in the present analysis to demonstrate how this might be done (but see chapters 8 and especially 9 and 10). It is not too early, however, to show that there might be regularities associated with a temporal dimension that are observable even within the present mass-communicator-free perspective habitually taken by audience research.

When effects researchers take it upon themselves to look at some of the flows of contents that may reach the lifespaces they observe, they make sure that copies of those contents are available. Indeed, the serendipitous character of most temporal externalities are due to patterns of availability of contents in archives. At issue here is not the uncertain sampling that available contents represent, but what happens afterward. Researchers tend to view these contents repeatedly in order to make their coding instructions and train their coders, and they keep it

available for reliability checks on frequency counts or as means to ground the more ambitious semantic claims that occasionally emerge when one spends a lot of time with a pile of text.

Noting this engaging activity with mass media contents, McQuail wrote that the results of content analysis were often the creation of texts other than those that individual audience members could be expected to have witnessed or read (1987, pp. 183-4). To McQuail the major culprit in this activity was the scientific penchant for objectification and counting: Content analysts make frequency counts, lay people do not, so the stimulus is somehow misspecified.

My alternative claim is that misspecification of some kind occurs, but it is unlikely that we can find the means to express the problem if we focus on either objectifying or interpretive strategies as our critical object, as both these approaches require knowledge of the relationship of content to quantification that we do not now possess.

A more workable notion of misspecification can be had when we focus on temporal externalities if we allow 'externality' to exist in a particular location outside the lifespace, particularly, in those places where content is prepared for research. In academic and professional realms we find that both quantifying and interpretive strategies are frequently applied to available copies of mediated contents. As a result, more time is spent with these copies of contents than was likely spent with the originals back in the lifespace. More contents are seen in more precise amounts, more meanings emerge between textual lines, but the only 'more' that we can really see accumulating is the time given to contents in academic and professional workspaces. Were we to measure this we would likely find that it varied systematically from the time taken by a sample of lay

individuals in lay lifespaces for similar contents (especially contents political).

I mention this obvious possibility not to chide empiricist or interpretive scholars for some error, as I do not think *error* the appropriate term to describe this temporal disjuncture. Rather, allowing mediated contents to exist empirically and noticeably in this one location outside the lifespan suggests the existence of some contextual or organizing principle that allows us, in turn, to see that the lifespan in general is different from at least one other specific kind of space, one that we know well.

Recognition of this difference might further allow us to consider the lifespan beyond the surface of the individual's body--certainly beyond perception--as something with systematic properties. Something about professional or academic workspaces compel their occupants to spend more time with contents. Place the same occupants in their homes and the compulsion no longer exists--or at least the occupants have a choice in determining how much time they will spend with contents more normally found there. Rather than make this new space an issue in itself, let me just say that its existence holds out the possibility that the lifespan is, after all, a particular human location, one that may, in its entirety, be more systematically structured than we would otherwise be led to believe by looking within it at particular classes of objects like content, media devices, or temporal externalities.

The possibility of temporal disjuncture between their observational position and the object they observe may lead to misspecifications of any stimulus that involves content. Audience researchers may thus consider making adjustments in their research designs to prevent this from happening. They could do this by trying to reproduce naturalistic content reading and witnessing behavior in

their coders, but there is another, much less awkward way to make an adjustment.

Scholars may find it easier--and less transgressing of their own often painfully acquired dispositions in approaching texts--to simply refrain from applying their interpretive powers to texts not really intended for their use. Without texts to read, however, what would one observe? That is one of this study's larger questions, and I will end the discussion of temporal externalities by simply suggesting that it is a legitimate question. Like the entire domain of extra-individual lifespace, temporal externalities are so disorganized that giving them more than a passing glance may be interpreted as immodest behavior. Let me, then, extricate myself from this indelicate thread of discussion with the general conclusion that something more be had from the region than is available in present conceptions.

As we will see in the next section, the field has not only been avoiding the disorganization we have encountered in the extra-individual portion of the lifespace but it has also been trying to find ways to get rid of time even as an individual characteristic brought into exposure. This effort to be rid of time has been more prominent in the literature because the individual can offer so much more than reports of time. She can even give evidence of motive and cause that one can use to define the mass communication process in its entirety. Nevertheless, the idea of using activist individual ontologies to promote a particular vision of reality is, at base, an epistemological matter, and as such falls outside this study's domain. My purpose in the next section is to suggest, on empirical grounds, why individually derived measures of time in exposure cause difficulties for research.

Temporal Attributes of the Individual

Individual exposure time surfaced repeatedly if

briefly in previous chapters. It quantified content, it helped make the link between individuals and the message system problematic, and it was stripped away from nominal media typologies to better reveal the lack of meaningful variation that remained. In all these instances more immediate matters made it easy to drop time from the explicatory agenda--there was always something else to discuss. There is no other matter to deflect our attention now, so let us look at the individual's temporal contribution to mass media exposure.

Instances of individual time in exposure can be found in many studies. Meta-analysis might show it to be the dimension of exposure most frequently employed in survey research. Yet time has not been given sustained attention either in the theoretical sections of empirical studies or in review essays.² The former usually concentrate on the type of use or effect studied first, the mediated contents to be associated with them second, and only later--usually in a sentence in the procedural section or, if an appendix is included, within a survey question or two--is a glimpse given of the role time played in the research activity. One may thus gain the impression that time does not amount to much in theoretical terms, but it would be a mistake to move from there to a general claim of time's unimportance. In fact, it is difficult to conceive of a regular program of audience research without a temporal dimension somewhere in or around operational indicators of exposure. On a criterion of frequency of use in research, time would certainly wear a crown, but it then would be told to go sit in a corner and be quiet.

As was the case with temporal externalities, individual time resists easy evaluation on empirical grounds. It is everywhere, and verifiably so, in many forms in individual lifespaces.³ To move the discussion beyond the stifling safety of empirical adequacy without straying away

from field-related concerns or into temporal metaphysics, I have designed this discussion around the issue of time's peculiar conceptual status, and I will ask and address two questions in that regard: (1) What makes individual time so popular at operational levels of exposure and (2) What prevents audience researchers from speaking more about such a useful dimension, and often disparagingly when they do?

The Benefits of Individual Time

The individual is a given in audience research, but we can also say that the individual gives something to audience researchers that often proves quite valuable. As we can see in the previously cited examples of exposure, it was the reader's or viewer's own time with a medium or a medium's contents that gave the latter a level of measurement transcending a nominal scale. How much news does an individual read? Perhaps an hour's worth. How much television does she watch? None, two hours, 30 minutes or--a respondent is quite capable of saying this--42 minutes' worth per day.

Unless one uses unobservable and conveniently varying entities drawn from the cognitive unknown, it is difficult to imagine how one could actually quantify mediated contents in exposure without making use of individual time. The speculative road from the sublime to the ridiculous is particularly short here. Does television vary by number of sets in the lifespace? Do political newspaper stories vary by inches of height of a storage pile? They can, of course, and I suppose one could accept these forms as a challenge for research designs, but look at what time does: Taken from the individual and attached to any kind of mediated contents it immediately transforms them into variables at the ratio scale. With time the communication scholar need not envy economists and their dollar--certainly one of the most lovely dependent variables available in the human sciences. What would the field of

communication have done without individual time? The gift it gave to a generation of users of parametric statistics was precious and it may be described in one word--measurement.

It is difficult for me to poke empirical holes in this usage of time. One may argue that time's almost infinite plasticity and divisibility has led to methodological flights of fancy. Kline (1977) may have had this in mind when he noted that scholarly treatments of time seemed to be limited only by the current state of knowledge in pure mathematics. It is also the case that scholarly discussions of time often proceed as if it were an internal affair--to be adjudicated through the interaction between a scholarly self, a software package, a body of data and colleagues who operate in the same way, which can result in the disappearance of time as an empirical phenomenon and its replacement by discussion of the latest in measurement theory. That is to say, time gives researchers the possibility of quantifying for quantification's sake.

But to criticize these ambitious acts of quantification would require a review of the rules of the research game, and I am not prepared to do that. Moreover, and I may be underestimating the sophistication of contemporary analytic activity in saying this, it seems to me that a large range of treatments of individual time could be empirically justified were a researcher challenged to do so. Not only may individual time be observed in very small or very large quantities, but for any given individual it may happen in different rhythms and rates not unlike those a mathematician expresses with logarithmic or exponential scales⁴ or even trigonometric functions. Certainly many individuals would not express their temporal experiences so mathematically, but an observer can translate them into such a language and, if she has reason and resources, with some precision. If the expression is at first unclear, the researcher can refer to an empirical phenomenon to make it

clearer, and to the extent that this obtains it would be difficult, and quite possibly inconsistent, to criticize even elaborate specifications of temporal variables on empirical grounds.

To summarize, though one may criticize certain analytical uses of individual time, the fact remains that it exists in the lifespace in all sorts of gradations and quantities that are easily recognizable or apprehensible by researchers, interviewers, subjects and coders. It is perhaps so well grounded in individual lifespace that external validity may not be a major issue. What remains salient about individual time is the support it gives to researcher who desire high measurement levels in variables expressing exposure to mediated contents. This is no small gift. If only it came without strings.

The Conceptual Costs of Individual Time

We have already discussed time's role in causal inquiry with content and need only review the argument briefly. To characterize content quantitatively, both content analysts and structuralists isolate and count instances of occurrence of sets of meaning object-- attributions to government sources, violent acts, violent acts by young white males, and so on. To relate this content to individual perception, scholars normally express the distribution of content objects as frequency densities in time, and then ask individuals to express their own media use in terms of time. Problems arise if the frequency densities observed in temporal content flows are uneven, because if data cannot be had which identifies where within the temporal flows the individual's time is located, the researcher does not know how many content objects the individual may have witnessed, and attempts to associate those objects with an effect will be confounded by unknown amounts of error.

Shoemaker and Reese (1990) have recently

criticized audience research for failing to actually observe content as an independent variable. Their comments are directed at the continuing use of time with media categories instead of content as a measure of exposure. However, logistical as well as logical problems involved in successfully operationalizing content variables (outside specific campaign research settings) weaken their criticism significantly--just how is one to observe exposure to content among even a modest number of individuals?

Shoemaker's comments do point to the field's reliance on some form of the temporal frequency procedure I have outlined, and since my focus is not content but time I can mount a different criticism. Audience researchers usually fall short in their specifications of content as temporal frequencies in one of two ways. First, they tend to select objects that demonstrate plausibly stable frequency densities over time--cultivation's use of violence is perhaps the prime example here. When they do they have to downplay the existence of semantically related content objects as well as the overall level of variation in the frequencies of the objects they have selected (but see Signorielli, 1986).

Second, they generally fail to explore the degree to which individual exposure times map onto content regions of known frequency density. Trying to do so would greatly increase the length of the survey interview; not doing so--the norm in audience research--would mean that the inference process might not be adequately supported by the data.

Let me summarize: For those who hold that content is the authoritative dimension of exposure, the prime bearer of causal force, time will likely be a bearer of bad news. One needs it to forego otherwise overwhelming observational requirements, but if one pays close attention to what proper causal inference minimally requires when temporal frequency densities are employed along with measures of individual

exposure time, time will either show uneven densities, internal variation in exposure to those densities among individuals exposed in similar quantities of time, or both.

Let me acknowledge the first maker of these challenges: Herbert Blumer, back in 1959 (see also O'Keefe, 1974). But let me also note the normative lesson that Blumer and others have drawn from the argument: Time hurts content, therefore time should go.

Consider this criticism, expressed by communication scholars, of the kinds of exposure variables that have been included in cross-sectional survey data made available by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center and Inter-University Consortium, where measures of exposure time with various media categories and general content types predominated. "The shift from the community to the nation as a center for study," Becker et al. (1975) wrote,

had tremendous impact on the study of the role of the media...Despite the tradition in this country of local media institutions, the SRC studies...forced a conception of the media as national. The rise in prominence of the broadcast networks and the news magazines, as well as broadly regional newspapers...seemed to justify this shift. But such a decision ignores the peculiarities of media roles within a community that may serve to counter the influence of the national media or limit their influence to select audiences. *The SRC research made content analysis of the local media extremely difficult and forced researchers to guess what users of the media were receiving.* The result was that the potential effects of the media on voter's "cognitive and affective map of politics"--on which the SRC studies focused--was largely unexplored (1975, pp. 32-3. emphasis added).

Chapter 10 will discuss one of the major cognitive mapping projects undertaken at the SRC during the last forty years. For now it is important to note that the exposure variables in national cross-sectional studies do tend to rely on gross notions of content and, more often, individual time with media categories. Many hypotheses of effects have foundered and an unknown additional number of effects have probably been left unhypothesized because specific content categories have been submerged in the huge temporal streams these data tap.

Nevertheless, to witness mass communication scholars recoiling from these data in the way that they do here should give one pause. First of all, it is difficult to accept at face value that a media effects researcher in the United States would decry the national scope of SRC or NORC surveys. The bulk of audience research has been supported by surveys, but, and perhaps more importantly, the rise of these observational technologies may be attributed to the emergence of a national commercial radio system in the 1920s (Barnouw, 1966, 1969, 1975). National media created national audiences, and the existence of this new reality, while it might not have led to the invention of early survey techniques, certainly helped to diffuse them. Yet these communication scholars acknowledge national audiences created by national media (and an effort to observe these national audiences) only grudgingly.

I suspect that the problem here is not the national scope of media audiences or any pressing need to reassert the existence of *gemeinschaft* communities within the heart of the nation. The problem instead resides in the character of the exposure variables in SRC and NORC surveys. They observe little content beyond news, and what they do manage to observe can only be described as a mystically derived sampling from the overall temporal domain of mediated contents: People are asked to report the spans of

time they habitually spend with one or two media devices. Once more, content is mostly missing and time is there to take the blame for its absence. Time should go. If the national scope of a survey design stands in the way, then it, too, should go.

Finally, popular conceptions of complex exposure (the subject of chapter 7) are undermined by properties of individual time. One of the most frequently encountered theoretical maneuvers with complex exposure is the positing of the individual as a causal force (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Swanson, 1979). This notion begins with the commonsensical observation that individuals may be observed to witness media fare in varying modalities--they watch television very attentively in some instances and with minimal attention in many others.

If one has measures of television exposure expressed in minutes or hours the result is a measurement scale with uniformly marching distances between unit boundaries. Hour one is followed by hour two and so on. Yet, ten good minutes with a compelling newsmagazine may lead to much greater knowledge gain than, say, an hour's perusal of that same magazine to kill time on a commute. With simple exposure time measures, however, the latter instance is given six times as much magnitude as the former. Individual time tends to smooth out all the peaks of high involvement and to fill in all the valleys of mindless witnessing.

To help sort the differences out, scholars seek and use cognitive variables like 'involvement' or 'attention.' Once more, time is cast as a demoralizing empirical problem, and some cognitive scholars add their voices to those of the content analysts in saying that time should go.

For many researchers, then, individual time is a lamentable presence in the data, so lamentable that some are willing to toy with the idea that one can ignore the very

distributional phenomena that make mass communication what it is (where can one not buy an Oreo cookie today?). The denial seems aimed at saving content, but if distributional reality is to be the price, I do not think content worth saving.

However, presuming a reader willing, for the sake of argument or curiosity, to set aside the idea that content were the authoritative stimulus domain, what would he confront now? It would very likely be a situation of intellectual stasis like the one I have sketched out in the two preceding sections: Individual time is honored for the high levels of measurement it gives to audience data, particularly to conceptions of exposure to mediated contents, but then it takes away much of one's ability to speak with empirical authority of the effects of content or of cognition.

What scholars tend to do, especially with national data, is adopt a satisficing strategy--they frame their inquiry in such a way that known information, or knowable information requirements, are thrown away in order to allow some kind of research action to proceed (March & Simon, 1958). Time becomes an issue for measurement theory rather than a property of the object observed, and the object, insistently described in terms of content or cognition, is one that is never observed as such.

If the satisficing strategy seems less than attractive, we may wish to note that in a quiet corner, somewhere away from all the expressive consternation about content in national surveys or in exposure in general, individual time seems to function quite well at any level of aggregation--including levels paralleling the distribution system for Oreo cookies. Why get rid of the dimension that works best? Why not call other dimensions into question? Perhaps for its quiet measurement assistance alone time might warrant further attention. If so, then we must anchor

the increased attention that we give to time, as it exists in many forms in the lifespace. To assist in this anchoring I focus the next section on the exchange between Paul Hirsch and George Gerbner and his colleagues. My thesis has been that more can and should be had from time than the service it has rendered to parametric statistics. Their exchange can help us find what that more might be.

Paul Hirsch and Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory wove institutional, audience and commercial television content data into a structuralist interpretation of the culture industry's content. That industry, Gerbner argued, reproduced distorting and malevolent images of reality in the minds of the mass public (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 1979). Chapter 2 questioned the Annenberg team's specification of a singular message system as the vehicle through which the causal force of the social could be observed to flow. This section returns to cultivation research once more, this time to consider how its proponents attempted to actually observe the relationship between individuals and the culture industry.

Let me emphasize that I am not concerned with either the meaning of the message system or of mass public cognition. Rather, the object of my concern is the relational concept that cultivation research used to observe the culture industry and the mass public in interaction. Precisely at this point we find that the Annenberg team employed a simple conception of this relationship. They used television viewing time, formed by combining an individual's daily cyclical time with a single nominal media category: television. Through this simple relational object the causal force of the culture industry allegedly flowed. Television viewing time was a typical operational take on mass media exposure.⁵

Cultivation analysis, however, was no typical

program of research. The Annenberg team's larger effort to systematically apprehend television content and to work it into a claim of powerful culture industry effects gained increasing attention and prestige throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Excepting perhaps certain versions of agenda-setting and Noelle-Neuman's (1974) spiral of silence theories, the effects community by this time had become quite accustomed to modest theories of modest media power. Gerbner and his associates argued for their contesting vision compellingly and many, including graduate students,⁶ took note. Those who continued to regard television's (or the culture industry's) effects as minimal saw cultivation theory as an object worthy of strenuous challenge (Hirsch, 1980; Newcomb, 1978).

This section will concentrate on media sociologist Paul Hirsch's reanalysis of the audience data used by the Annenberg team. His was one of the most strident responses to cultivation research to emerge in the early 1980s. Perhaps because of the controversial context, Hirsch treated exposure time not as a corrosive attachment to content or cognition but rather as a valuable substance in itself.

The Annenberg team's handling of television viewing time variables was accompanied by a lack of theoretical consideration more typical of audience research. They employed standard measures of daily cyclical time with television from a variety of NORC and ICPSR survey datasets--and similar measures in surveys of their own design--and made subsequent statements of causal force *not* of individual time with television, but of the culture industry's message system.⁷ In this study's terms, a dimension of daily cyclical time was combined with a nominal media category in order to create variation. Once that variation was created the simple procedure was pushed quietly into background to allow the message system to take center stage. The Annenberg team used individual time but then did not deem it necessary

to consider what they were using beyond asserting that through this time the message system's meaning power flowed evenly.

Let me say, however, that in looking at how the Annenberg team operationally defined television viewing time one would be hard-pressed to mount a serious criticism-- indeed, to say much about these procedures at all--on the basis of a review of standard procedures obtaining in the field at the time.

Fortunately, Hirsch's unwillingness to accept the claim of a malevolent cultivation process enabled him to mount a sustained critique of these standard procedures, effectively bringing them into view. Not only did he notice matters that normally engendered little comment, he also worked these matters with purpose and control and produced one of the most thorough and valuable considerations of exposure time available in the audience research literature. He illuminated a large theoretical space around a normally obscure concept without getting lost in the metaphysical traps associated with the general category of time.

The present discussion will make use of the theoretical space Hirsch opened up. The pages to follow will often be marked with what appear to be circumscribed or procedural issues, and it is therefore important to remain aware of the broader field of contention informing the discussion of particulars. Cultivation theory had become something of a lightning rod for emerging notions of powerful media effects. Hirsch coordinated his efforts with those of Newcomb and others within the emerging field of television criticism to help put to rest the notion that television was a harmful institution. From time to time I will refer to this broader level of contention in order to contextualize certain claims Hirsch made during the course of his 110-page critical empirical reanalysis of the audience effect claims of cultivation theory.

My purpose in referring to this broader context is not to identify and exploit biases of either party in order to influence my own assessment of the outcome of the exchange. On that score I can say that on research grounds obtaining at that time Hirsch's reanalysis was devastatingly powerful even controlling for interpretive excesses attributable to his basic position. At the same time, my own general position on the power of the culture industry closely mirrors that taken by Gerbner and his colleagues, so that Hirsch's reanalysis is not particularly pleasing to read. What I wish to do is to understand just how it was that a claim of media power could be so thoroughly eviscerated by an opposing view when that claim was played out in audience research discourse--I very much want to see how the loser lost so that the same battle need not be fought again. To do this one must acknowledge a winner and consider his efforts as such.

I also use this general context for less dramatic purposes: It is my position that a call for more meaning from a dimension of time would be largely an empty gesture in itself, as once the Pandora's box of temporal meanings is opened up the problem is how to constrain them. I use lines from Hirsch's reanalysis to build arguments for specific temporal meanings that future research might wish to explore.

These recommendations lay groundwork for later responses to Hirsch's reanalysis: If one uses better and more expansive measures of time, as Hirsch suggests, and if one attaches these times more squarely to the mass communication process, then one might reopen questions of media power for survey research. Lessons are learned in this section and acted upon in chapters 8 through 10.

The Reanalysis

If, generally, audience researchers are operationally defining exposure time with enough ordinal

categories to mimic measurement at interval or ratio scales, then an operational practice that falls back to gross dichotomies or trichotomies will perhaps raise a few eyebrows, though it should not be expected to light up the wordprocessors of the land. If, in addition, the deviant operational practice occurs within the context of a research program that diffuses its results widely among academic and policy circles, more eyebrows will be raised and responses will begin to be composed. If, finally, the gross operational procedure is part of a widely diffused claim of pernicious television (or culture industry) power, numerous and energetic responses should be expected.⁸

The very fact that the abhorrent research cuts against the grain of standard theory and observational practice will lead to responses that review and recover the meaning of standard procedures in order to make these meanings available as resources for counterattack. 'We do things *this* way. Now someone is doing them differently. All we need to do is restate the logic of what it is that we do and we can bring the authority of standard practice to bear upon the deviant.' I can think of no more parsimonious way to frame the following pages than this. I cannot attribute the statements to any author but I can say, at the outset, that Hirsch's efforts effectively shed light on many aspects of standard research practice.

In the 1970s and early 1980s the Annenberg team used NORC General Social Surveys and the SRC 1976 election studies survey as well as four of their own convenience samples of school-aged children to investigate the effects of the message system on audiences. It should be noted that in the latter studies the Annenberg team essayed no special theoretical or operational definitions of television viewing time. Hirsch's focus on the analyses with NORC and SRC data miss nothing essential with respect to cultivation's specifications of mass media exposure (Hirsch 1980, 1981).

Using the national cross-sectional surveys the Annenberg team investigated the level of association obtaining between estimates of daily television viewing time and questions tapping individual feelings of anomie, alienation and fear. They did this by dividing the survey sample into subgroups of light and heavy television viewers, computing mean scores on the dependent variables, and comparing subgroup means. As their interpretation of the message system's meaning system would have led them to predict, they found a number of small differences (cultivation differentials) in group mean levels of anomie, alienation and fear, and somewhat larger associations between individual visions and television distortions of real-world events (see Hawkins & Pinegree, 1981), as a function of the light and heavy television viewing specification. Looking up from the immediate modesty of their findings, the Annenberg team drove their point home: the monstrous culture industry had measurable effects on the public (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al. 1979).

Perhaps because struck with the idea that the entire cultivation project was basically misconceived, Hirsch focused on basic procedural issues in data analysis in mounting his response to these findings (1980). In reviewing some of these procedural issues let me say at the outset that because they center on the dimension of time I consider them to be also, and primarily, empirical observations. That is, in reviewing Hirsch's discussion of data analysis we can discern just what television viewing time is often taken to mean as an empirical object.

Hirsch wrote first, and at some length, about just what was functioning as the independent variable in models producing cultivation differentials. Figure 6.1 describes the independent variable in the form of a histogram of individual reports of their television viewing time. A similar description is given in Hirsch (1980); the Figure

adds partition markers made by the Annenberg team on these data to facilitate discussion.

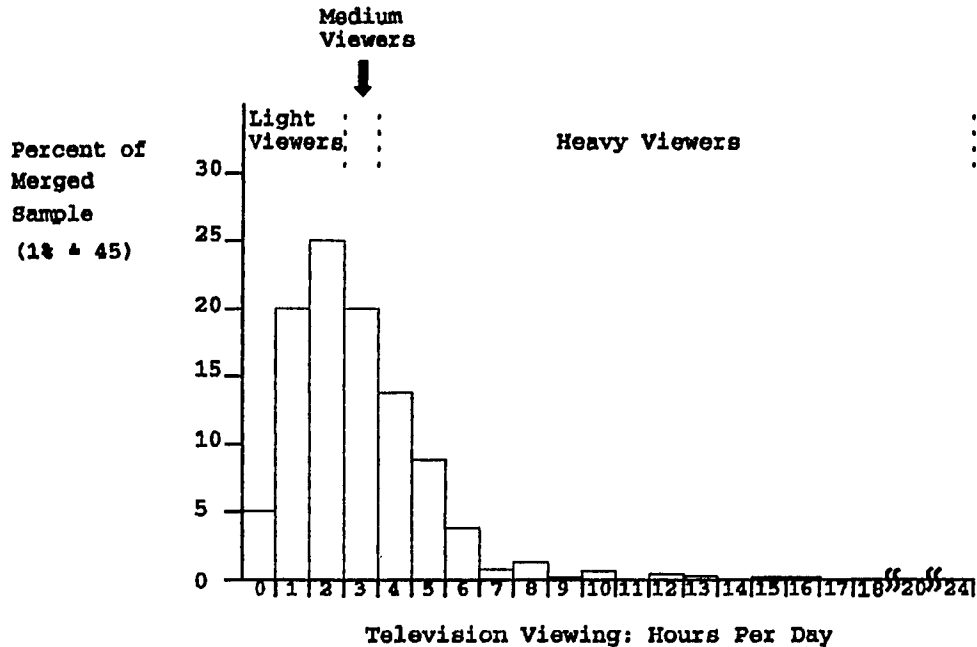


Figure 6.1. Television Viewing Times from Three NORC Datasets, with Ideal-Typical Cultivation Partitions

In comments like those a professor would make to a students in a first statistics course, Hirsch called attention to the left-skewness of the individual viewing time distribution, and suggested that it might benefit from a scalar transformation to make it appear more normal. Hirsch himself would not base his subsequent reanalysis on any log transform of the independent variable (he would report some work in a footnote in 1980), so his

first comments are perhaps best viewed as a bid for authority from the community of standard practitioners. The Annenberg team, he seemed to suggest, did not perform basic investigation of the properties of their most fundamental data.

It is perhaps just as well that Hirsch did not proceed with transformed data, making such a transform is not merely a procedural matter. Had he done so, to be consistent he would subsequently have had to have spoken of the effects (or lack of effects) not of television viewing time but of the log of television viewing time. Log-scaling time in this way would suggest that the distance between zero and one, one and two, two and three hours, and so on, were not the same when associated with cognitive outcomes. One could support such a claim, but to do so one would have to address an empirical matter the scale would seem to invoke: The idea that the television viewing time was bounded and that some kind of displacement process involving other lifespace objects was at issue.

For example, if people who watched no television at all were substantially different from people who watched one or two hours, and those who watched one or two hours were not much different from those who watched two, three or four hours (which Hirsch would later argue, but without the log transformation), then the suggestion is that an individual would cross some kind of qualitative threshold in going from no television viewing to some television viewing. What other lifespace objects might this threshold implicate? Neither Hirsch nor the Annenberg team would pursue the matter, but it is one that is empirically opened up by toying with the scaling of the viewing-time distribution. These initial descriptive gestures, then, give us less insight into the dimension of individual time than they might have.

More important is what Hirsch would subsequently

accomplish by laying out the television viewing time variable as a simple distribution without scalar adjustments, for in doing this he showed that it was a variable containing 24 distinct locations on which an individual could locate his estimates of his own habitual viewing time. In looking at the estimates the GSS respondents actually made, we can see that most are contained within 13 categories (times beyond 12 hours could be summarized Pareto-fashion and made into a 14th category)

The important point is this: There are over 100 ways to cut a 14-unit list into two or three subgroups within the constraints of ordinality. The number of options the variable makes available to the researcher strongly suggests that the choice of any particular set of cutpoints be theoretically justified.

Cultivation theory was not developed sufficiently to inform cutpoint decisions. Across various survey datasets they were made both at different points on the 24-hour scale and in different numbers, sometimes producing two subgroups (light and heavy viewers) and sometimes three (light, medium and heavy viewers). Hirsch located this indecision and with it mounted what I believe are his most important contributions to our understanding of the role time has played in effects research.

What, empirically, does this discussion of cutpoints mean? Simply this: Time allows one to specify an audience into a large number of ways. Researchers and subjects themselves may successfully observe television viewing as light or heavy, as light, medium or heavy, or as taking place in a more precise quantity of minutes or hours extending across the cyclical 24-hour day. One may divide this day and its pool of viewing time into two or three parts, but without any compelling reason for the action another is quite free to see and make more or different decisions--time will always empirically support the way a

researcher chooses to specify the viewing time variable. Time will not, in itself, say which specification is preferable. It is too theoretically empty or perhaps too embarrassingly accommodating.

In his initial reanalysis of the survey data Hirsch used descriptive statistics of television viewing time to reach a point where he could note the many different ways one could specify such a variable. On empirically unassailable grounds he respecified the television viewing variable as continuous and used regression to retest the Annenberg team's findings of cultivation differentials for 18 dependent variables, with beta coefficients instead of tests for differences in gross group mean scores (1981).

He found that the regression data disconfirmed the Annenberg team findings. In some instances the signs of the coefficients even reversed. All in all, it was a beautiful and devastating crucial test of the original set of hypotheses of audience effects produced by cultivation theory.

We are fortunate that Hirsch did not let the matter rest with these tests. He instead continued to work with specific subregions on the television viewing distribution and with other pieces of the GSS survey data not just to kill a dead theory but to replace it with his own vision of how one should use media variables in social inquiry. To assist in capturing all that Hirsch had to say I have constructed Figure 6.2, which is not in his work or accurately scaled, but which I offer as an ideal-typical summary of what Hirsch found with the GSS data and television viewing, across the 18 dependent variables and beyond. On the horizontal scale is a slightly reduced range of individual viewing time slots, expressed in hour units, and on the vertical dimension a composite hypothetical anomie-alienation-fear outcome.

The solid line in Figure 6.2 represents the

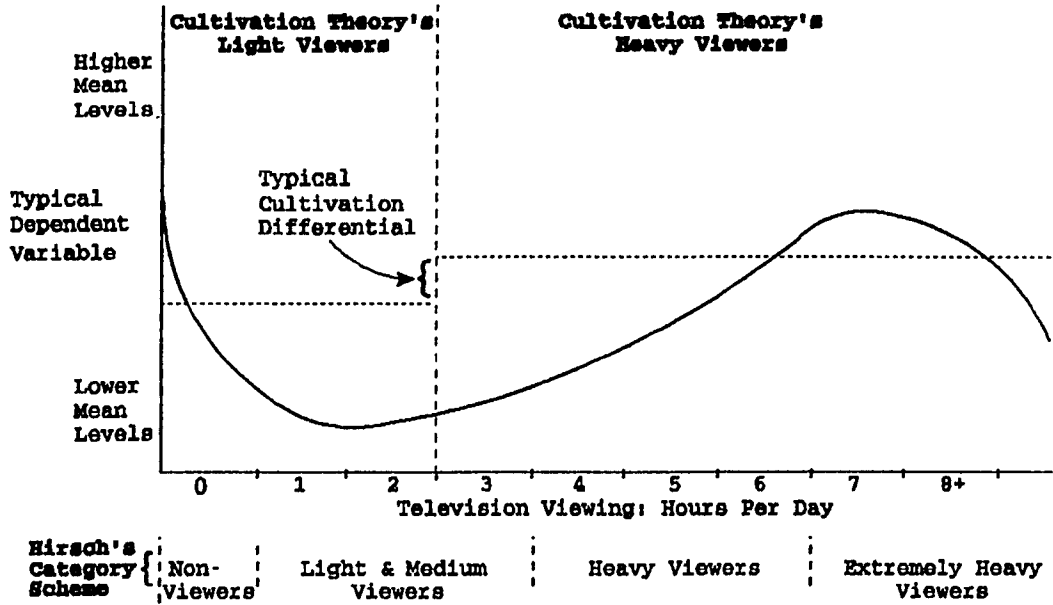


Figure 6.2. A Cultivation Differential and an Ideal-Typical Interval Outcome

magnitudes of the association between television viewing and the outcome variable that one could see if the former were allowed to be expressed in a larger number of more finely graded categories. The dashed vertical line represents a hypothetical division of the same data into an ordinal dichotomy, suggesting how the uneven outcomes on either side could still average out as a cultivation differential.

We can see right away that the gross specifications of television viewing time used by the Annenberg team could be interpreted as attempts to hide important information. The rather high degree of association

between non-viewing and the outcome variable is subsumed when merged with outcomes for one- and two-hour viewers; the tailing off of outcome magnitudes at the high end of the television viewing range is similarly lost when merged with outcomes for less extremely heavy television viewers.

I do not recall Hirsch actually imputing malevolent motives to the Annenberg team with respect to the way that simple light- versus heavy-viewing categories hide these interesting associations at the extreme ends of the television viewing range, nor am I inclined to look again for them. For this study, hiding or not hiding the associations we can see in Figure 6.2 is not a substantial issue, as a dimension of individual time would support gross or fine measurement levels. That is, if one really had a good reason to talk about light versus heavy viewers, empirical reality would not stand in the way. Criticizing light versus heavy viewing in itself would thus waste time. Hirsch's strategy at this point in the reanalysis was more positive and interesting: He concentrated on giving good reasons of his own for identifying subgroups at the extreme ends of the television viewing range.

By merging three NORC GSS datasets from three different samples and years (1975, 1977, and 1978), Hirsch was able to identify a group of nonviewers of television of sufficient size to permit tabular analysis. He began to talk about the category of nonviewers as people, the roughly one in twenty individuals who reported watching television at all. Who were they?

By reaching for other variables in the NORC dataset Hirsch found that these people were less likely to be married than others and, as a group, had less income and more education. What did these associations with nonviewing add up to (besides an image of the graduate student)? The answer was not clear. An Annenberg scholar had also taken a look at this subgroup at around this time and had concluded

that no definitive characterization could be made (Jackson-Beeck, 1977). In their response to Hirsch's reanalysis, the Annenberg team used the lack of definition to justify including these individuals within the larger light viewing category (Gerbner, et al., 1981a).

To Hirsch this was not an inconsequential or amorphous subgroup but one whose dependent-variable magnitudes represented a serious anomaly for cultivation theory. Whoever these people were, they seemed more alienated, anomic and fearful than light viewers, more so, indeed, than many heavy television viewers. Here Hirsch made an observation that the data made hard to resist: Maybe, he speculated, these people should watch a little television.⁹ Nonviewers seemed to be a deprived group (1980). More importantly, cultivation theory seemed to be incapable of capturing the deprivation process. The theory was in trouble.

Merging the three NORC datasets also enabled Hirsch to clothe heavy television viewers with meanings from the survey questionnaire wardrobe. Extremely heavy television viewers, he found, tended to be older, poorer, less educated and less proportionally white. His description of this subgroup is reminiscent of the category of shut-ins used to in the 1920s (see especially Beuick, 1927) to describe a benefit commercial radio would bring to the nation. Shut-ins were people who were without resources of the type that would enable them to leave their homes and participate in community life, and whom radio helped maintain a sense of social contact.

Hirsch seemed to suggest that both the shut-in category and the corresponding function were still relevant in the 1970s. Perhaps they were. In any event, the examination of the dip in magnitude for dependent variable outcomes at the high extreme range of television viewing times was, once more, serious disconfirmation of the

cultivation hypothesis of uniformly increasing effects.

At about this time the Annenberg team's interpretation of the meaning of the message system began to move toward a malevolent middle (see chapter 3)--television was scary but only to a degree. They also introduced two new concepts, "mainstreaming" and "resonance" (Gerbner et al., 1980b, 1981a) to describe more complex audience research outcomes. "Mainstreaming" described what would happen if an individual's life circumstances were actually more alienating or frightening than that portrayed by the message system. In such instances heavy television viewing would tend to reduce the individual's feelings of fear or alienation, pulling these levels down to some mainstream. Similarly, there would be occasions when real-world experiences of fear and alienation would interact with the meaning of the message system, producing higher-than-expected outcome levels for given amounts of television viewing time. This would be evidence of a resonance effect (Gerber et al., 1980b).

The importance of these new theoretical developments was that they could be used to describe the same outcomes Hirsch had found at the extreme ends of the television viewing range. Hirsch was most energetic in his response. First, he noted (correctly, I believe), that the concepts of mainstreaming and resonance, taken together, resulted in a tautological theoretical system that explained nothing. Whatever outcomes one obtained from any pair of comparisons of mean levels, the concepts stood ready to name them. To dramatize the point (and perhaps provide some comic relief to those who followed the sometimes tedious arguments threaded through the reanalysis), Hirsch used a NORC zodiac-sign variable in a parody of a causal model, showing how its associations with various outcomes demonstrated mainstreaming and resonance (1981). Suffice it to say that the concepts of mainstreaming and resonance did not

constitute a strong shoring up of cultivation theory against the anomalies Hirsch was uncovering at the ends of the television viewing distribution.

Still, all Hirsch had really accomplished throughout most of his reanalysis was disconfirmation, first of the claim of a monotonic cultivation effect and then of claims that cultivation could explain specific subgroup outcomes. What Hirsch had not done was re-establish a vision of the role television should be seen to play in any more global sense.

I do not think it likely that concerns for things like variable specification or multivariate analysis sensibilities regarding could support the sustained discourse Hirsch had undertaken in the reanalysis. A broader vision was necessary, and in the last section of Part II of the reanalysis Hirsch seemed to begin preparing the way for an emergence of his broader vision.

Hirsh performed one more analytic operation on the data, this time with those individuals who reported high levels of television viewing time. He successfully divided heavy viewers into two subgroups, one reporting high levels of alienation and fear and the other low levels for these outcomes. Since the differences were obtaining at the same position within the television viewing distribution, television's association with the outcomes was likely spurious, provided that one could locate the missing third variable explaining both the viewing and the outcomes.

Looking through the NORC data Hirsh found that heavy viewers who reported high levels of fear and alienation tended also to be highly educated and have relatively high incomes, while those with lower outcome levels were describable as classic shut-ins. Television presumably made the latter group happy.

Interestingly, the resource-rich heavy viewers also tended to report their health as only fair or poor.

What was happening here, he suggested, was that something in the lives of these otherwise resourceful people was presently limiting the range of activities they would otherwise have undertaken. Television wasn't causing their seeming rage, it was only an object in their midst at an unfortunate moment in their lives.¹⁰

Here Hirsh drew together all of the threads of his reanalysis into a fuller and contesting vision, one that could not only explain this last finding but which would also explain why the more general anomalies at the extreme ends of the television viewing range. The vision is worth citing in full:

Research on what sociologists and social psychologists have called "status inconsistency" suggests that individuals who occupy different social statuses considered mutually incongruous by others experience role strain, status ambivalence, and high anxiety (see Jackson, 1962). High-status, high-income, and high education individuals who view television heavily can be considered status inconsistent, as can low-status, low-income, or low-education individuals who do not watch television or who watch very little. Our analysis of the NORC data suggests that much of the "effects" found at both ends of the viewing spectrum are found among individuals who are in status-inconsistent categories. This frame of reference runs contrary to that which argues for universal across-the-board effects in that it places emphasis on the mediation of television's impact by social experiences... (1981, p. 33).

We should thus see television as mediated by social experiences, which means we should see social experiences as the causal force in the outcomes we find with

survey data. The idea is easily stated and, in the abstract, easily understood. It is even strongly reflected in the agenda for future *cultivation* research in Morgan and Signorielli (1989). But if we accept such a statement what, in all, would we be accepting?

First of all, and in this instance, we would be accepting the idea that the category of "social experience" is adequately represented by the variables Hirsch names in the passage above. I will explore one aspect of this acceptance further below. Here let me make one general observation that I cannot, in this study, pursue in detail, regarding the concept of status.

Over the years this concept has been operationally defined by education, by income, by occupation, or by occupational prestige, alone or in combinations where each of these dimensions is an indicator with varying degrees of weight in relation to a status construct. Now, uncertainty as to just how status should be operationally defined can seriously undermine the claims Hirsch is making about nonviewers of television. For example, depending on the degree of weight given to education in the status variable one constructs, nonviewers may be described as either low or high in status, and therefore as having or not having dispositions associated with status ambivalence or inconsistency. Truth be told, arguments employing concepts like status contain tautological problems that would give concepts like mainstreaming and resonance quite a run for their money.

More important than the particular positive theoretical scheme Hirsch offered here may be whether one should accept his category of social experiences in relation to television viewing, as with such acceptance television, and along with it the culture industry, are demoted to some kind of residual category in the world of causal inquiry. This is an important consequence, so important, I believe,

that it would repay one's efforts to see just how Hirsch arrived at his conclusion. Without coming to grips with this process, mass communication research will likely continue to be vexed in its efforts to find effects that survive, in Hirsch's words "any two controls" (1981; see also Potter, 1989; Hawkins & Pinegree, 1981; Signorielli & Morgan, 1989).

Let us focus our attention once more on individual lifespace. Looking around we see a television, some books, magazines, audio and video recordings, a few radios. Putting a person who speaks in place in the lifespace along with its observable furnishings, we can gain evidence of the individual's income, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, family status, occupation health, group memberships, age, cohort, marital status, and so on, by listening to her responses to our questions.

In short, we recreate the painter's palate of social experiential variables Hirsch had available from the NORC GSS datasets. Hirsch unified a selection of these things under the theoretical notion of status, but he, like the Annenberg team, was content to leave the media devices he encountered there in complete disarray.¹¹ Hirsch neither challenged the fragmentation of the stimulus domain nor television's capacity to represent this domain as a sample. In fact, he seemed not to notice the disorder at all.

Trusting in his vision as well as well as my own, I concluded that each of us was likely in the habit of internalizing different features of media institutional reality to bring to bear upon the lifespace. I will report what I bring in chapter 9. Here, in the context of Hirsch's challenge of cultivation and the general idea of regarding the media as a major causal force, we need to see what it may have been that allowed Hirsch to ignore the disorder and to work so concertedly to destroy the idea of media power.

In an essay written before he undertook the reanalysis of cultivation research, Hirsch recounted the

well known evolution of commercial radio into commercial television in U.S. broadcast history (1977). From the perspective he traced out there one could see definite ways to move toward a more synthetic characterization of the culture industry, perhaps not as a pernicious entity but at least as one with enough definition to support the idea that, for example, 30 minutes with radio might be similar to 30 minutes with television.

Not so. For some reason, the unified vision of the broadcast industry simply did not translate into the lifespace. Hirsch proceeded as if convinced that neither television nor any other media device would provide such unity.

We may see why in the position he staked out (1985) in an more recent exchange with Bagdikian (1985; 1983) concerning the overall character of the mass communication industry. Against Bagdikian's carefully documented findings of high levels of media ownership concentration and articulation to other industries, Hirsch countered with a brief description of the book industry, arguing that the 40,000 book titles produced by that industry at that time could used as general evidence of the overall level of diversity the media industry as a whole contributed to society despite high levels of ownership concentration among publishing firms.

We learn two things in this exchange. One, Hirsch seems more comfortable in allowing the idea of mass communicator agency to reside within individual bodies (publishing firms may be big, but most book authors are individual people). Two, Hirsch quite possibly took a generalized notion of diversity into the lifespace, allowing him to see the different books, magazines, sound recordings, and commercial broadcast programs as so many separate instances of communication--as a hodge-podge assortment of things fully reflective of the same general idea of

diversity he displayed in crafting his institutional arguments with Bagdikian.

Imagining myself to have also internalized a notion of diversity as I looked about the GSS lifespace, I can see right away why disarray within the stimulus domain would not likely even occur to me as a passing thought. There, all over the place, are individual acts of communication from an almost immeasurable array of sources-- people who write stories, who compose ad copy, who craft visuals, who make long arguments or who tell long stories in books.

Considering the way that general service surveys typically access the reality of this diversity in the lifespace, one can see from Hirsch's perspective that a considerable level of reduction has already occurred when one is forced to work with media exposure variables specified not at the level of stories or authors but as gross media categories like television or newspaper exposure time. Such variables must seem useless, if not offensive, to one who knows that in reality, the media system is a bewildering diversity of acts of symbolic contact. Those who see 'television' or the 'culture industry' as a singular and monstrous force must, in this view, be wrong.

Learning from The Reanalysis

Against an internalized notion of diversity and the way it makes the stimulus domain come to life as an unfathomable cornucopia of symbolic fare, it might seem strange to notice that a portion of an individual's daily cyclical time can attach to each instance of each media object--magazine story or picture, printed book, broadcast voice or visual--and these individual times *qua* individual time could, at least theoretically, be commensurable. That is, time with radio and with television stand ready right now for addition. Time with newspapers, books, music, video recordings--all these diverse things--all stand ready to be

added across one, two, or even ten categories representing some kind of synthetic vision of what might unify the disparate objects despite their phenomenal diversity. With Hirsch we see what a vision of diversity does to this potential commensurability--it ignores the possibility. His insistence on the anomalies at the ends of the viewing time distribution must have seemed like the tip of much larger iceberg of deviations from a singular process.

For those who, unlike Hirsch but in the original spirit of the Annenberg team, hold that there might exist a more unified set of causal forces somewhere within the reality of the culture industry, it might be interesting to come into the lifespace after having internalized knowledge that would make these individual quantities of daily cyclical time commensurable in some way. I essay one particular strategy in the last three chapter of this work, but I also think that the idea might be promoted more generally: How could audience research take fuller advantage of the commensurable quantities of individual time that can be routinely observed in the lifespace with surveys? How could one, as it were, turn the complaints of Becker and his colleagues (1975) regarding the national scope of surveys on their head, and fully exploit what individual time makes available to an observer of the distributional reality created in mass communication?

Closer consideration of Hirsch's notion of social experiences will suggest one way to do this. I will illustrate with a typical social-experiential education variable.

In general service datasets such as those made available by NORC and the ICPSR, an individual's education is usually operationalized as a report of an accumulation of years of social experience, of formal credentials, or both. Before using an education variable in data analysis one would be well advised to look at the descriptive statistics

that show its range and other distributional properties, much as Hirsch reviewed the television viewing variable.

In comparison with television viewing, however, we find that education is not seen as a contemporary habit. One does not find survey questions that ask respondents to report how many hours of education they receive during an average day or after 5:00pm on weekdays, or how many days of education they receive during an average week. That is because the temporal backdrop used to express the institution of education is different from that for media exposure variables. When inquiring into an individual's educational experience (and, arguably, many other social experiences like ethnicity or religion), the metric is years. Furthermore, it is easy to assume that these years of experience had occurred and ended some time in the past, and that experience is now available to the respondent and to the researcher as a consequential presence in the lifespace, perhaps as an aspect of the respondent's manner or degree of schematic organization or differentiation.

Now, nothing is terribly wrong with this way of handling an education variable. It assumes that people have memories and that they are, at least in part, a product of their past experiences. There will likely be some error in recollections of numbers of years, some misunderstanding as to how a part-time school year might relate to a full-time year, and some doubt about the commensurability of educational credentials. These are problems, but they do not seem overwhelming, and with reason and resources one could gain precision in measurement of an education variable.

What does seem overwhelming, on the other hand, is the asymmetry that is presently built into the measurement of individual social experiences with institutions like education versus mass communication. If a person today is who she is as a result of sixteen years of education, could she not also be who she is as a result of her ten years of

daily cyclical time with television? Quite possibly--and this was the idea behind the term 'cultivation' (Gerbner & Gross, 1976)--but we have neither data nor clear theoretical impetus pushing us in the direction of development of media experiential variables as accumulations of years of experience.¹² Capturing as a consequential presence an individual's past accumulation of media experiences may be one way an audience researcher might wish to go to find more meaning from a dimension of time.

To summarize the lines of speculation Hirsch's careful reanalysis of cultivation research opened up, I suggest that it may be premature to categorically place television or, through television, media variables as a whole in a secondary position with respect to a broad notion of social experience. From a synchronic perspective, much of that experience would be found to involve a large proportion of individual time with a number of media categories in any typical day. Full confrontation of the meaning of this quantity of time is unavailable in the audience research literature, perhaps because of shared and internalized notions of media diversity. Should some other characterization of the media industry achieve convincing specification, internalization, and later reflection in the lifespace, our view of even the synchronic causal force of the media (in daily cyclical time) could undergo substantial change.

Second, and from a perspective embracing longer cyclical expanses of time that stand behind presently observed dispositions, we might find that a significant portion of an individual's accumulated social experiences might be expressible in terms of not hours or days but years with various media devices. A slight loosening of the notion of 'mass' in conjunction with communication would allow us to re-express education itself as so many years of experience with books, journals, focused oral communication

and non-standard film and entertainment fare, along with reduced time with television and other commercial media.

If education were recast in these empirically accessible terms, we might find that controlling media exposure for education might be very much like controlling one's present media behaviors for one's past media behaviors, so that we could not be certain just what to attribute to the media and what to education in terms of causal force. This of course raises the question of boundaries between media variables and a third variables, but, given the subsequent popularity of Hirsch's stifling notion of "social experience," media scholars may have a stake in reopening the question. I will begin this work in chapter 10 from a commodity relations perspective.

Here I will end this discussion, and the chapter, with the observation that the dimension of time might merit more serious attention than it has received from audience researchers in the past. It may be that overattention to the dimension of content has foreclosed important avenues for theoretical gain. Retheorizing time will likely involve, first, a readiness to admit that it may not be an enemy, and second, observation of media institutions and subsequent internalization of something there that will give meaning and commensurability to the disparate quantities of time that we currently attach, willy nilly, to objects dispersed around the lifepace.

The next chapter reviews an approach that considers internalization as a property only of individuals observed. It seeks cognitive objects and asks, in turn, how those objects influence media usage and effect. Chapter 7 is very much an interruption of the line of inquiry our consideration of Hirsch has opened up, but that interruption deserves its place here, as in individual subjectivity we find the object that is much more widely accepted as containing promise for future theoretical gain.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

¹Though it falls somewhat outside the mainstream of audience research, one of the best portrayals of the disorganization of this external region can be found in de Certeau (1984).

²For exceptions see Kline (1972; 1977) and Allen (1981). These studies use temporal conceptions of exposure, but in a causal context different from that informing the present study. They use individual dispositions and social categorical variables to predict exposure. I use exposure as a concept standing between mass communicators and audiences and try to discern what it is about mass communicator agency that such variables represent. Despite this basic difference it should be noted that Allen took an unpopular but, I believe, correct position in arguing for a theoretical place for time in exposure, doing so much more energetically than did McLeod and Reeves (1980) or Chaffee (1980) in their review articles on the field of effects research. It is interesting to note that Chaffee's recent monograph on explication uses a temporal variable for illustration--age (1991). My review of Hirsch at the end of the present chapter provides some overlap with that discussion.

³The time an individual brings to exposure may come from his average day, his average weekday evening or weekend day or evening, in which case spans of 24 hours, five, two or seven days are implicated. The frame can extend outward to calendar months, to positions within the month, to calendar years, to years in the individual's social or biological life, or to an historical epoch the individual lived in or lives now. With time we can move from the easily observable and measurable to the metaphysics of biography and history, but even before we reach the unobservable time gives us many, many things that can be measured with great external validity. The list is not exhaustive, and it should be noted that they have further properties that are themselves specifiable: cumulability within different ranges (parts of the day or week), cyclicity or reversibility (repetition of days or weeks, see Giddens, 1987), linear progressions of small units--calendar days, weeks, years-- and large units--cohorts and generational spans (see Marias, 1989). To note that more is available from time than what any empirical field might currently employ is to say little. To suggest that an empirical field avoids time is to note something more curiously substantial, but best, I believe, is to try to indicate what more a field should take from this empirically extensive domain.

⁴An individual's experience of the ephemerality or permanence of various mediated content objects would likely generate a temporal scale incorporating both seconds and minutes on one side and years on the other. Mathematical log scales stand ready to express this.

⁵The Annenberg position was that the content categories isolated, counted, and interpreted as the message system were distributed evenly in the temporal flow of television content. This assumption allowed them to equate individual viewing time with temporal expressions of stimulus quantity. See Gerbner and Gross, 1976, pp. 173-99. Signorielli later modified the assumption of uniform stimulus flow (1986) when she found that violent acts were slightly unevenly distributed across general prime-time television program categories. Recent critics of cultivation tend to see variation in stimulus quantity as resulting from individual selective behavior rather than in the temporal stream of contents (see, e.g. Gunter, 1988; Potter, 1986, 1990).

⁶An interesting reference to cultivation theory's popularity among graduate students may be found on p. 533 of Hirsch (1980).

⁷Compare the broad discussion of the television message system (pp. 175-8) with the parenthetical mention given to television viewing time (pp. 191-2) in Gerbner and Gross (1976).

⁸See Hughes (1980); Doob & Macdonald (1979); Newcomb, 1978; Gerbner & Gross (1979); Coffin & Tuchman (1972-1973a, 1972-1973b); Eeley, Gerbner, & Signorielli (1972-1973a, 1972-1973b); Blank (1977a, 1977b); Gerbner et. al. (1977a, 1977b); Hawkins & Pinegree (1981); Pinegree & Hawkins (1981); Potter (1990, 1991); Gunter & Wober (1983); Slater & Elliot (1982).

⁹I will complete Hirsch's argument here, as it is the only place in the 110-page reanalysis where television viewing is granted status as an independent variable: Taken in moderation, television viewing can have calming prosocial effects. It is a calming, prosocial causal force.

¹⁰This alternative explanation casts television as a low-status medium. Since nothing is available in the NORC datasets regarding the character of the television industry, I cannot pursue here why Hirsch would attribute low status to television in this back-handed fashion, though he is quite correct in doing so. Chapter 9's social objects include television firms, and there I will develop an empirical justification for this seemingly natural status attribution to an innocent little object in the lifespace.

¹¹In a footnote Hirsch reported associations between radio listening time and cultivation-relevant dependent variables (1981). Rather than move from this finding to a simple challenge of the television's capacity to represent the stimulus domain as a whole, or to recognition of the fragmented state of the stimulus domain, Hirsch made gentle allusion to the idea that the Annenberg team had not given its own stimulus selection decision careful thought.

¹²There has, of course, long been interest in the study of media effects with panel data (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944; Rosengren, 1989). I am not talking about panel data in this instance but about temporal asymmetries we can see very clearly in cross-sectional survey designs. In fact, given the difficulties and expense of panel surveys we may have some practical investment in asking why it is that certain social experiences are allowed to accumulate in quantities of years while media exposure must be squeezed into variables with much shorter temporal horizons. In chapter 7 we will see that there has been some movement toward the development of media variables that fall outside the domain established by the cyclical day or week, but these variables have not yet been developed to express simple accumulations of past experience. They instead intend to convey the existence of more purely cognitive and ahistorical entities--like attention or reliance--of uncertain substantial meaning. In chapter 10 I briefly sketch an operational strategy intended to capture the consequential presence of past media experiences in a way more closely aligned with the main argument in the text.



LOST CAUSES:
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE'S EMPIRICAL MEANINGS
IN SURVEY RESEARCH.
A CRITIQUE AND INTRODUCTION TO COMMODITY RELATIONS

Volume II

by

Brian Jacob Nienhaus

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Communication)
in The University of Michigan
1993

Doctoral Committee:

Assistant Professor Jimmie Reeves, Chair
Assistant Professor Hayg Oshagan
Professor William Sewell, Jr., The University of Chicago
Professor John Stevens

Section II. THE EXPLODING DOMAIN OF COGNITION

CHAPTER 7

COMPLEX EXPOSURE

Introduction

"Complex exposure" refers to attempts to move beyond mediated contents and individual time in the search for causes of mass media effects. Contemporary audience researcher has shown a marked preference for individual subjectivity as the place to find more explanatory power, so that an individual's skin may be said to delimit the domain of the complex. Within this domain, audience research has posited and worked with many new things.

In turning to complex exposure audience research has not rid itself of the old. Individual lifespace beyond the surface of the skin still plays a role in conceptualization. Whether one associates television with time spent or attention subjectively given, there is still 'television,' a device found among others in the lifespace.

Selections from the external portion of the lifespace merely tag along, however, as the point of complex exposure is to find additional meaning and explanatory power from individual subjectivity. Since externalities in individual lifespace play such quiet roles, and since the individual himself functions only to delimit a domain of inquiry, namely, the unseen psychological processes that exist within, direct empirical assessment of complex exposure would be largely--but not completely--beside the point.

Subjective phenomena may only be observed indirectly. They are placed between observable antecedent and consequent stimuli and behaviors; their meaning is inferred through their association with these observable

points (Greene, 1985). As a result, efforts to focus scholarly attention on subjective elements in exposure are easier the more completely terms like "television," "news" or "important local political issues" can be taken as unproblematic and observable anchorings.

When these externalities become unproblematic, scholars can speak at more length about the *existence* of cognitive objects proper. When they do, they rely on the language of measurement and on epistemological discussions of constructs and acts of construct validation. When this happens, we encounter researcher activity that falls outside this study's domain.

As I indicated in chapter 1, I have worked primarily with the empirical meaning of concepts in order to reduce misunderstandings associated with an alien perspective on mass media exposure. Beyond the empirical meaning of terms, I have tried to limit procedural discussion to issues of simple causation and to the naming of metaphysical realms normally encountered in mass communication research. In this study I cannot not linger on the existential character of things essentially unobservable.

The reader may now recall two seeming exceptions to the study's overall design: the act of internalization in chapter 4's discussion of message discrimination, and the agency of the researcher in manipulating stimuli in cognitive approaches to the medium in chapter 5. Let me briefly restate the point of those discussions in order to reaffirm the integrity of the delimitations given at the outset.

After a researcher internalizes the motives or goals of an agency, she physically moves to another location, individual lifespace. There she observes individual recall of messages associated with topics. Her prior internalizations allow her to see content and recall

as something other than an association between content and memory. Measures of topic and message association become straightforward evidence of an association between an agency's goals and the attainment of those goals. There is directly observable evidence of both communicator and recipient, but not in the same place at the same time. The process of internalization, then, was an activity the researcher undertook to recover evidence of a relationship between observable objects when one object was not present at the site of the other. I needed to speak of the researcher in chapter 4 in order to indicate where the topics had come from as an empirical matter.

Much contemporary discussion of individual subjectivity, however, is aimed at creating stand-alone objects of unobservable things. Individual 'attention' is something other than a convenience term expressing the relationship between two observable objects, say, television and knowledge. It is not television and knowledge together, nor is it observable if the researcher travels to some other place. It is, at present, an essentially unobservable thing, thought to exist somewhere between television and an knowledge outcome.

Were I to pursue how these things were made, I would not be able to situate researcher activity as a necessary part of an empirical mass communication process in the way I could in chapter 4. Therefore I pursue only the general act of their making. In the course of this chapter I will ask why audience research makes such objects, and I will answer it only when reference can be made to an empirical object of mass communication.

Regarding experiments, many subjective phenomena are best investigated in laboratory settings, where the researcher is better able to manipulate the composition and delivery of stimuli and where much more precise measures of time can be made, both as a feature of the stimulus and as a

duration between stimulus and response (Nass & Reeves, 1990; Rothschild, Thorson, Reeves, Hirsch, & Goldstein, 1986; Thorson, 1989).

Here, as in chapter 5, I am not interested in findings produced in such controlled contexts. Mass communication is a process involving mass communicating agencies and individuals. I become interested in this research only insofar as it implies that the experimental activity of the researcher may stand in place of the empirical activity of a mass communicator. Here I challenge not the logic of experimentation but the external validity of the act of research itself. What the researcher does in the laboratory is fine, but it is not mass communication. Such was my argument in chapter 5; I will not repeat it here.

Returning to present matters, I believe I may proceed as I have in previous chapters as I discuss dimensions of individual subjectivity in complex exposure. Accepting the essential unobservability of these phenomena, I do not pause to consider efforts to shore them up as abstract theoretical constructs, but I do note what they seem to be without these efforts--generally in relation to their observable surroundings, or when placed in causal contexts, where their observable surroundings become antecedents and consequents within a causal statement.

These limitations are especially important to emphasize at the outset. I do not know, for example, what a 'need' or a 'gratification' is, nor is my understanding of what they are illuminated by their configuration as constructs, nor, finally, am I reassured by acts of construct validation as to their existence. I am, however, interested in what these terms mean when they are used as part of a causal argument, both as entities in themselves (as best as one can ascertain from this context) and with respect to the observable objects the causal arguments take

from individual lifespace and associate with the unobserved term.

Relying on the meanings these concepts acquire in causal inquiry helps maintain consistency with previous chapters and simplifies discussion. Still, simply following the lines of a causal argument in studies using individual subjectivity is, as we will see, not at all a simple matter, as subjective phenomena are sometimes antecedents, sometimes contingent or mediating factors, and sometimes elements in causal models that circle uncertainly back upon themselves, becoming parts of functional models with tension variables (Stinchcombe, 1967). Given the limitations of the study, and since individual subjectivity is essentially unobservable, I am forced to pay particularly close attention to the forms causal arguments take when complex exposure is included. There is nowhere else to go.

Individual Subjectivity:

Where Hope Meets Expanding Explication

I mentioned above that individual subjectivity is the site of a lot of contemporary research activity. It is difficult to overstate this magnitude. Here is a list of terms and corresponding references one encounters if one wishes to follow what is happening in the field "beyond simple exposure" (McLeod & McDonald, 1985):

acceptance, activity, activation, affect, attention, attitude, choice, cognition, decision-making, decoding, dependency, dominant activity, elaboration, emotion, encoding, gratification, importance, information processing, intention, interaction, interpretation, involvement, media orientation, memory (flashbulb, short-term, long-term) mindful involvement, motivation, need, need for X (where X may equal cognition, information, self-confirmation, relaxation, surveillance), para-social interaction, perceived Y (where Y may

equal need, issue importance, message relevance, realism, risk, salience of an issue or medium), mood, perception, reliance, reception, salience, split-brain activity or function, selection, selective Z (where Z may equal activity, exposure, attention, perception, reception, retention), television viewing (as a construct), use, viewer or reader interpretation or encoding/decoding, transaction, yielding (Bauer, 1964; Ball-Rokeach, 1976; Chaffee & Schleuder, 1988; Gunter, 1988; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; Krugman, 1965; Levy & Windahl, 1985; Livingstone, 1989; McLeod & Becker, 1974; McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Perse, 1990; Perse & Rubin, 1988; Pinegree, 1983; Price & Ritchie, 1991; Potter, 1986, 1991; Roser, 1990; Ritchie, 1991; Rothschild, Thorson, Reeves, Hirsch & Goldstein, 1986; Rubin & Perse, 1988; Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985; Sears & Freedman, 1967; Salomon & Cohen, 1979; Slater & Elliot, 1982; Ward, 1987; Watkins, 1989; Zillman & Bryant, 1985).

It should be noted that these terms are usually used with selected content and media categories, sometimes with individual time and sometimes in contrast to measures of exposure employing individual time. When even a small selection of these terms is laid out with mediated contents in matrix form the result is a formidable region, cubic only if explication stops arbitrarily with three dimensions (Roberts & Maccoby, 1985; Chaffee, 1980). It should also be noted that the list is not exhaustive.

When Chaffee (1991) asserted that communication's only primitive term was the individual, and further suggested that communication would likely not produce fully satisfactory concepts on empirical criteria imported from the physical sciences (Hempel, 1952), he may have been

referring to these concepts, all of which represent attempts to make tractable objects from the metaphysical domain of individual subjectivity.

How does one explicate these terms? According to Chaffee, careful attention has to be paid to the theoretical notions that stand above the operational measures researchers used in observation (1991). Explication is a process of movement from theoretical to operational definitions and back, and thence from one scholar's theoretical definition to another's (1991). Notable by its absence is empirical explication.

Five years earlier, Chaffee and Roser explicated one of the field's more popular terms in roughly this fashion.

Researchers differ strongly on just what involvement is and how it should be measured. Confusion arises from a welter of definitions and operationalizations, some of which tap different concepts while using the same name. Involvement, Salmon (1986) notes, is variously treated as a personality trait, an internal state, the salience of a stimulus and the property of the stimulus. This means that it is treated conceptually as the motivations that lead people to attend to mass media content, as a state of attention or activation during exposure, and as the information processing that attention generates. It has been operationalized as a characteristic of the medium (Krugman, 1965) or of the message topic (Bowen & Chaffee, 1974; Ray et al., 1973), even as it is treated as a trait that is subject to individual differences...It has been defined as having cognitive, affective and behavioral components...and it has been hypothesized to have

separable effects upon those same three concepts...it is no longer clear how it differs from attention (1986).

The passage works with three problems. One, researchers have put involvement in various locations, and this understandably vexes the authors. Two, from the text one can infer that involvement has played the role of cause, mediating variable or contingent condition, and effect in separate instances of research. Three, wherever one puts involvement, one is never certain *what* it is.

Chaffee and Schleuder attacked the third problem. They recommended multiple observations "tapping" various facets of involvement in research. The indicators would be apples and oranges and the construct fruit, much as violence indicators were in message systems analysis (Gerbner, Gross, Eleey, Jackson-Beeck, & Jeffries-Fox, 1977b). Unlike message systems analysis, the involvement construct would rely on analytic rather than semantic metaphysics to replace unknown meanings (chapter 3). In other words, the recommendation was not promising.

First, even though one might create a multipli- indicated construct called 'involvement,' one would still know no more about what involvement was than one did before the act of construction. The resulting construct could still explain more variance (which can happen--see Ward, 1987), but one would still not know no more about what caused the increase. That 'what' refers to something outside the research setting, something the researcher cannot independently see as part of the mass communication process.

Second, factor analytic techniques would not help one find out *where* a cause was located. Constructs with multiple indicators are singular entities. If one is vexed by involvement's attachment to a television, to individual cognition, or to occupation, lumping the possibilities

together in one construct promises little illumination. One would not know if a savory outcome were due to one of the fruits, all of the fruits, or to the juicemaker.

Complex Exposure From an Empirical Perspective

Chaffee and Roser refrained from offering a strategy to handle the first two problems, location and causal role. They are the problems the present chapter addresses, not just for involvement but for the full array of ideas associated with complex exposure.

I will argue that the matter of shifting locations may have a historical component, wherein concepts of exposure in audience research have by degrees become boxed into a dysfunctionally small empirical domain. Second, and in part because of the impoverished empirical domain that supports concepts of complex exposure, I will argue that loci of cause and effect are collapsed into a single site, so that it should not surprise that any particular concept taken for explication exhibits a confusing number of roles in causal inquiry.

Even without reviewing accompanying procedural matters, it would take too much text to explicate elements of the array of terms separately and then in relation to each other. To move more quickly I have produced Figure 7.1, which I will use: (1) to discuss general empirical problems posed by complex exposure, and (2) to locate families of terms that may have promise in research contexts that more adequately reflect the empirical character of the mass communication process.

After introducing general empirical problems and promising regions with Figure 7.1, the chapter will discuss themes of cognition, individual agency and individual interaction. Though the diversity of terms used to denote complex exposure makes it risky to do so, I speculate that these three themes represent most of the meaning that one may attribute to the larger field of terms from their causal

contexts.

These three themes are treated as additional dimensions of mass media exposure. Specific complex terms will be discussed as particular instances of one or more of these dimensions. In these discussions I will attempt to substantiate summary claims introduced in Figure 1.1 regarding complex exposure's impoverished empirical domain, uncertain causal arrangements, and families of terms that show promise.¹ Chapters 8 through 10 will attempt to reclaim some of that promise for audience research.

Visualizing General Empirical Problems

Figure 7.1 denotes individual lifespan as a large dashed box encompassing everything but the term "perturbations" located left-center (see note 2) and, of course, mediated contents. A second, solidly outlined region, suggests that the individual now occupies most of the space within individual lifespan. What is left is reserved mostly for the individual traits and demographic (or social experiential) attributes I have squeezed in along the upper region of the lifespan.

Within the large intra-individual region are a selection of terms denoting subjectivity. Some terms are located in this region as objects to reflect meanings that individual subjectivity occasionally receives in audience research with complex exposure. Other terms occupy positions connected by lines, indicating meanings they acquire as a result of causal arguments.

Straddling an expanse that includes both individual subjectivity and extra-individual lifespan are terms that, like involvement, tend to implicate both. Bordering this expanse on the left are the fragmented mass-communication related externalities of mediated contents, some of which become tangible perturbations² initiating perception and a particular program of research.

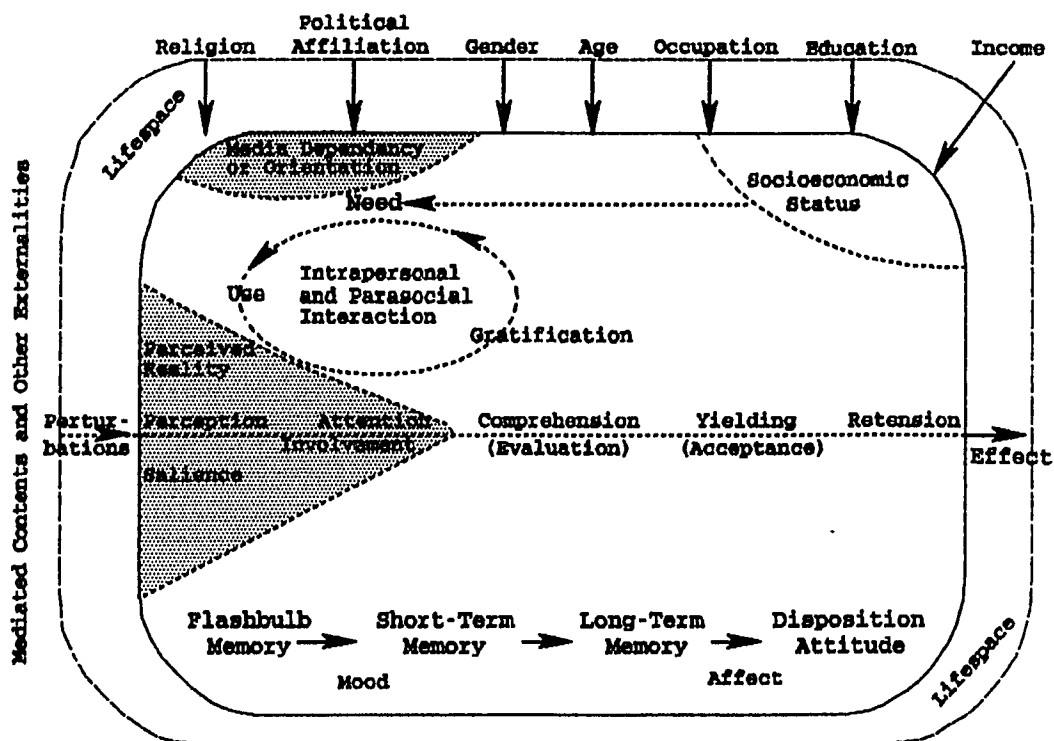


Figure 7.1. The Domain of Complex Exposure

Not clearly representable, but, I assume, present in complex exposure are cognition, individual agency and individual interaction. Cognition, as defined further below, would be located along the temporal memory locations in the lower reaches of the Figure. Individual agency might mark the entire region of individual subjectivity, but it might also point to a small region somewhere within that one might label 'homunculus' (see Greene, 1985). I have not placed a core term representing individual agency in this region because it is generally manifested when one or more of the included terms plays a causal or contingent role in a model of mass media effects.

Something like intra-individual interaction emerges visually when certain processes are depicted in the figure. Para-social interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956) is an one example. It surrounds an external perturbation (like an image of a news anchor) with subjectivity. The idea of uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974) may be the fullest attempt to specify an intra-individual process and a related internal structure.

The terms falling along the horizontal line that centrally bisects the Figure correspond to the following ideas. One, whatever perturbations are selected to initiate inquiry, they tend to be associated with, or are difficult to distinguish from, magnitudes of individual time. Two, and in agreement with Chaffee (1991), the road that stimuli travel is too long and detailed to be accessible via surveys in multiple lifespaces. Three, and moving quickly into and through individual subjectivity despite its practical inaccessibility, the terms are arranged to denote a temporal sequence often asserted to be associated with a persuasion process. The idea here--a demanding one--is that between stimulus and response there is the organism, a complex entity that brings many structures and processes to bear upon the movement from stimulus to response. The terms actually placed along the line come from McGuire (1974) and Roberts & Maccoby (1985).

Finally, two dispositional regions are located just below the upper boundary in the Figure. These dispositions are neither purely semantic or volitional but an uncertain mixture. One region stands for media-related dispositions, the other for dispositions that are intended to remain free of media connotation (Hirsch, 1981).

I cannot say whether Figure 7.1 is a full or fair representation of the domain of complex exposure, but it is one which corresponds closely to what complex exposure looks like if one works with the assumptions that guide this

inquiry.³

What stands out first about the move to complex exposure is the retreat, not only from social agency, but from that region of individual lifespace that contains media-related externalities. So much attention is paid to individual subjectivity itself that new terms are merely added to pieces of the same problematic empirical stock reviewed in chapters 2 through 6, without systematic efforts to see if those new terms actually organize or synthesize those externalities. The result may be seen in that confusion of empirical meanings to which Chaffee and Roser allude in their explication of involvement (1986).

Second, we note that many of the externalities remain implicated in basic models of one-way causation that move from stimulus to response. From there two things may happen: (1) Elements of the individual's subjectivity are added along this line, or (2) Other elements of individual subjectivity intersect this line tangentially, and in the movement back and forth to this line an almost entirely distinct, self-contained causal system is born. (Need for surveillance leads to use of the--externally--located--newspaper, back inside to gratification, and thence again to need.)

This second family of causal systems is sometimes specified as an independent process and sometimes as a qualification of the basic line of causation moving from stimulus to response. What complex exposure often represents is not an overcoming of the basic bullet model (Figure 1.1), but its replacement with a more complex bullet model, one we might call a 'dum-dum' bullet model, to denote its continuity with past causal thought and its explosive fragmentation upon penetration of the surface of the body.

One can see that individual subjectivity has become quite demanding of epistemological resources. Not only the mass communication process but the lifespace itself

is becoming unavailable as means to empirically define concepts as researchers make use of more complex and subjectivity-centered models to explain outcomes. There are many terms now, so the meaning of subjectivity in models including complex exposure tends to change from study to study, impeding replication and cumulation of findings.

Notions of causation are becoming more complex and difficult to disentangle because of the number of terms and their contiguous location in an unobservable realm. In a sense, what one sees in complex exposure are attempts to posit an entire mass communication process within the region of individual subjectivity. Only "perturbations" remain to suggest that other phenomena might be necessary in order to depict that process.

With respect to what may be promising if the empirical foundation of complex exposure can be improved, I have shaded two regions. One is associated with involvement, attention, salience and similar terms. These ideas are at present attached to both individual subjectivity and elements of the lifespace (Chaffee & Roser, 1986). In later chapters I will argue that they do this for a reason: they are likely a function of what both individuals and mass communicating agencies may bring to the site of their intersection. In the truncated empirical domain in which complex exposure operates, attributing involvement to the medium (Krugman, 1965) might stem from deeply internalized knowledge of the mass communicator, while similar attributions to the individual, whatever else they mean, might be reflective of dispositions the individual herself has internalized from past relationships with mass communicating agents.

This latter assertion implicates a second shaded region that, I believe, may also be useful within a larger empirical context. At present, notions of media disposition are posited as existing within the individual (e.g. McLeod,

Rucinski, & Pan, 1989; McLeod & McDonald, 1985), but they are then traced back to empirical indicators posited as non-mass communication phenomena--education, family background, age, and so on (Elliot, 1974; Murdock & Golding, 1979; Hirsch, 1981; see also chapters 6 and 10).⁴ It is difficult to know where socioeconomic status ends and where a true media disposition might begin.

To the extent that a clear taxonomy of mass communicating agencies can be associated with these internalized media dispositions, their meaning will become at once more empirically accessible and more theoretically consistent than they are at present. Neither of these regions stand to gain as long as mediated contents--the substance of the vertical line in Figure 1.1--stand in the way, but both will play a role in the explication of commodity relations in chapters 8 through 10. Before we consider improvements, however, we must look more closely at the status quo. Let me now turn to the dimensions of cognition, individual agency and individual interaction and, through them, return to these central conclusions.

Dimensions of Complex Exposure

Cognition

Content, McLeod and Reeves asserted, must be specified to initiate causal inquiry (1980). Exposure to the specified contents must then be established as having occurred. What better way to accomplish both these tasks than to take one's evidence of content from individual memory?

Cultivation theory proposed that violent content was a central part of the causal force in cultivation effects (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Perhaps because they assumed that individual memory was content's proper location, Slater and Elliot (1982) and many audience researchers thereafter would respond to cultivation theory by claiming that it was not the message system's meaning but

individual perception of television's violence, or of the reality of violent content, that should really count in an investigation of effects (Blank, 1977a, 1977b; Gunter 1983, 1988a, 1988b; Hawkins & Pinegree, 1986; Potter, 1986, 1990, 1991;).

In this debate, perceived violence or perceived reality of violent content combines two dimensions of subjectivity: a semantic component (Greene, 1985) and a component of individual agency, as the individual, in this instance, must have made some kind of judgment in order to selectively discern violence from the overall flow of content or to label television violence as real or unreal. As best I can, I wish to analytically bracket out the dimension of individual agency from these terms in order to discuss, as matters of cognition, what remains.

In making this distinction one finds that what remains is the physical relocation of the stimulus. No longer is mediated content independently measured from the surface of a device. Instead, content objects are taken from individual memory, and from there investigation expands to consider forms in which the objects must have existed in memory, whether as scripts, schemata, construct systems, prototypes, semantic memory, or according to some other metaphor of static structure (Markus & Zajonc, 1985).

In making this analytic distinction we find that a portion of what is involved in the turn to individual subjectivity has already been discussed in chapter 4. Message discrimination was a technique developed to find evidence of memory associated with previously disseminated messages. Terms standing for memory structure and content continue to be produced in audience research, with designs that fail to define the agents and motives behind content dissemination and recall. With respect to the empirical object of mass communication, these newer terms possess strengths and weaknesses similar to those associated with

the academic version of message discrimination reviewed in chapter 4.

One difference between contemporary conceptualizations and message discrimination may indicate a more pronounced empirical weakness in the former. Insofar as specific topics worked in message discrimination they did so because researchers could specify, observe, and internalize goals of specific mass communicating agencies and, when they moved on to individual lifespace, they could observe traces of those motives in the very responses individuals gave to topical probes.

For concepts like perceived violence, perceived reality, and others generally aimed at countering the broad claims of cultivation theory, it should be noted that social agency has neither operational trace nor theoretical connotation in accompanying discussion. In the interest of fairness, it must be stated that cultivation theory did not provide any operational trace of the conceptions of social agency it inferred in message systems analysis (chapter 3). In offering these alternative conceptions of complex exposure, however, later critics of cultivation were not so much destroying evidence of a social agent as they were adding evidence of an individual agent at a point where no agent at all had been found before.

Fairness aside, the important point is that concepts that locate semantic phenomena within individual memories generally dress up the simple act of relocation with assertions of agency. If we undress the concepts of 'perceived' violence or 'perceived' reality of violence, we find violence--a general content category somewhere between Troidahl's total content and message unit levels (1965).

About this general content category there is little to evaluate. Empirically, what was said about content in chapters 2 and 3 could be repeated here, which means that cognition as a dimension representing *general semantic space*

in individual memory is quite weak at present. Perhaps because any referential fields other than the individual himself now stand one further step removed from the concept, content's external validity becomes even more problematic than it is in content analysis (chapter 2).

More important than working through a logic of inference with content once more, let me suggest what may be at stake in this simple shift in content's empirical location. Since the individual's body shields content from extra-individual referential fields, terms expressing content's internalized forms within cognition proliferate like categories of Inuit snow. One must strain to distinguish individual notions of form (say, schema and prototype) from each other; little beyond a theorist's own sensibilities, expressed in her particular selection of higher-level conceptual abstractions (Chaffee, 1991) remain available to help order the internalized semantic fields. A focus on content as cognition makes the position of the researcher more important, albeit at the expense of empirical reality. (Another strategy for promoting the importance of the researcher will be given in the last section of chapter 10).

Also, since the individual's body seems to hold external reality at bay, the world inside that body must play a fuller role in the causal inference process. In a sense it is unfair to strip the content component of concepts like perceived violence from their intra-individual location in order to stare at the bare contents within. These bare contents are not really the point. The individual is, not just as content's location but as site of and motive force behind an increasingly full mass communication process. Indeed, concepts like perceived violence or perceived reality may give a greater role to cognition than does cognitive psychology proper.

Individual Processes or Individual Agency?

Green made a thorough sketch of the elements necessary for a proper cognitive argument (1985). What a researcher had to do, he asserted, was associate content with distinctly specified cognitive structures and processing mechanisms within the same causal model. Structure was no good without process, and vice-versa.

Nevertheless, Greene's arguments were offered to those who might do communication research, and not specifically mass communication research. For his purposes, content sufficed as a stimulus. Violence on television, for example, was accepted as an unproblematic and measurable offering to the individual. After the offering, a world of interesting cognitive structures and processes would unfold to the careful researcher.

Still, in cognitive research proper, Greene emphatically asserted that a researcher would not posit a homunculus or volitional agent somewhere within individual subjectivity who might apply its own causal force in the production of an effect. Effects were to be studied by moving content through the organism and inferring how outcomes might be stifled or catalyzed by structures and processes carefully specified as independent of human will, as in action-assembly theory (Greene, 1989) or theories of short-term memory searching behavior (Sternberg, 1969). In this design, the researcher is clearly the other agent in interaction with the subject, and the experiment is an entirely appropriate technique for cognitive inquiry.

Furthermore, in cognitive research proper, contents are often reduced to nonsense stimuli (Neisser, 1976) in order to focus more directly on hypothesized processes. That focus is aided by laboratory measurement resources--precise chronometers, galvanometers, and so on--and the point is to specify process as a systemic thing in much the same way that respiration is. The researcher

assumes the cognitive system is there and tries to find out what it is like. He uses content--any content--to help him do so, though Neisser complicated the matter by urging cognitive scientists to use more broadly meaningful contents to make the field seem more relevant to outsiders.

Complex exposure begins with quite a different object. Content comes loaded with meaningful referential fields, and they must be somehow stripped away so that what remains may function as a quiet external perturbation (see chapter 5). Once this is done, the individual is placed stage-center as in cognitive psychology.

In mass communication research, however, the stage is crowded. The researcher cannot really pursue notions of internal systemic process because, moving as he will from lifespace to lifespace, he will not have means to surround the bodies with measuring instruments (Chaffee, 1991). Internal mechanisms associated with perceived violence or perceived reality of violence cannot really be pursued, but that does not matter--they, like content, are not the issue. What really matters is that the individual actively perceived and assessed content in some way. The individuals' actions here are what count. What adheres to content in audience research is not cold (or even hot) process but volition. There may or may not be an effect depending on what the individual wills.

Volition is a substantially more complex matter than process, but then again it seems that it has to be, as from the moment a researcher posits a mediated content category as an unproblematic empirical thing (Reeves, 1989), a good half of the source of agency has been defined away. Only the individual is left; he must therefore be posited to do a lot of consequential things. Cognitive psychology does not have this problem, cognitive mass communication does. Let us try to see how it has come to be in audience research.

Individual Agency

In mass communication research, content-in-the-head comes with the individual-as-agent as a total conceptual package. When they are separately considered, the in-the-head part may not be impressive, but that may be because the individual-as-agent is the real shining assumption.

A concept of perceived reality or involvement in audience research might suggest a complex *mechanism* of evaluation or focus (Hawkins & Pinegree, 1991), but these suggestions are not backed with specific hypotheses of the structure or process of such mechanisms (Chaffee, 1991) produced for testing in controlled settings (Green, 1985). In audience research, the individual is shown to have perceived something as real or as having been involved to some degree in a flow of mediated content on the basis of her responses to survey questions that simply inquire into these matters. These responses are then placed (singly or in constructs) in various positions in causal models where they are made to play volitional roles. A cognitive psychologist might complain about this, but in doing so she might miss the point. Terms like perceived reality, involvement, and many others listed above or depicted in Figure 7.1 are not about subjective processing mechanisms but about a desire to see the individual as an active agent in the mass communication process.

It is difficult to summarize historical trends in conceptualization of individual activity. Biocca, for example, claims that the field of communication research has long been divided between proponents of activist and passivist ontologies (1988). Chaffee and Roser (1986), as well as Miller (1974), read the field's history differently, claiming that the field has gradually moved from passivism to activism as if this were an Enlightenment-type intellectual process. This second reading of history follows

the decline of theories of mass society and mass atomism that dominated turn-of-the-century social thought, peaking during the 1930s, when public figures like Huey Long and Charles Coughlin frightened social scholars (Becker, McLeod & McCombs, 1975; Lee & Lee, 1939).

Evidence is easily available for both positions. One has only to read the contribution of Blumer to the Payne Fund studies of children and film (Blumer & Hauser, 1933), the early works Herta Herzog on daytime radio listeners in the 1930s (1944), or to the work of Wolfe and Fiske (1949) to find prominent examples of research that assumed individual activity.

On the other hand, social scientists working after World War II and through the 1960s had to make their peace with the predominance of behaviorism, so that when the activist perspective of uses and gratifications began again to influence communication research designs in the late 1960s, Blumler (1979) could understandably note that it was "like a breath of fresh air."

Over the longer term the better bet might be placed on Biocca's position, as individual activity has been troubling scholars since Spinoza. Over the shorter term a trend on the question of activity is difficult to discern. In reviewing the early literature of audience research for this, however, I found another trend, associated with assumptions of individual activity, but more empirically assessable and interesting. Assumptions about individual activity may well have risen and fallen and risen again in audience research (Kinder & Sears, 1985) and beyond, but the trend I found was that the other agent in the mass communication process, the mass communicator, has gradually but firmly faded away. The remaining empirical object has become correspondingly smaller and more theoretically weighty.

The missing mass communicator may help us

understand why present notions of individual activity are so mercurial and volitional. There is now little empirical constraint on how a researcher might work his notion of activity into a research design. An individual may be made active or passive with the wording of a survey question or the inclusion or exclusion of a path in a model.

Earlier scholars had much less flexibility, as they had to make do without the sophisticated tools and procedures for data analysis and conceptualization the contemporary audience researcher has at her disposal. Interestingly, along with the absence of statistical sophistication in the early research we find fuller acknowledgement of mass communicators and, consequently, a more recognizable empirical mass communication process as research backdrop.

Herzog's 1944 study of daytime radio serial listeners, oft-cited as the first instance of a uses and gratifications perspective in audience research, demonstrates both data-analytic simplicity and a sophisticated empirical approach to agency. Working with two-way cross tabulations of data from more than five thousand individual interviews and one hundred more intensive follow-up interviews (1941), Herzog identified three gratifications women derived from their radio listening: emotional release or escape from the drudgery of daily affairs, emotional release or escape to a more desired vision of human life, and advice to use in the conduct of one's actual affairs (pp. 23-5).

The first two gratifications were articulated in a different context in Fromm (1941), and they were also among Radway's principle findings for contemporary readers of romance novels (1984). The third gratification would likely today be called "surveillance," or "information" gratification (Blumler, Katz & Gurevitch, 1974; Katz, 1979; McQuail, 1987), and all of them would be investigated in

relation to their psychological or social-situational determinants, a line of inquiry we will review momentarily.

Returning to Herzog's study, it is interesting that she used the term "advice" to describe something that today is normally called "surveillance." Advice implies an advisor, surveillance does not. From Herzog's perspective, which she describes as "the standpoint of social research" (p. 3) this advisor did not need to be physically present in the flow of radio content. She referred to "those concerned with the production of radio programs" (p. 23) and to the "great social responsibility of those engaged in the writing of daytime serials" (p. 31). "No mass communication," she said, "can fully safeguard itself against abused applications...[but the] writers of daytime serials must live up to the obligations to which the influence of their creations, however unintended, commits them" (p.32).

Herzog's principal object was the radio audience, her perspective was that of an interested scholar, but the audience of her efforts included another party, one she clearly acknowledged as acting consequentially within the mass communication process: namely, the mass communicator.

Here the mass communicator meant the body of writers responsible for the production of daytime radio serial content, not a culture industry. One might see mass communicators as something more or other than this (see chapter 9), but in the turn to cognition the field has simply averted its eyes and emptied mass communicators from collective memory.

Herzog's perspective held forth at least a promise of finding and using fuller definitions of media agency, perhaps through exploration of the writers' organizational context or through the transactional notion of responsibility for unintended consequences (information gain instead of relaxing escape, or vice-versa). Instead, the perspective and the promise have been spun away:

Gains in social responsibility theory (Hutchins Commission, 1949; Lemert, 1989; Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956) and in the context of professional media activity (Ettema & Whitney, 1982, 1987; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1972; Tunstall, 1991) would later be made in the broader field, but they would also be located on the other side of the divide in Figure 1.1.

In Herzog's work these social concepts seemed to stand within reach of audience research. In the early broadcast years a mass communicator was still a novel entity, one not so deeply internalized as to have disappeared entirely, and Herzog was arguably able to assert the activity of individual radio listeners in ways much more subtle, nuanced and empirically convincing than can be found in much contemporary uses and gratifications research: Individuals may be active, but so are mass communicators; the activity of the former implies definite obligations (p. 32) for the latter. The implication is that any third-party observer must take both agents into account to understand what is going on. Contemporary audience research has nothing of comparable empirical scope or theoretical promise.

Roughly a decade after Herzog conducted her research, Joseph Klapper would publish the first version of what would later become a classic summary essay on the effects of mass communication (1949, 1960). In his early essay Klapper directly addressed the matter of advice Herzog had investigated and discussed with some poignancy. Klapper, however, was almost brutal:

When unrealistic material, fit only to serve an escapist function, is used as a presumably valid source of information and advice, the results are clearly undesirable. The advice provided is often impractical and superficial, and if put to use in real life would very likely prove futile and might conceivably cause

serious harm. In addition, much current escapist communication, if taken seriously, lulls its audience into a blind resignation and equally blind faith that everybody will somehow come out all right in the end (1949, pp. III-2 to III-3).

Today it is deemed unwise to assert a distinction between realistic and unrealistic content without reference to an individual perceiver (see Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Newcomb, 1976; Slater & Elliot, 1982; Gunter, 1988; Lindloff, 1988), so it is interesting to see Klapper making just such a distinction, and with such confidence, a few decades ago.

One might say that conceptions of individual agency now available were not in Klapper's day, so that his comments exhibit the normal naivete of a young field's founding efforts. I would argue that the passage is not nearly so naive as it might now seem. For Klapper in 1949, the existence of an essentially useless flow of mass communication content seemed beyond question. He may have overstated the claim, but only to a degree. In chapter 9 I will argue that some content flows may well be useless in comparison with other flows. I will use definitions of mass communicators that Klapper did not include in either version of his essay.

For now it is again important to note that Klapper's was in many ways a more sophisticated position on agency than those audience research now uses. Klapper was issuing a warning to any who might confuse the motives of two distinct classes of communicating agents--those who produced useful content and those whose offerings were useless.

Klapper moved from this promising position to the more familiar and 'mature' one reflected in his 1960 rewrite of the earlier essay. That rewrite is itself remarkable for

two things: (1) the editing out of the above and related passages, and (2) their replacement with what Klapper would call a "phenomenistic" approach to the study of mass media effects.

The importance of Klapper's later innovation is already reflected in this study: His notion of phenomenism is another way of saying that tests of mass media effects must only be made from materials available in individual lifespaces. In his writings for academic audiences, Klapper, like the early message discrimination researchers, replaced mass communicator agency with increased focus on the individual. Whether this was done to make questions of effects more interesting to a scholarly audience or for some other reason, the results were the same: Mass communicators, not present in the phenomenistic lifespaces, would disappear. It would thus be only a matter of time before the bullet model would mushroom into what it is now.

In contemporary uses and gratifications research we see this mushrooming and confusion in one of its most unfortunate versions. A *series* of subjective phenomena--'need,' 'use,' 'gratification'--are associated with each other and with a moment's contact with selected externalities like television, news, or entertainment content. The individual is asserted to be an active agent, and this claim colors the question wording in surveys, the specification of linear models, and accompanying graphic depictions.

The individual is asked, for example, why she watches television, and the response is termed media use instead of media exposure.

The responses are also considered gratifications the individual derives from use, and this doubling of meanings taken from the same empirical evidence has led to considerable conceptual confusion (Elliot, 1974; Swanson, 1979) that is not at all allayed by their placement at

separate positions inside a picture of a person's active and moving subjectivity (as in Figure 7.1).

One response to this confusion involved the importation of psychological typologies of need and balance mechanisms. Psychological needs were asserted to drive use, and if use led to a reduction in need, the individual could be said to have been gratified by the experience.

At this point uses and gratifications fragmented into two internal camps, one process-oriented and one volitional. Proponents of the volitional approach were troubled by the genesis of these psychological needs and critical of attempts to posit them as internalized mechanisms beyond the individual's control (Swanson, 1977, 1979). One could not see individual activity as an internal mechanism producing observable behavior and, later on, talk about volition. One had to choose, and Swanson chose volition. The *individual* determines the outcome, Swanson insisted.

But if so, then what if an individual felt a need? Where did this feeling of need come from? For the process-oriented uses and gratifications scholars, the external circumstances of the individual were available to help answer these questions (Hirsch, 1981; Katz, 1979). In this second view, need-use-gratification processes could be more simply and empirically explained. If an individual worked all day in unrewarding tasks, he would acquire a need for escape to an image of a more satisfying world during his evening leisure (Hirsch, 1981).

Leaving aside the question of what, in the evening's content, actually provided satisfaction, it should be noted that Swanson's critique of the determinist turn in uses and gratifications could now be made with other empirical materials taken from individual lifespaces: position in occupational or family structure, education, age, and so on. On these grounds Katz, a major contemporary

proponent of uses and gratifications, formulated his response to this difficult matter of individual agency:

...are the dictates of such antecedent "needs" tantamount to the hypodermic [i.e. bullet] theory of mass media? I think not. I find it difficult to think of human needs arising from social roles and psychological dispositions as externally imposed. The social and psychological situation may be externally constrained, of course, but the web of roles and orientations, and the motives arising therefrom, *is* the individual. If an individual striving for mobility finds the culture of the upper middle class embodied in the local FM station, shall we say he is externally compelled listen? The media--*pace* McLuhan--are not part of ourselves in the same way (1979, pp. 76-7).

One would have to look long and hard to find a more explicit and accurate statement of the contemporary process view on individual agency within the mass communication process. The agent is the individual. His empirical existence defines the lifespace itself (or vice-versa), a notion in some ways reflecting Lewin's early definition of the term (1951). Therefore, almost anything taken from individual lifespace may be used (by whom?) as an independent variable in a causal model without thereby violating the assumption that the individual is an independent, active agent, because whatever one takes from there--his education, his children, his mood--he is still the cause.

In the more general and rhetorical question that ends the passage, however, we see that Katz vacillates with the empirical meaning of radio. What he seems to suggest is that if radio is part of the lifespace it is of course part of the individual, and its influence is not one of external

causation. If radio is not a part of this lifespace, well, the best we can say is that the matter is now complex.

My argument is that these unworkable complexities derive from the shrinking empirical scope and status of extra-individual lifespace. Having been progressively stripped of available knowledge of mass communicators and even of their own motives and actions, uses and gratifications researchers are left to contemplate only the hypothetical individual, an object from which they must craft a complete mass communication process.

With the little empirical space left, efforts to speak in causal terms or to specify independent variables quickly become confusing in areas beyond uses and gratifications. In 1965 one found Krugman locating involvement squarely in the medium of television, yet with time and perhaps further consideration of the innocent little devices of storage and conveyance sitting in the living rooms of the land, it may have seemed more promising to define involvement, as Krugman and others now do, as a function of brain-wave activity (Rothschild, et al., 1986; Ward, 1987). When brain function is questioned, non-media-related lifespace phenomena are then brought in to give meaning to involvement, much as they gave meaning to individual need.

To see how, in its turn to cognition, audience research may have become increasingly confused about its own empirical position on the mass communication process, we can consult the early literature. Again, we can discern sophisticated perspectives on researcher activity as well as individual agency that have subsequently become lost as knowledge of other agents slipped away.

In 1964 Raymond Bauer wrote his famous essay on the obstinacy of mass media audiences (see also 1963; Biocca, 1988a, 1988b. In arguments similar in substance but much more upbeat in tone to those made earlier by Hyman and

Sheatsley (1947) on why media campaigns failed, Bauer asked audience researchers to consider the magnitude of their persuasive tasks. People, he noted, were entrenched in their beliefs, having acquired them through lifetimes of experience. A campaigner, facing the totality of this intransigence, should not expect major results as a result of the dissemination of a few words. In the face of present obstinacy, Bauer further recommended, one should remember that communication was a transaction. One did not achieve a desired outcome without giving something in return. Cheer up, he seemed to say, and get to work.

We will look more closely at transactional issues in mass communication from a perspective that includes mass communicators in chapter 9 and ourselves, too, in chapter 10. What is important here is that even Bauer's formulation, which has since been used to trumpet notions of individual activity, the perspective of two other agents remains present. One is the agent to whom the audience researcher, contemplating the aggregate and obstinate audience, will report his possibly meager findings. The other is the researcher himself. From either perspective, even small units of individual behavior aggregate into millions, and the aggregation itself is the real form of individual agency with which (or rather, against which) a mass communicator must work.

In many ways this formulation's view of individuals is superior to those that worked up from lifespace materials alone. It could, at the same time, hold minimalist conceptions of individual agency at the true level of the individual and, by positing a need to observe the aggregation, note the at times overwhelming power or obstinacy of their sum. No variation in the level of one's attention or involvement was required to make an activity variable. Instead, Bauer moved deftly across levels of aggregation. These levels were available to him not from a

process of methodological reflection (Price, Ritchie, & Eulau, 1990), but, perhaps, because he kept the empirical position of the audience researcher in relation to a funding agency available as a referent for his conception of an obstinate audience.

In contemporary audience research of allegedly general (i.e. non-campaign) interest, it is becoming more difficult to defend a vision of individual agency that suggests or allows later aggregation (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Rogers & Dearing, 1988) by a researcher. Acts of mass communication continue to create mass audiences, but theories of individual activity create visions of a complete agent from the raw materials of single lifespaces. Efforts to reduce the number of uses or gratification individuals report in their own varying words to a small number of functional categories (e.g. 'surveillance' or 'identification') stand out as increasingly strange maneuvers, barely defensible from contemporary challenges by ethnographic scholars: Why such cold, abstract terms to brutally and summarily reduce so many warm and lively individual responses? From Bauer's position one could make short work of this challenge, but that position came with further obligations, ones that the demands of cognitive structure, process, and individual agency have made practically inaccessible.

Are notions of involvement or need causal and the individual the agent of this cause? Are these same notions conditioning of the causal force of mediated contents? Are they actually properties of the devices in the corners of the room, or are they dispositions internalized from the individual's daily and accumulated biographical experiences? Which causal model should a researcher make, or should she use independent variables at all? This set of questions is indeed complex, and at their center is a subjective empirical phenomenon, variously named, and a field for

assertions regarding individual volition that range from definitely active to passive to varying.

Contemporary audience research with notions of complex exposure draws one into this rich vortex of issues and away from perspectives that might bring not just order but empirical guidance: perspectives that include knowledge of the mass communicator, perspectives that acknowledge (without epistemological fanfare) the empirical position of the researcher.

My argument has been that elements of these perspectives were not so absent from past audience research, that their present absence is part of the price paid for increased methodological sophistication and scholarly self-consciousness (where explication involves comparisons of the meaning of various scholarly meanings of "higher-level" abstractions), and that the price paid may not be worth it. To accept the question of agency on its present empirical grounds is to gain in knowledge of psychological theory and research techniques, but it is also to lose the opportunity to observe, understand and assess the mass communication process. Even the contours of the living room itself are becoming empirically uncertain. The history of individual agency in audience research is merely the history of a shrinking empirical object.

Individual Interaction

Rich conceptions of human communication stem from the positing of a dyad as the domain of empirical inquiry and the simple observation of what happens when people speak with each other (Bateson, 1972; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967). In interpersonal communication research one may find analytic abstractions and counts of isolated verbal behaviors, or semiotic expansions of levels of meaning deeply embedded somewhere within a phrase, but one also finds the safety net of the empirical dyad, two people speaking with each other, and a chance to recover from

overambitious abstraction or expansion. One can see the effects of a family system on the child, and one can see the patterns of mutual exchange that constitute the family as a system.

Loosening the restriction of unidirectional causation imposed by the bullet model in Figure 1.1, one sees the potential for an interactional or transactional view for the study of mass communication. Mass communicators, the Figure would suggest, are engaged in a relationship with individuals. One would need then identify definite patterns of exchange defining those relationships, and move from there to predictions of individual effects.

This has not been done in audience research. More importantly, the framework of unidirectional causation may not be the source of hindrance. Rather, and once more, it is the absence of a tangible and empirically valid other agent with which to associate biological individuals. The notions of interaction to be reviewed below empirically implicate nothing to the left of the dividing line in Figure 1.1. Not surprisingly, matters on the right have become complex and confused.

Interpersonal interaction has long been studied in conjunction with mass media exposure. *Personal Influence* remains the most famous example of their conjunction (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). In concert with Bauer's later arguments regarding the absence of an ability to achieve influence through a media campaign, Katz and Lazarsfeld focused attention on one part of individual lifespaces to explain why it was that media influence was limited. People, they noted, were members of groups bound by interpersonal ties and guided by the influence of opinion leaders. These leaders could be very localized and their authority itself could extend over singular object domains (dresses, cosmetics and beauty treatments, movies, and opinions on local public affairs). Effects of messages about particular dresses or

movies would be mediated by the authority of a local opinion leader existing within the target individual's interpersonal network. To understand the influence process more fully, one would have to observe these interpersonal networks more thoroughly.

Though not formalized as a version of this two-step flow theory of mass media effects, early research on children and television also invoked interpersonal networks as part of a fuller explanation of television's influence. Whatever one might find through the study of the direct influence of television content on children's knowledge, attitudes or behaviors, one had to remember that much television viewing occurred in the presence of others, particularly parents (Schramm, Lyle & Parker, 1962).

Reliance on the agency of parents in mediating the effects of a mass medium on children is a long-standing practice in policy-oriented research. Parents, like opinion leaders, are visible in the lifespace of the observed individual, though parents reside there while the others are more occasional presences. In both instances, however, an element of interaction has been grafted on to a bullet model, and the interaction itself is seen as reducing or facilitating an effect.

In the two-step flow theory and in research on media and children, the element of interaction is based on a system of clearly specifiable agents. In 1957 Horton and Wohl would offer a concept of interaction that would alter this pattern (1979). Some people, they observed, seemed to exhibit strong levels of identification with or attachment to mediated contents. They acted as if these contents were other persons, and as if they themselves were in interaction with these 'others.' The authors called this phenomenon "para-social interaction."

Para-social interaction is made by combining elements of mediated content with observed individual

behavior and assumed motives. Though relational in form and standing empirically for a kind of dyadic object, it is used as an independent variable in studies of mass media effect. Some scholars found para-social interaction to have pernicious consequences (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985). Roser (1990) proposed that para-social interaction might have therapeutic effects for college undergraduates.

Though I believe I push the trend somewhat, what I wish to suggest here is that along with the dimension of individual agency, the dimension of interaction has also moved by degrees into a much smaller empirical domain. It arguably began against a backdrop of the individual's neighborhood in *Personal Influence*. From there, in studies of media and children, it was empirically supported by the living room couch or floor, where parent and child interactions could be observed to mediate the influence of mediated contents.

After a time the notion of interaction could be supported with only one living individual, as the position of the other could be had by isolating an image or voice speaking individual projected by radio, film or television screen. (In Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953), it should be noted, the mass communicator was defined as the representation of an individual on a media device as a matter of course.)

Part of the problems associated with individual agency, I would suggest, stems from an overlay of an idea of interaction onto an even more tenuous empirical domain: individual subjectivity. This is not to say that all research with complex exposure works only with subjectivity, or to deny the possibility that gains in psychological theory may be had through the positing of individual subjectivity as an interactive system. It is to say, however, that the direction of conceptual innovation in *mass communication* research is becoming too ambitiously cognitive

and too empirically impoverished. Neither cognitive psychology nor mass communication stand to gain from this unfortunate combination.

Against contemporary definitions of individual involvement in terms things like alpha and beta brain-wave activity, it should be noted that audience research has not yet benefitted from a conception of interaction that adequately reflects the empirical reality represented by the simple bullet model. Neighborhood and family networks, images and persons, cognitive structure and process ensembles--all these relational phenomena have found a place in audience research variables. Television networks have not.

Complex Exposure: Promising Conceptual Regions

Chapters 8 through 10 will suggest a way to specify and observe general categories of mass communicator agency in individual lifespaces. In anticipation of this work I would like to discuss two subregions in the domain depicted by Figure 7.1 as meriting special consideration. I do not isolate these regions because they have led to marginal increases in explained variance in causal models from time to time, though they have (e.g. McLeod, Rucinski, & Pan, 1986). Rather, I do so because the empirical range of objects and activities available from the dimension of commodity relations will also make use of them, not by pointing to their existential forms but by surrounding and implicating them more directly with observable features of the mass communication process.

Attention and Salience

The first region I have shaded includes a number of terms of uncertain location but similar substantial intent. Television itself could be a low-attention medium, or the individual could be the source of the attention or salience a researcher might observe in exposure. Mediated contents may 'grab' an individual's attention, may be

salient in themselves, or else the individual herself may be attentive or may make the mediated content salient. The pressure of theoretical interest in individual subjectivity forces these concepts inward; common sense, perhaps, moves them back out after awhile, producing the bouncing effect Chaffee and Roser (1986) found in their explication of involvement.

What is important about this region of terms is its position in a line of causation which, if we may leave their varying locations in abeyance for a moment, still moves from left to right. If a broader empirical base can be had, one that effectively allows a causal force to be located within a real external agent, we may be able to sort among agents and stop this bouncing around. If mass communicators are recovered, we will be able to affix certain meanings related to attention or salience to *their* motives and actions. This will not destroy individual agency. It will merely establish the presence of another agent in relation to the individual within the mass communication process.

Dependency and Orientation

With respect to how a mass communication relationship might define an individual, the conceptual path has already been laid out by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) and McLeod and McDonald (1985), through their respective notions of media dependency and media orientation.

As mere names of internal dispositions, the concepts in this second shaded region point to mass communication phenomena. It is only when one inspects the antecedent variables normally used in audience research that one sees their relationship to mass communication become obscure. Those who read more, for example, and who thus might be observed as print reliant, dependent, or oriented, tend to have higher levels of education, income, or status than those who read less. Roughly the reverse argument is

made for those who watch television more and/or who read less or not at all.

When a researcher visits individual lifespaces and makes inquiries that refer to an individual's media orientation or dependency, she may do well to suppose that there exist such dispositions within the lifespaces, just as they may for education (see chapter 6). Since there is at present no clearly available taxonomy of mass communicating agencies with which to associate individuals in more direct forms of exposure, it should not be surprising to note that little in relation to mass communicating agency is available to ground these more temporally distant dispositional concepts. A researcher conceives them, observes them indirectly, but then is forced to trace them back, empirically, to other non-media lifespaces phenomena. When she does, these 'media' dispositions become indistinguishable from indicators of socioeconomic status and other third variables (Hirsch, 1981; McLeod & Kosicki, 1986; McLeod, Rucinski, & Pan, 1986).

With mass communicating agents available after chapter 9, chapter 10 will suggest that the positing of media orientations apart from socioeconomic status, and in addition to mass media exposure, is empirically supportable and perhaps desirable for those who wish to explore the effects of mass communication in research of general scope. A dispositional region will remain, but its antecedents will come from the mass communication process.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

¹'Promise' does not mean opportunity for marginal increases in explained variance, as such increases over simple exposure can now occasionally be obtained with constructs (see, e.g., Drew & Weaver, 1990). Promise rather relates to the goal of understanding general causes and effects associated with mass communication, where effects, such as may be found, may also be attributable to empirically accessible causal forces and not left to float mystically between the indicator lines of a construct.

²By tangible perturbations I mean specific examples of mediated contents that a researcher claims as having been perceived, regardless of the level of activity or saliency she finds has been added to it by an individual. Tangible perturbations are like perceived stimuli, though they are not subject to researcher manipulation.

The term "perturbations" itself comes from a constructivist version of content analysis developed by Krippendorf (1991). Krippendorf was concerned to make explicit the assumptions and activities of researchers who perform content analyses. The price paid for increased self-reflection was reduced attention to external phenomena, hence the term "perturbations." Though I apply it in a different context, it seems to represent the same thing: convenient selections from an empirically disorganized domain of externalities.

³I was also struck by the passible similarity between Figure 7.1 and a recent model developed by authors much more sympathetic to the cognitive approach. See Bryant and Rockwell (1991).

⁴Even Bourdieu (1986) fails to establish clear links to mass communicating agency when working with abundant data on popular media fare and lifespace phenomena in France, even though he loads both sets of terms with social connotation and envelops his ideas in a theory of symbolic capital formation.

**SECTION III. COMMODITY RELATIONS: THE SOCIAL IN
AUDIENCE RESEARCH**

CHAPTER 8

COMMODITY RELATIONS AND THE LIFESPACE

Introduction

When Gerbner (1958a) claimed that the social could be read from the consequential meanings of mass media content he was, of course, correct, just as are grand media theorists who articulate mass communication with history, contemporary social structure and the human condition. The social, like the cognitive, is readily available as grand referent to the words one puts on paper. It is just difficult to observe systematically in individual lifespaces.

Although commodity relations aims to bring more of the social into audience research, the attempt would fail at the outset if the concept could not be shown to have its empirical place in the lifespaces. The chapter briefly defines the concept of commodity relations and move immediately on to operational matters. Only after indicating what commodity relations makes one observe in the lifespaces, that is, only after establishing its feasibility for audience research, do I begin to map the concept among past practices and against the larger mass communication process given in Figure 1.1.

The mapping comes in sectional overlays. In this chapter I discuss the new operation in relation to traditional practices. Commodity relations shares much with mass media exposure: To begin working with it one observes what is already happening every moment of every day in the empirical world of individuals. With commodity relations these observations are more organized and fully accounted

for than they have been in the past, but the more important point of this organization is to open up a path toward mass communicators.

Let me emphasize that chapter 8 marks out only the beginning of the social trail since it works only with what the lifespace makes available. Where that path leads will be the subject of chapter 9.

To give brief preview, chapter 9 finds ideal-typical mass communicators, defined by their sources of revenue and by the actions they take to function well within their relations, and chapter 10 returns to the lifespace, social meanings internalized, to discuss relevant mass media effects, to expand the basic research model across time and space, and, finally, to address general research and policy avenues, including Rogers and Dearing's (1988) admonition that academic scholars acknowledge individual subjectivity.

The preview suggest that the simple concept of commodity relations introduced here is enmeshed in a richer web of meanings. I think we can expect this to be the case for any concept whose referents straddle social and psychological realms. To maximize the chance for clarity, these meanings cannot be given all at once. For that reason I have decided to make a virtue of necessity and consider operational matters first: It is especially important to establish an ambitiously social and relational concept's links with the empirical world before assuming that it is a workable concept for systematic inquiry.

I begin this task by using observable exposure-related elements from individual lifespace, primarily nominal media categories and the individual's daily cyclical time, and by noting how these elements are associated with acts of monetary exchange. As will be acknowledged below, some of the monetary articulations would likely have to be made by observing mass communicating agencies, internalizing knowledge of their financial operations, and then returning

to the lifespace to seek their observable traces there. These simple monetary considerations will be the only instances in this chapter when theoretical matters will take us outside the lifespace. Our principle interest now is to establish that there is something to observe.

Definitions

Commodities

'Commodity' is a familiar word, seemingly synonymous with a handful of other familiar words: 'good,' 'object,' or even 'thing.' More formal definitions of the commodity reinforce this thingish semantic field. *Webster's Third International Dictionary* defines the commodity as (1) "an economic good" and the notion of commodity exchange as (2) "an organized market where future delivery contracts for graded commodities (as grains, cotton, sugar, cotton, wool) are bought and sold" (1981).

Unfortunately, these authoritative definitions of the commodity are more useful in their limitations than in what they substantively include. Let me first propose a more workable (and empirically adequate) set of meanings and then proceed to the concept of commodity relations.

First, we must understand that commodities need not be defined with examples so tangible as cotton or sugar. Commodities may be much more intangible. Recorded songs and videotapes of cascading waterfalls can be commodities,¹ but so can human activities that are not contained in material casings like cds or videocassettes. During a forty-five minute session with a psychoanalyst a symbolic commodity has been produced, offered and accepted in exchange, and the telephone company's innovative 900 numbers allow friendly or erotic conversation to be sold by the minute. Cotton, *The Cotton Club*, and the ephemeral late-night phone conjurings of a tired employee--all of these things can be, and are, commodities.

An empirical definition of the commodity must be

ready to include anything a person or economic agent offers or *does* in exchange for money. This is especially important to note, as if one holds to the field of examples traced out so quickly by *Webster*, the field of communication would disappear.

The dictionary definition of the commodity also mentions "an organized market." The meanings that are associated with this observation are essential to all that follows. There are so many of them, and they are so crucial to organize in thought, that we will take them on by degrees. Having noted that commodities can be literally any *thing*, let me now say that any two instances of the same thing can be stood side by side such that one is, and the other is not, a commodity. Cotton, for example, was likely cultivated for centuries before it was exchanged in markets. Narratives were likely offered for millennia before being formalized, recorded, and sold in book or movie encasements. And friendly talk has been around a long time. The offer of friendship for sale by phone is merely one charming new way a post-industrial society attains its economic growth. More such entrepreneurial schemes are likely just around the corner.

The second definitional point is this: By merely looking at something we cannot know if it is a commodity or not. We need additional knowledge. As the dictionary notes, we need to know whether a thing is part of an organized system of market exchange. Know this and we know that a particular pile of content or flow of symbolic activity is or is not also a commodity.

How, specifically, do we know we know that something is a commodity? We may use broad theoretical knowledge of how and where money-based market systems organize human social life, but we can also, and more simply at the outset, know that something is a commodity if it has a price tag attached in some way, and is not a commodity if

no price tag is attached.

Price-tag evidence can be used to roughly describe how political economists determined whether something was or was not a commodity through the first third of the twentieth century. Marx made much of the attachment of prices to human labor power (1967), and Adorno and Horkheimer generated expansive works with the idea that prices had been overtly attached to symbolic flows (1979; see also Nienhaus, 1989b). We will use this time-honored way of identifying commodities for a few more moments. Easy as it is to understand, the price-tag method has its limits, but let us use contemporary mass communication to see what these limits are.

Commodity Relations

Traditional political economy allows us to look at any thing and decide that it is or is not a commodity. Let us see what this means with lifespace materials.

When we observe an individual in her immediate ecological surroundings we may notice that she uses or has available to her symbolic fare from a broad array of sources--technological media devices and people. If the symbols coming to her from any device or person come without a price tag attached, then we know that the symbols themselves are not commodities. If the symbols have (or were known to have had) prices, then we can say that they are or were commodities.

In preparation for the operational discussion to follow we may say that symbols without price tags attached may signify a *non-commodified* relationship between the sender of those symbols and the person we observe. In non-commodified relationships money is not an immediate concern informing the relationship between whomever produced the symbols and the person we now observe appropriating them. For mass communication these formulations will, in empirical fact, be mostly wrong, but neither nineteenth-century definitions of the commodity nor the price evidence we have

from the lifespace let us yet see the mistake.

If we see symbol packages and flows in the lifespace with prices attached, we have evidence of a traditional market relationship structuring a communicative act between whomever produced those symbols and the person we now see appropriating them. When symbols and prices fall together in this way, as they often do with print media and recorded film and music, we have evidence of a commodity relationship, one that I call, more specifically, a *first-order* commodity relationship. By "first-order" I mean a direct exchange of symbolic fare for money.

Survey researchers will likely not catch people in actual acts of exchange, and many of the symbolic flows offered for money were not likely purchased by those the survey researcher interviews, but these are matters to be taken up in operational discussion below.

In noncommodified relations money is not an issue structuring the production and acquisition of symbols; in first-order relations money does so directly. These two definitions are our legacy from a long tradition of political economic thought, and as Smythe observed (1977, 1979), they are woefully incomplete when applied to the empirical object of mass communication.

In any contemporary lifespace we would likely see people situating themselves in flows of electronically conveyed symbolic fare to which no prices had been attached--network television and commercial radio stand as outstanding examples of this (Robinson & Converse, 1972; Robinson, 1977, 1981). Like one's conversation over tea with a friend, the individual's appropriation of these symbol flows would seem to fall outside the domain of market-based commodity exchange. In fact they do not fall outside, but we must speak briefly about non-lifespace phenomena to establish why they do not.

Much contemporary mass communication is supported

by advertising. Advertising, as Adorno and Horkheimer only briefly noted (1979), was about a "peculiar commodity," one arguably more peculiar than "labor power" as explicated by Marx (1967). When advertising-supported symbolic flows come into the lifespace, the intention of those producing those flows is neither to offer meanings freely (as our friends do over tea) nor to offer meanings as commodities (as authors of books often do), but to offer them as a *means* to quite another end: the acquisition of the observed individual's time and attention which will be aggregated by transmission technology, measured by ratings firms, and then sold to third parties.

This activity results in a peculiar commodity, but it is peculiar only in an historical sense. Nineteenth-century political economy set us up to expect that commodities would be various tangible or intangible things that had price tags attached and that biological individuals might purchase for money. This kind of commodity still exists, but the rise of advertising in mass communication has created quite another, one that the nineteenth century did not recognize, peculiar, but not for that reason difficult to comprehend, especially for one who occupies the position of a survey researcher. Here the commodity is not comprised of a package of symbols. It is a package of aggregated individual time and attention that a media firm fishes for with symbols and then gathers in and sells to a third party for money.²

With an initial gesture toward contemporary mass communication (and *only* mass communication), we note that the general idea of the commodity must be expanded to include phenomena beyond those made available by nineteenth-century thought. Let us bring these basic meanings into one list. Objects in human communication are not adequately classified as commodities or not-commodities, but trichotomously:

First-order commodity relations: symbolic objects or flows actually exchanged for money or having prices attached;

Second-order commodity relations: symbolic objects or flows producing aggregated individual time or attention for sale to third parties; and

Non-commodified relations: symbolic objects or flows offered neither with price tags nor as means to produce quantities of individual time or attention for sale to third parties.

When using the terms 'commodity,' 'the commodity form' or 'commodity relations,' this study will refer to one or more relations from this three-category taxonomy. For purposes of simplicity I will normally drop the term 'commodity' and speak of 'first-' or 'second-order relations.' At the end of this chapter I will explain why I use the term 'relations' in this set of names rather than, say, 'first-order commodities.'

With these definitions in place, I want to indicate how one might find evidence of commodity relations in individual lifespaces, so that the more taxing substantive matters we encounter later can be directly related to things an audience researcher may have observed and turned into well-behaved variables in datasets.

Commodity Relations: A Tool for Audience Research

To prepare commodity relations for audience research I use (1) internalized knowledge of the financial character of the mass media industry, which the reader will have to accept on their face, (2) nominal media typologies--the cue-card lists discussed in chapter 5, and (3) time in its daily cyclical form, that is, as a quantity beginning at zero, extending to 24 hours, and then beginning again at

zero. Empirical objects associated with media typologies and daily cyclical time are available in the lifespace, as is some of the information about media financial structure. Here is a list of survey questions one might use to gather data and make a commodity relations variable for analysis:

During an average day, how much time do you spend reading

- (1) books?
- (2) daily newspapers?
- (3) magazines?
- (4) newsletters from church, school, an investment advisor, or sports or hobby organization?

During an average day, how much time do you spend listening to

- (5) radio?

Let's take a closer look at your _____ with radio. What part of that time do you spend listening to

- (6) public radio from a school or university?
- (7) religious radio?

During an average day, how much time do you spend watching

- (8) television?

Lets's take a closer look at your _____ with television.

What part of that time do you spend watching

- (9) cable television?
- (10) premium cable channels like movie channels?
- (11) public television from a school, a community center or university?
- (12) religious television?

How much time do you spend listening to

- (13) records, cassettes, or cds?

How much time do you spend watching
(14) rented movies or videos?

How often do you
(15) go out to a movie, a concert, or a play?

These 15 items are not offered as a definitive set; they have not been pretested and there are some rather obvious rough spots that would need to be monitored and worked out.

For example, the operational goal is to attain responses in minutes. Respondents might, in fact, respond in different units, and these would have to be translated in coding, and item (15) would sound strange if cast in daily cyclical time. For movie excursions one could recode a response of, say, once a month as 90 minutes, divide this time by 30, and then record a value of 3 minutes for the individual on this item. The procedure is awkward, but it does not seem to me to be more so than those we encounter in the normal conduct of audience research, and the theoretical point and empirical referents of the operation stands ready to support improvements.

My purpose here is to establish the operational feasibility for a full set of commodity relations without a long, tedious survey instrument. To accomplish this goal empirical compromises would likely have to be made. Some of the more serious compromises this set of questions involves will now be addressed.

The minutes one gathered from responses to items (1), (4), (8),³ (10), (12), and (13) through (15) would be deemed commensurable. All would be added to a variable called 'first-order commodity relations.'

To the number of minutes in first-order relations we obtain for an individual from these items we will have to add a few more. For items (2), (3), (7), and (9) we would

need, at minimum, general knowledge of the degree to which firms in the industries these items implicate obtain their revenues from individual payment and from advertising. What we are after in each instance is a ratio, and the ratios will differ across industries, regions, individual firms, and over time.

For example, newspaper firms in general currently derive about 80 percent of their revenue from advertising and 20 percent from individual purchases and subscriptions. For item (2), then, I suggest the following operational strategy. If an individual reports reading a newspaper for an hour per day, one should allocate only 20 percent of that hour, or 12 minutes, to the first-order relations variable. One would develop similar strategies (with different ratios) for magazines, public radio and public television--to the degree that these latter two categories of firms rely on revenues from individual contributions.

Again, I cannot say what we would lose by analytically parsing flows of time that occur in such phenomenally mixed form, but we do have some sense of the empirical compromises this procedure asks us to make, and with time and resources one could perhaps develop better measures if that goal were deemed necessary.

At this point a researcher would have a variable that measured the quantity of time the individual had spent in first-order relations during an average day. This time is set apart from time in second-order and non-commodified relations. Let us now turn to these.

What does one do with the other 48 minutes from an individual's hour with a newspaper? One simply allocates this time to second-order relations, and one does the same thing for public radio and television (part of whose revenues, we note, come from advertisers, though they might be called something else).

The bulk of the time we allocate to second-order

relations will come from radio and television, but we have to establish these quantities as net of other relations that obtain through these devices. All of the time from (8) and most of the time from (7) have to be subtracted from the individual's time with an undifferentiated notion of radio in (6). Similarly, from one's total time with television a researcher should be ready to subtract a portion of her time watching cable and public stations (the point of items (9) and (11)), and perhaps all of her time with premium and religious television fare.

I do not suggest that the ratio procedure will be the best way to do this, but I do think this procedure can be implemented without undo stress on survey research resources. Again, the point is to capture the total quantity of daily cyclical time the individual spends in second-order relations, and to hold this time apart from that spent in the other two relations.

Let me finish this initial operational discussion with a few observations regarding non-commodified relations in mass communication. For reasons best seen historically, and thus best only lightly touched in present discussion, non-commodified relations would likely be a small residual category. The set of survey items provides a way to gather this time and set it apart from the other two, but I do not think it would be overly fruitful to do so, for two reasons.

First, individual time in non-commodified relations would likely be small in quantity. Not many people watch public television or listen to public radio, and from these times we still have to wrest quantities of minutes associated with the audience and corporate contributions that currently support these venues.

This allocation can be done, and with the above items. My sense, however, is that time in non-commodified relations will be associated with outcomes similar to those one would find for first-order relations. In the United

States, at least, public radio and television may best be seen as state subsidies of flows of contents that would otherwise be offered for money (or freely, and interpersonally, and in educated circles--a matter to be discussed in chapter 10). Those individuals who take advantage of state-subsidized flows will likely be similar in many ways to individuals who regularly use symbol flows with prices attached. These assumptions--which are subject to empirical assessment--have led me to focus the balance of my attention in this study to the pools of time we would allocate to first- and second-order relations.⁴ When chapter 10 takes up questions of effect, models presented there will show a merger of the paths that move endogenously from time in non-commodified and first-order relations.

What, then, do these items and procedures make available to audience research? Let me present a response in the form of a formal causal model whose fuller specifications will be given in chapter 10.

The squared numbers on the left side of Figure 8.1 represent each of the 15 items introduced above, each measured in minutes of daily cyclical time. In contemporary measurement modeling imagery, this Figure suggests that the 15 items may function as empirical indicators of latent theoretical constructs. The latent theoretical constructs are, from top to bottom in the Figure, non-commodified, first-, second-order commodity relations.

One will note that one, two, or three lines move from these squares to circled items on the right. The numbers of paths moving from indicators to these constructs reflects the analytic procedures essayed above: Since, for example, public radio combines state sponsorship, corporate sponsorship and individual contributions, a portion of one's hour with public radio would have to be allocated to each of the three latent constructs.

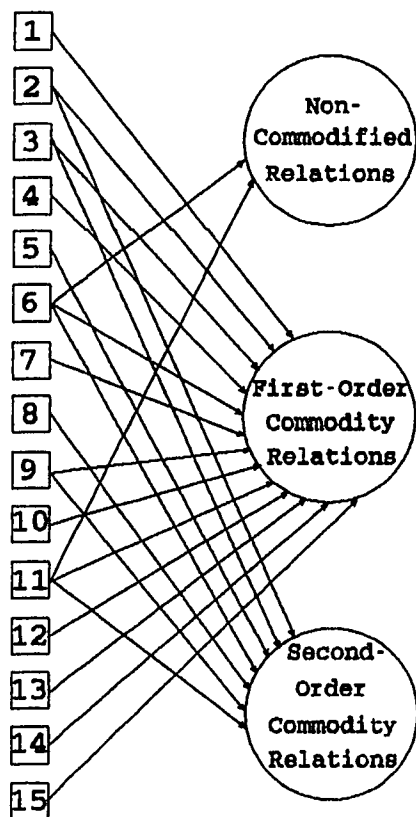


Figure 8.1. Commodity Relations: Empirical Indicators and Constructs.

Figure 8.1 suggests a bit more than a formal measurement model. The empirical indicators and latent constructs, together, aim to exhaust the causal force that daily cyclical time makes available to effects inquiry. This force, in turn, may be of two (or three) kinds, and they may be discussed using the names given in the latent constructs. With this model, audience researchers may acquire audience data that would place them in a better position to speak with empirical authority about media

effects in general because they would have more exhaustive specifications of *causal force* to work with than they can currently obtain with existing conceptions of mass media exposure.

The model is not about the causal force of 'television' or a 'newspaper.' These items are used to operationalize commodity relations, but, as I believe one can see, Figure 8.1 puts these nominal categories in a less prominent theoretical place. With this Figure one speaks of the causal force of first-, second-order and non-commodified relations, and not of the force of an uncertain sampling from a nominal typology of media devices.⁵ Quantities themselves total in individual time, bounded by the 24-hour day. If, after this procedure, 'television' looms substantially, it will only do so because the quantity of time flowing through these devices is large, and, more likely, because these large amounts of time are spent in second-order relations. As a little device in the corner of the room, 'television' will remain an innocuous empirical thing.

Even without leaving the lifespace, that is, even without yet speaking of either mass communicating agents or of particular mass media effects, I believe that we can see why many effects findings, such as those we see in the agenda-setting or the political communication literature, are, as a rule, mixed.

In these lines of inquiry, contents begin the inference process, and they are often observed by topic and device mediation: people are asked to recall national issues they found in newspapers or political ads they remember from television. What the time-based operationalization of commodity relations immediately suggests is that establishing mass media exposure in this way is not a good idea: With this strategy one will left comparing one media device that is associated almost purely with second-order

relations (television) with a second media device that is four-fifths second-order and one-fifth first-order commodity relations (newspaper). One can predict that comparisons of media effects made on the basis of data operationally acquired in this way will produce mixed findings: The commodity relations underlying the media device categories are more commensurable than they are theoretically distinct, so that different findings should accumulate as a function of the number of studies conducted.

Intermediate Considerations

It is premature to outline the full point of view availed by commodity relations, but while we still occupy a position that observes individual lifespaces let me review some of the dimensions of exposure this variable does and does not implicate when operationalized in daily cyclical time.

We can see, first of all, that the procedure does not speak of content or cognition. One may be interested in the effects of news or pictures or violent content or perceived realism of violent content, but all of these things would have to come as additional specifications. Nothing prevents such additions, but it should be acknowledged that commodity relations gives little theoretical sense of what one would gain by adding them and no help at all as to how to do so in quantitative terms. "Little theoretical sense" is not nothing, but to note the assistance commodity relations might give in this regard I must speak not of content or cognition themselves but of further features of commodities and commodity relations.

Commodity Relations and Content

It is not difficult to produce a set of exposure questions that asks individuals to report their time with general classes of content like 'news and public affairs' and 'entertainment,' and to reproduce the distinction across one or two media device categories. Absent any clear

indication of the domain of comparative causal force this common procedure would make available, let me generate a theoretical position on news versus entertainment using the concept of commodity relations.

If, as a third party, we watch someone give money to someone else in exchange for something, what can we safely say about the object purchased and the agent who purchases it? Put another way, what does money substantively communicate (Gansmann, 1988)? Not much, but something nonetheless, and as outside observers on the exchange it might be worthwhile for us to note what this something is.

When an object is purchased for money we can assert (we could be wrong, especially if, following the proposed operational strategy, we use prices as a proxy for payment behavior) that the object has something of value for the person who buys it. What was this value? Money does not tell us what and we actually do not know. That is a secret locked inside the subjectivity of the person we watch buying the object. That person has her reasons, but we do not, in our position, know *what* those reasons might be. We only know--money only tells us--that *something* of value resided in that object for that person. To that person the object was valuable enough to have made her pay money to receive it, in sufficient quantity to induce the holder of the object to release it. Money is, in this formulation, nothing more than an abstract signal that announces to any party looking on that something of value had been, produced, perceived as such, and acquired.

Money only tells us these very general things. To learn more while observing the lifespace we would have to meddle more with the subjectivity of the purchaser. Multiply this meddling by the number of people one interviews in the typical survey and one had better be prepared to spend a lot of time in interviewing, and prepared, too, to sweep a lot of things under the rug in later coding the acquired data.

When our observations allow us to perceive a general temporal flow of contents with prices attached, we have the option of letting go questions relating to all the individual reasons all the hundreds of individuals may or may not be able to report in response to detailed questions. We may say, instead, that the person has positioned himself in a flow of symbols that have value of some general kind: first-order flows, money suggests to us, are flows of valuable symbols.

If we did not make typologies of subjective phenomena, what could we now do? We could move immediately on to second-order flows, where the absence of prices suggests to us, at minimum, that individuals have no chance to signal utility in the general and recognizable ways that money avails. They do not buy their evening flow of national news. It just comes to them, courtesy of the monetary expenditures of another party.

The point is this: Though commodity relations does not say anything of substance about content, it does speak about distinct flows of symbols in ways that seem analogous to those that might lay behind gross content distinctions like 'news' versus 'entertainment,' and behind gross subjective needs categories like 'surveillance' and 'escapist' gratification. This means that even this minimal operational specification of commodity relations does more than stand mute with respect to the semantic dimensions of exposure it does not use: It actually competes with these dimensions for later explanatory power.

I cannot push this point strongly in this work, nor can I perceive a moment when the point could be strongly pushed in the future, as those who work with content and cognition have yet to establish the domains of causal force from which they take their semantic samples. Nevertheless, I would assert that insofar as "news" is employed in a research design to signal socially (or even personally)

useful information, while "entertainment" is employed to signal something else, commodity relations now stands ready to replace these categories. It can also clarify the currently blurry lines that separate theories of representational form and media logic.

Insofar as one notices a blurring of lines between news and entertainment when one looks directly at content and finds, for example, realist police programming or news stories about holiday shopping, or insofar as one looks at a print device and notices that it looks like another medium (e.g., *USA Today* and television), then commodity relations would allow us to entertain the possibility that content forms and media devices historically associated with first-order relations are being replaced by second-order relations. I do not know how one could make a similar argument with categories of news and entertainment, nor have I yet seen a workable theory of media logic that convincingly posits essential features of media devices and, at the same time, allows for the changes that we see occurring across devices. These are, again, empirical matters that commodity relations might help address.

Commodity Relations and Individual Agency

Individual agency is a more serious matter. Notwithstanding the abstract signals money could safely provide about the utility of an object or its lack, many scholars would rightly insist that individuals, like children, can make use of the useless, because individuals possess volitional power. Even though they may stand in temporal streams of content that do not come with prices, and that, therefore, do not allow any signaling of utility with money, these contents may nonetheless be *made* useful (Nienhaus, 1989a). More importantly, the way they would be made useful could only be seen indirectly, through recourse to cognitive categories like attention or involvement.

There is nothing wrong with a general claim of

individual activity. At least, it is one that I share, but it is not one that I see standing in challenge to the claims about extra-individual causal force I will make in this work. The perspective on the mass communication process commodity relations gives will allow one to say this: Individuals are agents, but they are not the only agents in the mass communication process.

What does this mean for traditional audience research? One could investigate the uses people make of generally useless content streams, for example. Or, in the presence of firm evidence of individual volition, one could ask why it might be that individuals in the United States would have to expend their demonstrated cognitive powers on useless instead of useful or non-commodified symbol streams. In these instances the lack of utility of second-order symbol flows simply does not refer to individual volition. It refers instead to the activity of the mass communicating agents that we will discuss in chapter 10.

Of more immediate concern as we contemplate the lifespace alone is the general assertion of individual agency that often accompanies the addition of cognitive components as contingencies in media effects models. When one moves from time with television to involvement with television, one takes causal force away from the box in the corner of the room and gives it to the individual. With involvement, the individual may gain political information from political television content, while without involvement he might not. The individual, in other words, determines whether or not a knowledge gain effect will occur.

I wish to acknowledge one aspect of this position. As I argued in chapter 7, concepts like attention or involvement usually combine elements of internalized semantic fields with elements of individual volition (see, for example the concept of "political interest" in Luskin, 1990). Commodity relations give us no purchase on the

semantic fields people may hold in memory, but it can it can and will give us some purchase on matters of volition, in two ways.

One, recalling that cognitive region discussed in chapter 7, where concepts like 'attention' or 'saliency' were contained in and around a region associated with immediate perception, I would argue that one of the reasons researchers have had difficulty determining whether these phenomena are part of the stimulus, the ecological situation, or the respondent is because they may actually be a part of all three (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; Salmon, 1986). If one pays money for content, or if one finds oneself slugging one's way through contents produced for sale and use, then one will likely find higher levels of content saliency and its related subjective forms, like high individual attention, than one will when one explores topically similar contents and subjectivities in second-order relations.

Why? There are a few reasons, but the simplest one can make from a lifespace perspective is this: In the long run people do not spend money frivolously. It is available to them in limited quantities, and over time (and across populations) we will find higher levels of human energy expended with paid-for contents, and we will find better recall of items from such contents, than we would for contents in second-order relations.

This is quite a family of propositions, but I believe they are empirically testable, though not, as McQuail suggested, by deciphering content itself for signs of utilitarian and escapist modes (1984, pp. 188-9). If so, they would signal another way that commodity relations would compete with existing conceptions for explanatory position and power in explorations of media effects. Dependent variable phenomena associated with high levels of attention or saliency would be associated with first-order commodity

relations. Low attention and salience phenomena would be associated, not with television or even with brain waves but with second-order commodity relations.

In these alternative commodity formulations, individual agency is not the only or even primary locus of cause: Somewhere, someone must produce streams of contents with prices attached to start the first-order relation. This somewhere and these someones are the topic of chapter 9.

With respect to the second family of cognitive variables identified in chapter 7 around the terms 'dependency' and 'orientation,' commodity relations will also produce a contesting theoretical position. Again, that position will not address semantic components that one might associate with these terms, but it will address the individual volitional component these terms also imply.

At issue here is the origin of dispositions that individuals can be said to possess in the present, dispositions which, when applied to any stream of contents--even the useless--can result in utility. How do these dispositions come about? If, for example, one used the concepts made available in an academic journal article by Campbell and Reeves (1989) one could later notice and become quite involved with mundane commercial television news stories about homelessness, and one could make many meanings from them that likely would not have been made before reading this work (Fiske, 1991).

If, through a survey question, I were asked to report my degree of involvement with stories of homelessness, I could in good faith report the number on the end of the Likert scale that indicated 'high.' And my level of involvement would likely be sustained by various strategies for construct validation developed to affirm whatever it may be that I hold in my head or heart in relation to the term.

Access in this way to what I subjectively hold and

apply to these stories, however, would be tenuous: The concept of involvement would not say which topics or which media devices involve me. Stories of drug use or of political campaign events, in either electronic or print media, for examples, might still simply pass me by. If they did, then the concept of involvement itself would be topically bound, and prediction with the concept would require knowledge of which topics were and which were not involving to me, to the next person interviewed, and the next, and so on. I have seen no theory of involvement or related dispositions that could make such predictions, nor have I seen any conception that would indicate the degree to which my involvement would be commensurable with that reported by others or groups of others.

Despite these difficulties I believe that concepts like involvement and reliance access something real, something related to the fact that I read that academic journal article in the first place, something that could be used to support assertions that people make useful things out of otherwise useless streams of contents. That is, there may be more stable and enduring *dispositions* that could counteract the effects that second-order commodity relations would otherwise predict (i.e., low recall) when the causal force is measured within an *exposure-like* context of daily cyclical time. People may regularly turn second-order contents of all sorts into semantic jewels--especially if they possess degrees in television studies.

However, there may be empirically better ways to theorize and observe enduring dispositions than those made available with simple or complex psychological scales, especially if one is looking for dispositions that might hold across all topical categories and media devices. In chapter 10 I will suggest a strategy to access these dispositions as more general cognitive states. The empirical indicators of these dispositions, however, will not be

indirect measures of things essentially held in one's head or heart. They will instead point to the consequential presence of individual media experiences that, like education, have unfolded over longer spans of time (see also chapter 6).

With these additional comments I wish to suggest that the simple operational character of commodity relations, and specifically its eschewal of content and cognitive semantic categories, should not be taken as a sign that some drastic reduction in meanings is taking place. One often sees such criticisms invoked whenever an economic category is introduced into a domain where content has reigned supreme. I suggest instead that commodity relations will lead not to a major reduction of meanings but to a replacement of one set of meanings (generally cognitive) with another (generally social). This is especially so when we remember that the observational position assumed in this study is that of the survey researcher, a person who must visit one lifespace and then move quickly on to another.

Having formally introduced the concept of commodity relations for survey research, and having suggested some of the ways this concept resonates with and ignores existing dimensions of simple and complex exposure, let me end this chapter with some observations about the comparative relational character of commodity relations and mass media exposure that may help mark out the newer meanings that will be brought into audience research.

Commodity Relations and Mass Media Exposure

In chapter 1 I indicated that what was most interesting to me about mass media exposure was its conceptual form. One made a mass media exposure variable by combining something from individuals with something external to the individual. Let me now add that these makings do not cumulate systematically or extend very far. It could be that the history of audience research has left the external realm

so filled with perturbations--fragments of mediated contents beclouding the lifespace--that one can no longer associate mass media exposure with relationships extending beyond the parasocial, where an individual is posited to stand in pseudo-discourse with an image on a cathode-ray tube. With the idea of the commodity, or, more specifically with the idea of the commodity form, we have a relational concept that has been rendered much less ineffective in performing a relational concept's basic function: to hold the entities it stands between in better view.

The concept of 'marriage' in conjunction with the term 'wife' immediately suggests the term 'husband,' as, in hegemonic heterosexual discourse 'marriage' is a term defining a formal relationship between a husband and a wife. The field of mass media exposure no longer contains terms that so easily imply a relationship between two agents, but in political economy the term 'commodity' has long been associated with relational thought, at least in the radical political economic discourse engendered by Marx's seminal essay on commodity fetishism (1967).

In this discourse commodities are things that embody relationships between selves and others, particularly between selling selves and buying others. The relational meaning of the commodity is perhaps not as strongly available are those associated with 'marriage,' but they are nonetheless available, and when they are one generally uses the more extended term 'commodity form' instead of 'commodity' to signal an intent to employ relational meanings.

It is beyond the scope of this study to pursue the intellectual history of relational meanings given to the commodity form in political economic thought, but it is appropriate to lay out meanings relevant to this study by example, as the example indicates that the commodity form is not merely a category of thought but a common empirical

phenomenon.

The tomatoes I grow in my garden are a type of fruit. I grow them organically, and they reach a certain color and texture at maturity. My family consumes most of them, others become gifts. I also like to eat tomatoes in winter, and when our stock of tomatoes is exhausted, price permitting, we buy tomatoes at a local supermarket.

When I buy tomatoes at a supermarket I, perhaps like many others, choose tomatoes with good color and few blemishes. Color and surface quality are features of the tomato I can readily assess as I inspect them among the fake parsley in the supermarket display.

Do these inspections give me all I might need to know about these tomatoes? Not really. I am not particularly interested in consuming pesticides or insecticides, and investigation has led me to seek out sources of tomatoes that are produced more organically. Similarly, I prefer soft, fleshy tomatoes to the red hockey pucks we are often offered in winter. It turns out that many tomatoes for sale in supermarkets have been genetically selected to survive mechanical picking and transportation processes without turning into catsup prematurely, and, further, that many of the tougher fleshed strains of tomato also have a shiny, smooth surface appearance that has been associated with success in the marketplace. (Try as I might, I cannot bring myself to buy the pockmarked, moldy organic tomatoes available at my local co-op).

When I grow tomatoes myself, I know most of what I need to know about them, as I am both their producer and consumer. When I buy tomatoes from a supermarket, I no longer know what I need to know. I can assess their color and overall appearance, but I cannot bring in instruments to measure traces of chemical residues, nor can I easily assess their toughness, nor do I know if these tomatoes were picked by Mexican labor for seventy-five cents an hour.

All of these features of supermarket tomatoes are important to me, but only a few of them are available to me via direct observation. Those features not available indicate much of what is meant by commodity fetishism, where the appearance of an object becomes the entire domain from which one will derive knowledge of the object. Were I an unquestioning shopper I would be satisfied with purchase decision based on color and surface features, and I would be happily oblivious to the empirical but not immediately observable fact that those tomatoes came from somewhere beyond the store's walk-in cooler.

Two issues are important here. One is this gap between what one can know about a commodity if one wants to and what one can know about a commodity from its phenomenal appearance alone. As Chaffee rightly noted, scholars like Freud and Marx made much of the fact that things were not always what they seemed to be (1991). More important than acknowledging that knowledge may be missing from one's immediate field of vision, the commodity as a objectified form that indicates that missing knowledge will be found by observing the activities of another, particular class of agents--the producer of the commodity. How does one find out about the pesticide residues in tomatoes, their genetic type, their ability to withstand bruising journeys down conveyor belts, or the wages paid for their production? Not by positing a general cognitive schema of 'tomato-ness' or even 'commodity tomato-ness'⁶ but by careful and often painstaking inquiry into the immediate past histories of the tomatoes one contemplates, and particularly the histories of their production and distribution.⁷ Though the connotation may be a bit weaker than it is for 'marriage,' the commodity status of an object implies not only a consumer but also a producer.

In this chapter I have traced out operational definitions of a concept of commodity relations with

lifespace materials. I have associated an extended, three-category taxonomy of commodity relations with individuals who use or witness temporal streams of mass media contents. The category of second-order relations, though not new, is new to this objectifying domain, and I do not wish to lose the relational meanings associated with the traditional thought and inquiry with the commodity form.

Commodity relations, like commodities, imply at least two agents in exchange relations, producers and consumers. Within the lifespace we observe the way individuals are linked to the activities of producers, sometimes as literal consumers of symbols and sometimes as something else. In the next chapter we will complete the definition of these relations by defining the producing agents that stand empirically on the other side of the temporal flows discussed in this chapter. It might not be easy to conceive of an other side when one's conceptual field is populated with notions of simple or complex exposure, but it might be easier if one has a path and a road sign. Commodity relations gives us this help.⁸ Our task is now to fill three conceptual spaces, standing for locations outside the lifespace, with substantive meanings. With these meanings we will have a set of mass communicating agents to work with in our later investigations of mass media effects.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

¹The slim, vulgarly material 'casings' that symbols have are often offered as examples of how human symbolic activity is 'material.' As the text will suggest, I do not find this notion of 'material' or its binary opposite 'ideal' useful.

²It is beyond the scope of this chapter to empirically establish the validity of this claim, though I must confess an inability to imagine strong contrary positions. Nevertheless, in an elegant dissertation Bates (1985) predicted market prices of media firms using sizes of audiences reached (and sold to advertisers), explaining more than ninety percent of the price variance in his regression equations. When media firms are for sale, purchasers buy neither fancy equipment nor flows of contents but audiences.

In informal conversation Kurt Lang informed me that the notion of the audience commodity has long been available (see the reference to *New York Times* radio critic Jack Gould in Seldes, 1940), and I have no reason to doubt his claim. The tone of discovery that strongly colors Smythe's seminal efforts (1977, 1979) and, perhaps, this study, is probably overdrawn. The audience commodity is neither a new nor a particularly difficult idea at first glance. The question now may be how to move beyond that first glance and take fuller advantage of the commodity form's relational qualities. This work tries to more fully exploit the commodity form by mapping it against the domain of mass media exposure, where it may give access to actual agents of cause (in chapter 9) of media effects (in chapter 10).

³For reasons I will give in chapter 10, I do not use the category of religion to denote a particular kind of mediated content in items (8) and (12). It is instead used to give evidence of a possible first-order relationship between an individual and a still-to-be-specified mass communicating agent beyond the lifespace.

⁴In making arguments with aggregated pools of time in chapter 10 I will also speak of effects in such a way as to suggest that causes were observed at the level of biological individuals. In order proceed logically, I believe I would have to ensure that no individual time totals exceeded 24 hours--the domain I have established for commodity relations as an exposure-type variable. 24 hours defines a person's day, but the sum of individual usages of time might exceed

that limit because people can use more than one device at a time. (See Kubey, 1986, Peterson, 1982; Robinson, 1977, Robinson & Converse, 1972).

I have decided to ignore these overlaps to keep the introductory operational discussion focused on the empirical process commodity relations aims to capture. Nevertheless, this is an empirical compromise with potential theoretical consequences, as some scholars have used the idea that people have the television or radio on in background as they cook or sew to explain away absences of knowledge gain despite time with television. My theoretical defense of this operational strategy would be to say that we would more likely find secondary or background uses of media in second-order relations than we would in first-order relations. One can be more easily distracted from objects for which one has not paid money. Since my operational strategy does not involve observing whether people, in fact, pay money for their objects (I suggest using price tags), and since people often play copies of priced recorded music and videos as they engage in other activities, there may be problems with the strategy I recommend in the text.

Notice, however, that as we move closer to specific phenomena (whether the person in fact purchased the object; what the person does concurrently with a stream of a priced or unpriced objects), connection is not lost with the larger theoretical structure commodity relations presents. An ethnographer or even a psychologist could do some interesting work here. For example, in observing individual selections of music as background to other activities, one could try to discern whether the individual aimed at establishing some kind of mood, beyond words, in which to envelop the activity. There is a route here to questions of *utility of affect* that could compare with the approaches of Atkin (1986), who established a utility domain topically and then measured utility on an abstract Likert scale, or with Fiske (1987), who bypassed questions of affect utility for adolescent girls and Madonna videos in order to make his points with categories of meaning. I do not pursue such issues in depth in this study, as in surveys one must observe quickly and move on.

⁵The 15-item example does not work with an exhaustive list of media devices, but commodity relations stands ready to help classify any device one might encounter. What, for example, would individual time with a billboard be? Time in second-order relations, as the individual does not purchase the symbols on the surface of the board. Instead, those symbols are crafted to capture his passing attention, the thing the billboard agency will later sell to a third party. What about individual time with on a computer network? If the network were subsidized by a state agency, as is the case in France and in certain academic circles in the United States, we might allocate some individual time on the

network to non-commodified relations, as the agency actually operating the network does not actually produce a quantity of individual time or attention to sell to the state agency. If the computer network were private, and the individual's use of the network were metered and priced in time, we would allocate her time to first-order relations. The 15-item set does not include computers and billboards, so it is not as exhaustive in operational form as commodity relations are in theory. But if one were wearily bent on pursuing empirical exhaustion of a 24-hour domain, commodity relations would remain available to inform decisions all the way down to the bottom of any cue-card list of media devices.

⁶Consider that the tough flesh of many contemporary supermarket tomatoes is not an essential feature of 'commodity tomatoes,' that is, as 'readable' in the tomato once one recognizes that it is a commodity (see Haug, 1986). If enough individual consumers reject tough tomatoes, or if a producing agency improves its distributional practices so that softer tomatoes can be brought into store displays, then the softer tomatoes will now be the commodities the supermarkets offer for sale. Pesticide residues can and in many instances have been reduced through such a process.

The point is that one cannot associate any given feature of an empirical instance of a commodity with what is essential to the commodity form. There is, in my view, no category of content or form of representation that one may identify as essential in either first- or second-order relations. The only essential empirical thing about commodities is their form as embodied relations between producing selves and consuming others. All else, though apparently solid, can melt into air.

⁷It is when one moves beyond these immediate past histories of commodities, or beyond the immediate fields of action that comprise their production and distribution, that one encounters metaphysical difficulties in historical and social realms of the unknown. The close operational definitions in this chapter and the looser ones in the next reflect time's capacity to undermine commodity relations' external validity. The operations attempt to keep these keep these metaphysical regions contained, but they do not rid us of the problem.

⁸I believe this relational character needs emphasis, as even a seasoned economist like Paul Samuelson found considerable conceptual trouble when he defined television in more traditional object form, as a 'good' (1958). Samuelson's argument was that since a firm's marginal cost for adding one additional viewer was zero, television was a free or public good--a finding that may have surprised many participants in the television industry both in the 1950s and today. What got Samuelson into trouble was an error of

omission. Beginning with an object (a flow of television contents), an observational point (that of the television firm) and a single direction (the audience), Samuelson noted that no money exchanged hands when contents flowed from the television firm to the audience. Therefore television was a free good. He simply missed another object and vector: the money that came to the television firms, and another agent in the process: the sponsoring firm. See also Barnouw (1978), Bates (1985) and Smythe (1977, 1979).

The relationship between media firms and sponsors is a major one; making 'relations' the fundamental semantic component of the commodity concept used in this study is meant to emphasize the existence of *all* major agencies implicated in mass communication. An observational perspective that satisfies itself with one or two classes of things (be they content or money) can no longer see the relations for which things are merely a moment. With the name and with the plan of action for commodity relations in this work, I am trying to avoid premature moves or retreats to the truncated and overworked object-centered perspectives that mass communication and many other fields have taken on the mass communication process.

CHAPTER 9
COMMODITY RELATIONS AND MASS COMMUNICATORS

Introduction

This chapter seeks a mass communicator for each of the pools of individual time introduced in chapter 8. Non-commodified, first- and second-order mass communicators are first posited as social *objects*--as things whose existence may be verified through observation.

Mass communicators are then regarded as *agents*. Their intentions and corresponding actions are used to define causal forces that flow outward, through distributional networks, and into the pools of time we can construct with surveys. The effects of these intentions and action will be taken up in chapter 10.

Though mass communicators stand outside the lifespaces, the procedures used to apprehend them are much the same as before. Words with empirical referents are employed, and the referents are either things or actions selected for use in causal inquiry. The chapter continues to be a work of empirical explication, though what is now being explicated is rather novel for audience research using survey designs.

My claim is that observing these agents successfully, both in their existence and in their actions, requires no change in levels of analysis (Chaffee, 1980, 1987; Nass & Reeves, 1991; Price & Ritchie, 1991; Reeves, 1989), no lengthy theorizing about the media in society, social reality, or social constructions of reality (see, e.g., Adoni & Mane, 1984; Altschull, 1983; Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Bennett, 1982; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1976; 1982; Gerbner, 1958a; Levi & Windahl, 1986; McQuail, 1969, 1987; Shoemaker, 1987; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991; Westley & McLean,

1957; and Wright, 1959), and no compromises against contemporary interpretive and measurement procedures accepted as proper in scientific conceptualization. Simple claims about the existence and actions of mass communicators will be made and tailored for audience research.

After having spent some time reading the effects research literature, I am concerned that certain epistemological habits may stand between this chapter's offerings and their reception by trained researchers. In the paragraphs to follow I wish to work preemptively and suggest that what follows is a discussion of empirically existing objects that can indeed be incorporated into systematic audience research without bending traditional rules of science.

Internalization

From The Lifespace to the Social

To see mass communicators effectively for audience research, we must proceed with knowledge of what audience observation will later entail *literally in mind*.

We have spent some time considering how audience research observes lifespaces in previous chapters. There is no need to throw away what we have learned now. Keeping that knowledge requires 1) that we recall, at least generally, what we must later work with in the lifespace, particularly commodity relations, and 2) that we remain aware of these meanings as we move beyond the lifespace to places where mass communicators exist and act.

We proceed much like the early message discrimination researchers discussed in chapter 4. In this case we begin by internalizing knowledge of how money articulates with the total temporal flows of symbols that reach virtually everyone every day.

We then take this internalized knowledge to places where individuals work in formal organizations, or, at least in this chapter, to our reading of accounts of those places

published by others. There are, of course, many activities to observe in these places, but I use commodity relations to argue that some activities are more salient than others. Organizational action related to the gathering of information about audience desire receives particularly close attention.

I suspect that some of my claims about organizational learning and action will be controversial, and, with further research, might be proven wrong. Nevertheless I believe the claims themselves are properly made, as I use the same theoretical procedure accepted as standard by generations of campaign researchers. That procedure, I argue, is nothing more than the observing of phenomena in one place, memorizing their relevant features, moving to another place, and then observing a second set of phenomena in light of what has been memorized.

We memorize the names and empirical forms of three pools of aggregate individual time from chapter 8, and now we ask 1) if there are recognizable agents that stand at the producing end of these pools, and 2) what it is that they do that may be attributed to the relations that bind them to their audiences.

From the Social Back to The Lifespace

If one recognizes the simple act of internalization that allows one to move from campaign agents to the lifespace, one should have little trouble accepting another move in reverse direction. After defining mass communicators in this chapter, we will once more internalize knowledge and carry it back to the lifespace in chapter 10. In doing so we will have socially derived causes to attach to individual time and to associate with effects in chapter 10.

The need to return to the lifespace forces me to leave many broader social things and relations behind. What I describe is much smaller than Gerbner's culture industry

(1958a) or the set of inter-related systems offered by media sociologists (e.g., Adoni & Mane, 1984; Ball-Rokeach, 1985; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1976, 1982). In return, however, the social things I define are less obscure and their relations to their audiences more carefully laid out than the corresponding social things and relations found in much media sociology.

I see mass communication as a set of simple relationships between mass communicators and audiences. After initially working on the question of who mass communicators were, I found that mine was like a symbolic interactionist approach (Mead, 1934) wherein agents were defined through their actions with others. There is some difficulty in applying this perspective to dyads when one member is a supra-individual entity but, perhaps surprisingly, not too much.

Writing during the Great Depression, Arnold (1937) showed how easy it was to speak of the actions of corporate entities defined by law, and indeed how necessary it was to be able to do so. When speaking of corporate entities some mystery remains despite the tangible character of action in relation to charters and statute law, but no more mystery than there is when dealing with individual subjectivity. I suspect one may find corporate entities even more consistent and predictable in their being and action than biological individuals, at least within the mass communication process.

Just how easy they will prove to be to observe and use in audience research, of course, remains to be seen, whether as outlined in this chapter or in such future research as this chapter helps bring about. For now we consider mass communicators to be supra-individual agents that interact daily with vast numbers of individuals.

This chapter's conceptual maneuvers are roughly similar in their overall simplicity to those found in standard audience research. There has been some relational

thinking in audience research in the past, though not as much as there has been in interpersonal communication (see, e.g., Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967; Bateson, 1972). What relational considerations we have in mass communication have tended to be spatially limited. Coorientational or two-step flow models of the mass communication process never grasped more than the interpersonal networks that surrounded individuals actually targeted for effects research (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Chaffee & McLeod, 1968). I work with something quite similar in form to a coorientation model. I just replace the person next to another person on a sofa or across the clothesline in the backyard with a social agent whose existence and actions originate farther down the road.

The design is a blend of relational and causal thinking not unlike that carried out daily by biologists or clinicians or uses and effects researchers (see Levi & Windahl, 1986; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). The two acts of internalization required by commodity relations are simple moves from one location to another within a relational whole that can't be seen of a piece in one place.

Measurement

Generally speaking, empiricist theory has been regarded as overly simple, especially by critical media sociologists (e.g. Garnham, 1980b; Slack & Allor, 1983; but see Burgoon, 1992). Against any criterion of pure complexity, I suspect that this chapter, like much audience research, will fall short of critical expectations.

More importantly, the chapter may also be too simple by empiricist tastes. Audience research may seem simple if one looks only at the empirical meanings of its concepts (see Chaffee, 1991), but it is an exceedingly complex endeavor to learn to do by oneself, primarily because of the high degree of sophistication required to manipulate data in multivariate models. The aura of quantitative sophistication that surrounds most audience

research is missing in this chapter, primarily because of the categorical status of the mass communicators with which the chapter works.

Since quantitative complexity might be confused with scientific practice, I must return for a moment to the question of how numbers are habitually applied to objects in audience research (see also chapter 1). My argument is that something can be both scientific and simple as long as that simplicity is empirically warranted.

There is no mass communicating 'thing' outside the lifespace as tangible as an individual or the individual's living room and television set. Even with such social things as one can reasonably construct, there is little accumulated knowledge of how to incorporate them into datasets representing multiple contacts with individual people and their media devices. From the point of view of audience research, there is even doubt that these social things are something other than theoretical gestures to be tolerated for a while (e.g., as in Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

Doubt about the existential status of supra-individual objects is certainly warranted, as one cannot literally see them. But I argue that the social is merely a realm combining the observable with unobservable, and that, procedurally and empirically speaking, it is at least on a par with cognitive phenomena. Social objects can easily be created, but surveys might not be involved in their creation.

Recall how variables are often created with surveys. High measurement levels have been a general goal, and they have been obtained in one of two ways. One, prior to observation one may prepare an interval space, as when a political ideology variable is given values from, say, one (e.g., for conservatism) to ten (for liberalism) (McLeod & Kosicki, 1986). Even before observation, the space between one and ten is there on the surface of the questionnaire,

suggesting an empirical referent that also exists in that form, so that one can speak of an political ideology *variable* immediately.

Variation at high measurement levels can also happen after observation, as when one recasts categorical variables (say biological gender) as proportions. After 500 or so lifespaces contacts the researcher can work with subgroup proportions of even dichotomous categorical variables at virtually ratio measurement levels in tabular analysis or logistic regression (e.g, Fox, 1984). Observing 500 lifespaces brings aggregation. Aggregation brings variation and variation a sense that one is doing science.

For many who are trained in observing audiences systematically, prior creation of variable forms incorporating high measurement levels or later variable constructions with aggregate data may have become synonymous with empirical inquiry, in part, perhaps, because many phenomena survey research deals with cannot be seen directly (like political ideology) or do not vary at high levels until after data have been collected (like biological gender). Either way, variables 'happen' in research designs that include survey questions and repeated acts of observation. It is thus understandable that many audience researchers will require that concepts be traceable to interally scaled spaces or to repeated observations before they will recognize something as empirical in a scientific sense. Understandable, but not acceptable.

It is important to stress at the outset that what this chapter means by 'mass communicators' are *empirical phenomena*, even though they may not handled in the same way that one gathers or handles audience data. Media firms and agencies and institutions are not directly interviewed. Few of right mind can interview a TV set, but it is also the case that no one can talk to CBS directly. Everyone talks to a CBS employ at one level or another within the corporate

hierarchy, or looks directly at actions of small groups, or else looks at company or industry records. Depending on the type of data one needs to support one's theoretical definition of a media agent, data collected by interviewing live people may not be relevant.

In this chapter, survey activity is not needed to construct a mass communicator variable at its appropriate measurement level. The theoretically relevant measurement level for mass communicators in this chapter is *nominal*, as that is what is required if one really does internalize knowledge of the entities created in chapter 8 while making a controlled excursion into the social-institutional domain. We are looking for non-commodified, first- and second-order mass communicators--singular, categorical social entities that can stand behind the corresponding pools of time we create later with surveys.

There is nothing new here, in fact it is only a tenacious embrace of old practices as we move briefly into a more spatially extended social realm. When one works with simple exposure to television, for example, 'television' normally remains a nominal category. It only takes on ratio-like measurement features when combined with individual time or one or more dimensions of individual cognition (see Salomon & Cohen, 1978; and chapters 5, 6, and 7). All this chapter does on measurement grounds is replace 'television,' 'newspaper,' and other elements from the nominal typologies encountered before (see especially chapter 5) with a smaller taxonomy of more precisely defined mass communicators. Higher measurement levels will become available in chapter 10, just as they have always been for audience research, when we move back to the lifespace and attach these categorical entities to a more plastic dimension of individual time.

Since mass communicators are defined as ideal-typical categories, criteria other than those associated

with the study of the behavior of covariate entities (Zeller & Carmines, 1980) should be used to evaluate them as scientific concepts. Categorical mass communicators must be found to be the same entity (and to act in the same specified ways) wherever we find them engaged with individuals at whatever time of day. These assertions could ultimately be proven wrong with institutional case studies or repeated observations of organizations. Such evaluation would constitute a program of research opened up by commodity relations, but it will not be taken up in this study for reasons of scope. What such studies should confirm or disconfirm would be the *stability* of organizational existence as specified (see Allen, 1981; Allen & Taylor, 1985),¹ and the *theoretical relevance* of actions selected for scrutiny versus actions left behind.

In the meantime, however, the point is that the entities offered in this chapter are asserted to empirically exist; their nominal measurement level and the lack of discussion of survey-related research activity should not prevent one from considering them appropriate for scientific analysis. I do not create mass communicators idiosyncratically or by statistical technique. I merely try to see what is already there, develop means to observe this reality more carefully, and prepare it for audience research. What is there, like a newspaper or a television set, is not necessarily interviewed.

What Are Mass Communicators?

Representations

In previous chapters I have found myself using the terms 'mass communicator' and 'mass communicating agent' interchangeably with references to social agency and 'the social.' At minimum this means that I am constructing an object that is not too tangible. The looseness in terminology also suggests that it--whatever it is--has a different appearance when viewed from different angles. The

potential variability in meaning of these terms suggests a need to introduce limiting assumptions at the outset. Knowledge of the lifespace gives them.

The empirical range of the commodity relations variable--the 24 hours available to every member of the population--forces us to consider all possible mass communicating firms, public and private, using all conceivable distribution technologies. At least in this initial venture, deference to this independent variable domain suggests that conceptual room be made for all empirical organizations involved in the production and distribution of temporal streams of content.

I acquire this room by positing three ideal typical mass communicators as shown in Figure 9.1. They are initially defined by the lines representating relations they have with audiences. In deference to these relations, I have called them, simply:

**non-commodified mass communicators,
first-order mass communicators, and
second-order mass communicators.**

Lines in the Figure move back in time and to the left. This indicates two things. One, for audience research the entities will be teased out of institutional reality with lifespace knowledge in mind. We are not after individual book publishers or authors or commercial television networks or news anchors but first- and second-order mass communicators. Two, with these mass communicators defined, the multiplicity of lines moving forward indicates that these agents have multiple mechanical venues to distribute their temporal content streams.

If one did media institutional research, one would not likely go through the trouble of designing and conducting a survey of individual audience members. Without

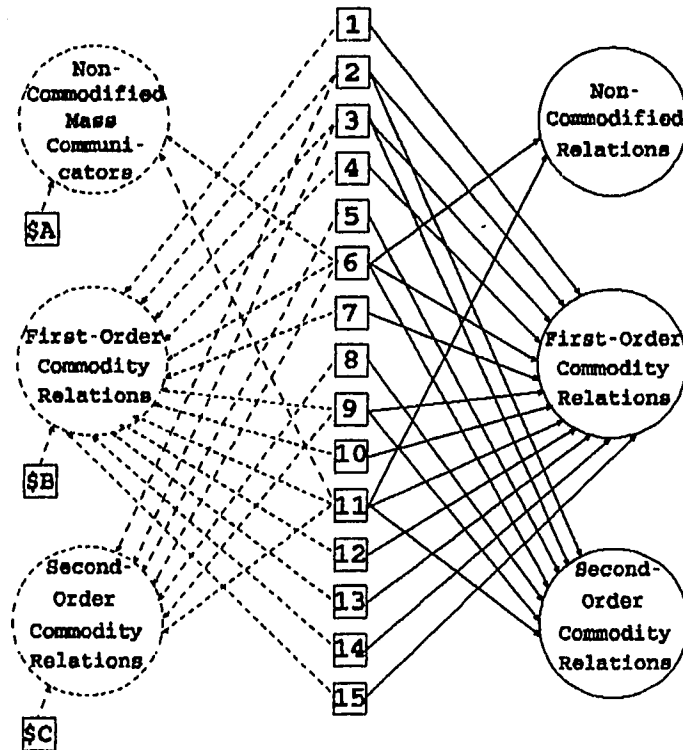


Figure 9.1. Commodity Relations and Mass Communicators

the benefit of chapter 8's indicators, however, the institutional scholar could still construct and observe these same ideal-typical mass communicators. I will indicate how, as in so doing I am also arguing that the social entities depicted in Figure 9.1 could be externally validated.

To each mass communicator I have attached an indicator according to the following sources of revenues:

non-commodified mass communicators: (**\$A**),
first-order mass communicators: (**\$B**),
second-order mass communicators: (**\$C**).

These indicators stand for the different sources of revenues an institutional researcher might use when studying media firms and agencies. These sources are:

(**\$A**): the state,
(**\$B**): purchasers of symbols, and
(**\$C**): purchasers of aggregate individual time.

With this design an institutional researcher could directly observe media firms and agencies and reorganize them according to the major sources of their revenue.

If, for example, they observed a metropolitan daily newspaper firm, they could recast the empirical organization as one part first-order mass communicator and four parts second-order mass communicator, in much the same way that we parsed individual time with newspapers in chapter 8. The only difference--and the reason the Figure uses separate indicators here--is that the institutional researcher would be parsing quantities of money, while audience researchers, using chapter 8's recommendation, would be parsing quantities of individual time.

With indicators of financial sources we could straightforwardly establish the *existence* of theoretically relevant mass communicators for institutional research. Audience research can construct those same entities with the lifespace indicators introduced in chapter 8. Neither observational route, however, lets us know what roles these entities play in the mass communication process. The balance of the chapter pursues these roles, but before beginning this work I wish to comment on one more representational feature of Figure 9.1.

Even though I am depicting a real object, everything standing to the left of the fifteen empirical indicators remain dashed. Why? To help indicate that observations of these entities need not be made when audience research is privileged as the observational position, as is the case in this study. Were one to do institutional research from a commodity relations perspective, one could easily make the left side of Figure 9.1 solid and the right side dashed. Since audience research has come first, it has defined the position from which observation and internalization begin. Order of observation, location of observation and expediency make one side or the other of the Figure solid or dashed, and not any inherent division between the theoretical and the empirical, the social or the psychological, or the speculative and the scientific. Mass communicators are dashed simply because, in this study, we look for them from an audience research starting point.

Empirical Referents

While lifespan considerations force (or allow) me to formally posit three ideal-typical entities, what does the empirical world give us? Generally, formal organizations, not individual persons, are responsible for the symbolic flows that are inserted into the daily pools of individual time taken up in mass communication. In the United States, most of these formal organizations are private publishing, program production, broadcasting, and advertising firms.

Since the experimental manipulations of Hovland and his associates (1949, 1953), it has been popular to think of mass communicators as individual people (see also Lichter, Rothman, & Lichter, 1986). Mass communicators *may* be individual people, but typically they are not. A simple test could stand ready to help us decide in any empirical instance.

If the death or retirement of any individual resulted in blank paper space or empty broadcast time, we could conclude that the individual was a mass communicator. One might strongly miss an individual who ceased communicating, and on that basis make a claim that the individual was a mass communicator. This might especially hold for some seasoned journalists, entertainers, or religious personalities. Nevertheless, absence of blank time or space would suggest that the empirical mass communicator was and continued to be something more or other than such persons, and it is this other object that we need to apprehend. Organizations, and not individual people, likely stand empirically closer to the ideal mass communicator constructs depicted in Figure 9.1.

Organizations may be as small as a single-proprietorship book publisher operating out of her basement or as large as a corporate newspaper chain, national broadcast network, or national state broadcasting agency. In this study's scheme, their size matters less than the sources of their revenues. Using a parsing strategy for money analogous to chapter 8's strategy for individual time with media devices, one could determine the degree to which any empirical organization was a non-commodified, first-or second-order mass communicator.²

Audience researchers will not necessarily sample and interview empirical mass communicating firms or related individuals standing behind the ideal types on the left. Should they wish to do so, they will likely have to selectively observe pure instances where possible--firms whose revenues are entirely attributable to one of the three sources outlined above.

Beyond this, they will ultimately have to look at single organizations that derive their incomes from multiple sources. With metropolitan dailies, for example, they might use the idea that roughly 80 percent of an average newspaper

firm's revenues are derived from advertising to suggest that what they observe are activities dominated by, but not purely representative of, the logic of second-order relations.³

Given the mixed sources of revenue among many existing empirical organizations, theory and observation will have to play a important role, especially when we try to see whether and how a certain relation predominates. The problem is similar in kind, I believe, to what a biographer would encounter when, departing from ideal-typical understandings of major religious orientations, he observed an individual whose mother was Catholic and whose father was Jewish. My sense--one that remains to be evaluated in institutional research--is that the size and enduring status of contemporary empirical organizations (and the importance of financial constraints on these organizations) would make our task somewhat easier than the biographer's.

I proceed by assuming that one can observe actions attributable to non-commodified, first- and second-order mass communicators even when empirical reality gives us organizations comprised of mixed relations. I will suggest what is theoretically relevant to observe for each relation, and what therefore might be internalized for a return to the lifespaces in chapter 10. Most of what I will lay out is, at present, sparsely supported by research, and should therefore be read with caution.

The ideal-typical casting of mass communicators according to commodity relations can tell us at the outset what form what mass communicators take in a very general sense: They are what stands on the social side of large pools of daily cyclical time. They are there, just as an individual's mind is there behind her smile, but what are they?

What Do Mass Communicators Do?

When one doesn't know who a person is one may, if

one can, watch what they do--how they work, what they wear, what they eat, what they say. People do a lot, so that general recourse to a notion of action is only a start when one interrogates a person in this way. One must observe actions selectively, and in those selections one introduces criteria distinguishing relevant from irrelevant actions.

Complex exposure observed individual actions on both temporal sides of a cognitive construct. The location of these actions immediately prior to or after the targeted cognitive phenomenon helped researchers determine which observable actions would and would not be relevant to inquiry. Only selected prior actions were relevant; they usually involved a piece or two of mediated contents. I see nothing wrong with the process of contextualization or with many of the pieces of mediated content complex exposure incorporated into its general design.

The problem I do see is this: the selections normally made with complex exposure result in a system with only one potential agent (chapter 5). The cognitive approach tries to make do with one when there are at least two and, as will be argued in chapter 10, likely three agent classes to take into account in observing mass communication processes and effects. Those who work with complex exposure do their best to surround their cognitive agent-objects with observable antecedents and consequents; the problem, however, is that these surrounding objects are treated as if they were dead.

Since the mass communicating entities I have constructed cannot themselves be seen, I am also forced to refer to antecedent and consequent actions much as the cognitive scholar. Nevertheless, contextualizing mass communicating entities with observable activity for causal inquiry is quite different from its cognitive counterpart, and the result may be less problematic.

In defining mass communicators in terms of their

actions we have something that was simply not available to those who worked with complex exposure. We have another agent--the aggregate audience--which we can use to delimit and focus our initial recourse to a general category of action (Bauer, 1964). We can define mass communicators substantively in terms of the actions they take in relation to their audiences. And, at least for now, we may ignore other actions.

First-Order Mass Communicators

First-order mass communicators produce symbols with prices attached for mass distribution. Only authors, editors, and support staff (and equivalent occupations associated with other media devices) can be said to do this literally. The action meanings I will impute to first-order mass communicators will be based, as best I can, on observations one could make with respect to such individuals.

Since these individuals generally work within larger organizational contexts, and since they may do many things other than speak or write for distribution, we need some means to delimit classes of activity across individuals which we can use to give stable meaning to the whole temporal stream of priced contents the audience researcher will work with.

Past research on mass communication professionals has often focused on internalized dispositions and background features of samples of individual journalists and broadcasters (Efron, 1971; Ettema & Whitney, 1987; Gans, 1979; Lichter, Rothman, & Lichter, 1986; Tunstall, 1971, 1991). We can learn something about the character of first-order mass communicators by observing these media professionals, but we would soon encounter difficulties.

Many persons work for firms that derive their incomes from more than one source. Print journalists, for example, will work for firms that usually derive between

fifty and eighty percent of their revenues from advertisers. Were we to interrogate such people straight away, we would have great difficulty disentangling the part of their professional dispositions that might be attributable to first- or second-order relations.

To move forward on task of characterizing first-order mass communicators I literally move forward--to the relationship that binds lay and professional individuals in first-order relations. Watching symbols flow outward and into lifespaces, all that really distinguishes the first-order relationship from its non-commodified and second-order counterparts is its possession of a price. That is, contents of all sorts are conveyed by various media devices to the lifespace, but only a part of those flows is priced and, therefore, intended for purchase by a consumer of symbols. What may be inferred about professional individuals under the influence of this relation?

First, we know that an abstract value of one's symbolic offerings can be measured--in money. The higher the price, the more value? Not quite. More money comes into the first-order agency as a result of two things: price of the symbolic good and number of copies purchased. In the context of mass communication, which I have assumed to exist whenever a survey seemed the appropriate means to 'follow after' a mass communicator's audience (see chapter 1), I set aside unique, expensive symbolic objects and small, specialist markets in order to concentrate on moderately priced symbolic products with reasonably large diffusion. I am not interested in theorizing about price levels, but in observing phenomena associated with reasonably large flows of priced symbols.

What symbols are useful to relatively large numbers of people? We do not know. Standing beyond the concerns of any particular first-order agency, we can only note that utility is signaled when money actually flows back

into the firm from end users. We might concentrate on individual firms within the book, film, and music industries to see what its employees may have learned was useful to particular audiences, but I think we can still interrogate the relationship for more focused, general guidance.

If a firm is involved in the production of priced contents for distribution to reasonably large numbers of people, then we can expect that somewhere within these firms we will find observable activities whose purpose is to find out what people want in their future symbolic fare. End users in this relation, after all, are being asked to part with money in exchange for symbols. That money could be used for other things, so to persuade them to purchase their specific symbolic offerings, these firms need to find out the symbolic fare that people might want to buy.

Once we work with commodity relations we are really working with relations between selves and others. When dealing specifically with mass communicators and their audiences, we can find evidence pertinent to this relationship not only from that which flows from the former to the latter--in this instance, priced contents--but also from that which flows back to the agency: namely, feedback (Lewis, 1966; Singer, 1973; Westley & McLean, 1957).

Noting that production, distribution and transaction costs might encourage organizations to learn *before* sales figures come in, I ask whether first-order firms try to anticipate what symbols to produce and distribute to audiences. If they do, how better could they anticipate than by somehow contacting that audience? Put another way, how would a firm that remained ignorant of the needs of its audience manage to survive as an economic entity, especially given the diversity of symbolic offerings available in daily temporal streams (Hirsch, 1985)? We need research, but by my reading of the financial logic of first-order relations, we are reasonably safe in assuming that

symbolic feedback from audiences would be useful to first-order mass communicators.

Empirically, however, would we see first-order mass communicators soliciting feedback from their audiences? This is a difficult question to address with available literature. We might find, for example, that many firms operate without feedback. While we could infer that such firms would not survive long term, they might not actually cease functioning during the time we would observe them.

A bigger problem we face is that most of the sparse literature on audience feedback pertains to second-order firms. The bulk of it is market research (but see Lewis, 1966; Singer, 1973; and especially Turow, 1977). What follows does not definitively support the claim that first-order mass communicators categorically solicit symbolic feedback from their audiences, but it suffices to let us work with the idea in exploratory fashion.

There is interesting evidence on feedback within an almost pure first-order relationship with relatively large audiences in Radway's (1984) work on the romance novel industry. Though feedback was by no means her central focus, she described in some detail how an aspiring writer of romance novels would receive direction from romance novel firms in the form of detailed authorial guidelines. Though I likely translate Radway's findings to some degree, I believe we can see these guidelines as accumulated knowledge of what the first-order firm's audience expected in its future romance stories.

Though academic journals tend toward more limited diffusion than what we normally accept as mass communication, they also operate within first-order relations, and the reader may take a moment to look at format requirements contained in journals and, further, at guidance obtained from blind readers of manuscripts they may have submitted themselves. One does not function well,

either as an author or as an editor of a journal, if one does not takes steps to find out what a targeted discourse community would wish to read.

Prior to the design of this study, but motivated by interest in who first-order mass communicators might be and what they might do, I investigated the activities of a 1930s religious radio broadcaster, Father Charles Coughlin (Nienhaus, 1990). I chose an historical object in part because there are few examples of a reasonably 'mass' first-order relationship for which data are available, in large part because mass communication in the United States is more firmly organized by second-order relations.

In that study I found that Coughlin's broadcast organization's feedback activity was highly developed. Most of his organization (which numbered over one hundred employees at its peak) was engaged in the processing of incoming mail and in producing mailable responses to all who wrote. From the 1920s on Father Coughlin encouraged radio listeners to write--and they did. Bennett estimates that the Coughlin organization received, on average, 80,000 letters a week from the broadcast audience (1973; Franklin Roosevelt averaged 4,000 per week--ten times more than any previous president. See Sussman, 1963). Newspaper accounts of his early radio sermons indicate that he incorporated letters into his broadcasts directly.

The letters gave Coughlin questions for which he would construct pastoral responses. Since the questions originated in the audience, Coughlin could expect that his own responses would provide something of value in return. No single response would address the needs of all audience members, but a few each week seemed to suffice to encourage sizable voluntary contributions of money from numerous audience members.

Before the collapse of the economy in the late 1920s, the letters Coughlin received dealt with matters of

personal, family and religious life, and Coughlin's broadcasts responded directly and uncontroversially. Members of Detroit's social elite associated themselves with him, and he was even known as a promoter of tolerance among the diverse ethnic and religious groups that made up industrial Detroit at that time (Nienhaus, 1991).

After the collapse, the letter writers surrounded these same matters with references to general fear for their economic well-being and again, Coughlin's broadcasts responded directly and more quickly to these fears than did other media organizations at that time, primarily because his organization was in a position to bypass the confident, misleading articles contained in newspapers and magazines (Angly, 1931). He read the magnitude and depth of the economic problem from listener letters--the same listeners who paid for his words each week.

While others have characterized Coughlin's activities as mysteriously malevolent and demagogic, I think his activities are relatively easy to understand. Throughout his broadcast career he was concerned to provide symbols of value to his audiences. Hagiographic sketches of the virgin Mary may have been valuable to them in the 1920s, but when audiences began to be faced with loss of job, home and security, they asked for, and received, information on the economy, the state, money, and social justice. Coughlin changed topics--and became controversial--because of the *stability* of the relationship he had with his radio audience. That was a first-order relationship, perhaps the most developed example we have for the U.S. broadcast media.

In the romance novel industry there are perhaps hundreds of individual writers producing manuscripts for a handful of publishing firms. Knowledge of audience desire might be located at these firms rather than in the minds of the individual authors--hence the detailed guidelines Radway encountered. In Coughlin's case, and perhaps for other

religious broadcasters, the person producing the stream of symbols was located closer to the feedback bureaucracy than is likely the case in the romance industry. Studies of feedback in the movie, music, and journal and newsletter industries might reveal other variations, but rather than await an accumulation of case studies it might be more useful now to bring this line of inquiry to a close more speculatively.

Acknowledging that we need much more study of pure first-order firms and contemporary religious broadcasting organizations, I propose that somewhere within the first-order mass communicating organization we will normally find a developed feedback function involving letters, phone-calls, blind readers, personal contact, formal published reviews, formal format specifications or informal stress on style or genre--something to help ensure that what is produced will correspond to what purchasers desire. What we would look for in each instance is how the firm tries to ensure that its audience will see something of value in the contents the firm offers, in light of the simple fact that the firm offers its contents at a price.

Without an accumulation of knowledge relating to feedback in first-order relations, we have little to work with in making even speculative characterizations beyond an abstract notion of utility signalled by prices. Nonetheless, to lay out an initial position for future research and criticism, let me try to break this abstraction down into more direct communicative terms. The ideal-typical first-order mass communicator may be provisionally characterized as:

- 1) an agent that serves a *therapeutic* function for its audience by soliciting and directly responding to symbolic feedback, and
- 2) an agent of *development*, adding something to

content that is not directly traceable to past feedback.

One portion of the overall first-order symbolic flow will likely reflect the static, cognitive situation of the first-order agent's particular audience. That is to say that insofar as first-order firms take symbolic audience feedback into account, that account will be reflected in the selection of topics and starting points structuring the contents offered for sale back to audiences. People will be given back the symbols contained in their missives to a first-order agency in a mirror-like fashion I call 'therapy.'

There will also be other information, attributable to enduring mass communicator/audience relations, to historical knowledge some first-order firms may hold and convey to new cohorts of audiences, or to an agency's own risk-taking with respect their sense of what their audiences must later do in their lives, that will result in contents not purely reducible to mirror-like conceptions of audience desire.

Here I work with the following idea: In giving feedback to mass communicating agencies, people are already generally aware of the symbols that they have, the meanings that they can make with them, and the decisions and actions they can take on the basis of their symbolic possessions. If they seek only affirmation from another of what they already cognitively possess, one could read contents in ongoing first-order relations for literal indication of audience desire. But when individuals pay money for the symbolic products crafted by another party, I believe that after an initial acknowledgement of who they are, individuals might be found expecting something more--something in symbolic form, but something more than a simple reflection of who they are nonetheless. People encounter novel settings in

their lives for which their available stock of symbols may no longer be adequate (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1976, 1982).

Freud's positing of a hidden subconscious architecture in the clinical subject indicated a sensitivity to the limits of pure therapeutic feedback in face-to-face first-order settings--the mysterious subjectivity made the subject interesting for the clinician, who, over time, could reconstruct a portrait of the individual and then, through trial and error, give her the 'missing pieces' of her identity. I am merely suggesting that the idea might also apply in mass first-order settings.⁴ Lemert touches upon a similar function with the concept of 'mobilizing information' (1989). In my formulation we should expect such information to flow within first-order relations, not in pieces of content here or there but as a developmental force in time.

In summary, then, provision of priced information suggests that the first-order mass communicator may stand in a therapeutic or developmental relationship with its audience. To the degree that we could identify and observe enduring first-order firms, I suggest that we would find high levels of solicitation of and response to audience feedback. I cannot predict specific levels of feedback activity, nor would I try to parse a stream of contents into its therapeutic and developmental components (unless I were the intended audience). Instead, I propose that the total temporal stream of first-order contents be graced with these functional names, and that empirical research supporting the existence of these functions should rely not on content analysis but on finding out how first-order firms come to learn of audience desire.

One might move with this relationship into more extended institutional social realms, but in this chapter I am only interested in preparing a stable meaning for a single category standing for a particular social actor--the

first-order mass communicator. For that specific purpose, I suggest that two functions might be collapsed into one category, so that we may carry forward the simple idea that this mass communicator be conceived as a *provider of useful information*. In the lifespan, this idea will be reflected in potentially higher degrees of involvement or information gain on the part of individuals, regardless of the media device the first-order mass communicator uses to make contact with individuals.

I suspect that research on the specific actions of any two first-order mass communicating firms would reveal an uncomfortable amount of internal variation, both with regard to the forms and magnitude of their feedback activity and the degree to which their contents could be shown to be a simple recycling of received symbols versus the adding of something new. My assertion that utility may suffice as general characterizing terms rests less on confidence in the discussion just presented than on the idea that this is only one among three categories commodity relations creates. While it is difficult to pin down essential meanings--or specific dependent-variable levels--to associate with the ideal-typical first-order mass communicator, it is not so difficult to posit an essential *difference* between first- and second-order mass communicators with respect to utility and, later, to a range of outcomes that might become significant when aggregated.

Even though this study moves quickly on to other relations, I think that research on actual instances of first-order mass communicators and associated feedback activities would be quite interesting in itself. Given the large numbers of people that the technology of mass communication can make available, it is not immediately clear, at least to me, how individuals working within this relationship would come to know who their audience was and what it wanted. We need to find out how organizations learn

to solicit, listen to, sort out, aggregate and then respond to possibly massive inflows of symbols. While the motivation might be there, success is not at all inscribed in the relation. It rather seems that success would be on the order of a miracle if it actually occurred and persisted when a mass communicator regularly presented its offerings to large numbers of people. At any rate, it seems that normative marketplace theorists would have a stake in such investigations.

Second-Order Mass Communicators

In terms of quantity of aggregated daily cyclical time, second-order relations would encompass the largest and most important relationship between mass communicators and audiences in the United States. As an ideal-typical entity, the second-order mass communicator is both massive and complex. To deal with this complexity and to work toward a general characterization that can later be used in audience research, I will begin by breaking the total temporal flow into three component parts, each named by a total content category (Troidahl, 1965) but standing for different sets of media organizational activity (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991) rather than content itself. I will discuss news, entertainment, and advertising in second-order relations, and bring my tentative characterizations together at the end for internalization and later use as a unified meaning for causal inference in the lifespace.

News

In a brief study published in 1977, media sociologist Joseph Turow gave an account of how a network-affiliated local radio station responded to 100 letters received at the station⁵ from listeners during a two-month period. Turow's aim was to characterize this station's feedback activities. He found that the station possessed a routinized "performance program" intended to "...respond to all letter writers without alienating any of them..." while

at the same time leaving standard station programming and related practices intact.

He observed that only two non-secretarial employees read these letters, so that majority of the station's broadcast personalities remained oblivious to their contents. The station's editorial director, a non-broadcaster, composed most of the station's written responses in the station manager's name, and the station manager would sign them. Turow added that while interviewing the station manager a pile of composed responses was laid on his desk, which he signed during the interview without reading.

Turning to the position of the editorial director, Turow found empirical evidence of how this station's accumulated knowledge of its relationship with its audience had become crystalized in a performance program. The editorial director had a loose-leaf folder containing form responses to audience letters. She would match letters with the most appropriate form response, add a personalized salutation, and then produce a new letter for the station manager's signature. One can see why the manager did not deem it necessary to read the letters he was signing--he more than likely already knew what they contained.

Turow's observations of this station's feedback activities resulted in a picture of a static process. The station personnel did not appear to be aware of what their listeners were saying about their station's broadcast activities in these letters, much less capable of taking their verbal feedback into account for the production of future symbolic offerings. Did the people like its weather reports? Its sports coverage? The copy its news staff read off the wires? Its personalities? Its lifestyle features? Its ads? Characterizing this particular radio station on the basis of positive or negative audience evaluations would miss the point. A better characterization of this station

would be that, based on its in-place performance program, the employees of the station did not know what people thought about their symbolic offerings at all.

Turow called for more case studies of the type he carried out, suggesting that a collection of studies would square with the idea that mass communication was "a complex interaction between senders and receivers who have different--sometimes incompatible--goals" (1977). It is unfortunate that his call for more studies along these lines has not been heeded. He himself regarded his findings for this radio station as "somewhat unusual," but he did not indicate why.

At about this time Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur had introduced their first essay on media dependency theory (1976). Media sociologists like Turow, they had used general historical sociological categories of increasing differentiation, complexity, and individual distance from centers of political and economic power to define the individual's position within society as one marked by an increasing need for information--presumably information to use to adapt to complexity, to find and function within a differentiated niche, and to keep track of distant social powers.

From their straightforward depiction of contemporary society as a whole, Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur imputed an information function to the media in general (see also Ball-Rokeach, 1985). The imputation likely seemed and still seems innocuous to those who take a broad sociological view *and then* consider the mass communication process. "Mass communication is meaning production" (Jensen, 1987). Mass communication has an irreducible information function (Habermas, 1983).

A notion of the media's general information function is both sensible and enduring. It should not surprise in retrospect that Turow would have been taken

aback by his findings. He could have passed them off to the chance selection of a deviant radio station; still, he must have found it difficult to avoid their implications for the received sociological view: On the basis of his observations, one had to conclude the station's personnel had virtually no idea of what information to give its audience. How, then could this station be regarded as part of a media system that performed a necessary information function?

Turow's work throws open the question of second-order relations quite well. This was a commercial radio station, meaning that all of its income was derived as a matter of course from the advertising agencies who purchased whatever audience time it could manage to aggregate and deliver. The ignoring of individually originated missives makes initial sense in this context: If the firm one works for sells audience time or attention in aggregation, each individual letter would confront the firm with a series of questions that never go away: How representative is this person of the aggregate? How representative of the aggregate the advertisers are interested in reaching? These questions stand *before* those that would arise if one read specific symbolic missives--questions of likes dislikes, intermediate judgements, wants, and so on--with the intention of acting upon them.

Literally larger questions stand between the recipients of individual acts of symbolic feedback and the writers and callers who send them. The reason these questions stand where they do, and the reason that they might be involved in the production of performance programs such as the one Turow uncovered, is that a third party stands in the second-order relation, forcing those who produce the non-advertising components of the daily symbol stream to think not of individuals but of aggregate numbers.

"Forcing" may be too strong a term. What we should

normally expect to see in contemporary second-order firms is an easy habituation to a reality that has existed for almost seventy years, a reality that nudges the second-order employee away from specific meanings received and toward questions of aggregation as a matter of course.

Studies less squarely centered on second-order firms and their feedback activities nonetheless suggest that we may be warranted in reaching general conclusions about second-order relations. Pool and Shulman (1959) used the term "fantasies" to describe the audience knowledge possessed by the newspaper reporters they observed. Tannenbaum (1963) reported that the image newspaper reporters held of their reader's working images of mental illness were different from both what the readers themselves had (as could be ascertained by survey) and from the images the journalists themselves personally held. In 1972, Martin, O'Keefe and Nayman found that editors were relatively inaccurate in their assessments of audience priorities, so that a hypothesis of reverse causation within an agenda-setting framework was unlikely. Gans (1979), too, found that the print and broadcast journalists he observed worked with images, rather than knowledge of, their audiences. Gilbert (1986) found that magazine editors worked with an empirically unsupported assumption that visuals had to be simple because complexity would hurt readers' ability to comprehend their meaning. Gunter (1988) reiterated Robinson and Sahin's (1984) findings of serious misconceptions of their audiences by media professionals.

All of the cited studies except Gilbert involve news, and they encompass firms of purely second-order and mixed first- and second-order financial character. Gunter's study comes from Great Britain; the misconceptions he refers to occur might include non-commodified BBC activity or the more purely second-order Independent Broadcasting Authority.

This means that even with this collection of

studies, we could not now be sure whether ignorance of the audience were attributable to the mostly dominant but still impure second-order relations that structure the activities of these news firms.

I think we could make this attribution and leave it open for future research, but even if ignorance were found to hold for news organizations and departments, news is only part of the total second-order flow. There are still gaping holes to account for in the spans of second-order time that reach the aggregation of lifespaces. 'Entertainment' and 'advertising' will be convenience terms for these temporal holes. Either one may reveal quite a different story from the conclusion I will draw here for news.

Those who produce and disseminate news within second-order relations and, evidently, within firms where second-order relations predominate,⁶ likely do not know whom they speak or write to. Individual professionals within this relation may be said to be engaged in para-social interaction with imagined audiences (Horton & Wohl, 1979). The behavior of some mystics excepted, one can perhaps communicate with an inanimate nothing for only so long, so that to function in this relation the newsworker may have to construct an image of another. This other, Gans notes (1979), usually turns out to be a person much like the newsworker's friends and family.

Without a stream of audience letters, calls or some other form of direct contact to confirm the second-order newsworker, (a stream that sometimes happens for news personalities--see Gans, 1977), tangible knowledge of who she communicates to is reduced to a circulation or ratings number, shored up by demographic information provided by a marketing department or ad agency representative--provided such people are on speaking terms with the editorial staff. The rest of her confirmation, her regular sources of

confirmation, must come from elsewhere--self-reflection on a job well done, acknowledgement from an editor, colleague, professional association, or familiar news source.

How might we generally characterize second-order news content streams? With respect to therapy, the ability of an organization to acquire and feed symbols back to an audience in mirror fashion, we might find little evidence that there is any therapeutic value at all to news. No massive letters flow into news organizations begging for horserace political campaign coverage, for stories that merely reflect the criminal status quo, for stories that begin or end with the evidently necessary plea to the lay or sports person to express for the audience how she feels, or for stories that indicate that the powerful are, after all, just persons like parasocial you and me.

The kinds of stories that we see in second-order relations, in other words, are probably not renewed with knowledge of what audiences desire to witness or read. In turn, audiences do not tend to write or call second-order agencies in large numbers--why call or write an organization that is not really speaking to you?

Absence of a therapeutic function, however, does not suffice to describe the flow of news in second-order contents (Why the incessant 'how did you feel...' for example). Some other orienting principle must be involved explaining the rather predictable range of story types and treatments one witnesses in this flow (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). Some media sociologists have explored theories as to the other orienting principles newswriters might have by moving in a more deeply social direction. Something about a media firm's close articulation to centers of economic or political power, this line of inquiry holds, must explain its peculiar ideological character (Altschull, 1983; Bennett, 1988; Cohen & Young, 1973; Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, 1980; Hall, et al., 1973).

I will explore a different path toward a characterization of second-order news, one that stays closer to the actual relationship between audiences and second-order firms. My goal is to produce a characterization of news that will contribute to the overall definition of the second-order temporal stream that reaches the lifespace; that goal, I find, is best accomplished by avoiding recourse to a notion of ideology, as existing models use 1) rather long excursions away from an identifiable media/audience relationship and into the social, and 2) on return, offer often strained readings of selected news flows and not an assessment of force of an overall flow of news using evidence from the lifespace itself.

What, then, can be used to characterize second-order news flows beyond the notion of absence of therapy? Regarding the development function, can it be said that newswriters add a sense of what their audience might need in the future, taking risks that might make their symbolic renderings more useful to their audiences?

I think that such a notion might characterize some newswriters' own sense of what it is that they do. That is, in constructing their stories according to their editors' lead, to available criteria of newsworthiness, or by inflecting their stories with personally held values, or even by striking out to find their own stories once in awhile, some newswriters may claim that they are adding something to the news that would result in useful information despite the absence of initial direction from their audiences.

We can learn useful things from the news, and there is some currency to the idea that within the body of newswriters as a whole there exists a disposition related to ideas of social responsibility--often taught in journalism schools--so that practicing journalists will inflect their efforts with a sense of what the audience might need to know

(despite what their image of its desires tells them) from time to time.

Like poor persuasion, however, recourse to a social responsibility disposition would be risky for a second-order newsworker. Giving an audience what one imagined it might need despite real ignorance of its situation and desire is like receiving a gift from a stranger. Absent tangible feedback from audiences, that is, absent a flow of symbols that would enable the journalist to construct empirical estimates of individual needs and wants, stories inflecting social responsibility or utility are really shots in the dark--wild, inefficient risks, often taken by younger journalists in whom the force of an academically acquired positive disposition might still burn strong. They do not yet know that one cannot effectively move another one does not know, indeed, they may not yet be aware of the ignorance of the audience that comes with the second-order journalist's occupational turf.

A development function does not very well describe news in second-order relations when we consider the feedback news departments receive. If anything, we must once more refer to an absence of this function, a lack of an ability to grasp where the audience is so that it could move it to where it should by some lights be.

We might also consider 'objectivity' in this context (Schudson, 1978). Absent a capacity to engage and move a real audience, the best the journalist can do to serve his second-order organization is to try to withdraw all traces of his possibly strange and irritating agency. The notion that news is not objective is common as journalists cannot erase all traces of agency--the agent is still something more than her body and mind. News simply remains irritating, less notably so, perhaps, when journalists try to be objective and when audiences know no alternative to a second-order news flow, but irritating nonetheless

With these two negative characterizations I have not managed to capture the essential meaning of news flows produced by second-order mass communicators. Absence of therapy? Absence of development? Is news really useless, as the paucity of feedback to news organizations would suggest? Surely there is a more substantial way to characterize this flow. I believe one can do better, but not with available organizational referents to a category of news.

To more fully understand news in second-order relations, we have to look at other parts of the ideal-typical second-order organization, as they may provide us clues to motives that structure the actions of second-order mass communicators and help explain why news is what it is.

Entertainment

Klapper's sweeping condemnation of the practice of using useless contents (1949; see also chapter 7) had commercial radio entertainment fare as its referent, just as Postman's more recent characterization of all television content as amusing was about commercial radio's counterpart, U.S. commercial network television (1985). There is in both works a sense that a clear distinction can be drawn between the useful and the useless, that there is, on the one hand, a flow of the really meaningful and valuable, and on the other a flow of the ridiculous.

When first comparing lifespace categories of first- and second-order relations, I felt I had a better tool than media device names with which to ground sweeping categorizations of the U.S. public sphere's overall symbolic flows. There was the useful, signaled not by my own subjective judgments of meaning or by the mysterious attributes of a device but by the offering for or payment of money for symbols, and then there was the useless, again, signaled not by my subjective evaluations but by the insertion of flows into lifespaces without prices. Furthermore, my initial reading of the feedback literature suggested that I

would not be wrong to think of second-order symbol flows as ungrounded in knowledge of audience desire, much as the absence of money payment would suggested it would be. I still use that dichotomy useful/useless as a short-hand means of characterizing first- and second-order flows in relation to each other, and I will reduce meanings back to these two at the end of the chapter. I think, however, that there is reason to treat this reduction with caution.

First, let me refer to a point made in Herzog's 1941 and 1944 studies of daytime radio serial listeners. Her suggestion, aimed at second-order radio personnel, was that people were, in fact, making use of the useless. The industry later reasserted this observation in a pamphlet to educators in the 1970s (Eleey, Gerbner, & Signorielli, 1972-1973b), and political communication scholars find active learning from second-order entertainment fare in the late 1980s (Swanson, 1989). Thanks to assumptions of individual agency in audience research and, now, to ethnographic audience studies (e.g., Lembo, 1987), the evidence for individual agency is quite compelling: However one might characterize a flow of contents on the basis of the financial context of its flow, that context itself cannot be regarded as mechanistically determining the outcome for any individual at any point in time. People may turn iron into gold. More to the point, this may not come about by merely adding one's own gold.

While people remain active within the mass communication process, this chapter's concern is to establish and characterize a set external agents who *also* act within that process. Much of the activity of second-order mass communicators results in the production of entertainment content and, as Herzog suggested, those involved in the production of this content may be moved to take their audience into account.

Just as there are individuals who make use of the

seemingly useless, there are likely writers and talents who put their hearts and souls--and their often considerable knowledge of historical and daily life--into the production of narratives that are later inserted into second-order streams. Two sources of audience knowledge are implicated here: 1) that borne by individuals whose past concerns for daily life forge an ability to behave prophetically in the present (Weber, 1965), and 2) that which might adhere to story-telling forms.

Second-order temporal flows are massive, and to fill them, second-order agencies have long inserted contents originally intended for exchange in first-order relations. Paddy Chayevsky brought the theater to television, and we watched films made for the cinema on television long before we began to see 'made for tv' films. Radio brought music originally intended for consumption at a price into lifespaces for free; it also battled the recorded music industry over ground-rules for regular insertion into the second-order stream (Barnouw, 1968). To the extent that first-order contents are imported into second-order temporal flows, we can impute to the latter at least a modicum of therapeutic and developmental functions, derived, albeit at one step removed, from first-order relations and feedback.

In noting these historical sources, however, I do not see that second-order flows have been adequately characterized as a result. There is still the question of the "step removed." The importation might still be seen as a residual empirical feature within second-order relations, explained best not by referring to first-order functions but to the striking magnitudes of the twenty-four hour day that broadcasting threw open, much to the terror of station program directors. Given the ear of the masses, Brecht mused in 1930, what would one say (1983)? He was only skimming the surface of the problem: Given those same ears, what would one say for eight, sixteen, and, finally, twenty-four hours,

day after day?

The entertainment industry has undoubtedly developed a series of responses, indeed, the existence of industry itself may be the best response we have (Boorstin, 1964), to the magnitude of the problem of filling up second-order time and print space. Importation of first-order contents was a stop-gap, other strategies have been developed. They are likely spread among numerous production firms, talent and advertising agencies, so I will not chase them here. Nevertheless, somewhere within this proliferation of entertainment agencies we need means to characterize second-order relations' essential contribution to the massive flow. Insofar as we can limit inquiry to those agencies who actually construct entertainment contents for insertion into second-order flows, what can be said about their activity in general?

Looking at the basic financial relationship between actually transmitting second-order agencies and their audiences, one would expect that they would know little about those to whom they direct their offerings. Fiske uses the fact that nine out of ten new television programs fail to argue for individual agency within the mass communication process (1989); I would argue that this same finding could be used as evidence of a general tendency to shoot contents into a void of ignorance of audience desire, while noting that the ability of the industry to withstand a ninety percent failure rate and still make money is hardly the best fact to use to make a case for individual agency within the mass communication process.

Is there, however, a real void of ignorance of audience desire? Yes and no, but let me argue the no. In the first place, and most obviously, much entertainment fare takes the form of narrative: fiction and human interest stories in print, a variety of program types in broadcasting.

Before the rise of second-order firms, and likely⁷ before the rise of first-order firms, the narrative form existed and functioned to capture and convey information across generational time. There is a certain magic and power in narrative forms (Newcomb, 1978; Gerbner, 1989). In terms made accessible by this inquiry, we might say that narratives embody in the present the vision of what had been deemed interesting and useful in the past, so that one cannot characterize narrative flows as feedback-free and, consequently, undevelopmental or untherapeutic. Narratives undoubtedly affirm and move, and when second-order agencies make use of narrative forms something of these functions is inserted into the second-order stream, even in the hypothetical case of completely audience-ignorant writers of stories.

Secondly, and my observation here will encompass some of the entertainment offerings not describable as narrative (variety and talk shows as well as narratives), it is difficult to imagine a complete absence of feedback activity among entertainment production firms. We have evidence that early commercial radio took great interest in soliciting written feedback from listeners (Sayre, 1937), in part, perhaps, to show advertisers that people were indeed listening. Moreover, faced with the task of producing a regular stream of offerings for the second-order stream, it is quite likely that we would find that many existing entertainment firms solicit, or at least do not discourage, feedback from their audiences.

One key to a program-producing firm's enduring existence in the second-order stream might be to create and actively manage an audience feedback bureaucracy. Gerbner and Gross (1976) noted that a popular evening commercial television personality had received over a quarter of a million letters in a five-year span in the 1970s. Whether this firm did so is an open empirical question, but the

number of letters television viewers wrote to *Marcus Welby, M.D.* suggests that the organization producing that program may have had one in place. Faced with the question of just what to put into seasons of hour slots, that organization might well have seen positive value in their audience letters. Program writers and producers could mine those letters for themes and language to insert into future programs.

We need more research, but let me once more offer a speculation to close this line of inquiry. To some degree, it would be unwise to read backward from second-order commodity relations and infer an absence of feedback activity to second-order firms generally, especially when we look at individual entertainment firms. Feedback likely comes into these firms by narrative gift and, to an uncertain degree, as a result of their own contacts with audience members.

Working back for a moment from entertainment to news, I do not think we have yet found means to characterize news content by referring to entertainment production itself. The fact that news units are often described as stories implies that something of narrative's magic may carry over there, but again we seem to be confronted with a residual trace, and not a particularly strong one. We might find that entertainment is more therapeutic and developmental than news, but even if this claim survived an empirical scrutiny, it would add little to what our understanding of news as it currently flows into lifespaces. In addition, the idea that entertainment might be more valuable than news complicates my search for a stable set of meanings to apply to the ideal-typical second-order mass communicator.

On the other hand, I need not deny a difference between news and entertainment for the purposes of making a summary characterization for internalization and later use

in the lifespace. Since I am working with *categories* of mass communicators, and specifically on questions of feedback-derived levels of therapeutic and developmental value, I need only establish that there may be a difference in their respective levels across first- and second-order mass communicator categories. It may be that second-order entertainment content may be therapeutic and useful to their audiences in relation to an absolute zero, but it may also be the case that somewhere within this relationship there is interference with what we have so far found by considering entertainment, so that summary levels of therapeutic and developmental value could still be predicted to be different across first- and second-order categories.

In pursuing grounds for means to more fully characterize second-order mass communicators as actors without knowledge of their audiences (and to find means to understand Klapper's (1949) confident dismissal of entertainment content), we must move away from the site where an individual entertainment firm is interested in surviving in its own time slot across calendar seasons, and move toward those locations where we find individuals responsible for more global second-order temporal flows. This is the position of a local radio or television's station manager, a network programming executive, a newspaper's or magazine's publisher (or, tensely, the conjunction of the newspaper editor-in-chief and business manager). In these positions we find individuals responsible for filling an incessant twenty-four hour march of broadcast or daily or weekly print space with contents.

At this occupational position, we note first that such individuals exist at a step removed from the sites where letters aimed at specific personalities or programs might be considered useful. Turow set aside the letters for individual personalities when he conducted his study of a single commercial radio station. What remains?

At the level of the station and certainly the national network, decisions on programs have to be made on the basis of gut feelings and numbers (Bogart's "net net," 1988). Persons at this level see the passionately crafted narratives, the individual charismatic visions of comedians, talk-show hosts, and dramatic actors, as so many possibilities to fill time slots.

Entertainment is a large and attractive industry. Second-order executives can thus act as if somewhere within the cottage industries of content production and the emerging pools of new talent there will be new offerings to acquire and insert into the second-order temporal streams under their charge. Though they might like or hate particular offerings as persons (Gans, 1979), as occupants of their positions they do not need to care about the survival of any single entertainment firm or individual talent, or even about their own likes or dislikes. They will work with what is available, for purposes we will soon detail.

Dispositionally speaking, these persons are simply not the same as the comedians, the actresses, the writers of suspense and mystery, the starlets and sports stars who inflect with their bodies or the personalities who inflect between lines of weather, news, or discourse with a guest within the overall second-order cacaphony. They stand above this rich human mix, buying among it, putting a march of its offerings into the temporal spaces for which they are responsible.

In doing so they do not destroy the power of narrative, the utility of news or the charisma of personalities of a piece. Rather, they add something to the flow, something we might characterize as a cutting up of narrative, of utility, and of charisma, into so many pieces.

Expressing the consequences of executive action as content-fragmenting can only be an initial gesture. I do not

think it feasible to construct a variable corresponding to second-order relations on the basis of content's observable fragmentation so that the result would exhaustively represent a domain of content. Humanist scholars working with a notion of the postmodern may work with the idea, but the audience researcher who takes the 24-hour domain of the commodity relations variable seriously likely cannot. I therefore wish to explore the actions of managers of large second-order flows for knowledge that might be used to characterize these flows, and to internalize and recover those characterizations in association with the lifespan's pool of second-order time.

More frequently and fully than do their employees and contract agents, those responsible for a more total flow of second-order contents feel the impact of the relationship itself. This is a triadic relationship between the second-order mass communicating firm under their charge, the aggregate audiences their firms attract with their contents, and advertising agencies. (There is also a direct relationship between advertisers and audiences which I will discuss momentarily). Amidst the variety of narrative and other offerings, beyond the criteria of newsworthiness that may motivate individual newswriters in their employ, they must manage to direct the second-order firm as a whole so that its activities remain functional within this relation.

What they must do as a matter of general principle may be stated straightforwardly: They must maximize the audience their contents help gather across the twenty-four hour day, the cyclical week and the calendar season. To the degree that they maximize audience size, they maximize the audience commodity that they are charged to deliver to advertisers (Smythe, 1977; Meehan, 1984), and their firms prosper as a whole.

Through their activities we can best see what a second-order mass communicator is and is about. Though an

individual newsworker may wish to inform, that newsworker's same incomprehension of audience desire may be traced back to an understanding held more firmly at this position. From the point of the view of the firm, news is not about delivering information (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1976; 1982; Ball-Rokeach, 1985) to an audience. It is about grabbing the attention of a large audience and delivering that attention to its purchasers.

We can expect that the newsworkers will learn more, in a positive sense, about audience shares and other "net net" forms (Bogart, 1988) than about the audience's present cognitive status and effective possibilities for future cognitive change. We can also expect perfunctory performance programs such as that found by Turow as we move closer to this set of occupational positions.

Standard criteria of newsworthiness that could, on historical grounds, be seen as an accumulation of past first-order experiences, themselves attributable to someone, somewhere, having had real contact with an audience or readership, can be recast as criteria in evolution according to the exigencies of an entirely different relation.

Today, we might interpret the wisdom embedded in news criteria against a standard that says that one must attract the attention of the largest number of people possible. One thus writes stories or constructs visuals according to one's vision of what will make people sit up and take note, at least momentarily, in the lifespace. No actual news content category, no particular format, layout or editing practice, can be read as *essentially* expressing what it is that will actually grab audience attention, as newsworkers work on the basis of trial and error. Fires and earthquakes seem to work. So do screams, cries, and other expressions of anguish on the part of victims. News directors, I suspect, would remain pluralistic here: They would present whatever contents in whatever way they could

if it would marginally increase audience share. As the present dominance of second-order relations eats away at inherited notions of information utility, the category of news seems to be in an increasing state of flux, as purely second-order firms--using a range of media devices--explore a new total content category that has been called 'infotainment.'

That flux, as well as the peculiar general character of U.S. news, is not attributable to the technology of television, to the speed-up of print distribution systems, or, most importantly, to audience desire. It is attributable to projections on the part of second-order decision makers as to what the individuals under their charge or firms under their contract can do to attract the attention of aggregations of unknown individuals.

With respect to entertainment-producing firms, writers and talents may remain oblivious to second-order exigencies only at their own risk. Whatever *else* they feel or do in their story-telling craft, to survive they will *also* have to incorporate features into their narratives aimed not at conveying generational knowledge or at activating or creating new sensibilities, but at attracting attention. How? Again, the producing agency proceeds on the basis of trial and error. The results so far, and relatively speaking, seem to involve loud sounds like gunshots, fists, and sirens, soft curves and hard bodies and strong actions embedded within venerable narrative forms. These forms must themselves unfold in shorter temporal segments existing between commercials, so that, in temporal terms, we might expect followers of second-order stories to become somewhat habituated to four-minute attention spans packed with attention-grabbing action.

Second-order content decision-makers will regularly use two kinds of feedback. One is whatever they

receive in direct symbolic form, in letters, at meetings, over the phone--from representatives of advertising agencies. That is their private information; I will honor their privacy.

The other form of feedback is numeric and consists of aggregate audience ratings or circulation figures. On the basis of these numbers they make selections from the mix of human talents as best they can, plug them into time slots, read the aggregate ratings results, scratch their heads and make further selections. Where is the audience in this action? Somewhere behind the aggregate ratings numbers which, as Rogers and Dearing suggested, cannot really be used to acknowledge individual subjectivity (1988), just as multiple-choice tests fail to tell teachers who their students are.

Strong pressure moves downward from this numbers-divining position toward news and entertainment producers, dampening dispositions toward therapy or development for their own sake, replacing them with a disposition to grab maximum amounts of audience attention over repeated short bursts of daily time. Is this position's power such that we might say that, despite all likely still takes place at the site of individual newsmen and entertainment talents, temporal flows in second-order relations are, in general, less therapeutic and developmental, even pathological?

This question would likely have to be pursued by seeking consequences in the lifespace, but I think that we would be warranted in entertaining the suspicion. We see the logic of second-order relations embodied and enacted most clearly when we observe programming decision-makers. Following their actions into entertainment might give us glimpses of a fascinating and tragic struggle that alternatively scars or bloats generations of talented, charismatic individual performers and storytellers.

Following their actions into news gives us

glimpses of what we would otherwise miss by looking at organizational feedback: A disposition of bias toward the new, the flashy, and the attention-grabbing from the flow of daily events. News likely lacks therapeutic and developmental value, as was tentatively concluded above. Were second-order news something other than useless, I would suggest, perhaps with Postman (1985), that it was worse than useless.

Advertising

"Give us substance" voters in the presidential campaign keep saying, yet do they really want it? Consumer product advertising, which professes to have the most accurate finger on America's pulse, seems to say the opposite.

Good advertising used to be about communicating unique product benefits. However, judging by some recent efforts, the less said the better.⁸

Second-order news has no finger on the pulse of the nation. It just pokes a finger here and there, hoping that the irritation grabs attention, hoping too, perhaps, that some dignity might still adhere to the position of the journalist, somehow. Second-order entertainment is the pulse of the nation--two beats from this body, one beat from that one, none from others. The pulses that manage to make it into entertainment have to beat hard, as most will not beat very long, and all will have to grab attention when they do.

Advertising flows are another matter. Those involved in the production and placement of these contents into second-order temporal streams do not have to alter their story-crafting practices to suit second-order logic. Quite the reverse: Everyone else working with the second-order stream feels pressure to gather and deliver human attention to them. From that point on, advertising addresses its audience directly. Unlike news, it really aims to

communicate with its audience. Unlike entertainment, it has no one looking over its bare shoulder. It has bought the activities of these others as well as its own time with the audience, and now it acts.

Inspecting the outflow of advertising content, we see creations of great beauty, stories of great brevity, and an immensity of objects, but, as the writer above implies, we see ourselves, metaphorically in the objects, but mostly in the situated people around them. They are direct representations of the nation's pulse; we are the members of that nation. Knowing full well that commodity relations will not work with contents in the lifespace, let me nevertheless begin with a short list of advertising content topics, originally offered as "some emotional motives" in an academic text on broadcasting published in 1941. It is slightly longer than Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

- 1) Self-preservation from harm or danger, which includes care of health.
- 2) Satisfaction of appetite; pleasing taste.
- 3) Romantic instinct.
- 4) Care of children and family.
- 5) Ambition and advancement, economic or social; intellectual desire for advancement.
- 6) Desire for securing comfort, personal comfort or comfort in the home.
- 7) Desire for entertainment, pleasure, leisure.
- 8) Cleanliness. This is a deep-seated instinct.
- 9) Pride--in appearance, in one's home, in one's family, etc.
- 10) The expression of artistic taste, which takes the form sometimes of the selection of gifts
(Abbot, 1941, p. 179).

This writer also mentions a few "rational," as

opposed to "emotional" motives--handiness, efficiency, durability, dependability, economy in use or purchase, but he then stresses the distinction between the two sets of motives, adding that "it may easily be seen that the emotional motives far outweigh and outnumber the rational motives" (p. 180).

Newswriters speak about prominent persons and events; under the influence of marketing, of course, we increasingly see new cohorts of newswriters who wish to capture an expression of *feeling* of a prominent person or a victim of a tragedy. Entertainers, of course, face audiences as aggregate wholes who accept or reject them over time according to ratings numbers, so it helps them little to see such detailed lists.

Advertisers, on the other hand, are the generators of these lists. Inductive empiricists by trade, they need not worry about parsimony or mutual exclusivity, as the lists function as a mere repository of things found within the lifespaces. For advertising, any one of these topics may be further subdivided and the resulting subcategories can become the foci or 'hot buttons' of individual ad campaigns.

	<u>Antecedent</u>	<u>Motivation</u>	<u>Result</u>
<u>Products</u> <u>as</u> <u>Responses</u>	self-image ->	need arousal->	need satisfaction product purchase impression management
<u>Products</u> <u>as</u> <u>Stimuli</u>	product symbolism ->	role definition ->	self-attribution situational self-image role performance

Source: Solomon (1983)

Figure 9.2. Two Models of Advertising's Function.

Moving to a more systemic plane, we see advertising as incessant activity upon the aggregated pulse of the nation. A more recent account of advertising's

project (more accurately, a reminder to wayward advertisers, and a superior summary introduction to symbolic interactionism), lays out the purpose of this activity.

In what follows I will pursue Solomon's second model, where products are seen to play a communicative role after they are purchased. This role, I argue, allows us to understand a range of advertiser activities that extend well beyond what we see in the display of ads.

The activity of advertising reveals a process immensely involved in the monitoring of lifespaces. Indeed, many of the technologies used in audience research owe their diffusion, if not their invention, to the service they render in keeping track of living rooms for advertisers. During the middle of this century the survey predominated; more recently the focus group has risen in prominence,⁹ and all the while a stream of technologies--the field experiment, the laboratory, the ethnography--have been used to chip in here and there. The nation's pulse is real, large, alive, and closely monitored.

If we stop at this point to define the second-order mass communicator in terms of feedback about audiences to advertisers, we would seemingly have to say that the second-order mass communicator really has its metaphorical finger on the nation's pulse, and that it can therefore give the people what they want.

That statement, however, would make us miss something fundamentally important about the relationship between people and symbols that results from advertising-driven mass communication. Let me move the two first-order functions of therapy and development through the process depicted by Figure 9.2 to help isolate the essential distinction.

A properly conceived¹⁰ contemporary advertising campaign begins with a product-concept and the lifespace. The product-concept captures a range of potential final

forms a consumer product will take. Orange juice, for example, could come in standard eight-, twelve-, or sixteen-ounce cylinders, but it could just as well be encased in other shapes and sizes, contain more or less sweetener, pulp, or nutritional additives. The encasement's color and content also open a door to a world of expressive possibilities.

Lifespaces (and distribution system) research will help constrain product-concept possibilities and lead both the product and the advertising firms to a set of final forms. In this research, lifespaces are combed for the reality in which large groups of individuals find themselves --physically, socially, cognitively. Happy children in the morning, for example, might be a working lifespaces reality for an orange-juice marketing project.

Placing a rendering of this reality into the ad might well be considered an act of therapy: The agency projects back to its target audience a mirror-like and affirming sense of who that audience is: purchasing parents with kitchens, children, and a sense that daily happiness does indeed depend on smooth interpersonal exchange in the morning.

The advertised projection will, of course, strain reality, but, like a good romance novel, not *too* much. The actual differences between people as they really are in their real morning kitchens with their real interpersonal others, and the dramatic depictions in ads, must not be too great, otherwise the magical attributes of their new orange juice will seem too unreal, and the action the firm will ask individuals to perform (i.e., buy the orange juice) will seem implausible.¹¹

A development function is also implicated in second-order relations. People are asked to perform future actions (e.g., buy this orange juice) they might otherwise not, given their existing set of cognitions. Therapy begins

and drives the process; development is its goal. Applying these functions to advertising in second-order relations, one might be moved to conclude that they describe the second-order mass communicator intentions better than those imputed above to first-order mass communicators.

However, the same functions describe quite different things when they are moved through first- and second-order relations. It is this difference that will provide the summary meanings that will allow us to internalize knowledge of mass communicators as distinct categories for a return to the lifespace pools of first- and second-order time in chapter 10.

In first-order relations, such feedback as the agency is able to acquire is used to serve a therapy function when *priced contents* flow back, to be recognized and acquired by individuals. In second-order relations, such therapy as the agency is able to conjure flows back to the lifespace unpriced. Both relations, however, may be characterized as therapeutic.

A qualitative, not merely quantitative, distinction is found when we consider the second function. First-order *contents* themselves embody the development function, and individuals buy these contents. Whatever movement first-order mass communicators want their content acquirers to make--toward knowledge of nutrition, better or successful romantic relations, or a better conception of mass media exposure--they convey this movement *in priced* words. The secret to something better is hidden in first-order content. The purchaser buys the contents with hope that she can find this secret, understand it, internalize it, and use it later. In first-order relations, what the acquirer acknowledges as missing, and the new that she wants, she seeks in symbolically conveyed meanings that she can use herself in later perception, decision, and action. Over time, first-order relations might make the symbolic

realm itself seem venerable.

Second-order mass communicators do something else. In the space between where the person is and where the person might want to be, it inserts a *product* to be purchased. One literally buys a container of orange juice-- to which a meaning has been attached through repeated displays of product and meaning together.

In second-order relations, the attached meaning is not internalized, altered, and used to make future decisions. In our hypothetical case, for example, the meaning is simply happy children in the morning. Buying the orange juice does not mean that the purchaser will know what else to do to produce happy morning interactions on the basis of the attached idea. The orange juice container will remain silent, and if its purchaser needs more information he or she will have to talk to friends, read a child-rearing book, spend time with the children, or buy another happy morning product--perhaps sugar-coated cereal with animal shapes.

It takes considerable effort to remind oneself that advertising firms themselves work hard to attach lifespace images to otherwise inert consumer products, and that the purpose of market research feedback is to find possible product/concept combinations. With that effort in mind, it might be easier to see that, in fact, people in second-order relations are not buying meanings in a first-order sense but products to which meanings have been attached--one cannot buy the happy children in the morning, only the orange juice. Meanings are only an inducement here. Consumers are intended to be trained to gain secret magic from the actual objects they purchase.

Advertisers as a whole likely do have their fingers on the pulse of the nation, much as the writer at the beginning of the chapter suggests. He may be overestimating the degree to which ads appealed to 'rational

interests' in the past (see Abbot, 1941), but he embodies well the advertiser's ethos when considering something like contemporary politics.

A plea by voters for substance will be puzzling to an advertising sensibility. The advertisers' empirical backdrop--the average living room or certain kinds of aggregations of living rooms--stands in sharp contrast to the empirical backdrop individuals may have in mind when they contemplate the political process. They probably understand their own lifespaces reasonably well, and want to know more about the broader world beyond.

Such knowledge is difficult to produce if one is accustomed to isolating small lifespace phenomena and then directing attention toward a perishable products to associate with them. Since "good advertising" generally works with smaller objects, smaller temporal frames, and smaller movements, "the less said" is quite likely "the better." Clearly, from an advertising perspective, one must challenge what it is that people seem to want to know about the polity, as there is just no product to which meanings about the living whole can be reasonably attached and offered for mass distribution. Much the same thing, there are no lifespace settings wherein the individual consumer may be seen to be interacting with this whole that ad agency talents could work with.

In advertising generally, contents of all sorts representing real lifespace meanings are isolated and redisplayed in association with an object offered for purchase. Second-order temporal streams are big and full of symbolic flows of enviable internal quality and diversity, as they reflect much of the quality and diversity of the people they flow to.

But once this incredible flow reaches the lifespace, people are habituated to 1) identify themselves or a possible self, 2) confirm a localized need within the

lifespace setting, and 3) learn about a thing to purchase to satisfy the need. The thing they purchase, after the display of the ad, is not usually content, so that internalization and active use of content itself--a hallmark of first-order relations--will stand at one step removed from their daily lives.

No serious satisfaction, no development or "mobilizing *information*" (Lemert, 1984; italics added) can be found in second-order news, apologies to the weather reporters. Some development can be found in entertainment, apologies to consumer goods firms for the expense. But most development can be found by following after ad flows. People are marshalled to places to purchase things. Their purchasing acts initiate development; things embody the end of the development cycle, though disposable income helps the process continue to develop smoothly.

Second-order mass communicators thus interfere with the process of acquisition and active use of content itself--a process we are perhaps more familiar with given our personal histories as first-order students and teachers. Nevertheless, and in entire agreement with Fiske (1987, 1989), let me say that people who witness second-order flows are not sheep in the stockyards of some monstrous social process as, in fact, we must see recognizable objects in our environment in order to function. We can make these objects ourselves, but if another agency crafts objects that we can use, we will use them.

Referring to the historical process of differentiation and specialization outlined by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) or to the more recent idea of "disembedding mechanisms" of Giddens (1990), we can acknowledge that daily life in the United States has been structured by continuous disruption, decontextualization, and reintegration. People move around, live in new places, meet new people, encounter new differences (Meyrowitz,

1985). Everywhere they go, however, they eat, wear, or otherwise display *objects* that others will find familiar, even though they themselves might be new to a place. Similarly, the newly located persons will read the eatings, the clothes and the objects of others to gain a sense of their surroundings.

If people had to create as well as evaluate the objects they used in their constant habituations, our collective story of physical mobility would have been quite a different one. That story might have left an historical trace of struggles so intensely disruptive that sociology would have been hard-pressed to use such antiseptic terms as 'differentiation' or 'integration' in its telling. As the historical record now stands, such words are not at all inappropriate. People have moved a lot, buttressed by the familiarity of Oreo cookies.

The creation of one's own objects, on the other hand, is cognitive work. A certain amount of this work may be attributable to individual volition, but it is nurtured in time by taking in, grasping, accepting, altering, and reshaping the cognitions of others.

Whatever one's sense of the shape of an individual's subjective economy, one must admit that these internal power sources are limited--we can only do so much creation, so much evaluation and reshaping on any given day. If we are given time and support, we learn to develop theories that can help us generate, sort and evaluate objects and relations. When we communicate with others, they will notice not only our objects but our organizing schemes. We will be recognized as possessing organized thoughts (Converse, 1964, 1970). Others will not possess the time and resources, either generally or with respect to some specific domain (like politics) to work out their own organizing schemes, and a certain cognitive lack will be noticed.

For all of us, but especially for those whose

resources are strained, advertising's meanings stand as ready-made objects allowing us to conserve our cognitive resources.¹² We may not like ads themselves. If we watch them at all, we are irritated by the disruption of a narrative that had engaged us, we 'see through' the disruption's appeal, we 'know' that there is a company that wants us to pay twice as much as we should for a cookie, we may even 'knowingly' laugh at the futility of the appeal in our case--we will never, ever, buy that cookie because we do not like it, or because we see the emotional appeal as a futile gesture. We may do this a few times, as ads are usually repeated (Ehrenberg, 1972), but we will more than likely simply ignore the ads after a while.

When we turn off the television or put down our magazine and go outside, however, the ads still perform work for us. Things look familiar, comprehensible. A certain charm adheres to the products associated with second-order symbol flows, and, perhaps, to second-order institutions, as a result (Shils, 1968).

In mass communication, second-order temporal flows are the most massive (Beatty, 1989; Robinson, 1981). Moreover, they present the greatest challenge to the task of constructing an ideal-typical mass communicator to stand at the point of initiation of the flow. Indeed, positing a mass communicator seems to sunder a cyclical process that really starts elsewhere--in the fine combings market researchers make of the lifespace. Yet, much like the biologist who must impose an epistemology of one-way causation on a living body in order to proceed, I will disagree with Rogers and Dearing (1988) and insist that effects research is not wrong to seek and stop at effects. It errs in starting with mediated contents while ignoring the agencies that stand behind them. In this case, and informed by the lifespace, I posit a second-order mass communicator whose complex actions I will nonetheless stabilize and simplify as follows:

- 1) Because of market research, second-order mass communicators are rich in therapy resources.
- 2) Second-order mass communicators are rich providers of therapeutic functions, which may be obtained by merely facing and witnessing second-order flows of entertainment and advertising.
- 3) Second-order mass communicators are rich providers of developmental functions in *non-content* form. Individuals may acquire the developmental functions themselves through consumer product purchase, or they may recognize development functions purchased by others.
- 4) In contrast with first-order mass communicators, second-order mass communicators are not in a position to provide developmental functions in content itself. People do not buy the symbol flows directly. There is no development to be worked into news itself, no developmental integrity to be preserved in entertainment or even to be purchased in the actual flow of advertisements themselves. Second-order *content flows* themselves are bereft of a cognitive development function.

It is on the strength of this last consideration-- which I offer among others in order to display what I now throw away--that I believe I can construct a single, stable, meaning for the second-order mass communicator that stands behind second-order temporal flows, a meaning categorically distinct from the first-order mass communicator.

The second-order mass communicator is an intending agent. Its empirical actions will necessarily overlap with the actions of the first-order mass communicator as both agents insert contents into temporal streams.

The first-order mass communicator, however,

intends that its contents be witnessed, internalized and used in the production and evaluation of future cognitive objects. First-order temporal streams are intended to be food for thought. The better this agent knows its audiences' taste in cognitive food, the more likely it will succeed. The more it explores cognitive tastes and the limitations of those tastes, the more clearly its scope of symbolic action and risk-taking become. First-order content is useful.

The second-order mass communicator's goal is simply not captured by a notion of information transfer. It reduces cognitive risks to a minimum--everything depends on the insertion and display of *familiar* meanings (except, perhaps, for certain upscale audiences, where the familiar is defined by its simple negation). Its intentions and preferred risks revolve around the *objects* it offers for sale. These objects must be purchased and used or otherwise displayed as they are, and not internalized as cognitive resources. The desires that individuals acknowledge as real must be steered away from cognitive food and directed instead toward--real food, real lipstick, real shoes. Advertisers intend that people not stop and think more. Instead, they engage already thinking people on their own grounds and offer thought-stopping objects--shoes that mean athletic prowess and not long walks to work at McDonalds, lipstick that means the attention of a living other and not the turning of oneself into a sexual object. Every food imaginable is associated with second-order intentions except the cognitive food that nurtures and develops an independently thinking (and in chapter 10, a 'first-order') person. Second-order contents are, comparatively speaking, useless.

Setting aside functional decompositions and intra-organizational variations to prepare for a return to the categorical forms we will use in the lifespace, I reduce the meaning of first- and second-order mass communicators to a

contrast between the useful and the useless. One may disagree with this reduction, and there are certainly many empirical holes to be filled in the account of its social backdrop, but, most importantly, others who know or do audience research are certainly invited to make their own excursions out from the lifespace and back. The empirical object of mass communication demands that we try.

Acknowledging that the useful is never useful enough and that the useless is never completely so, chapter 10 will nonetheless work with this simple contrast in its return to the discussion of effects and contingencies observable within the lifespace. Modern society is complex and differentiated and people are located at great distances from sites of political and economic power, and they need--even desperately need--information as a result (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). It simply does not follow, however, that a media system dominated by second-order relations will provide the information people need.

A third category remains, the non-commodified mass communicator, but I will only consider it briefly, as an excursus, not so much because I find it theoretically uninteresting--quite the reverse--but simply because what is interesting about it is too much a matter of speculation in the empirical case of U.S. mass communication. It is not carried forward into chapter 10.

Non-Commodified Mass Communicators

This relation posits the existence of a mass communicator that produces content neither for sale nor as means to gather and offer aggregate audience attention for sale. What makes the category magic, for me, is that in this relation the mass communicator would intend to say things that it would freely want its audience to hear. This is the simplest and most global of intentions, as within that "want" one could insert one or more specific intentions from a spectrum encompassing the entire human condition. Why do I

say things I want you to hear? Why do you speak with your colleagues, friends, the person at the coffee shop? (Or do you?)

The category is fun at the interpersonal level. It is therapeutic to think that one's words need not evince evidence of proper previous cognitive work, or that one's words need not signal proper avoidance of cognitive work in conversation, or that one's words need not grab an otherwise resisting subject's attention, but that they might just happen, freely, playfully, between people, so that such political economic games as do arise--the battling of theories, the delaying of serious intercourse, the gift exchange of ideas--might do so as a function of more natural, biological economies we already embody but try to forget.

I begin at the interpersonal level because here, more than anywhere else, non-commodified relations still exist, and will continue to exist to the degree that 900-exchange telephone numbers remain within their present confines of general eroticism, friendship, and card-reading. Certainly there is encroachment, much as second-order relations now directly encroach upon the first-order environment of the school, but both still contain large spaces for wonder and free human action.

In a social domain populated mostly by phantasmic organizational realities surrounding people with structuring principles, there is little of the non-commodified mass communicator to be snatched from the air and made into a quasi-definite object. Gray's (1986) study of west-coast community radio seems to have captured something of a non-commodified mass communicator: He found mostly educated, middle-class individuals using the airwaves to explore what can only safely be called their sense of symbolic novelty, mostly through what struck them as noncommercial. There is certainly more to non-commodified relations than this

expressive creativity.

There certainly can be, but not necessarily. Beyond the imperatives that lay down more stringent lines of communicative action for more purely first- and second-order firms, I think one can perceive the outlines of a third principle, one that says that you can try to grab attention when you want to, you can crystalize your words around cognitive or even other objects or leave them somehow open, you can be therapeutic to the extent that you want to and to the extent that you had planned to be in previous feedback work (audiences being large groups of people you do not normally know), and that you can explore the limits of development with or without a contextual, therapeutic starting point. In non-commodified relations your communicative actions unfold without immediate financial consequences. Taking advantage of their freedom, the community experimentalists Grey described seemed only to be exploring the limits of development without recognizing any need for a therapeutic starting point.

Actual, tangible agencies now working in a non-commodified context in the United States seem to found among entities of two types. Public broadcasting is one. Certain radio and television organizations derive part of their incomes from government, and the subsidy temporally (and partially) enables individuals to more freely create and insert contents into underpriced streams aimed at undersold aggregations of human attention. These organizations are a mix of all three commodity relations; they are interesting both on that account and for what we might further discern about an orienting principle of non-commodification, but one might still be better off exploring broadcast systems in other countries for evidence of orienting principles related to non-commodified relations.

One might also attempt to compare outcomes of partially non-commodified and other temporal streams, but to

a large degree the principle outcome in the United States can already be seen as determined in the relative magnitudes of lifespace temporal pools: Few people swim in the non-commodified stream, and those who do are likely looking for crafted, usable feelings and ideas they can perceive, internalize, and use later to craft expressions on their own. If one is into cognitive food or if one does thought-work in this country, one would be wise to take advantage of the partially non-commodified public broadcast stream, as at no direct cost it is presently a bargain.

To the extent that public broadcasting can be said to exist in the United States, one can say that it has to operate on the fringes of the mass communication economy. It has relatively few resources with which to investigate the situation of existing audiences, which is a crucial limitation, as much of that existing audience, long habituated to the use of ready-made cognitions attached to the objects it purchases, is now too mobile and frazzled to stop a lot and think. If people see any great distance between where they are and where a missive suggests that they should be, they will likely ignore it. If a temporal stream is populated with tough cognitive objects, they will likely tune the entire stream out.

Beyond public broadcasting we encounter another institution, distributed among a handful of occupations but most fully sited--least completely encroached upon--in the occupation of the United States presidency. There, for a few minutes each January, for a few more unpredictable minutes strewn throughout the calendar year, and for a few evening hours or pairs of hours during the evening prime-time flow late in a national election year, we encounter acts of mass communication by individuals, the purpose of which is neither to more fully aggregate individual time to be sold back to the network, nor to solicit donations or respond to previous payment of the stream of words now offered.

Observing the position of the presidency and these few instances of mass communicative action as residuals of a never-developed institution of non-commodified mass communication might be interesting. Certainly there is much pressure on this position in our political culture, much centering in on the person of the position's pretenders and occupant by employees of the surrounding second-order agencies, and much that may be regarded as consequential in the flow of their words, whether those words survive intact or are graced or made grotesque by the surrounding spins.

There already exists a field called presidential studies, mostly in speech departments or among speech faculty in communication departments. This field has focused on an important empirical object, one not well perceived when one's principle concern is either the lifespace or the culture industry as a whole. In their present efforts to apprehend central meanings in and consequences of presidential utterances and formal rituals, students of the presidency, much like content-centered media scholars, may not see just how interesting their object is.

One will not find the keys to President Reagan's or FDR's charisma either in or between the lines of their words. One will, however, find bureaucratic structures that stood behind these words, piecing together knowledge of the national audience, creating a potential for successful communicative action within the free temporal space this occupation still has.

What do presidential bureaucracies do? In FDR's administration they encouraged and processed all sorts of feedback from the nation. The extent of this bureaucracy was too multifaceted and vast to characterize here (but see Nienhaus, 1989b; Stiles, 1954; Sussman, 1963). FDR spoke as if to a friend because, more than any previous occupant, he had been able to find out just what the people of his country were like. These people included those of his own

social background, but they extended well beyond, not magically but out of considerable executive effort, perhaps motivated by desire to know whom he represented. FDR was able to remain immune from press criticism (even though he submitted himself to numerous press conferences) because, evidently, even by the 1930s the people in general had become so foreign an idea to journalists that their attempts to set agendas could be played with like so many toys by one who really knew what mattered to real people.

As for the fascinating presidency of Ronald Reagan, there is certainly the person to study, and also the person's words, but there is also, I believe, a feedback bureaucracy to be investigated, one likely distinct from that developed by FDR, involving letter-processing bureaucracies and surveys, but also the use of focus groups for the express purpose of crafting presidential topics and language.

The presidential scholar need not read a hundred studies of organizational theory and research in preparation, as there is already here an interesting empirical object that can be used for guidance, one that normally entails a following of feedback from the public to the office of the presidency and the infrequent non-commodified and purchased addresses made by his person. Perhaps the presidential scholar might take her cue from media sociology, but in reverse: Individual distance from centers of political and economic power is, after all, a concept implying two empirical locations. How does a powerful person--a person at the other location about which media sociology rarely speaks--close this distance? What kind of powerful person works to close it, how does he do it, and what kind does not (see House, 1992)?

Closing down this line of inquiry for our move back to the lifespace, we note that there probably is a non-commodified mass communicator existing at least in embryo on

the other end of the meager accumulation of non-commodified time, but for reasons of empirical impoverishment we set the relation aside until it can be situated within a more empirically focused context, one that cross-national or presidential studies might make available.

Had we reason to believe that a non-commodified mass communicator was a significant empirical presence in the U.S. public sphere's immense pools of time, we could probably internalize a notion of indeterminacy with respect to the other two relations and to an abstract notion of utility. Classifying a non-commodified mass communicator would likely always be subject to further consideration of the absence (perhaps in Bush's case), presence, and particular aims of an associated feedback bureaucracy. Let us leave this category aside--it might be interesting in other contexts--and consider what we can do and see with useful and useless mass communicators in effects research.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

¹For example, two commercial television broadcasting firms existing and operating in different parts of the country may differ in the number and kind of personnel they employ, in ownership, in programming practices, in audience demography--in a potentially infinite number of ways. For purposes of later use in audience research, however, what they are and do in common over time and space is what matters. The chapter will make a series of empirical assertions about their being and action, and these assertions require stability within categorical instances and over historical time. To the extent that stability is not found, the chapter's specification of mass communicators as nominal entities will stand in error.

²Empirical firms would not fall cleanly into commodity relations categories. In general, boundaries between commodity relations do not actually correspond to distinctions generally made between the state and civil society or between the public and the private. In a context other than audience research one could use commodity relations to problematize these venerable sociological categories. Mass communication, in short, could become an exporter of concepts to other disciplines.

³The idea is similar to Altschull (1983; see also Shoemaker, 1987; and Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Altschull works with empirical forms of ownership and claims that ownership interests may be read as features of content. When multiple owners are involved, the claim is that individual patterns of interest may be teased out of the symbolic mix. I work with sources of revenue, and these sources do not overlap with empirical forms of ownership--a corporation may be a pure instance of any of the three commodity-relations defined mass communicators or an empirical mixture which must somehow be disentangled. I also do not work with content. Commodity-relations-informed mass communicator intentions need not be seen in or between the lines of any kind of content, but in organizational actions that one can use to characterize massive temporal flows of symbols in stable, qualitatively distinct ways.

⁴It is interesting to note that the French psychoanalyst Lacan varied the duration of his patients' visits in order to avoid the appearance of an easy exchange of his time for patients' money. It is similarly interesting to note that Freud himself drew parallels between the activity of the

psychoanalyst and that of a religious pastor (1969).

Religious and psychological professionals operate on the same first-order turf, but Freud overdrew the parallel to some degree. The professional psychoanalyst's clients are usually middle class, while many religious professionals sell their words to the masses. When they do, the middle-class world begins to look disparagingly at them and speak of demagoguery or propaganda (see chapter 10).

⁵The station received more letters during the time Turow made his observations, but he set aside those addressed to particular personalities carried in the station's broadcast time. The remaining 100 letters, Turow ventured, could be considered to have been addressed to the station or the station manager--he could not quite pin the addressee down. The radio station's manager (who did not actually read any of the letters) was his working notion, but it did not work too well. When I read his account I substitute 'second-order mass communicator' for station manager and find the actions (and inactions) he reported understandable--even predictable.

⁶Juan Luis Cebrian, the Spanish equivalent of editor-in-chief of the post-Franco era Madrid daily *El pais*, writes of an envy for what appeared to him to be a rich tradition of epistolary discourse in the English press, specifically in the *Times* of London (1989). In Cebrian's account of the history of the new newspaper under his charge, letters from readers were an supremely important signal of how well *El pais* was carrying out its role within the new democracy. The paper received hundreds of thousands of letters from readers by the mid-1980s. As best I can tell from personal communications, this financially successful newspaper derived only fifty percent of its revenues from advertising, compared with the eighty percent obtaining for U.S. dailies. For firms that operate in mixed first- and second-order settings, it is difficult to tell if there is a point in the mix where the logic of second-order relations might predominate over the logic of first-order relations. A certain historical weight might be given to first-order agency, as writing for money probably preceded writing to produce audience attention by a few centuries, and old habits would be expected to die hard. Judging by the 1980s concerns in the U.S. print press for its own credibility, and by the diffusion of soft news practices according to 'total-marketing' plans, the old habits are dying in the U.S. print press. A piper can afford to listen to one payer in five for only so long. Within a present context containing uneven mixes of commodity relations and uncertain historical vestiges, an analytic strategy parsing the ensemble of media firms into first- and second-order categories to load into pools of aggregate individual time is perhaps the best way we can proceed to discern more

global tendencies within the mass communication process.

⁷I say "likely" because I do not know how Homer and the author of Beowulf managed to eat while they wrote.

⁸Bill McGee, president of McGee Creative, Aurora, Colorado, writing in *Advertising Age*, June 1, 1992, p. 22.

⁹The logic of focus groups, I believe, is an outgrowth of the same logic that produced the lifestyle studies at Stanford University (Mitchell, 1983). One can only gain so much from quasi-analytic lists and sublists of emotions available in the lifespace. After that what does one do? Much like the statistical bonus one gets with interaction terms, one puts groups of emotions back together in packages--lifestyles--hoping that in so doing that the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. Focus groups are studies of whole people of known demographic background. One sees demography in action, one also gets a natural flow of real words and feelings. When one's goal is to reflect the real back to real people, why use intermediaries (e.g., copywriters) when the real thing is available?

¹⁰Ad agents are free to do what they wish with the aggregate time and attention they purchase. Again, there is no 'iron law' of second-order relations to be read between the lines of content in any particular ad. From a perspective on the process, however, there are grounds for determining whether ad agents make mistakes. Though there seems to have been some movement in the late 1980s, most of the history of drug-abuse ads, for example, could be easily dismissed as misconceived if adolescents were seriously thought to have been the target audience, but not so easily dismissed if the target audience were reconceived as the tax-paying parents whose concerns gave credibility to the actions of relevant social-service agencies.

¹¹Humor, of course, is an exception, and it can be quite funny to see everyday situations distorted into implausible, slapstick scenarios. In such a case, the advertiser may wish to associate a generalized feeling of goodwill with the product so humorously offered. I wish to avoid any tracing out of a precise calculus here--I do not think that one could find formulas within the advertising industry that will determine when to make a happy lifespace commercial and when an outrageously humorous one. Outrageous humor may be too scarce a commodity to depend on--when agency talents happen upon a funny idea, fine. Advertisers have so much opportunity for trial and error that chasing its formulas might be a waste of scarce academic resources.

¹²Rereading Smythe (1977, 1979), I note that upon discovery of the audience commodity, he asked what work it was that individuals performed for capital while at home. Why this question? Aggregate audience attention was making a vital contribution to capital accumulation. From a classical Marxist perspective, there can only be one source of capital accumulation--the human energy that is expended during work. Yet advertising's accumulation of human attention obviously occurs during leisure. Leisure, therefore, was work.

Alternatively, one can maintain that work is work and leisure leisure and rethink the way they articulate with the economy. This would move us beyond what has been done by Harvey (1982, 1989) or Habermas (1983). Once more, it seems that mass communication can take a more active role in the development of social theory on the basis of what its empirical object makes available. Others have still not looked closely at this object.

CHAPTER 10
COMMODITY RELATIONS AND MASS MEDIA EFFECTS

Introduction

Mass media exposure has offered fragmented or informally conceived notions of causal force to audience research. Commodity relations helps gather the fragments back together, enabling audience research to address questions of media power with aggregate data.

The *location* of cause is the collection of firms and agencies that actually produce and distribute contents. Since they are physically outside aggregate lifespaces, knowledge of their causal force must be brought in by professional memory and made observable in its consequences. Toward that end, the chapter discusses effects one should expect to occur from individual time with useful versus relatively useless flows of symbols.¹

These flows immediately suggest that the general audience is divided. One part should perform better and the other worse on the kinds of cognitive tasks a survey researcher could lay out in short visits to lifespaces.² Both the knowledge-gap hypothesis (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970) and Converse's model of political mass belief systems (1964, 1970; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960) reflect this basic idea.³

The chapter does not revise these effects ideas but introduces research models that would allow one to associate mass communication-related causal forces with them. The chapter is not about new media effects but about effects of reasonably completely specified media causes. Three causal models are presented:

- 1) A *basic commodity relations model* associates

commodity relations and the knowledge gap within exposure's traditional domain of daily cyclical time;

2) An *extended commodity relations model*

operationally extends the basic model over longer spans of personal life-historical time;

3) A *full commodity relations model* extends spatially, incorporating the position of the audience researcher in a design for mass political belief outcomes.

In presenting the first two models I assume that individual cognitive states can be characterized as disorganized/organized or knowledge-poor/knowledge-rich. To assume this today one should be able to address the strongly developed opposing claim that one cannot pass summary judgement on the quality of people's minds (Bennett, 1977; Edelstein, 1973; Lane, 1962, 1969, 1973; Nie, Verba, & Petrocik, 1979, 1981; Rucinski, 1989). Moreover, to measure knowledge is to measure content, and I have suggested that content is not measurable outside specific campaign contexts (see chapters 2 and 4). Nevertheless, I set aside these concerns to focus on independent variables during the presentation of the first two models.

The first model is of traditional two-variable form. It comprehends a commodity relations independent variable and a knowledge outcome variable in a design suitable for correlational analysis.

The second model works against the crowded field of independent variables that confronts virtually all who work with survey data (Donohew, Palmgreen, & Rayburn, 1987; Roberts & Maccoby, 1985). After associating some version of mass media exposure with a family of dependent variables, researchers often control for large numbers of presumably non-media causes. These variables come from everywhere

within the lifespace (Lewin, 1951; Klapper, 1960; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1975, 1982), forcing survey researchers to spread their expertise among a world of human concerns, perhaps to master none except the process of model-making itself (see, e.g., Luskin, 1990). To recenter research attention on media processes, the second model tries to outline a boundary between media-related and -unrelated causal forces, with the idea that the former should constitute a domain of special interest to media scholars.

Since Hirsch's strident critique of cultivation theory (1980, 1981), non-media independent variables have played an increasing role in multivariate models of effects (see, e.g., Roberts & Maccoby, 1985)--even contemporary versions of cultivation theory (Hawkins & Pinegree, 1989; Potter, 1986, 1991). That theory is now seen as interesting for what it might reveal about subgroup differences (Signorielli & Morgan, 1989). Education, race, ethnicity, status, family structure, age, attention, involvement, and a wealth of other venerable variables now stand ready to turn media scholars into social psychologists--which would be fine if the media were not lost in the process.

To clear out more space for future research into media power, I introduce a second, extended commodity-relations model for predicting the knowledge gap. In this extended model I take up a theme from chapter 6, *viz*, that there is no reason to limit the temporal backdrop of media-related causes to the twenty-four hour day. Using more extensive temporal backdrops, the model aims to express individuals' years of commodity relationships with mass and quasi-mass communicators (Menzel, 1971).

With this second model, the study's goal of tracing out an overall domain of media-related causal forces for traditional audience research will have been completed. Both the twenty-four hour day and the individual lifecycle are systematically mined for the media-related causal forces

they contain. One may still control commodity relations for catalogs of third variables (while perhaps having to deal with substantial collinearities in the data), but the empirical meanings of a simple, three-category variable will stand ready to assist those who might wish to challenge the third-variable onslaught and seek a general understanding of the effects of mass communicator activity.

Only after providing this extended model will I return to the controversial assumption that had been set aside: that audience researchers may say that one audience subgroup is intelligent while another is ignorant. I will suggest that the assumption may often be warranted, and I will use a third commodity relations model to explain why.

This third, full model is yet another version of the basic commodity-relations design. It extends across space instead of time. We need this spatial extension to grasp a class of agents important to media effects research but traditionally ignored--ourselves. Perhaps always, but especially when outcome variables are formed through acts of intellectual judgment, the position of the interpreter must be taken into account in order to see the *object* the interpreter has crafted.

Researcher activity is presently taken into account epistemologically (e.g. Chaffee, 1991). It is as if, having for some reason become self-conscious, we look at the rules of our research behavior to see if they are good, and in doing so we ignore the objects we craft with those rules. Some scholars consider it misguided or wrong to see mass ignorance in survey data (e.g., Bennett, 1977; Rucinski, 1989). They have adopted closer, more intensive forms of observation of smaller groups of individuals (e.g., Fiske, 1987; Morley, 1980; Radway, 1984), to make cases for lay cognitive quality.

As in past chapters, I try to skirt discussion of scholarly rules in addressing this assumption. I will use

Converse's notion of mass belief systems to empirically locate political scientists in relation to the mass communication process they observe with surveys. Using commodity relations to outline the empirical setting, I will argue that national research programs such as Michigan's long study of American voters actually uncover situations of mutual ignorance *between* lay and professional communities. The final section of the chapter will address problems and research possibilities stemming from acceptance of an idea of mutual ignorance.

A Basic Commodity Relations Model

The Knowledge-Gap Hypothesis in Daily Cyclical Time

As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970, pp. 159-160).

This early statement of the knowledge-gap hypothesis was itself a summary evaluation of decades of accumulated professional experience in the conduct of information campaigns (Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947; Star & Hughes, 1950; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McFee, 1954). With evident frustration, Hyman and Sheatsley called one part of the mass public "chronic know-nothings" (1947).

Characterizing terms have since been laundered. Bauer spoke admiringly of audience obstinacy (1964), and many other ways to characterize differences in knowledge levels may be found in the campaign literature. Semantic distinctions aside, the hypothesis stands today much as it was made in 1970 (see, e.g. Gaziano, 1985; and Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1986). Campaign research continues to find what, by induction, seems to be a cognitively defined

bifurcation in the mass audience across a wide range of topics diffused in information campaigns.

Exceptions are sometimes found around topics related to world-shaking events outside the context of campaigns, as in the death of President Kennedy (Greenberg, 1964), but even in these situations, one subgroup of the population seems to have more deeply organized information than another about the same event (see Spitzer and Denzin, 1965) after a short while.

Since knowledge gaps are typically found in campaign research contexts, researchers may be expected to have prior knowledge of a social agency's information diffusion goals within some topical and targeted audience domain (see also chapter 4). When knowledge of the social agent's intentions is available, scholars are able to measure topically bound knowledge levels using the agency's definitions to give content a metric.

The campaign context explains why a researcher might actually observe an "information infusion" when using the prototypical knowledge-gap formulation. A campaign's legitimacy, after all, depends on professional, often data-based, perceptions of an initial knowledge deficit and a determination that an agency must act to erase it. The idea that an infusion of information is needed (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970) relies on prior campaign circumstances, and gaps themselves result from observation of the infusion's consequences. They are not things a researcher would be able to observe when contacting lifespaces cold.

Perhaps because the knowledge-gap hypothesis has been so closely tied to campaign research, where the bifurcation is encountered in topically narrow contexts, little headway has been made in explaining the gap's genesis more generally--what may hold for one topical domain, one may perpetually propose, may not hold for another. In

addition, social and psychological contexts (as controls) may function differently within different topical and targeted audience frameworks. Expectations of finding generalizable patterns take a back seat to attitudes of readiness for surprise and contingency, deflecting attention away from patterns that may already be there.

All adolescents presumably need information on family and occupational planning, for example, yet some adolescents acquired much more information than others (Kline, Miller, & Morrison, 1974). The prototypical campaign researcher, perpetually surprised by such findings, thus hedges her bets on cause: Is the gap observed here created by "the infusion of mass media information" (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970), by a pre-existing distribution of socioeconomic statuses, or by both?

Since the knowledge-gap hypothesis still tends to be associated with campaign research and with two very vaguely outlined causal domains, it is not clear how an audience researcher should proceed. The most complete set of suggestions for future research I have found is Gaziano's (1985, pp. 489-494), and it is not promising.

Gaziano notes that little is presently known about the media as a causal force (pp. 489-490). She suggests that future knowledge-gap research should use panel designs, vary levels of information infusion, vary time spans between infusion and audience contact, sort out topics that may be of intrinsic interest to the lower in status, reach out and comprehend interpersonal network resources, and do some operational work with exposure. "Types of media studied may vary," she notes, "as may measurement of media contact--use, frequency of exposure, ownership, message discrimination, and so on" (p. 488).

Unfortunately, this broad agenda holds out few prospects from clarification of the media's causal role in generating knowledge-gap effects. Panel studies will not

help if they only accumulate findings with poorly conceived media/audience linkages over time. Varying the amount of information diffused is not a realistic possibility, as it implies availability of resources beyond those possessed by most social agencies as well as researchers. Working with temporal variations between information infusion and audience contact become moot for the same reason. As for interpersonal networks, Gaziano notes, correctly I believe, that they may be indicators of social status resources, which would lead media researchers away from the presumably principal object of their interest.

As for the assumption that a researcher might have prior knowledge of what may or may not be interesting to those of lower social status, a move from such a position to questions of media cause is confounded by at least three considerations. One, where would a researcher find such lists of topics? Two, and this is a point Gaziano also made, topics that might be interesting to those lower in status might still be more comprehensively understood by those of higher status, so that after an initial absence of a gap when knowledge is defined as simple recognition or awareness, the gap returns when forms of depth knowledge are considered (p. 491). Third, the entire matter of topic salience still points back to the status distribution as locus of cause--the media as a causal force slips away in a fog of semantic complexity and uneven findings (Horstmann, 1991).

The basic model of commodity relations bypasses concerns for specific campaign topic saliences and status distributions and focuses instead on what Gaziano listed as operational matters. Little insight into the media's role in generating knowledge gaps can be gained if by media relations one means the rather eclectic list of exposure-like things given above. However, by situating commodity relations in the exogenous position in an effects model, we

begin to gain a clearer picture of just what might be causing knowledge gaps across a diverse array of topical domains. Figure 10.1 presents this simple argument.

For knowledge about any topic that is formulated prior to observation by either a social agency or a scholar, whether knowledge is defined as a quantity of recalled items, as a quality of their complexity, or for their thought-generating capacity, commodity relations predicts the following:

- (1) Associations between aggregate time in first-order relations and knowledge outcomes will be positive.
- (2) Associations between aggregate time in second-order relations and knowledge outcomes will be nil or negative.
- (3) In the United States, associations between aggregate time in non-commodified relations and knowledge outcomes will also be positive.

Both the Figure and these statements summarize what we should expect to find as a result of direct individual relationships with the ideal-typical mass communicators discussed in chapter 9. Non-commodified and first-order firms tend to work with better knowledge of the initial states of their audiences and better senses of where and how much they might be moved as a result of reception and internalization of knowledge offerings.

At the same time, for second-order agencies, knowledge outcomes--especially those that topically overlap with news--will be substantially lower than those for non-commodified and first-order relations, and possibly negative (see, e.g., McLeod & McDonald, 1985, p. 12, for a negative outcome with a pure second-order variable--commercial television news).

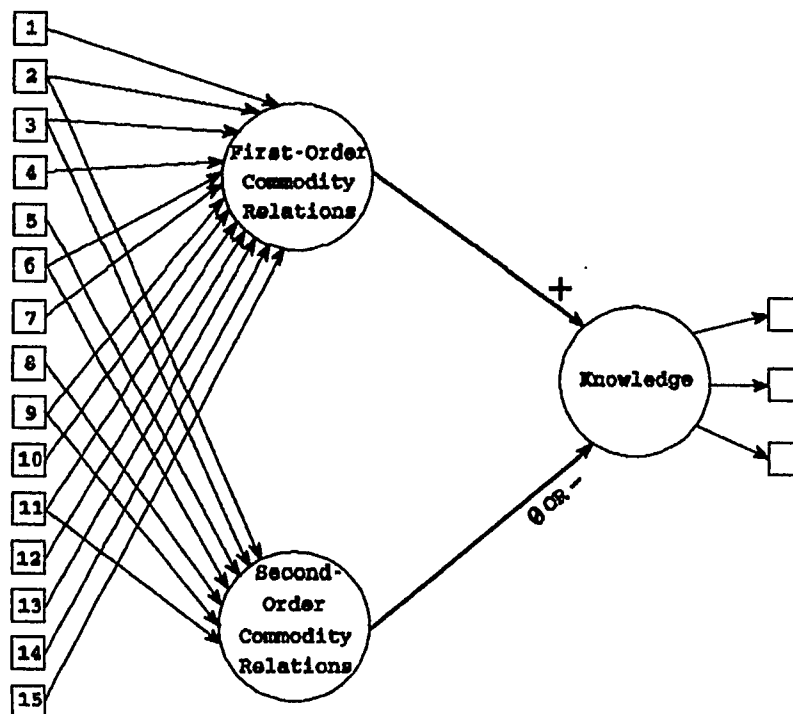


Figure 10.2 A Basic Commodity Relations Model

Why possibly negative? It seems counter-intuitive that time in front of a cascade of symbols would erase knowledge. Erasure of knowledge cannot be investigated in cross-sectional study, but I suggest that even negative findings (with perhaps sample grand mean performances as baseline) could be explained when we consider the orienting principle that defines second-order flows.

The primary aim of non-advertising portions of second-order flows is to gather audience attention for sale to advertisers. Pursuit of this goal results in breakups of narrative flows and insertions of visually striking and presumably attention-gathering images on paper and in

electromagnetic emissions. Once attention is gathered and given to advertisers, individuals are told that the solution to problems they presently hold in mind are not so much had by internalizing new knowledge principles but, simply, by buying products that externally embody solutions (Solomon, 1983). I do not think that even negative outcomes should be regarded as counter-intuitive once we hold the aim of the second-order mass communicator in mind.

All of this presumes, of course, that 'knowledge' has been successfully specified and observed. Figure 10.1 depicts knowledge as a latent construct, with three indicators placed there arbitrarily. Knowledge, whatever it is, need not be isomorphic with the media stimulus (McLeod & Reeves, 1980). The stimuli are the pools of time that flow from left to right in the Figure. Commodity relations do not ask the researcher to find out what particular mass communicators wished to say to an audience and then chase the results. They do, however, require that the researcher say what she wished to know about audience cognition.

An Extended Commodity Relations Model

Knowledge Gaps and the Life Cycle

The basic commodity relations model only helps clarify the direct linkage between media agency and audience cognition within the familiar domain restriction of the twenty-four-hour day. It has not, however, addressed the following problems:

- (1) Are quantities of individual time stable over time (Allen, 1981)?
- (2) Is the cyclical day a sufficient temporal backdrop?
- (3) Should a knowledge-gap effect engendered by commodity relations be expected to withstand controls? (Gaziano, 1983)
- (4) What is knowledge? (Edelstein, 1973; Gaziano,

1983; Rucinski, 1989)

The extended model will assist in addressing the first three questions.

I used the cyclical day to define commodity relations' domain as an independent variable largely in deference to implicit or explicit temporal backdrops to previous conceptions of exposure. Accessing this domain with the strategy presented in chapter 8 should not be an overwhelming operational problem. However, concern does remain regarding just what it or any less comprehensive selection of media exposure variables actually accesses in the lifespace.

For example, if a person reports reading books for an hour a day, the assumption is that one hour is a magnitude that reliably expresses the individual's time in first-order relations over an indeterminate span of her past life. She *normally* reads for an hour a day, she says, and, we *assume* that she has done so for some time when we allow her self-report to be expressed in this way.

As Allen noted for traditional exposure measures (1981), we should not be so quick to assume that quantities of individual time with media are stable over longer spans of time. Commodity relations has been operationally defined in daily cyclical time, and since it is a new concept for audience research, I have no data or reason to believe that individual magnitudes of time in first- and second-order relations would be any more stable across longer periods than are individual reports of time with television, the newspaper, or news and public affairs contents (Allen, 1981; Allen & Taylor, 1985).

At this stage in discussion I wish to affirm Allen's observations and extend them within the present context of commodity relations and knowledge-gap effects. What the issues of reliability and stability amount to is

this: When we ask individuals to report their media uses in quantities of daily cyclical time, we *hope* that what they report is a habitual behavior, one that extends far enough into their unobserved pasts to be a stable and measurably consequential presence in the lifespace for survey research in the present.

In normal cross-sectional contexts we have little evidence to back us up on the assumption of stability. Furthermore, research on media use across the lifecycle suggests that there is substantial, predictable variation in the quantities of daily time that one will spend with various media devices (Bower, 1973; Comstock, Chaffee, Katzman, McCombs, & Roberts, 1978; Dimmick, McCain, & Bolton, 1981; Rosengren, 1991). Casual inspection of reported variations across devices suggests that people will stand in distinct commodity relations depending on the stage of the lifecycle they occupy.

Many children's days are, relatively speaking, filled with second-order relations. Schooling, an inherited institutional phenomenon, makes adolescents stand more fully in non-commodified and first-order streams, which in turn begin to recede with the onset of adulthood (unless one attends college), whereafter second-order relations become more important once again, at least when we look at aggregate data.

It appears that operationalizing either mass media exposure or commodity relations against the backdrop of the cyclical day, while useful and possibly necessary, is likely not sufficient for any design that aims to speak in general terms about mass media effects. Exhausting the domain of the cyclical day, as commodity relations does, still does not accurately or exhaustively capture the causal force of the media in the normal course of people's lives. The twenty-four hour domain of exposure likely presents empirical problems for which observational remedies should be

developed. Before making positive recommendations, let me consider the third question, as the remedy implicates the subdomain of non-media or social-experiential causes (Hirsch, 1981).

(3) Should a knowledge-gap effect engendered by commodity relations be expected to withstand controls?

The knowledge-gap hypothesis commingles individuals' past family and personal economic histories, present situations, dispositions, and media behaviors, within two neat little abstract phrases. 'Information infusion' and 'socioeconomic status' are to the realities they invoke as 'dictionary' is to the reality of words: Everything is there. To make it a more useful instrument we could try to classify all the groups of meanings it contained, but we could also ask what meanings we really wanted, find them, and only then see if there were more of what we needed in the material we had left behind. Regarding the knowledge-gap hypothesis, communication scholars might be interested in first coming to grips with all that might be involved in 'information infusion.'

Commodity relations already help us see what may be involved outside specific campaign contexts but still within the cyclical day. We simply gather up times in free, priced, and unpriced symbol streams and associate them directly with a knowledge outcome of interest. We can expect something analogous to a generalized information infusion in non-commodified and first-order relations, and something like non- or negative infusion in second-order relations. Is this, however, enough? What about longer-term temporal variations in commodity-relations magnitudes, and what about the way socioeconomic status overlaps with these longer temporal durations?

We are now faced with the question that was first posed in chapter 6's review of Paul Hirsch and cultivation theory (1981). Hirsch added status deprivation to an ad hoc alternative explanation of anomalous outcomes in cultivation research. Cultivation scholars, too, created their own status-overlapping concepts of "mainstreaming" and "resonance" to handle those same anomalies (Gerbner, et al., 1980b).

The original knowledge-gap hypothesis was much less ambitious about media causes than was cultivation theory. As far as I can tell, unlike cultivation scholars, knowledge-gap researchers have not tried to develop a notion of an all-encompassing and possibly monstrous social causal force embodied in or working through the media. Instead, they have repeatedly noted subgroup differences in mean levels of knowledge gain or cognitive performance after single campaigns (Gaziano, 1983). 'Socioeconomic status' merely marks a conceptual space for causes that may one day be found. Jumbled among the possible causes we do not find mass communicators, perhaps because specific agencies remain unimpressed by the degree of knowledge transfer they had been able to attain through their campaigns.

Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970) state the present case reasonably clearly: Lots of status results in lots of information gain; little status results in little information gain.⁴ Why this is so we can initially understand informally--the high in status have probably acquired more cognitive resources over their life cycles. Applying those resources to a stream of symbols will result in more knowledge. But what have we really learned here? What would count as a 'resource,' and what would not?

We have a sense of what would count as resources within the cyclical day, but the *temporal* domain of social status, however muddled that same domain might be semantically, extends way beyond this into individual pasts

(Halbwachs, 1980). Commodity relations also allows us access into these pasts, but only by stepping on the toes of many third variables that lay sprawled along the way.

How do we access mass communication's role in earlier 'socialization' processes? Since social status has played such a major explanatory role here (see, e.g., McLeod & Chaffee, 1972), we might first ask whether a commodity relations-generated knowledge gap would withstand status controls.

Commodity relations would survive controls for socioeconomic status to the degree that beta coefficients associated with temporal pools of commodity relations and knowledge outcome variables remained significant after adding a status variable. Absent data, I do not know now what the results would be in a linear model, but given the degree to which media effects associated with very weakly specified samples of mediated contents have survived controls in past research in numerous contexts, I believe it reasonable to anticipate that the effects associated with comparatively larger pools of time would survive status-variable controls.⁵ Categorically stated, within each status group we should find that knowledge outcomes would still be positive for time in non-commodified and first-order relations and zero or negative in second-order relations.

What I am doing here is preparing a set of hypotheses for later empirical research in more or less standard temporal contexts. It is perhaps for the best that no data have yet been gathered, as in the next part of this discussion I hope to disturb the status domain enough so that mass communication researchers will at least pause before grabbing from an available painter's palate of third variables when controlling for media outcomes.

In Figure 10.2, two sets of constructs associated with commodity relations have been included in the model.

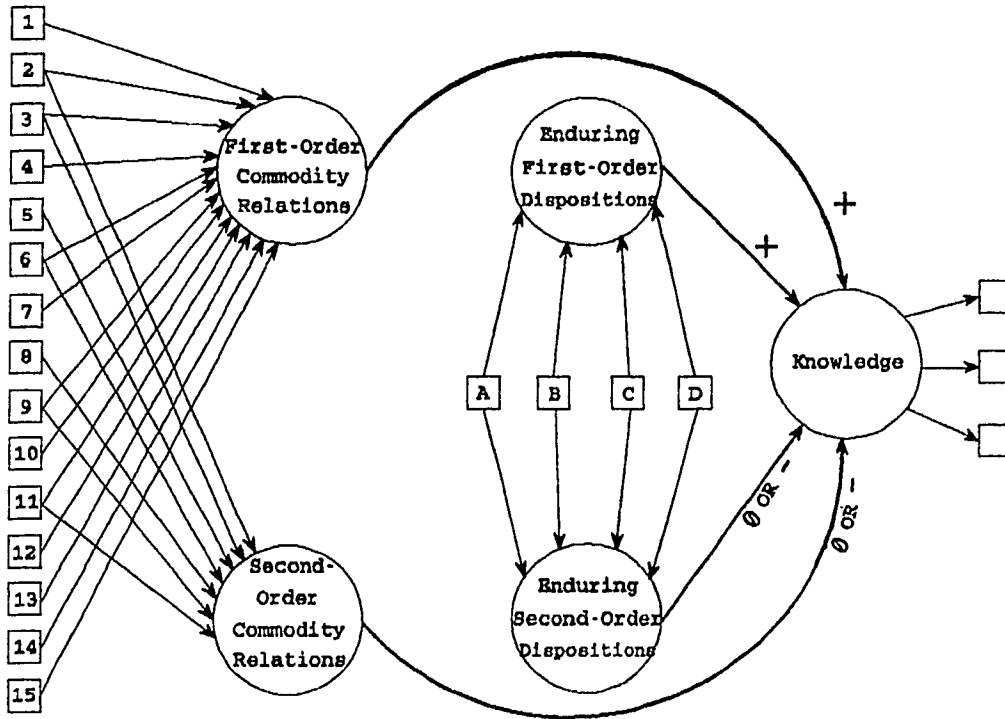


Figure 10.2. An Extended Commodity Relations Model

The relations in the most exogenous position are those found in Figure 10.1 above. Their domain is the cyclical day, their empirical antecedents remain those introduced in chapters 8 and 9, and they may be used in place of concepts associated with the attention-salience region in chapter 7. The direct paths from these commodity relations to the knowledge-gap outcome remain as they were before.⁶ All I am doing now is adding a second set of commodity constructs to the model. Its indicators are denoted with letters.

The causal force of these new constructs is intended to be precisely the same as those given to the first set. The temporal backdrop, however, is quite different. I call these new constructs "enduring commodity

dispositions." They are intended to replace concepts associated with the involvement-reliance region from chapter 7, and they would have to be operationalized with their own set of lifespace indicators.

The purpose of this second set of indicators is to try to capture, as best one can, past variations in commodity relations. Assuming that commodity relations are now more familiar, I would like to speak first of this purpose and turn later to operational considerations.

With this model we might acknowledge that there are individuals with few family resources, who reach school completely unprepared, who leave school without really learning how to function within first-order symbol streams, and who, in their adulthood, stand in second-order streams of symbols almost exclusively after having experienced second-order pasts. To the degree that can find people whose entire history unfolds outside first-order relations, we can begin to speak empirically not just of an abstract aggregation of second-order time that might be created in data analysis, but of real, flesh-and-blood second-order people, people whose entire relationship with symbols is structured by the imperatives outlined in chapter 9: Solutions to problems are had by purchasing goods; meanings attach to goods are to be displayed or 'read' when displayed by others, and not internalized (Solomon, 1983).

Similarly, we might find that there are people whose lives begin in resource-rich contexts, so that they are surrounded in their childhoods by first-order discourse in texts of all sorts and in the utterances of parents who themselves are able to function within first-order temporal streams. The general principle that ideas are meant to be taken in, reworked, made one's own in some way so that one may later produce new ideas of one's own, may describe the early experiences of some survey respondents. Later in their lives, the focused first-order discourse in the classroom or

church and the surrounding maze of first-order texts, idea films and arts, may be seen as an extension of a familiar environment with familiar internal divisions (Bourdieu, 1986). Enduring attention to useful texts and conversation may also make the second-order world seem like one of strange others: ignorant, consuming machines who become swayed by demagoguery from time to time.

At adulthood, these thoughtful, discerning individuals might be regarded as first-order persons--again, an abstract research category may actually be embodied in some persons. The work of these persons might involve continued use of first-order symbol streams, perhaps even production of new first-order streams of their own (Bell, 1976).

If a first-order child is less than successful in achieving a professional occupation in adulthood, we might find continued consumption of first-order texts during leisure,⁷ but we might also find a person who has, in a sense, fallen, by giving up the practice of internalizing and using symbols and letting the consumer-goods industry do his symbolic work for him.⁸ Similarly, we might find that persons with second-order backgrounds have, in a sense, risen, when as adults they begin to position themselves within first-order symbol streams by developing a thirst for something better, attending night school, participating in religious activities, and so on.⁹

Let me make two general observations about this extended commodity relations model. First, it makes available an expanded set of causal forces to explain an outcome. It does so by picking up a thread of analysis left dangling in chapter 6 and 7, that individuals might possess media dispositions in the present that are in some sense an accumulation of experiences in the past. By including constructs whose aim is to capture the past that stands uncertainly beyond the reach of present dispositions

captured in the cyclical day, this design would address concerns for stability that Allen noted in 1981. Present dispositions are more likely related to present lifecycle stage, and if so we need some way to access the individual's personal past. The extended design provides a plan for this.

In addition, Figure 10.2 suggests that it may be interesting to keep distinct constructs for media habits present and past. It is the only way I can see to isolate instances where we might investigate pure relational dispositions as they might be embodied in living people. It is difficult to maintain a sense of what is real at a level of lived experience if one works only with aggregate quantities based on multiple observations across a sea of lifespaces. To the degree that a person's past gives evidence of continuity into the present, then we may indeed speak of first- and second-order people. If so, then commodity relations categories could be taken up and used by those who work not only with survey data but with whole people.

In the context of the knowledge gap, we could say that knowledge differences would be at their greatest when first- and second-order people are compared. As for people who embody second-order pasts and first-order present habits, or vice-versa, I think these combinations are interesting, particularly in the case of the United States, as they express a kind of upward and downward mobility in an 'information' economy.

In the aggregate, people with mixed commodity-relations histories might fall between purer first- and second-order people in terms of how much they would learn as result of an information infusion. Perhaps the first-order adult with a second-order past might gain more than her fallen counterpart, as we might find that the recency of development of her cognitive tools would be reflected in better cognitive performances when the survey researcher

makes contemporary contact with her.

I am working through these possibilities quickly, as I do not think it fruitful at this point to speculate at length on how this extended model would articulate with the knowledge-gap hypothesis. I have not yet addressed questions (3) or (4), and without a fix on where third-variable domains begin or on what knowledge is in research contexts such as this one, speculation becomes empty. Let me then turn directly to the issue of third variables.

When I discussed the background of pure first- and second-order people, I worked largely with a notion of presence or absence of first-order resources in one's family background, and I decomposed the institution of education into first-order flows of texts in lecture, study, and leisure. I did the same thing in chapter 6 when reviewing Hirsch's category of social experience, but let me bring that discussion's central thesis into the present context. It is simply this: To the degree that an individual's past institutional experiences can themselves be decomposed into their non-commodified, first- and second-order temporal parts, then there is a real theoretical problem in determining whether or not a variable like education or a construct like socioeconomic status should actually stand as a control in a media effects design, whatever the outcome variable.

In the design depicted in Figure 10.2, enduring commodity dispositions overlap with other presumably non-mass media dispositions. Let me briefly indicate how this is so by discussing the operational tools (actually, areas for survey question development) that might be used to gain access to these dispositions and, through them, to individual past histories.

Operationally, the temporal backdrop of enduring commodity dispositions is not the twenty-four-hour day but the individual's entire life.¹⁰ An age variable is thus

required to provide an initial empirical domain for more extended commodity relations (see Chaffee, 1991, for a media-free explication of age).

The evidence that we may obtain about an individual's family background could be used as part of a socioeconomic status construct, as often happens in status attainment research, but it could just as well be an indicator of degree of presence or absence of first-order symbol streams in the individual's early years. With respect to enduring commodity dispositions, we might begin with an arbitrary value derived by interpreting the degree to which family resources might translate into accumulations of time in first- and second-order symbol streams. I am not sure what an appropriate operational form would be here as we are dealing with a distant past. A question could focus on availability of books in the house, on paid music or dance lessons, or on parent's occupation. From what we could gather here we would proceed by applying ratios to the individual's early lifecycle years and allocating proportions of that time to the associated dispositions. The process is similar to that for decomposing time with newspapers and other media devices representing mixed sources of revenue in chapter 8. We would likely incur more error, however, as we would not have anything equivalent to industry financial data to help us construct these ratios. Indicator A stands as a place marker for operational decisions to capture the commodity relations that envelop an individual's first years of life.

Matters become a bit easier once we try to follow the individual through her educational years. Years of education itself, indicator B, would provide evidence of accumulated time in first-order relations.¹¹ Indicator C marks a place where we might try to focus in on these years more closely. One might include a distinction for public- or private-school years, ask about credentials actually

obtained, about grade-point average during last year of school, or even about when it was that the individual last attended classes. Credentials and last grades could give some evidence of whether or not one's years in first-order streams 'took,' resulting in the reproduction of an individual who had learned how to appropriate, internalize and use symbols. Last year or date of attendance at class could give a sense of how much time had passed between the present interview and a time in the individual's past when internalization of symbols was more than a passing concern outside a leisure context.

Indicator D marks a spot for more the more contemporary work histories individuals may have. Here one could ask the individual what educational credentials were actually required for the various (or most important) occupations they have had. As for work-related symbolic consumption in the present, the set of questions given in chapter 8 would likely capture much of the first-order activity that might be expected to occur during a lay or professional person's leisure hours. Indicator D aims at capturing first-order activity at work that chapter 8's leisure-centered indicators might miss.

Overall, a program of pilot study stands between the operational ideas sketched out here and the production of a definitive set of survey questions. At this point, however, it is important to note just how firmly commodity relations may encroach upon education and, with work, upon other social experiential variables like occupation and even religion. How far they might be observed to encroach upon these other areas is not something I can answer now. That commodity relations *do* encroach, however, is the point I wish to make. Before moving on, let me discuss a matter of scope that has crept into the extended commodity relations model.

Operationally, enduring commodity dispositions are

made of the same dimensions of time, media devices, and financial articulations as commodity relations in the cyclical day. As that time extends, operational lists of media devices expand, as first-order time in education includes the classroom setting,¹² where a live instructor is the medium of paid symbolic flows.

The move from inanimate to living media might suggest that there is a categorical distinction between education and mass communication.¹³ However, commodity relations themselves suggest we use media devices, even living ones, as observational conveniences, and place no theoretical weight on their import as vulgar empirical things. Their meaning ultimately rests on financial articulations to generalized communicating others and their metric on quantities of individual time. Televisions are media devices, but so are teachers, lawyers, clerics, clinical psychologists, astrologers and computers. Commodity relations' basic dimensions force us to see them this way sooner or later. The concept of 'mass' has only been loosely defined in this work, and when we acknowledge its limited utility, we let these other media in. In doing so we stumble into the third-variable terrain marked by received notions of social experience (e.g. Hirsch, 1981). I think it might be more interesting to follow where this stumbling leads rather than stop at a road sign that marks the end of a foggy domain called 'mass.'

There is a certain aesthetic and historical inertia, and real savings in survey construction time, accruing to the use of standard social experiential variables and domain divisions in survey research. Those who use surveys to explore non-media-related outcomes might be expected to pause at the prospect of rethinking social experiences in terms of the temporal economics of commodity relations. Insofar as these scholars find the language of status ascription or attainment not too abstract or

unwieldy, and insofar as they are satisfied with the amount of variance they can explain with standard experiential variables, they might have a stake in upholding present boundaries between media-related and -unrelated lifespace phenomena.

The situation is different for media effects researchers, however. At present, they work both theoretically and operationally with only the barest sense of what media causal forces are or how these forces might be observed within the lifespace. The tendency for commodity relations to allow one's thoughts and observation to extend beyond the cyclical day and immediate lifespace (as in the next section) might initially seem unattractive, as it would force media scholars to theoretically delimit an independent variable domain. They have not had to put much energy into such delimitation in the past. Television was television, newspapers were newspapers. They seemed different from each other and that was enough.

However, in those instances where a media scholar is competing with a sociologist or a political scientist for a research grant, and where the issue becomes what it might be that media variables can explain in a problem area that other variables cannot, then this expanded commodity relations model might be useful. It has one advantage over standard survey designs that combine exposure and social experiential variables: One need not hold the entire sketch I have given in one's head. Instead, one can work with the three commodity relations themselves and, extending them through time in the lifespace, generate a research design suitable for any specific research context.

To make comparisons between media effects theories and commodity relations (an internal community affair), one recreates and observes commodity relations in daily cyclical time. To explore the media's role in lifelong socialization processes (a gesture that engages other social science

disciplines; see also McLeod & Chaffee, 1972), one tries to gain access to the individual's past commodity relations.

The core ideas are not too difficult to work with in thought, and objects to which they refer stand ready to help assess measurement compromise and error in accessing the past as well as the present. Much work needs to be done here, but it seems that media effects researchers might be in a better position, both intellectually and motivationally, to begin this work and perhaps breathe some life into the stale variable families inherited from social psychology.

With this initial sketch of what I believe would be two research designs that would fit within the traditional bounds of survey research, let me now move on to develop a full commodity relations model, one which will allow us to gain a perspective on question (4), a question which has not only plagued knowledge-gap and mass political belief systems research, but the use of surveys in general.

A Full Commodity Relations Model

(4) What is Knowledge?

Though one may explore commodity relations' predictive power for any physical *behavioral* outcome accessible in the lifespan (lack of voting, for example, may be an outcome of second-order relations¹⁴), the knowledge-gap hypothesis, the theory of mass political belief systems (Converse, 1964), and cognitive outcomes in general, assume an ability to measure knowledge. Words expressing something that an individual holds inside--knowledge--must be systematically interpreted and expressed in quantitative form, so that a researcher may say at the very least that one group of people possessed more and another comparatively less of that subjective something. The researcher has to pass judgment on the quality and quantity of each respondent's utterances. I can see no way around this.

As I argued in chapter 2, content is difficult to work with, primarily because we do not know what its appropriate unit of measure should be. Content was therefore bypassed when commodity relations were defined as an independent variable in chapter 8 and when general mass communicator intentions were explored in chapter 9. Content has never been vehicle for anything in the main lines of this study. Consequential meanings of the social (Gerbner, 1958a) are not discerned in the interplay of signifier and signified but observed in the activities of media firms, and then carried by professional memory to the lifespace, there to be linked not with content but with individual time.

Most dependent variables, indeed many complete effects theories, require the researcher to make and measure another body of content--that which is voiced by survey respondents and recorded for further study (McLeod & Reeves, 1980). As discussion of the knowledge-gap hypothesis has already implied, I do not see it as generically inappropriate to work with this other body of content. Given the position staked out in the early chapters, how could it now be acceptable to take a body of content, discern magnitudes within and, through the subsequent accumulation of variation, judge the quality of mind that stands behind its production?

My position has been that a researcher could not effectively evaluate content as an independent stimulus domain, campaign research excepted. Detailed reasons were given, mostly to address specific past practices, but the general reason is this: Content analysis generally ignores the fact that content comes from somewhere. It owes its existence and magnitude to the intentions of its producing agent. Without attempting to discern the agent's aims, content becomes an eviscerated thing.

Knowledge of what a specific mass communicator intends to say to a target group allows the researcher to

identify, classify and count relevant parts of respondent utterances later on. Though this design may work well for campaign research, it cannot likely be extended far beyond single campaign and agent settings.

For example, should one interview a television entertainment program authorial team for its communicative aims, one would still have to weigh their responses against the decisions of network programming directors, station managers, syndication executives, advertising agencies, sponsors, and against the authorial team's internalized and perhaps conflicting senses 1) what they want to say and, 2) how entertainment industries work. Teasing out the effects of these various interests in a program's content could be perhaps be done (see Altschull, 1983; and Shoemaker, 1987; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991), as, at least logically, it would merely be an extension of the early message discrimination research. One could later add evidence of audience reception to see which among the original coven of motives held sway. However, a considerable effort along this line would be needed to capture the mix of intentions behind a single program series.

Commodity relations speak to the production of all program types and magnitudes conveyed by all media devices within the march of cyclical days. Not only do they force us to consider all agents intending to diffuse all kinds of information, but they also place numerous agencies in our laps that seem little concerned with conveying information at all. Commodity relations therefore do not give the kind of guidance one would need to give meaning and metrics to all the contents an aggregation of survey respondents might recall. That content does not 'work' with commodity relations has been all right until now, since they can be operationalized as an *independent variable* without content relatively easily.

How, then, could one put content *outcomes* in a

effects research design along with commodity relations? Simply by remembering that in effects research a third party will always stand in the observed relationship between mass communicators and audiences. When working with mass communicator categories too comprehensive for work with specific topics or, as in the case of second-order relations, too marked by goals other than knowledge transfer, then the grounding of content contained in a dependent variable can still be done by referring to the relationship between the researcher and the interviewed subject.

The result can be considered an evaluation of the performance of a generalized mass communicator with respect to the researcher's own area of interest and competency, whether the researcher's interest overlaps with that of the mass communicator or not. Figure 10.3 illustrates this idea. Let me unpack it using Converse's research on mass political belief systems and some of the critical responses it has engendered.

Commodity Relations and Mass Political Belief Systems

To the extended commodity relations model I have added a new construct, political scientists, from which lines move outward in two directions. One set of lines moves left and feeds into general mass communicators, so the latter, too, have been placed in the full model. Like mass communicators, political scientists and their relational lines remain dashed because we are dealing with empirical phenomena that may not be reflected in survey research variables (see also chapter 9).

The new objects in the full commodity relations model depict the following empirical processes. First, the utterances of political scientists regularly appear in various media. Some of those media are produced for first-order consumption, as when a political scientist writes for or appears in temporal flows produced by first- or second-

order media firms. When the utterances of political

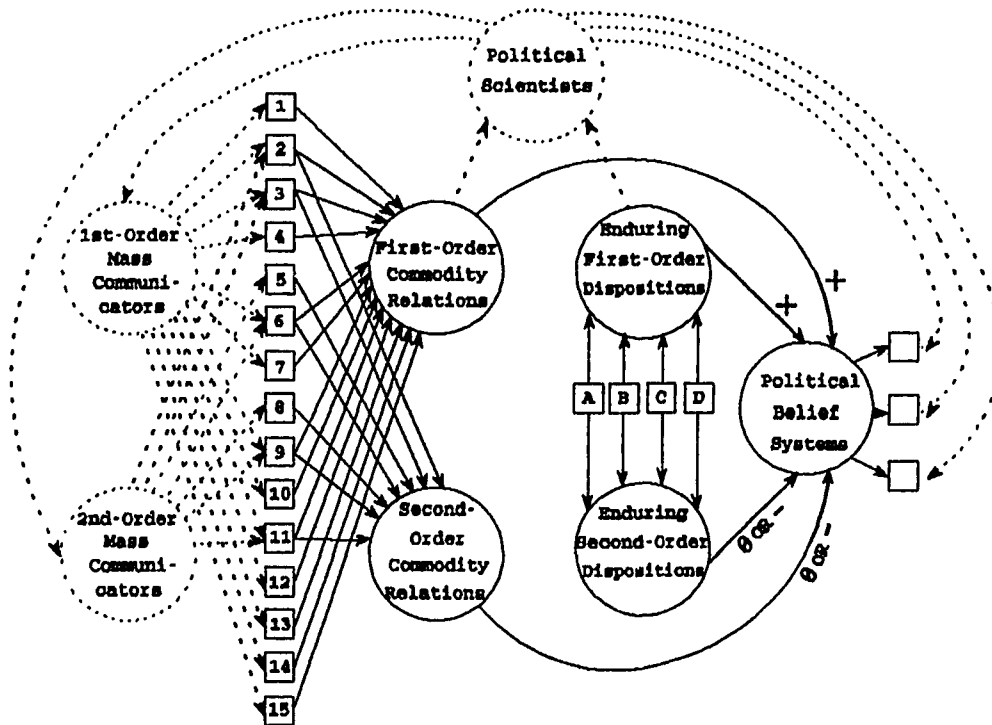


Figure 10.4. A Full Commodity Relations Model

scientists become part of the mass communication process in this way, they become part of mass media content, which we will ignore.

Secondly, lines move out from political scientists to the indicators for the dependent variable construct, labeled "mass political beliefs" in Figure 10.3. This is to show where survey questions intended to tap topical domains like this one come from--political scientists, not mass communicators.

Because mass political belief indicators come from

political scientists, we look not to 'culture' or 'the media' or anywhere else for their empirical grounding and meaning. Political scientists are intending agents; they must have had reasons to acquire resources and conduct surveys in which they ask so many people they do not know questions about such matters as who their congressperson is, whether Democrats are conservative or liberal, or whether electric power should be a private or a state monopoly. Those reasons may make it useful to 1) see mass political beliefs as knowledge and 2) find out how that knowledge is distributed across the population.

A political scientist might occupy the position depicted in Figure 10.3 for two types of reasons. The first type is purely disinterested: He simply wants to know, non-judgmentally, who thinks what about politics, much as uses and gratifications researchers wanted to know why people used the media in the 1970s (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974).

This first type of reasoning corresponds to the idea that the political scientist is somehow charged with the responsibility for keeping track of all thought relevant to the political process in the empirical world. We might say that this curiosity corresponds to a 'surveillance function' that seems to be imputed to the position of the political scientist from time to time.

Whether political scientists are, in fact, charged with such a function will not be discussed, as, taken seriously, total surveillance puts the political scientist in an impossible position. People give all sorts of phenomena political connotations. They organize their thoughts differently, so that the resulting wholes, at the individual level, will vary in internal organization and external referential scope and direction, while the resulting aggregate wholes, which we are here calling "mass political beliefs," will remain unclassifiable and

irreducible unless classification criteria are arbitrarily introduced. Because an initial position of detached curiosity leaves no agent as basis for the introduction of such criteria, the data either remain a large mess or else the detachment of the position itself becomes empirically unreal. Since this study deals with the empirical meanings of terms, the position of the detached political scientific observer will be set aside, as will its object--the holy grail of mass political beliefs (Price, 1992), comprehensively and objectively described.

What remains? To answer this question we return once more to the position of the political scientist. In addition to being a researcher, many political scientists are teachers of their discipline's store of specialist knowledge. That position forces political scientists to create a body of shared dispositions and knowledge for classroom and professional diffusion. To the degree that political scientists have been able to produce these things, they are able to evaluate the efforts of students who pass through their classrooms and others who pretend to their craft. The evaluative criteria they use have an arbitrary component. It is not purely objective knowledge of political objects and processes that they test, but the angle on those processes that has come to be valued by the political scientific community to which they belong.

Whether this somewhat arbitrary testing process is good or bad I cannot judge, even from a commodity relations perspective. I am laying out an empirical object, and what seems to hold for political science would also hold for other disciplines and fields. For this study, it is important to identify a teachings-based flow of political knowledge in order to produce a workable domain of political knowledge outcome variables and a way to interpret findings from surveys.

If political knowledge variables can be traced

back to the position of the political scientist as teacher, then a notion of desire attaches to them. The variables represent things a political scientist believes *should* also be known by others. Others *should* know who there congressperson is or whether Democrats are traditionally conservative or liberal. As educated individuals, they *should* themselves locate their own political beliefs or be able to generate a response to questions such as whether electric power should be a private or state monopoly.

If we can assume a body of people like political scientists, and a body of knowledge they share and teach and wish to see distributed among others, we can have an agent behind the dependent variables in Figure 10.3 and, from their standards as to what might count as political knowledge, some means to quantify recalled responses to political knowledge questions when they come in from the field.

Mass political belief research becomes similar to campaign research, with the following exception: Political scientists are observing an empirical domain that exists mostly outside the classroom. Outside the classroom, they have little control over how political knowledge is conveyed or distributed, but they are likely interested in how more general and uncontrolled processes of political information diffusion unfold, and what their consequences might be.

Once we reach this possibility, what commodity relations suggests they will find is not promising. First of all, the position of the political scientist is associated with first-order temporal flows and first-order dispositions. Political scientists produce symbols for sale, directly in themselves or indirectly through the time availed them from salaried positions, and, importantly, they consume symbols crafted by others from similarly economically grounded positions. Just what they manage to craft as political meaning is not the issue here. What is

important is that their crafting unfolds within the first-order temporal stream.

Some of that stream makes its way to part of the aggregate distribution of lifespaces without a change in commodity relations. A first-order flow moves into households in journals of opinion or newsletters. We can expect that analogous first-order streams of political utterances will continue to develop electronically. Devices are not important here. What is important is that when individuals swim in the first-order temporal stream, they maintain a position wherein symbols are to be internalized and used. This position is little different from that the political scientist finds himself in at work, including those moments when he crafts survey questions.¹⁵ He will recognize something of himself and his first-order world in the responses most fully associated with time in first-order relations. Those individuals who swim in this stream will more likely be called knowledgeable or sophisticated when their responses to questions from first-order political scientists are gathered and tallied.

Outside the world of newsletters, opinion journals and unsponsored electronic media, crafted political utterances are also given and conveyed to lifespaces, this time in a second-order stream. Though the political scientist may himself have had every intention of educating or informing the public his utterances reached, those intentions no longer count. He and his utterances are selected and edited for other reasons--primarily to fit within a flow of symbols whose purpose is to grab and sell aggregate attention to advertisers.

This other reason means that his words will normally be few and of short duration. If he somehow senses what second-order organizations want, he will imaginatively recast his knowledge in what he thinks are ways these organizations find acceptable--he will not wax long on

matters political; he will use vivid, snappy language, and so on.

Whether the political scientist is media-wise or not does not much matter. His offerings are slipped here and there into a much larger stream that is generally useless for cognitive purposes. People who swim in this second-order temporal stream might try to make use of the bits and pieces that they receive; should they do so there is little reason to expect that they will construct ideological structures that mirror those of the sporadic cavalcade of political scientists and experts. They will more than likely not produce political knowledge outcomes recognizable as knowledge to the political scientist in his position as teacher. Second-order relations, in short, can be expected to cause lack of recognizable political knowledge.

The political scientist is not accustomed to second-order relations. Not realizing how different they are from his world, the expert who is consulted by the media may only chafe at how his offering were 'taken out of context' or otherwise changed by the journalist or by the apparent 'format' restrictions of the program or publication in which his utterances appeared.

Not aware of its empirical importance in the overall temporal stream of mass communication, his surveys do not include variables that would allow second-order relations to be seen. When the political scientist finds large numbers of people whose political knowledge is fragmented, unorganized and different, he will remain unaware of why this is. Only when a picture of mass political beliefs emerges as an aggregate *outcome* will he be able to see that something other than the world he knows is out there.

Finding out that most people seem not to think about politics the way he or his colleagues do, but without an empirical explanation as to why, the political scientist

faces tough choices. One, he can refuse to accept what he and his colleagues had previously thought was political knowledge. This would put him in the position of undermining his discipline's authority as possessor and teacher of political knowledge. Two, he can look at the data and proclaim the masses to be ignorant. This would make him an elitist and would draw the ire of populists.

There is another option: He can look at his survey instruments and actions and find them wanting. He might say that given brief visits to hundreds of lifespaces, it is impossible to understand the political cognitions of those visited. He can leave the surveys aside and go out and spend time with a handful of people. Observing them closely over a period of time, he can come to understand the meaning of the words they use. With sensitive probing, he can discover that people are either already knowledgeable--he has just learned their language--or that they are quick to learn--once he calls the relation between two political positions to their attention, they are quick to see and respond to a contradiction they may have had in their own thinking. Perhaps, in some instances, they leave the contradictions unresolved, and give the researcher the impression that they were less than shining students of political science--though still more aware of their surroundings than brief surveys might have been able to show.

The first two options are unattractive. Simply questioning the validity of standard political knowledge indicators puts the researcher back in the position of having to observe all lifespaces and be ready to classify any and every utterance as potentially political on a potentially infinite number of dimensions. The second is unattractive, in the first instance, because many do not think it just or accurate to call others ignorant. Another reason will be given further below.

The third position has gained strength in political science and beyond. It rejects the survey for its inability to get at meaning and it replaces it with ethnography. Meaning is then successfully recovered from the empirical world, and people outside political science seem a bit more intelligent than before. The different ways the interviewed handful of individuals may have originally thought about politics are uncovered as lay epistemologies; those epistemologies frame their utterances, and the results, though they may not correspond to knowledge the community of political scientists possessed as teachers, at least has a logic and the possibility of internal coherence. With ethnography, political scientists would seem to avoid the difficult bind survey research would put them in.

From a commodity relations perspective, however, the gains to be had from an ethnographic turn come at a substantial empirical price. First, and most obviously, they come from a process that no longer 'follows after' the aggregate objects produced by mass communication (see also chapter 1). What is true about the few closely observed may not be so for the rest of the unobserved aggregate. Worse, with each discovery of a nuanced meaning object or relation, the lack of generalizability becomes more likely.

The biggest problem, however, stems from the method's strength: In comparison with surveys, ethnographic findings are based on temporally extended interactions between first-order individuals and a mixture of first- and second-order people. There is little problem when first-order people are observed and closely interviewed, as we receive an account of one first-order mind meeting another--something we are already used to in our positions as scholars and, occasionally, as teachers.

However, when the political scientist spends substantial time in a second-order lifespaces, he helps *make* a different object--one that is beginning to move in the

direction of the first-order world, and, with the help of the subject, vice-versa. Respondents will discern the political scientist's concerns and begin to craft meanings for him on the spot, perhaps initially out of politeness. Similarly, the political scientist will put certain professional terms aside and replace them with the linguistic currency he finds in the immediate lifespace. This is all good *making*, but it is this very act of communion between a first-order sensibility and the normally ignored second-order others that does not generalize.¹⁶

This is the key problem ethnography presents, but the story does not end here. If those terms the ethnographer set aside were from the stock of knowledge his community normally used and taught, his field accounts would then contain new forms of political knowledge. Those political scientists who did not make the journey into the second-order world with the ethnographer might have trouble accepting the basis or even understanding the meaning of these interloping political ideas, coming, as they would, from a new and unfamiliar world. In the meantime, these non-journeying researchers would continue to try to make sense of their aggregate survey data. That data would continue to come in descriptively, that is, without explanation, so much of their sense-making would involve the use of new tools or rules for statistical description.

Since these non-journeying political scientists would today sense a paradigmatic threat from their ethnographic colleagues, they might retreat further into their methods and create their own debates about the existential status of mass political beliefs. Their ethnographic brethren, sensing this flight, would write the survey researchers off and take up the task of understanding political culture--a domain of allegedly solid political meanings 'out there' for the taking (but really making) and brought back from the field.

Their distance from the concerns of survey research would also distance them from the survey researcher's object. Notions of aggregation, mass, quantity, or any idea that people are so numerous and poli-cognating as to belie their rendering in categories of meaning, would become notions to delegitimize. The one solid complaint that survey researchers could bring against these ethnographic efforts--that they did not, in fact, manage to spend time with all individuals and, with them, create hybrid meanings--would remain unvoiced. Surveys versus ethnographies would then become an epistemological matter and, in the yearly battles over what kinds of new faculty and grad students would be added, the empirical object of mass communication would continue to loom as an unseen plague on both houses.

I have told a long, just-so story of mass political beliefs research without citations, mostly because the literature itself contains few identifiable narrative lines. An anchoring narrative in place, let me now bring citations back in to summarize.

National election studies conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes; Converse 1964, 1970) began to try to outline the national distribution of political knowledge in 1952.

They used surveys, and their political knowledge questions corresponded to those that might have been acceptable in political science texts or classrooms (Bennett, 1977; Converse, 1964; Kinder & Sears, 1985; Nie, Verba, & Petrocik, 1979; Rucinski, 1989). Converse (1964) found that barely ten percent of the population thought about politics in ways that political thinkers had presumed. The rest, he noted, viewed politics in more concrete and/or fragmented terms.

Perhaps following Lane (1959, 1962, 1969), other political scientists attacked the implication that the

masses were politically ignorant. They argued epistemologically and empirically, and if their arguments did not come to depend on arcane matters of question wording or data manipulation, they emerged more clearly as challenge to the limits and legitimacy of surveys (Becker, McCombs, & McLeod, 1975; Bennett, 1977; Graber, 1984; Lane 1962). Ethnography and an accompanying and aptly named "constructivist" methodology (Bennett, 1977; Fiske, 1987; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Krippendorff, 1991; Rucinski, 1989) re-emerged, replacing observation of the consequences of aggregate phenomena (like mass communication) with other objects.

Lost in the contemporary literature on mass political beliefs was the question of cause. Converse's original work was mostly descriptive (1964, 1970). Though he mentioned in passing in 1964 that knowledge seemed to be associated with indicators of class and status (see also 1958), his later work seemed bent on extending the description across historical space and national cultures (1976). Implied in this extension is the idea that at all places and times we will find a small portion of the public politically aware and the rest mostly ignorant. A fixed or native distribution of cognitive resources might then be offered as cause of aggregate mass belief outcomes. What other causes could there be?¹⁷

Figure 10.3 offers another explanation. Recognizable political knowledge comes as a result of time in first-order relations of any kind. Unrecognizable knowledge comes from time spent in the unfamiliar world of second-order relations--even when the time is with political or public affairs news. The difference is predictable once we account for the position of the person who creates and asks the knowledge questions. We can account for that person by situating him in the fuller web of commodity relations that structure our symbolic environment.

Perhaps more importantly, that same web of relations gives us a way avoid the elitist/populist dichotomy that comes with the promotion or denial of this outcome. All the national election studies team at the Survey Research Center found was that the public did not think about politics in the ways political writers, scientists, and actors did in their political occupations, classrooms, and publications. Reading Converse closely (1964), one does not find him moving far away from this basic position. To the degree that he did, his descriptions invited challenge for the implications they may have had about mass public *dignity*.

Setting these implications aside, we are left with an empirically impressive description of two different worlds of political knowledge. In aggregate data, one world shades gradually into another. When knowledge criteria can be traced back to the classroom or to political occupations, unrecognizable knowledge seems empirically more widespread than recognizable political knowledge. If we do not ascribe ignorance to the unfamiliar right away--if we refuse to locate knowledge problems in interviewed subjects alone--, it remains possible to see the difference between these two worlds as representing mutual ignorance.

The way I read the mass belief systems literature, and especially the early findings, is this: Before time and resources were devoted to gaining a reading on the distribution of political knowledge, political scientists assumed that others thought about politics they way that they did in their writings, teachings and conversations. Finding out that this was not so must have come as a shock (Converse, 1964). Rather than essay means to deny the findings, whether by seeking "bits of structure in the data" (Bennett, 1977) or by challenging the edifice of legitimately accumulated political knowledge (see Schudson, 1986), I have offered the full commodity relations as a way

to look for their causes.

In doing so I have had to implicate the position of the political scientist as an agent. Acting stereotypically as a teacher, the political scientist finds that the general public has not learned its civics lessons. Acting as a surveyor of the political landscape, the political scientist realizes that he does not really know how most people actually think and feel politically.

Reflecting on his position as an agent, the political scientist might conclude that his separate spheres of action as teacher and scholar might not be all that they could be. The legitimacy of his position as political scientist, after all, is undermined to the degree that the mass public can be described as ignorant of accepted forms of political knowledge. Who else but he is supposed to teach these accepted forms? New types of actions might have to be developed for this position if it is to thrive in a world increasingly structured by commodity relations.

Conclusion

The three research models presented in this chapter leave a lot of familiar work to do. Commodity relations indicators must be tested and refined; enduring commodity dispositions need substantial operational development; and outcomes must be selected for the degree to which they represent specialist community knowledge that is deemed worthy of teaching to and finding among others.

This study has offered a perspective on media-related causes that might turn out to be promising, and I do wish to call for survey research with commodity relations to see if these and other venerable effects might be better associated with causes. However, since a research program exploring these three models might be substantial, I want to end the study by suggesting where the program's limits might be.

Survey technologies have been widely used in the

social sciences for a relatively short span of historical time. Outside government and marketing circles in the 1930s, they have only been a substantial presence in the academy since World War II (Gitlin, 1978). Despite their brief history I believe we may benefit from hindsight. We now know something about the life-histories of promising ideas that were subsequently fleshed out with survey data. Agenda-setting and cultivation theory in communication as well as mass political belief systems all began with simple, interesting notions whose main points were later lost in a sea of disagreements over technical matters, disorganization of the lifespace, uncertainties associated with the move from aggregate to individual phenomena and back (Eulau, 1969, 1986), or a fascination with cognition.

For those who work with commodity relations I expect that disagreement over conceptualization, measurement, and contingencies would also mount over time. Anticipating this, let suggest when the utility of knowledge gained with these models would be exhausted, and what we might do thereafter.

To do so I ask one simple, speculative question: What if commodity relations worked? That is, what if the combination of relations and dispositions parsimoniously and even powerfully predicted a bifurcated distribution of knowledge across the range of topics social scientists have put to mass publics, saving survey researchers dozens of degrees of freedom along the way?

Beyond Surveys and Ethnographies: Recapturing a
Distribution of Meanings

To help see what is at stake beyond a program of survey research, I ask the reader to return once more to Figure 10.3 and imaginatively draw a *horizontal* line through it, separating the first- and second-order realms.

Above the line I think we would find the institution of education and the recognizably legitimate

sides of other major social institutions. This is the world of the educated, the sophisticated, the creative. An educated, or in this study's terms, a first-order world, has existed in many cultures for many centuries. In itself, the identification of such a sphere is little cause for concern.

Mass communication, especially as it has developed in the United States, however, has upset any ability to see a cultural elite as a sparkling collection of harmless little jewels peppering a culture's crown (Etzioni-Halevi, 1985). Knowledge is now an integral part of modern economies, not just for what cultural elites say and do among themselves, but primarily because of what modern economic processes are doing to those who fall outside the first-order sphere--those who fall below the line in Figure 10.3.

I am not talking about a pernicious ideological or economic monster. Instead, I note an expanding exchange economy that intersects with individual human beings more frequently and enduringly with each passing entrepreneurial innovation. Structurally, people below the line are gently being reduced to consumers. They are asked to buy ready-made expressions of their personalities, feelings and status. A reality remains behind the facade of these expressive appearances, but these consumers are not encouraged to explore this reality (an 'educated consumer' is like a healthy case of tuberculosis).

The first-order world, on the other hand, has not grasped this second-order environment very well. Ethnography destroys it in the very act of research; the humanities parody it in post-modern discourse; survey research has failed to grasp its existence. Being knowledge craftspeople, we know a lot in a lot of unique ways. Being knowledge craftspeople in a world of consumers, however, we may find that we do not know all that we need, and that we may be accumulating much that does us little good (Carter, 1990).

Rogers and Dearing claimed that the purpose of academic research should be to acknowledge individual subjectivity wherever possible (1988; see also chapter 2). Encountering this assertion in the midst of extensive reading of survey research literature, I was taken aback: What did that have to do with coming to grips with the agenda-setting literature? And how in heaven's name was a scholar to do it? In retrospect, the I think their admonition was brilliantly on the mark.

The subjectivities of individual scholars are confirmed directly or indirectly in their first-order discourses with other scholars and associated professionals (and, perhaps, by students). Rogers and Dearing, however, seemed to be pushing us to be agents in the acknowledgement of those we reach by surveys. These others include many with whom we would not normally come into even casual contact. Considering the quality of some of these contacts, I suspect that no contact at all would have been better in many instances (Gandy, 1989; Kohut, Roper, & Goyder, 1988).

We can use surveys to find out things like the distribution of predetermined legitimate beliefs--beliefs we recognize as legitimate through our positions as scholars, that is--and even their temporal economic antecedents, but surveys are the last tool we should reach for should we wish for anything more given the tenuous relationships they allow us to establish with an aggregation of people.

Here, I think, is where the first-order world is lacking despite the richness of its internal discourse: It has few means to effectively establish symbolic contact with the broader public whose good will it depends on for support. Were we to establish the existence of a second-order world with survey data, what contact would we be able to say we had with it? What actions could we take to acknowledge the rainbow of individual subjectivities we would find there? Our books and ethnographies do not

circulate to them. We have no Sunday radio programs that reach them. Some of them see a few of us in fifteen-second news clips here and there. We take some of their children into our fold for a few years, but this often results in the production of new sensibilities they no longer recognize as their own. The newness is not just a matter of growing up, it is one of their children's ascension across a class divide and into our first-order world.

Right now, the horizontal line drawn through Figure 10.3 is just a working notion of an empirical object. It will take time to establish the degree to which it may be said to exist, but in the meantime the idea itself exists and can be used to understand some of the things we encounter in our daily professional lives.

There is, for example, a perception that the U.S. education system performs poorly, this despite the fact that the U.S. spends substantially more on education than many of its peer nations. Should this idea continue to point back to the performance of teachers and schools, I do not see how policy decisions will favor the latter. We may see more legislation forcing teachers to teach minimum sets of hours, more competency tests, less support through taxation, less acknowledgement, if you will, not of our individual subjectivities but of our collective institutional authority.

If I believed that education were at fault in the comparatively poor performance of U.S. students, a laundry list of such policy outcomes would seem just. But I do not it is, and between the lines of contemporary debate on the state of our educational system I see the makings of some possibly tragic mistakes: The classroom hours and all that goes on within are not our problem. The problem consists in what happens after the school day ends.

Furthermore, evening leisure hours are not adequately captured by the box in the corner of the room

called 'television' or by the institutional notion of the family. I suspect that families, in such forms as they exist today, are probably doing all that they can with the hours that parents have available to shape the habits and minds of their children. I do not think that we show much understanding of contemporary family life--or give much acknowledgement to individual parents--if in our occasional soundbite contacts with the public we admonish them to take more or better care of their children, to watch tv with them, answer their questions, and so on.

Rather I think that families and teachers are on the same side of a broader, barely visible problem: The wallpapering of daily temporal spaces of children and adults alike with symbol streams aimed at anything but the development of their *own* understanding of the world that surrounds them. Born into a world of second-order relations, children likely start their cognitive development behind their contemporaries in countries with less second-order wallpapering. Were we to suddenly take away this papering, I would not be surprised if we found out that parents and teachers were now doing *better* teaching and parenting jobs than their cross-cultural counterparts. Adversity may breed innovation, and ours is, if anything, a culture of frantic innovation.

I suspect that there may be a lot of creative effort going on in both these occupations, but that still may not be enough. The aggregate comparative data are still unpromising; expert and media projections of the problem still implicate families and schools while leaving the symbolic realm during leisure hours alone; and in the meantime second-order relations encroach even upon the hours of the poorer public-school days.

This line of thought--work with commodity relations outside the survey research context has led to one policy target: The institutions that paper the temporal walls of

our lives with object-centered but cognitively useless symbols. Perhaps some might use empirical commodity relations data to work on this problem. If they do, however, they will mostly create exchanges between one and another group of first-order professionals: Researchers may fly to Washington and speak for a few hours with congressional committees while representatives of advertising agencies and media networks nervously watch. While such policy work will undoubtedly continue to be important, it is not all that we can or should do if we work with the idea of commodity relations and we are concerned with the health of our symbolic sphere (see also Cook, Kendzierski, & Thomas, 1983).

There is one other line of policy action we might consider more seriously. This action depends not on government grants or corporate funding, but on 1) curiosity, after the manner of Rogers and Dearing (1988), about the individual subjectivities that exist in the second-order world, and 2) a desire to make contact with this world ourselves. We are the educated. How can we reach those who are not, and why would we want to?

Why? Perhaps out of a sense that individual subjectivities are to be acknowledged. Those who hold this as a value might be interested in finding out who currently falls beyond the pale and reach them in some way. This sensibility seems to have already motivated some of those involved in the ethnographic turn in the social sciences. To the extent that this impulse is real, my only criticism of ethnography would concerns its empirical scope: Through it scholars reach too few people for still-too-brief periods of time.

Against a criterion of individual acknowledgement, ethnography also often falters in a second way. Though they may spend more time with their subjects than survey researchers do, their efforts often end up doing something

other than acknowledging the individual subjectivities reached in the field (Willis, 1977; Radway, 1984). Ethnography reaches out with mixed motives: to find out not only what people think, but what is problematic about their subjectivities, whether as romance readers, as working-class adolescents, or as possibly selfish factory line workers (Burawoy, 1985). Ethnographers are presently psychoanalysts but not evangelists. In my sense of what it acknowledging subjectivity is about, we should be more of the latter to more people more often.

If we pause at the idea of helping others, then maybe we would help ourselves. Communication scholars are experts on symbolic flows. My question is whether we can apply some of our expert knowledge to our own collective situation, one, I think, that is increasingly marked by life in middle-class college-town ghettos. We exchange more with each other and less with outsiders--the people whose children, as DeLillo saw them, were delivered to campuses from unknown locales by station wagon each fall. How long may we expect these outsiders to support us, and how far?

We are now open to actions upon our activities by those on the outside--the second-order world of individuals and the institutional powers who may, depending on historical circumstances, see fit to enlist second-order individuals in the task of reigning us in. The historical examples that come to mind here are fascist, but fascism, in a view I have developed by working with commodity relations, is not a property of a confused mass and an elite with a charismatic leader. It is primarily a phenomenon that grows out of a widening gap between first- and second-order worlds as aggregate wholes (Nienhaus, 1990). Hitler's Germany was also bewilderingly brilliant Weimar Germany. Hitler's organization placed a copy of *Mein Kampf* on the foot of every German newlywed's bed. Small gestures in themselves, but in the absence of counteracting acknowledgement from the

collectivity of cultural elites, they were at least something.

I think there is reason to begin to consider the separation of first- and second-order spheres as a problem for which we ourselves should begin to craft and essay solutions without waiting for state policy action. We can see what this entails with Figure 10.3.

There we see the position some of our colleagues currently occupy in observing mass communication and the creation of mass publics. With surveys some of us are able to learn some things about this public. We argue over how much we have validly learned, but sometimes I think we argue to forget that we have not learned much.

Practical solutions--actions we might consider taking to learn more--involve the movement of academic observation away from its present tangential position toward one currently occupied by first-order mass communicators. The movement is easily made with our eyes from one position to another in the Figure, but what would it mean in practice?

It would mean that some of us should consider becoming mass communicators ourselves. That is, we should essay ways to allow interested professors to prepare and present symbolic flows intended to reach mass publics during their leisure. Were professors to do this, they would begin to perform something like a series of real experiments in mass communication. If one holds that the best in scientific knowledge flows from the laboratory, then existing mass communication technologies should be employed in experimental designs. So, too, should the existing massive and distant aggregation of individual souls be incorporated into those designs.

With this switch in observational position, communication scholars would actually experience what it is to be a mass communicating 'independent variable.' I suspect

they would find that mass communication was something more than the manipulation of a content category or a visual layout (e.g., Gunter, 1988; see also Carter, 1990), and that the audience was something other than the handful of individuals who could be enticed to come into a local setting from time to time (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Others, too, might be interested in reading scholarly accounts written from knowledge of this position.

I also suspect that the reader may by now have thrown up her hands at this second line of policy activity. It seems whimsical at best. How would an undramatic first-order person attract the attention of a mass of unknown people accustomed to dazzling, action-packed visuals? Who would pay the bill, even granting the existence of a few souls curious enough to try out mass communication from the 'inside.'?

Here is where the idea of commodity relations has been most interesting to me. When I first began to work with the idea, especially when I began to work with categories of first- and second-order people (in deference to the people I have been and met in my own past), I was curious to find out if there had been enduring first-order relations between mass communicators and ostensibly second-order publics in the past and, if so, what the results were. By my lights these would be instances of cross-class communication.

Inspecting U.S. media history, I found out that first-order relations between mass communicators and second-order publics has rarely existed. The only examples of substantial spatial reach and duration I could find were in *religious* radio and television broadcasting.

In the 1920s, religious organizations, like educational institutions, began to operate their own radio stations or else use time provided freely by local commercial radio stations (see Schultze, 1988). Some educational stations employed tuition-like strategies and

lecture formats to subsidize their broadcast efforts, and some succeeded moderately on the basis of this income or other subsidies (Barnouw, 1966).

Religious broadcasters did not have the benefit of state subsidies in the U.S., so from the outset any enduring relationships they established with a mass public would have had to have been financed by the public itself, or else submitted to the distracting interests of a commercial party (Nienhaus, 1990, Ward, 1933).¹⁸ This necessity created an opportunity for individual clergy--first-order people by education and occupation--to explore first-order relations with mass communication technologies and mass, second-order audiences.

The outstanding initial example of this combination in the U.S. was provide by a Catholic priest, Charles Coughlin, who broadcast over a clear-channel Detroit radio station in the 1920s and later over a series of ad hoc national radio networks in the 1930s. The details of this activity will be published elsewhere, but two points may be used from the Coughlin case in the present context.

One, the historical legacy of the Coughlin case--the trace that case has left among the first-order community, including many in the community of Catholic intellectuals, is one of general horror at the object (e.g., Bennett, 1969; Lee & Lee, 1939; Zikmund, 1992). A long stream of publications has considered the Coughlin case as one of prototypical demagoguery or of collective pathology by some other name.

Absent compelling contemporary theories of fascism, populism, demagoguery, or propaganda, I think it might be useful to reconsider how it is that we look at such objects as yesterday's Coughlin or today's Jimmie Swaggart. Name-calling has brought us little understanding of these objects or of our own position in relation to them.

I do not know if or how others would feel about

rethinking these objects, but here his how I have done so with commodity relations. First, I see the general horror or disdain an educated professional might have for Swaggart or Coughlin as a natural, if unreflective, reaction to reality. In the normal, everyday ordering of authority structures, religious individuals are seen as authorities for their own, localized flocks.

On a more national scale, we feel more comfortable if we ourselves are seen as the appropriate authorities: the sociologists among us for why juveniles are delinquent, the psychologists for why we haven't enough self-esteem, the communication scholars for how we might become 'educated consumers' of the media, and so on.

Normally, authority is roughly distributed in this way: It is holistic and local for the clergy and specialized and extending for us. In times of crisis, however, authority structures are disrupted. The abstract answers we provide from our specialized competencies (like telling families to monitor their children's media habits when both parents are working) do not work anymore.

Because we are so disconnected from the course of everyday life as it unfolds in the second-order world, we are often among the last to know of its problems and possibilities. Individuals like Coughlin, on the other hand, are among the first to know, and for a simple reason: They have established healthy first-order relations with mass publics well before crises arise, and when they finally do, they are able to read the feelings of fear and hope more quickly and clearly and respond accordingly (Nienhaus, 1989b, 1990).

Because their responses are broadly cast and on the mark, their persons become new objects of authority. Their localized authority as pastoral caretakers may spatially extend as a result of their direct reading of and response to mass public concerns. They may begin to speak

through media technologies to national audiences, taking their place alongside the legitimate, first-order individuals who normally reside there. The novelty and uncertain authority of these interlopers may cause concern. Worse, they do not have to make do with fifteen-second soundbites and unfathomable editorial decisions. Overall, their emergence seems to have been enough to have engendered the legacy of fear and name-calling that constitutes most of our literature on demagoguery, populism, and fascism.

It is not the name-calling that concerns me, but our consequent inability to *learn* from these historical examples as we face an increasingly economically divided and charged symbolic world. If we could set aside quests for the magic keys to propaganda or to flawed authoritarian subjectivities, I suggest that from the handful of religious broadcasting cases we have we could learn much, on practical and theoretical levels, about all of those policy matters introduced in the "whimsical" example above.

How should our contacts be financed? By those who listen to or watch us. What should we say? Something we know and value initially, but after that, something we know that has been altered by the knowledge we have gained from our audiences, knowledge we would gain not by commissioning surveys but by soliciting and reading letters or calls. How could we count on ourselves to attend to mountains of letters and not shove them aside? Because many of them would come with checks. What should our 'formats' be? Lecture? Sermon? Call-in? Radio? Television? And would our actions result in the kind of real acknowledgement called for by Rogers and Dearing (1988)?

These are interesting questions which beg for data from interviews with contemporary religious broadcasters. Each time they speak into a camera or a microphone, they know that their words must be accepted as personally relevant by large numbers of people. The words they give

occur only once, but are multiplied and delivered identically to thousands of lifespaces. Facing this reality, how have religious broadcasters classified or otherwise reduced the data contained in the thousands of calls and letters they receive in return, so that the words they give can be accepted as personally relevant to an aggregation? I suspect that they do not work with categories like 'surveillance' or 'entertainment' gratification, but I must quickly note that all I have here is speculation.

We have a lot to learn about mass communication and, I think, a lot to gain by learning about mass communication *within* a first-order relationship with those whom we do not presently reach. I am curious to know what form political knowledge would take if crafted by a political scientific sensibility shaped by some years of exchange with masses of lay individuals. Would the left-right continuum (Converse, 1964) seem so obviously efficient or useful? Would the political scientific community accept novel renderings of political knowledge that might emerge? On what basis would they be accepted or rejected?

Generations of clergy have carved out a path to publics who hold some sway over our collective future yet remain unreached by our words. What prevents the secular scholarly community from following this same path? If it is denial of the existence of a second-order world, then we will all have to wait for some data. If something else, then we have some interesting matters related to authority structures to talk about. If there is no compelling theoretical impediment, then we might begin to figure out how to act as mass communicators, so that beyond the audience we might see ourselves as active agents within our broader symbolic environment. More than any new combative and possibly disintegrating program of survey research, it is the circumscribed scope of our present activity as teachers and scholars that remains my central concern.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10

¹To simplify discussion, non-commodified relations will be set aside. For all models presented in the chapter, I assume that one can add the minutes of non-commodified time obtained with chapter 8's indicators to first-order relations. Since all models discussed in this chapter use those indicators, one could respecify non-commodified relations should theoretical considerations warrant. See also note 11.

²Unfortunately, the bifurcation does not yet allow us to speak of individuals. A single biological individual may spend substantial amounts of time in first- and second-order relations. Chapter 8's operational strategy would encourage us to divide her subjectivity into two temporal pieces, which we would then distribute among separate and abstractly aggregated pools of time. More accurately, the text should say that one pool of aggregated time should be associated with higher levels of cognitive performance than another. Later in the chapter I present a model that would allow one to speak more directly of integral individuals rather than abstract aggregations of individual time.

³Converse's black and white model (1970) of attitude stability would also work with commodity relations, but to see this instability with aggregate data one needs repeated surveys of randomly sampled respondents, and to see it at the individual level one needs panel data. Though I lose some ability to match causal inference with data reflecting an appropriate time order, I will steer this discussion of effects toward those that might be inferred with single-shot cross-sectional surveys. I do this for two reasons. One, since commodity relations is a substantial departure from normal forms of conceptualization, I cannot proceed now as if I expected funding would one day be available for the more expensive time-inclusive survey designs. Two, I can set aside complex methodological and meta-analytic concerns often associated with these designs and replace them with roughly similar concerns based on empirically accessible temporal phenomena--temporal things available in a lifespace whether a researcher contacts it once or thrice. Converse attacked the problem of describing mass political beliefs synchronically and diachronically; I consider only his more synchronic efforts.

⁴By clear implication, no status level is involved in determining when or whether an information infusion will occur. Like most effects theories, the attribution of cause to a media agency is made difficult by the agency's absence.

⁵Roberts and Maccoby (1985) can give a summary sense of just what has and has not survived traditional controls in audience research.

⁶No paths move from commodity relations directly to enduring commodity dispositions in this model for a simple reason: The latter constructs represent internalizations from more distant personal pasts and the former more contemporary behaviors. Enduring commodity dispositions are located to the right because they are more closely associated with the individuals one observes.

⁷It might be interesting to see if the combination of first-order pasts and present leisure practices, combined with non-professional occupations, would describe nonviewers of television, a category that cultivation scholars called undefinable (Jackson-Beeck, 1977). Such people might want or expect to find the world deeply meaningful, might struggle to make it so for themselves, but they would do so without the acknowledgement a first-order occupation or a non-commodified/first-order culture could provide. Resentment of the world around them could result, and perhaps, as Hirsch suggested (1981), a little daily dose of television might be soothing. It would gently tug them away from the first-order world and teach them how to function within another, one more suitable to their objective station in life.

⁸Interestingly, Radway (1984) wavered in her assessment of romance novel readers. On the one hand, she was impressed by their ability to clearly express what they wanted from their time with these books. Standing closely to them, she could express that utility more substantively than can one who must assess the utility of all first-order flows across all lifespaces within the cyclical day. Nevertheless, she moved beyond acknowledgement and tried to problematize the situation of her readers in various ways. She used feminist psychoanalytic and narrative theory to cast suspicion on the overall quality of these readers and their time with their books. They either had flawed subjectivities or they underestimated the degree of interpretive effort that went into reading well. This chapter would recharacterize Radway's problem. First, it is in part a problem of *hers*, as she evidently is an intensely first-order person from both personal history and present occupation. The romance readers, on the other, are likely a mixture of first- and second-order dispositions. Avid readers of first-order texts, they possessed a degree of cognitive sharpness that Radway was able to acknowledge. Whether because they did not

have degrees, or first-order family backgrounds, or first-order jobs, or days filled with first-order symbolic flows outside the context of romance reading, they found that they did not want or need texts that required a lot of interpretive effort to understand. Radway's encounter with romance readers was one marked by only partial overlap. Her psychoanalytic gestures were, to me, a rather standard way a first-order person would normally respond to an actual encounter with a person of second-order. Psychoanalytic theory in this context is an elaborate form of name-calling, a way to delegitimize a person who stands right next to you--body and words and all. Yet Radway was not a name-caller by trade, nor were these people purely second-order. She thus found means to acknowledge them and she found grounds a bit more hopeful with which to express her sense of remaining differences. These folks just didn't read hard enough.

⁹One might bypass audience research and use commodity relations to define national media systems and then associate these systems with measures of adult night-school attendance across nations. My hypothesis is that national media systems dominated by second-order relations will leave a general void in a nation's public sphere. People generally become ignorant, indeed, they may even know that they do, and they will tend to return to the first-order fold of the educational system more often throughout their lives to make up for the deficit. The United States may be found to have both extensive second-order symbol streams and a comparatively disproportionate amount of continuing education--overall, an economically supercharged symbolic environment where one side fights against the other. If so, then other comparative outcomes suggest themselves: National rates of consumption of coffee and other stimulants might be higher in the United States than in countries with less economically supercharged symbolic environments, as first-order people fight to maintain their sharpness. Evangelical forms of religious worship should gain a greater toehold in second-order cultures, as, among other things, they provide people with ways to create more meaningful environments within their mostly meaningless surroundings. These localized efforts might be looked at with suspicion by those who already occupy positions in the first-order world, perhaps because they cannot imagine or experience meaninglessness, even when engaged in post-modern discourse. Finally, humanities teachers in second-order cultures might find themselves scrambling the curriculum and working much harder than their foreign counterparts to produce meaning-making capacity in their students.

Cross-national comparisons might also produce outcomes useful in national policy contexts. First, we may find that devoting more monetary resources to first-order institutions like the education system might not be efficient (except for capital realization--see Harvey, 1982). In a context of

fiscal constraint, where the allocation of more money to education is unlikely, improvements in national cognitive capacity might still be had by simply reducing the size of second-order symbol streams. Media agents could still communicate whatever they wanted; it might nonetheless be possible to make it harder for such agents to gather and sell aggregate individual attention.

Secondly, if cross-national accounts of the amount of first-and second-order times were available, we might gain insight into the comparative position of nation states' intellectual resources as the world moves toward a single market. Currently, U.S. policymakers gamble on the nation's ability to produce new knowledge-intensive jobs to replace those being shipped off to countries with lower labor costs. I suspect that commodity relations data might show that this policy position is quite a gamble. The U.S. might not have sufficient intellectual resources to win the battle to keep knowledge-rich jobs in the United States. Countries without extensive second-order industries might find that even without spending large sums on an education system they would still have substantial intellectual resources, so that they could compete effectively not just for manual jobs but for newer high-tech jobs for their citizens.

Given the present makeup of our public sphere, an opening to the world market might be a losing proposition for the United States. Even if we manage to produce and maintain a pool of very intelligent people, we may also produce a larger pool of the hopelessly uneducated, perhaps resulting in large expenditures to control class conflict. Such expenditures would be a further weight on our ability to compete in world markets. Given our current rates of crime and imprisonment, one might say that we are already paying a high price for the present economic configuration of our public sphere, without really knowing why.

Such questions and their requisite cross-national designs are not developed in this study for reasons of scope. They suggest, however, that those who work with commodity relations and audience data might find that there paths to public policy other those resting on measures of association between things like violent content and violent behavior.

¹⁰Since I would ultimately try to scale these variables in years or in proportions of an individuals accumulated years, I assume that I would be able to treat the indicators additively, much as I suggest can be done for commodity relations in daily cyclical time. For that reason, the arrows in Figure 10.2 move from the indicators to the constructs and not in reverse direction.

¹¹Something I set aside in chapter 8 might not be so easily ignored here. For simplicity's sake, I suggested that we might ignore whether surveyed individuals actually paid for

the first-order symbol streams they used. My idea was that spouses, parents or an institution might be the ones paying the bills, or that the individual regularly used public libraries. My reasoning here was that it might not be worth teasing actual acts of payment out because individuals would usually be found in family-type settings where the point of the availability of paid contents was to reproduce first-order sensibilities across the family. Spouses, children and others would acquire habits, hobbies or skills that would help them develop their own first-order consumption habits in their own leisure time.

Though I proceed with the same assumptions for enduring commodity dispositions in the text, I think it likely that we would miss important and possibly systematic patterns which we would have to isolate in a program of research. The discourse in public schools, for example, is first-order: Teachers are paid to give streams of symbols to students, and they are also paid to receive and assess symbolic feedback from them. The agents paying the bill, however, are the state and adults--parties at one step removed from the recipients of the symbol flows.

Students do not buy teachers' symbolic streams--for many school is a forced experience--, and teachers are not so strongly induced to attend to their students and move them in ways we would normally expect for first-order relations. Students have some presence in the relation by being able to select some classes at the start of the semester, but it seems to me that a non-commodified category might need to work its way into extended commodity relations models to account for relations at school. Schooling may be about the production of first-order individuals, but it is not quite a first-order world on empirical grounds.

¹²Education is *not* mass communication, but commodity relations erodes the distinction, and I am inclined to let this erosion occur. Education is at most an aggregation of quasi-mass communication settings (Menzel, 1971). Throughout this work I have assumed that communication is mass when a survey is appropriate for 'following after' an act of communication (see chapter 1). It is interesting in this regard to note that classes do not have to be very large before instructors deem it necessary to use multiple-choice tests with mechanical scanners to assess the cognitive status and movement of students.

¹³A more important distinction might be crafted with a concept of authority. Those who possess educational credentials might be considered to be legitimately educated. Those who acquire first-order dispositions outside the educational context might be viewed as having dispositions of questionable legitimacy. People who function within first-order streams of religious content--both broadcasters

and their audiences--tend to be delegitimated by those who observe them from more legitimate positions within the academy. Religious broadcasting might thus be a focal point for the observation of conflict between two first-order communities: one of current legitimacy and comparatively brief historical standing, another of substantially less legitimacy, of emergent character, and of much longer historical standing. Again, the pursuit of this line of inquiry can quickly take us beyond recognizable bounds of audience effects research, so let me close this discussion by suggesting that it might be useful to produce audience data that provides separate sets of indicators for commodity relations present and past.

¹⁴I realize that all outcomes except those the interviewer directly makes about a lifespace (presence of artwork on the walls, etc. See de Certeau, 1984) are cognitive--one does not observe a person voting but instead relies on the person's recollection of having voted or not. Nevertheless, empirical considerations suggest that we might separate acts of recall of potentially observable behavior, such as voting, from phenomena that we cannot observe at all, such as attitudes and other forms of cognitive structure and process. If we really need to we can devise means to assess the external validity of behavioral outcomes like voting. As for cognitive structure, we have only construct validation to help us out. The literature on construct validation is so complex (see, e.g., Zeller & Carmines, 1980) that it can obscure the central issue if taken seriously. The issue is simply that which is given in the text: A flesh-and-blood human being, a researcher, must pass judgement on the mental capacity of many other human beings each time a cognitive outcome variable is observed by survey and made part of a research design. Rather than ask 'what are the best ways to validate a theoretical construct' I ask 'who are the people who must pass judgement on the minds of others?' To anticipate my answer, let me say that I believe that teaching and the giving of classroom grades are potentially legitimate acts, but they can lose their legitimacy if we ignore just what it is that we are doing and why.

¹⁵Actually, in deference to contemporary debates about making standards of knowledge that would result in showing other to be ignorant, a political scientists might work with an image of an individual who is neither knowledgeable like a professional nor devoid of cognitive capacity. He may pretest and sort out and use easier survey questions to find a few that will correspond to this image.

To understand this construction we might import the concept of 'interlanguage' from applied linguistics. Interlanguage is that which an individual speaks when he is learning a new language: He no longer speaks his native language, but he is not yet competent in the new one. He is

created are undoubtedly real, but in the case of political science the object is not that which was originally intended for study (Becker, McCombs, & McLeod, 1975).

¹⁶The comparison between surveys and ethnographies is overdrawn in the text. Increased communicative quality can be a goal for surveys, too. When it is, similarly new constructivist objects can result: "Differences by level of education were actually reduced; the reason was that those of lower education were able to talk about matters that were salient to them personally" (Edelstein, 1973). I do not doubt that a closer meeting of the minds can happen even after a few minutes, parties willing. What first-order parties cannot will, however, is enough time to spend quality minutes with more than a few hundred individuals every year or so. Outside the minutes spent with lucky few--and even among the lucky few a day later--educational differences remain intact.

¹⁷Luskin (1990) and Smith (1989) offer alternatives to the full commodity relations model, but they are based on theoretically blank, statistically sophisticated searches through the domain of lifespace phenomena contained in standard catalogs of variables. Luskin, for example compares variables of interest, intelligence, education, age, race, gender, and media exposure, which he operationally defines as "exposure to political information in print media (EPIP)" which he selected so as to "give the variable a fair chance" in explaining political knowledge gain, since so many had found that people learned or recalled very little from television (pp. 335-336). "Interest" won the explanatory contest.

¹⁸Some relationships between religious institutions and mass publics were non-commodified. They were carried by commercial radio on a continuing basis. The results included some of the more considered religious discourses that few (but important) people listened to, such as the *National Catholic Hour* on NBC.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, W.J., Eastman, S.T., Horney, L.J., & Popovich, M.N. (1983). The cancellation and manipulation of network television prime-time programs. *Journal of Communication, 33*(1), 10-25.
- Adoni, H., & Mane, S. (1984). Media and the social construction of reality. Toward an integration of theory and research. *Communication Research, 11*, 323-340.
- Adorno, T.W., (1946). A social critique of radio music. *Kenyon Review, 7*, 208-217.
- Adorno, T.W., & Horkheimer, M. (1979). The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception. In J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, & J. Woolacott (Eds.), *Mass-communication and society* (pp. 349-383). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Allen, R.C. (Ed.) (1987). *Channels of discourse*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Allen, R.L. (1981). The reliability and stability of television exposure. *Communication Research, 8*, 233-256.
- Allen, R.L., & Taylor, B.F. (1985). Media public affairs exposure: Issues and alternative strategies. *Communication Monographs, 52*, 186-201.
- Allen, R.L., & Waks, L. (1986). *The dimensionality of commonly employed mass media exposure measures*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago.
- Almond, G. (1950). *The American people and foreign policy*. New York: Harcourt.
- Altheide, D.L. (1991). The impact of television news formats on social policy. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 35*, 3-21.
- Altheide, D.L. (1985). *Media power*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Altheide, D.L. (1984). Media hegemony: A failure of perspective. *Public opinion quarterly, 48*, 476-490.

- Altheide, D.L., & Snow, R.P. (1988). Toward a theory of mediation. In James A. Anderson (Ed.) *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 194-223). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy, and other essays*. London: New Left Books.
- Altschull, J.H. (1983). *Agents of power: The role of the mass media in human affairs*. New York: Longman.
- Anderson, D., & Bryant, J. (1983). Research on children's television viewing: The state of the art. In J. Bryant & D. Henderson (Eds.), *Children's understanding of television: Research on attention and comprehension* (pp. 331-354). New York: Academic Press.
- Anderson, J.A. (Ed.). (1988). *Communication yearbook 11*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Anderson, J.A. (Ed.). (1991). *Communication yearbook 14*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Anderson, J.A., & Meyer, T.P. (1988). *Mediated communication: A social action perspective*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Anderson, P.A. (1989). Philosophy of science. In P. Emmert & L.L. Barker (Eds.), *Measurement of communication behavior* (pp. 3-17). New York: Longman.
- Angly, E. (1931) *Oh yeah?* New York: Viking.
- Aranguren, J.L. (1967). *Human communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Arnold, T.W. (1937). *The folklore of capitalism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Atkin, C.K. (1986). Informational utility and selective exposure. In D. Zillman & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Selective exposure to communication* (pp. 63-91). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Atkin, D., & Litman, B. (1986). Network TV programming: Economics, audiences, and the ratings game, 1971-1986. *Journal of Communication*, 36(3), 32-50.
- Bagdikian, B.H. (1983). *The media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bagdikian, B.H. (1985). The U.S. media: Supermarket or assembly line? *Journal of Communication*, 35(3), 97-109.

- Baker, R., & Ball, S.J. (Eds.). (1969). *Violence and the media*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Ball-Rokeach, S.J. (1985). The origins of individual media-systems dependency: A sociological framework. *Communication Research*, 12, 485-510.
- Ball-Rokeach, S.J., & Cantor, M.G. (Eds.). (1986). *Media, audience, and social structure*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ball-Rokeach, S.J., & DeFleur, M.L. (1976). A dependency model of mass media effects. *Communication Research*, 3, 3-21.
- Ball-Rokeach, S.J., Rokeach, M., & Grube, J.W. (1984). *The great American values test: Influencing behavior and belief through television*. New York: Free Press.
- Barnouw, E. (1966). *A tower in babel*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Barnouw, E. (1968). *The golden web*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Barnouw, E. (1978). *The sponsor: Notes on a potentate*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bates, B.S. (1986). Factors influencing the value of television time: An analysis over time (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 46, 698A.
- Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. New York: Ballantine.
- Bauer, R.A. (1963). The initiative of the audience. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 3, 2-7.
- Bauer, R.A. (1964). The obstinate audience: The influence process from the point of view of social communication. *American Psychologist*, 19, 319-328.
- Beatty, J.E. (1989). *Its about time: Revealing why and how some empiricists claim TV waists our time*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Qualitative Studies Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C.
- Becker, L.B., (1991). Reflections on a metaphor. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 14* (pp. 341-346). Newbury Park: Sage.
- Becker, L.B., McCombs, M.E. & McLeod, J.M. (1975). The

- development of political cognitions. In S.H. Chaffee (Ed.), *Political communication* (pp. 21-63), Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Becker, L.B., Sobowale, I.A., & Casey, Jr., W.E. (1979). Newspaper and television dependencies: Effects on evaluations of public officials. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 23, 465-475.
- Becker, L.B., & Whitney, D.C. (1980). Effects of media dependencies on audience assessment of government. *Communication Research*, 7, 95-120.
- Behr, R.L., & Iyengar, S. (1985). Television news, real-world cues, and changes in the public agenda. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 49, 38-57.
- Bell, D. (1976). *The cultural contradictions of capitalism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Beniger, J.R. (1990). *The control revolution. Technological and economic origins of the information society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bennett, D.H. (1969). *Demagogues in the depression: American radicals and the Union Party, 1932-1936*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Bennett, T. (1982). Theories of media, theories of society. In M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran, & J. Woollacott (Eds.), *Culture, society and the media* (pp. 30-55). New York: Methuen.
- Bennett, W.L. (1977). The growth of knowledge in mass belief studies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 21, 465-500.
- Bennett, W.L. (1988). *News: The politics of illusion*. New York: Longman.
- Benton, M., & Frazier, P.J. (1976). The agenda setting function of the mass media at three levels of information holding. *Communication Research*, 3, 261-274.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communication research*. New York: Hafner Press.
- Berelson, B., & Janowitz, M. (Eds.). (1953). *Public opinion and mass communication*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Berelson, B. (1959). The state of communication research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 23, 1-6.

- Berelson, B.B., Lazarsfeld, P.F., & McPhee, W.N. (1954). *Voting: A study of opinion formation in a presidential campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berger, C.R. & Chaffee, S.H. (Eds.). (1987). *Handbook of communication science*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Berry, C. (1983). Learning from television news: A critique of the research. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 27, 359-370.
- Beuick, M.D. (1927). The limited social effect of radio broadcasting. *American Journal of Sociology*, 29, 615-622.
- Beville, H.M., Jr. (1985). *Audience ratings: Radio, television, and cable*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Biocca, F.A. (1988a). Opposing conceptions of the audience: The active and passive hemispheres of mass communication theory. In James A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 51-80). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Biocca, F.A. (1988b). The breakdown of the "canonical audience." In James A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 11* (pp.127-132). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bishop, G.F., Oldendick, R.W., Tuchfarber, A.J., & Bennett, S.H., (1980). Pseudo-opinions on public affairs. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 49, 198-209.
- Blalock, H.M. (1982). *Conceptualization and measurement in the social sciences*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Blank, D. (1977a). The Gerbner violence profile. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 21, 273-279.
- Blank, D. (1977b). Final comments on the violence profile. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 21, 287-296.
- Blumer, H. (1954). Public opinion and public opinion polling. In D. Katz, D. Cartwright, S. Eldersveld, & A.M. Lee (Eds.), *Public opinion and propaganda* (pp. 70-84). New York: Dryden.
- Blumer, H. (1959). Suggestions for the study of mass media effects. In E. Burdick & A.J. Brodbeck (Eds.), *American voting behavior* (pp. 197-208). Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Blumer, H., & Hauser, P.M. (1933). *Movies, delinquency and crime*. New York: Macmillan.
- Blumler, J.G. (1979). The role of theory in uses and

- gratifications studies. *Communication Research*, 6, 9-36.
- Blumler, J.G. (1987). Election communication and the democratic political system. In D.L. Paletz (Ed.), *Political communication research*. New York: Ablex.
- Blumler, J.G., & Gurevitch, M. (1980). The reform of election broadcasting. A reply to Nicholas Garnham. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 1* (pp. 743-751). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Blumler, J.G., & Katz, E. (1974). *The uses of mass communications. Current perspectives on gratifications research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Bogart, L. (1988) Research as an instrument of power. *Gannett Center Journal*, 2(3), pp. 1-16.
- Borchers, D. (1988). Paul Lazarsfeld: A Marxist on leave. *Communication*, 10, 211-222.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *Distinction. A social critique of the judgement of taste*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bower, R.T. (1973). *Television and the public*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Bowen, L., & Chaffee, S.H. (1974). Product involvement and pertinent advertising appeals. *Journalism Quarterly*, 51, 613-621.
- Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and monopoly capital*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Brecht, B. (1983). Radio as a means of communication: A talk of the function of radio. In A. Mattelart & S. Siegelau (Eds.), *Communication and class struggle* (vol. 2, pp. 169-171). New York: International General. (Original work written 1930, published 1967).
- Breed, W. (1955a). Newspaper opinion leaders and processes of standardization. *Journalism Quarterly*, 32, 277-284.
- Breed, W. (1955b). Social control in the newsroom. *Social Forces*, 33, 326-335.
- Brown, J.D., Bybee, C.R., Wearden, S.T., & Straughan, D.M. (1987). Invisible power: News sources and the limits of diversity. *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, 45-59.
- Bryant, J., & Rockwell, S.C. (1991). Evolving cognitive

- models in mass communication reception processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Responding to the screen: Reception and reaction processes* (pp. 217-226). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bryant, J., & Zillman, D. (Eds.). (1991). *Responding to the screen: Reception and reaction processes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bryant, J., & Zillman, D. (Eds.). (1986). *Perspectives on media effects*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bryson, L. (Ed.). (1948). *The communication of ideas*. New York: Harper.
- Budd, M., Entman, R.M., & Steinman, C. (1990) The affirmative character of U.S. cultural studies. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 7, 169-184.
- Budd, M., & Steinman, C. (1989). Television, cultural studies, and the "blind spot" debate in critical communications research. In G. Burns & R.J. Thompson (Eds.), *Television studies: Textual analysis* (pp. 9-20). New York: Praeger.
- Budd, R., Thorp, R., & Donohew, L. (1967). *Content analysis of Communications*. New York: Macmillan.
- Burawoy, M. (1985). *The politics of production*. London: Verso.
- Burns, G., & Thompson, R.J. (Eds.). (1989). *Television studies: Textual analysis*. New York: Praeger.
- Bybee, C. (1980). Facilitating decision-making through news story organization. *Journalism Quarterly*, 57, 624-630.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P.E., Miller, W.E., & Stokes, D.E. (1960). *The American voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Campbell, R. (1987) Securing the middle ground: Reporter formulas in 60 minutes. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 4, 325-350.
- Cantor, M.G. (1980). *Prime-time television*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Cantor, M.G., & Cantor, J.M. (1986). Audience composition and television content. The mass audience revisited. In S.J. Ball-Rokeach & M.G. Cantor (Eds.), *Media, audience, and social structure* (pp. 214-225). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Cantril, H., Gaudet, H., & Herzog, H. (1940). *The invasion from Mars*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Carey, J.W. (1989). *Communication as culture. Essays on media and society*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Carey, J.W., & Kreiling, A.L. (1974). Popular culture and uses and gratifications: Notes toward an accomodation. In J.G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 225-248). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Carter, R.C. (1990). Our future research agenda: Confronting challenges...or our dying gasp? *Journalism Quarterly*, 67, 282-285.
- Carter, R. & Troidahl, V.C. (1962). Use of a recall criterion in measuring the educational television audience. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 26.
- de Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Chaffee, S.H. (1980). Mass media effects. New research perspectives. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 1* (pp. 77-108). Beverly Hills: Sage. (Original work published 1977).
- Chaffee, S.H. (Ed.). (1975). *Political communication. Issues and strategies for research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Chaffee, S.H. (1987). Introduction. In C.R. Berger & S.H. Chaffee (Eds.), *Handbook of communication science*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Chaffee, S.H. (1991). *Explication*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Chaffee, S.H., & McLeod, J. (1968). Sensitization in panel design: A coorientational experiment. *Journalism Quarterly*, 45, 661-669.
- Chaffee, S.H., & Roser, C. (1986). Involvement and the consistency of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. *Communication Research*, 13, 373-399.
- Chaffee, S.H., & Schleuder, J. (1986). Measurement and effects of attention to news media. *Human Communication Research*, 13, 76-107.
- Cirino, R. (1971). *Don't blame the people*. Los Angeles: Diversity Press.
- Clarke, P. (Ed.). (1973). *New models for communication*

research. Beverly Hills: Sage.

- Clarke, P., & Kline, F.G. (1974). Media effects reconsidered: Some new strategies for communication research. *Communication Research*, 1, 108-128.
- Cohen, A.A. (1976). Radio versus TV: The effect of the medium. *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 29-35.
- Cohen, B.C. (1963). *The press and foreign policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen, B.C. (1983). *The public's impact on foreign policy*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America. (Original work published 1973).
- Cohen, S., & Young, J. (Eds.). (1973). *The manufacture of news*. London: Constable.
- Coffin, T.E., & Tuchman, S. (1972-1973). Rating television programs for violence: A comparison of five surveys. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 17, 3-20.
- Coffin, T.E., & Tuchman, S. (1972-1973). A question of validity: Some comments on "Apples, oranges, and the kitchen sink." *Journal of Broadcasting*, 17, 31-33.
- Commission on Freedom of the Press. (1947). *A free and responsible press*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Compaine, B.M. (1981). Shifting boundaries in the information marketplace. *Journal of Communication*, 31(1), 132-142.
- Compaine, B. (1985). The expanding base of media competition. *Journal of Communication*, 35(3), 81-96.
- Comstock, G., Chaffee, S., Katzman, N., McCombs, M., & Roberts, D. (1978). *Television and human behavior*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Converse, J.M. (1987). *Survey research in the United States: Roots and emergence 1890-1960*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Converse, P.E. (1958). The shifting role of class in political attitudes and behavior. In E.E. Maccoby & E.L. Hartley (Eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (pp. 388-399). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Converse, P.E. (1964). The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In D.E. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and discontent*

(pp. 206-261). New York: Free Press.

Converse, P.E. (1966). Information flow and the stability of partisan attitudes. In E. Dreyer & W. Rosenbaum (Eds.), *Political opinion and electoral behavior* (pp. 324-344). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Converse, P.E. (1970). Attitudes and non-attitudes: Continuation of a dialogue. In E. Tufte (Ed.), *The qualitative analysis of social problems* (pp. 168-189). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Converse, P.E. (1975). Some mass-elite contrasts in the perception of political spaces. *Social Science Information*, 14, 49-83.

Converse, P.E. (1987). Changing conceptions of public opinion in the political process. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, S12-S24.

Cook, T.D., Kendzierski, D.A., & Thomas, S.V. (1983). The implicit assumptions of television research: An analysis of the 1982 NIMH report on *Television and behavior*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47, 161-201.

Corcoran, F. (1984). Television as ideological apparatus: The power and the pleasure. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 1, 131-145.

Cronen, V., Pearce, W.B., & Harris, L.M. (1982). The coordinated management of meaning. In F.X. Dance (Ed.), *Human communication theory* (pp. 61-89). New York: Harper & Row.

Culbertson, H.M., & Stempel III, G.H. (1986). How media use and reliance affect knowledge level. *Communication Research*, 13, 579-602.

Curran, J., Gurevitch, M., & Wollacott, J. (1982). The study of the media: Theoretical approaches. In M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran, & J. Wollacott (Eds.), *Culture, society, and the media* (pp. 11-29). New York: Methuen.

DeFleur, M.L., & Ball-Rokeach, S.J. (1975). *Theories of mass communication* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.

DeFleur, M.L., & Ball-Rokeach, S.J. (1982). *Theories of mass communication* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Dervin, B., Grossberg, L., O'Keefe, B.J., & Wartella, E. (Eds.). (1989). *Rethinking communication: Vol. 2. Paradigm exemplars*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- DeTray, S., Elsberry, T., Gilliom, J., Leonard, R., Livingston, S., & Steinhorst, M. (1986). Out of balance. Central America news coverage in the *Seattle Times*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and the *New York Times*. Unpublished manuscript. Political Science Department, University of Washington, Seattle.
- Dewey, J. (1927). *The public and its problems*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- van Dijk, T. (1983). Discourse analysis: Its development and application to the structure of news. *Journal of Communication*, 33(2), 20-43.
- Dimmick, J.W., McCain, T.A., & Bolton, W.T. (1981). Media use and the lifespan. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 2* (pp. 283-307).
- Domhoff, G.W. (1983). *Who rules America now?* New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Donohew, L., Palmgreen, P., & Rayburn, J.D., II (1987). Social and psychological origins of media use: A lifestyle analysis. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 31, 255-278.
- Donohue, G.A. (1975). Mass media and the knowledge gap: A hypothesis reconsidered. *Communication Research*, 2, 3-23.
- Donohue, G.A., Tichenor, P.J., & Olien, C.N. (1986). Metro daily pullback and knowledge gaps. Within and between communities. *Communication Research*, 13, 454-471.
- Doob, A.N., & Macdonald, G.E. (1979). Television viewing and fear of victimization: Is the relationship causal? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 170-179.
- Douglas, D.F., Westley, B.H., & Chaffee, S.H. (1970). An information campaign that changed community attitudes. *Journalism Quarterly*, 47, 479-487, 492.
- Drew, D. & Weaver, D. (1990). Media attention, media exposure, and media effects. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67, 740-748.
- Durkheim, E. (1963) *Suicide: A study in sociology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. (Original work published 1871).
- Eagleton, T. (1986). *Against the grain. Selected essays*.

London: Verso.

- Edelstein, A. (1973). Decision-making and mass communication: A conceptual and methodological approach to public opinion. In P. Clarke (Ed.) *New models for communication research* (pp. 81-118), Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Efron, E. (1971). *The news twisters*. Los Angeles: Nash.
- Ehrenberg, A.C. (1972). *Repeat-buying: Theory and applications*. New York: American Elsevier.
- Eleey, M., Gerbner, G., & Signorielli, N. (1972-1973a). Apples, oranges, and the kitchen sink. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 17, 21-30.
- Eleey, M., Gerbner, G., & Signorielli, N. (1972-1973b). Validity indeed! *Journal of Broadcasting*, 17, 34-35.
- Elliot, P. (1974). Uses and gratifications research: A critique and sociological alternative. In J.G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 249-269). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Emmert, P., & Barker, L.L. (1989). (Eds.). *Measurement of communication behavior*. New York: Longman.
- Epstein, E.J. (1973). *News from nowhere*. New York: Random House.
- Erbring, L., Goldenberg, E.N., & Miller, A.H. (1980). Front-page news and real-world cues: A new look at agenda-setting by the media. *American Journal of Political Science*, 24, 16-49.
- Ettema, J., & Whitney, D.C. (Eds.). (1982). *Individuals in mass media organizations: Creativity and constraint*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Ettema, J., & Whitney, D.C. (1987). Professional mass communicators. In C.R. Berger & S.H. Chaffee (Eds.), *Handbook of communication science* (pp. 747-780). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Etzioni-Halevi, E. (1985). *The knowledge elite and the failure of prophesy*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Eulau, H. (1969). (Ed.). *Behavioralism in political science*. New York: Atherton Press.
- Eulau, H. (1986). *Politics, self, and society: A theme and variations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Ewen, S. (1976). *Captains of consciousness*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Eyal, C.H. (1981). The roles of newspapers and television in agenda-setting. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 2* (pp. 225-234). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Eyal, C.H., Winter, J.P., & DeGeorge, W.F. (1981). The concept of time frame in agenda-setting. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 2* (pp. 212-218). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- von Feilitzen, C. (1991). Children's and adolescents' media use: Some methodological reflections. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.) *Communication yearbook 14* (pp. 91-101). Newbury Park: Sage.
- Fink, E.L., Monahan, J.L., & Kaplowitz, S.A. (1989). A spatial model of the mere exposure effect. *Communication Research*, 16, 746-769.
- Finn, S., & Roberts, D.F. (1984). Source, destination and entropy. Reassessing the role of information theory in communication research. *Communication Research*, 11, 453-476.
- Finnegan, Jr., J.R., Visnawath, K., Hannan, P.J., Weisbrod, R., & Jacobs, Jr., D.R. (1989). Message discrimination: A study of its use in a campaign research project. *Communication Research*, 16, 770-792.
- Fiske, J. (1982). *Introduction to communication studies*. New York: Methuen.
- Fiske, J. (1986). Television and popular culture: Reflections on British and Australian critical practice. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 3, 200-216.
- Fiske, J. (1987). British cultural studies and television. In R.C. Allen (Ed.), *Channels of discourse* (pp. 254-289). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Fiske, J. (1989). Popular television and commercial culture: Beyond political economy. In G. Burns & R. Thompson (Eds.), *Television studies: Textual analysis* (pp. 21-37). New York: Praeger.
- Fiske, J., & Hartley, J. (1978). *Reading television*. New York: Methuen.

- Foucault, M. (1984). What is an author? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 101-120). New York: Pantheon.
- Fox, J. (1984). *Linear statistical models & related methods*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Freud, S. (1969). *The question of lay analysis* (J. Strachey, Trans.). New York: W.W. Norton.
- Fromm, E. (1941). *Escape from freedom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Gamson, W.A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 1-37.
- Gandy, O.H., Jr. (1982). *Beyond agenda-setting: Information subsidies and public policy*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Gandy, O.H., Jr. (1989). Information privacy and the crisis of control. In M. Raboy & P.A. Bruck (Eds.), *Communication: For and against democracy* (pp. 59-73). Cheektowaga, NY: Black Rose.
- Gans, H.J. (1957). The creator-audience relationship in the mass media: An analysis of movie-making. In B. Rosenberg & D.M. White (Eds.) (pp. 315-324). *Mass culture. The popular arts in America*. New York: Free Press.
- Gans, H.J. (1972). The famine in American mass-communications research: comments on Hirsch, Tuchman, and Gelas. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77, 697-705.
- Gans, H.J. (1974). *Popular culture and high culture: An analysis and evaluation of taste*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gans, H.J. (1977). Letters to an anchorman. *Journal of Communication*, 27(3), 86-91.
- Gans, H.J. (1979). *Deciding what's news*. New York: Pantheon.
- Gansmann, H. (1988). Money--A symbolically generalized medium of communication? On the concept of money in recent sociology. *Economy and Society*, 17, 285-316.
- Garnham, N. (1980a). Politics and the mass media in Britain. The strange case of Dr. Blumler. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 1* (pp. 731-742). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Garnham, N. (1980b). Contribution to a political economy of

- mass communication. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass Communication Review Yearbook 1* (123-146). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Gaziano, C. (1983). The knowledge gap: An analytical review of media effects. *Communication Research*, 10, 447-486.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gerbner, G. (1958a). On content analysis and critical research in mass communication. *Audio-Visual Communication Review*, 6, 85-108.
- Gerbner, G. (1958b). The social anatomy of the romance-confession cover girl. *Journalism Quarterly*, 35, 299-306.
- Gerbner, G. (1958c). The social role of the confession magazine. *Social Problems*, 6, 29-40.
- Gerbner, G. (1959). Mental illness on television: A study of censorship. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 3, 292-303.
- Gerbner, G. (1964). Ideological perspectives and political tendencies in news reporting. *Journalism Quarterly*, 41, 495-509.
- Gerbner, G. (1966). Images across cultures: Teachers and mass media fiction and drama. *School Review*, 74, 212-230.
- Gerbner, G. (1967). Mass media and human communication theory. In F.E.X. Dance (Ed.), *Human communication theory* (pp. 40-57). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Gerbner, G. (1969). Dimensions of violence in television drama. In R. Baker & S.J. Ball (Eds.), *Violence and the media* (pp. 311-340). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Gerbner, G. (1972). Violence in television drama: Trends and symbolic functions. In G.A. Comstock & E.A. Rubinstein (Eds.), *Television and social behavior, Vol. 1: Content and control* (pp. 28-187). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Gerbner, G. (1973). Cultural indicators: The third voice. In G. Gerbner, L. Gross, & W.H. Melody (Eds.), *Communications technology and social policy* (pp. 555-573). New York: John Wiley.
- Gerbner, G. (1989). Epilogue: Advancing on the path of

- righteousness (Maybe). In N. Signorielli & M. Morgan (Eds.), *Cultivation analysis. New directions in media effects research* (pp. 249-262). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., & Melody, W.H. (Eds.) (1973). *Communications, technology and social policy*. New York: John Wiley.
- Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile. *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 173-199.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Eeley, M., Jackson-Beeck, M., & Jeffries-Fox, S. (1977a). "The Gerbner violence profile"--An analysis of the CBS report. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 21, 280-286.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Eeley, M., Jackson-Beeck, M. & Jeffries-Fox, S. (1977b). One more time: An analysis of the CBS "Final comments on the violence profile". *Journal of Broadcasting*, 21, 297-303.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1980a). Some additional comments on cultivation analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 44, 408-410.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1980b). The "mainstreaming" of America: Violence profile No. 11. *Journal of Communication*, 30(3), 10-29.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1981a). A curious journey into the scary world of Paul Hirsch. *Communication Research*, 8, 39-72.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1981b). Final reply to Hirsch. *Communication Research*, 8, 259-280.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1981c). On the limits of "The limits of advocacy research". *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45, 116-118.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M. & Signorielli, N. (1984). Political correlates of television viewing. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 48, 283-300.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M. & Signorielli, N. (1986). Living with television: The dynamics of the cultivation process. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Perspectives on media effects* (pp. 17-39). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Signorielli, N., Morgan, M., &

- Jackson-Beeck, M. (1979). The demonstration of power: Violence profile no. 10. *Journal of Communication*, 29(3), 177-196.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The constitution of society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1987). *Social theory and modern sociology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1990) *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gilbert, K, & Schleuder, J. (1990). Effects of color and complexity on mental effort and memory. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67, 749-766.
- Ginsberg, B. (1986). *The captive public. How mass opinion promotes state power*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gitlin, T. (1978). Media sociology: The dominant paradigm. *Theory and Society*, 6, 205-253.
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching. Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Glasgow University Media Group. (1976). *Bad news*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Glasgow University Media Group. (1980). *More bad news*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Golding, P., & Murdock, G. (1980). Theories of communication and theories of society. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 1* (pp. 59-76). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Goyder, J., & Leiper, J. (1985). The decline in survey response: A social values interpretation. *Sociology*, 19(1), 55-71.
- Graber, D. (1977). Is crime news excessive? *Journal of Communication*, 29(3), 81-92.
- Graber, D. (1984). *Processing the news: How people tame the information tide*. New York: Longman.
- Gray, H. (1985). Social constraints and the production of an alternative medium. In S.J. Ball-Rokeach & M.G. Cantor (Eds.), *Media, audience and social structure* (pp. 117-126). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Greene, J.O. (1984). Evaluating cognitive explanations of communicative phenomena. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70, 241-254.
- Greene, J.O. (1989). Action assembly theory. In B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B.J. O'Keefe, & E. Wartella (Eds.), *Rethinking communication: Vol. 2. Paradigm exemplars* (pp. 117-128). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gross, L. & Jeffries-Fox, S. (1978). What do you want to be when you grow up, little girl? In G. Tuchman, A.K. Daniels, & J. Benet (Eds.), *Health and home: Images of women in the mass media*. New York: Oxford.
- Gumpert, G. (1988). Linguistic character and a theory of mediation. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 11* (pp. 230-236). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gunter, B. (1981). Measuring television violence: A review and suggestions for a new analytical perspective. *Current Psychological Reviews*, 1, 91-112.
- Gunter, B. (1983). Do aggressive people prefer violent television? *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, 36, 166-168. (for feedback ch. naive psychologizing by news professionals about news needs).
- Gunter, B., (1987). *Poor reception: misunderstanding and forgetting broadcast news*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gunter, B. (1988a). The perceptive audience. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.). *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 22-50). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gunter, B. (1988b). Finding the limits of audience activity. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.). *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 108-126). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gunter, B., & Wober, M. (1983). Television viewing and public trust. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 23, 155-184.
- Gurevitch, M., T. Bennett, J. Curran, & Woollacott, J. (Eds.). (1982). *Culture, society, and the media*. New York: Methuen.
- Habermas, J. (1983). *The theory of communicative action*. (Vol. 1). *Reason and the rationalization of society*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hage, J. (1972). *Techniques and problems of theory construction in sociology*. New York: John Wiley.

- Halbwachs, M. (1980). *The collective memory*. (F.J. Ditter, Jr., & V.Y. Ditter, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row. (Original work published 1950)
- Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall, D. Dobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, media, language* (pp. 128-138). London: Hutchison.
- Hall, S., Clarke, J., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., & Roberts, B. (1978). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state, and law and order*. London: Macmillan.
- Hamill, R.C., & Lodge, M. (1986). Cognitive consequences of political sophistication. In R.R. Lau & D.O. Sears (Eds.) *Political cognition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hamill, R.C., Lodge, M., & Blake, F. (1985). The breadth, depth, and utility of class, partisan, and ideological schemata. *American Journal of Political Science*, 29, 850-870.
- Hartley, E.L., & Hartley, R.E. (Eds.). (1952). *Fundamentals of social psychology*. New York: Knopf.
- Harvey, D. (1982). *The limits to capital*. New York: Oxford.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.
- Haug, W.F. (1986). *Critique of commodity aesthetics: Appearance, sexuality and advertising in capitalist society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hawkins, R.P., & Pinegree, S. (1980). Some processes in the cultivation effect. *Communication Research*, 7, 193-226.
- Hawkins, R.P., & Pinegree, S. (1981). Using television to construct social reality. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 25, 347-364.
- Hawkins, R.P., & Pinegree, S. (1982). Television influence on the construction of social reality. In National Institute of Mental Health, *Television and behavior: Ten years of scientific progress and implications for the eighties* (vol. 2, pp. 224-247. D. Pearl, L. Bonhilet, & J. Lazar, Eds.). Rockville, MD: NIMH.
- Hawkins, R.P., & Pinegree, S. (1989). Divergent psychological processes in constructing social reality from mass media content. In N. Signorielli & M. Morgan (Eds.), *Cultivation analysis. New directions in media effects research* (pp. 35-50). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Hawkins, R.P., Reynolds, N., & Pinegree, S. (1991). In search of television viewing styles. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 35, 375-383.
- Hempel, C.G. (1952). *Fundamentals of concept formation in empirical science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Herman, E.S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon.
- Herzog, H. (1941). On borrowed experience. An analysis of listening to daytime sketches. In M. Horkheimer & T. Adorno (Eds.), *Studies in philosophy and social science* (pp. 65-95). New York: Institute of Social Research.
- Herzog, H. (1944). What do we really know about daytime serial listeners? In P.F. Lazarsfeld & F.N. Stanton (Eds.), *Radio research 1942-1943*. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce.
- Hirsch, P.M. (1977). Public policy toward television: Mass media and education in American society. *School Review*, 85, 481-511.
- Hirsch, P.M. (1980). The 'scary world' of the nonviewer and other anomalies. *Communication Research*, 7, 403-456.
- Hirsch, P.M. (1981). On not learning from one's own mistakes. A reanalysis of Gerbner et. al.'s findings on cultivation analysis. Part II. *Communication Research*, 8, 3-37.
- Hirsch, P.M. (1985). U.S. cultural productions: The impact of ownership. *Journal of Communication*, 35 (3), 110-121.
- Hirschburg, P.L., Dillman, D.A., & Ball-Rokeach, S.J. (1986). Media system dependency theory. Responses to the eruption of Mount St. Helens. In S.J. Ball-Rokeach & M.G. Cantor (Eds.), *Media, audience, and social structure* (pp. 117-126). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hirschman, E.C. (1981). Social and cognitive influences on information exposure: A path analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 31(1), 76-87.
- Hoggart, R. (1970). *Speaking to each other. Vol. 1: About society*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Holsti, O. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

- Holz-Bacha, C. (1990). Videomalaise revisited: Media exposure and political alienation in West Germany. *European Journal of Communication*, 5, 73-85.
- Horstmann, R. (1991). Knowledge gaps revisited: Secondary analyses from Germany. *European Journal of Communication*, 6, 77-93.
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R.R. (1979). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Intimacy at a distance. In G. Gumpert & R. Cathcart (Eds.), *Intermedia: interpersonal communication in a mediated world* (2nd ed.) (pp. 118-211). New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1957).
- House, R.J. (1992). Personality and charismatic leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 3(2), 81-108.
- Hovland, C.I. (1959). Reconciling conflicting results from experimental and survey studies of attitude change. *American Psychologist*, 14, 8-17.
- Hovland, C., Janis, I. & Kelley, H. (1953). *Communication and persuasion*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Hughes, M. (1980). The fruits of cultivation analysis: A reexamination of some effects of television watching. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 44, 287-302.
- Hulteng, J.L., & Nelson, R.P. (1971). *The fourth estate. An informal appraisal of news and opinion media*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hyman, H.H. & Sheatsley, P.B. (1947). Some reasons why information campaigns fail. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 11, 413-423.
- Innis, H. (1964). *The bias of communication*. Toronto: University Toronto Press.
- Iyengar, S. (1979). Television news and issue salience: A re-examination of the agenda-setting hypothesis. *American Politics Quarterly*, 7, 395-416.
- Iyengar, S. (1988). New directions of agenda-setting research. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 595-602). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D.R. (1987). *News that matters: Agenda-setting and priming in a television age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jackson, E. F. (1962). Status consistency and symptoms of

- stress. *American Sociological Review*, 27, 469-480.
- Jackson-Beeck, M. (1977). The non-viewers: Who are they? *Journal of Communication*, 27(3), 65-72.
- Jameson, F. (1972). *The prison-house of language*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Janowitz, M. (1978). Mass media: Institutional trends and their consequences. In M. Janowitz & P. Hirsch (Eds.), *Reader in public opinion and mass communication* (pp. 303-321). New York: Free Press.
- Jensen, J. (1990). *Redeeming modernity: Contradictions in media criticism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Jhally, S., & Livant, B. (1986). Watching as working: The valorization of audience consciousness. *Journal of Communication*, 36(3), 124-143.
- Kalton, G. (1983). *Introduction to survey sampling*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Kaplan, A. (1964). *The conduct of inquiry: Methodology for behavioral science*. New York: Chandler.
- Katz, E. (1979). The uses of Becker, Blumler, and Swanson. *Communication Research*, 6, 74-83.
- Katz, E., Adoni, H., & Parness, P. (1977). Remembering the news: What the picture adds to recall. *Journalism Quarterly*, 54, 231-239.
- Katz, E. Blumler, J.G., & Gurevitch (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J.G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 19-32).
- Katz, E., & Lazarsfeld, P. (1955). *Personal influence. The part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. New York: Free Press.
- Kellner, D. (1981). Network television and American society. Introduction to a critical theory of television. *Theory & Society*, 10, 31-62.
- Key, V.O. (1961). *Public opinion and American democracy*. New York: Knopf.
- Key, V.O. (1966). *The responsible electorate*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kinder, D.R., & Sears, D.O. (1985). Public opinion and

- political action. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (3rd. ed., Vol. 2, pp. 659-741). New York: Random House.
- Kippax, S. & Murray, J.P. (1980). Using the media: Need gratification and perceived utility. *Communication Research*, 7, 335-360.
- Kish, L. (1965). *Survey sampling*. New York: John Wiley.
- Klapper, J.T. (1949). *The effects of mass media*. New York: Columbia University Bureau of Applied Radio Research.
- Klapper, J.T. (1960). *The effects of mass communication*. New York: Free Press.
- Kline, F.G. (1972). Media time budgeting as a function of demographics and lifestyle. *Journalism Quarterly*, , 211-221.
- Kline, F.G., Miller, P.V., & Morrison, A.J. (1974). Adolescent and family planning information: An exploration of audience needs and media effects. In J.G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 113-136). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Kline, F.G. (1977). Time in communication research. In P.M. Hirsch, P.V. Miller, & F.G. Kline (Eds.), *Strategies in communication research* (pp.187-204). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Kohut, A., Roper, B., & Goyder, J. (Eds.). (1988). Is there a crisis of confidence? *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50, 1-41.
- Kornhauser, W. (1960). *The politics of mass society*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Kraus, S. & Perloff, R.M. (Eds.). (1985). *Mass media and political thought*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Krippendorff, K. (1991). Reconstructing (some) communication research methods. In F. Steier (Ed.), *Research and reflexivity* (pp. 113-142). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Krugman, H.E. (1965). The impact of television advertising: Learning without involvement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 29, 349-356.
- Krugman, H.E. (1966). The measuring of advertising

- involvement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 30, 583-596.
- Krugman, H.E. (1971). Brain-wave measures of media involvement. *Journal of Advertising*, 11, 3-9.
- Krugman, H.E. (1977). Memory without recall: Exposure with perception. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 17, 7-11.
- Kubey, R.W. (1986). Television use in everyday life: Coping with unstructured time. *Journal of Communication*, 36(3), 108-124.
- Lane, R.E. (1959). *Political life: Why and how people get involved in politics*. New York: Free Press.
- Lane, R.E. (1962). *Political ideology*. New York: Free Press.
- Lane, R.E. (1969). *Political thinking and consciousness: The private life of the political mind*. Chicago: Markham.
- Lang, K., & Lang, G.E. (1953). The unique perspective of TV and its effect: A pilot study. *American Sociological Review*, 18, 103-112.
- Lang, K., & Lang, G.E. (1968). *Politics & television*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
- Lang, K., & Lang, G.E., (1983). The "new" rhetoric of mass communication research: A longer view. *Journal of Communication*, 33(3), 128-140.
- Lasorda, D.L., & Wanta, W. (1990). Effects of personal, interpersonal and media experiences on issue salience. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67, 804-813.
- Lasswell, H.D. (1946). Describing the content of communication. In B.L. Smith, H.D. Lasswell, & R.D. Casey (Eds.), *Propaganda, communication and public opinion* (pp. 74-94). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lasswell, H.D. (1948). Attention structure and social structure. In L. Bryson (Ed.) (pp. 243-278) *The communication of ideas*. New York: Harper.
- Lasswell, H.D. (1977) *On political sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lasswell, H.D., Lerner, D., & Pool, I. de Sola (1952). *The comparative study of symbols*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Lau, R.L., & Sears, D.O. (1986). *Political cognition*.

Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Lazarsfeld, P.F. (1944). The controversy over detailed interviews--an offer for negotiations. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 8, 38-60.
- Lazarsfeld, P.F. (1963). Some reflections on past and future research on broadcasting. An Afterword. In G. Steiner *The people look at television*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Lazarsfeld, P.F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The people's choice*. New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce.
- Lazarsfeld, P.F., & Merton, R.K. (1949). Mass communication, popular taste and organized social action. In W. Schramm (Ed.), *Mass Communications* (pp. 459-480). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Lazarsfeld, P.F., & Stanton, F. (Eds.) (1944). *Radio research 1942-1943*. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce.
- Lee, A.M., & Lee, E.B. (1939). *The fine art of propaganda: A study of Father Coughlin's speeches*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Lembo, R. (1987). The concept of television culture and its application in effects research. Unpublished manuscript. Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley.
- Lemert, J.B. (1981). *Does mass communication change public opinion after all? A new approach to effects analysis*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Lemert, J.B. (1984). Name context and the elimination of mobilizing information: An experiment. *Journalism Quarterly*, 61, 243-249, 259.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Levinson, P. (1981). McLuhan and rationality. *Journal of Communication*, 31(3), 179-190.
- Levy, M.R. & Windahl, S. (1985). The concept of audience activity. In K.E. Rosengren, L.A. Wenner, & P. Palmgreen (Eds.), *Media gratifications research: current perspectives* (pp. 109-122). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. New York: Harper & Row.

- Lewis, J.D. (1966). Feedback in mass communication: Its nature and use in decision-making. *Dissertation Abstracts*, 26, 1929.
- Lichter, S.R., Rothman, S., & Lichter, L.S. (1986) *The media elite*. Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler.
- Lindloff, T.R. (1991). The qualitative study of media audiences. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 35, 23-42.
- Lindloff, T.R. (1988a). Media audiences as interpretive communities. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 81-107). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lindloff, T.R. (1988b). The practice of attendance and the forms of the audience. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 133-145). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Lippman, W. (1925). *The phantom public*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Livant, B. (1979). The audience commodity: On the blindspot debate. *Canadian Journal of Political & Social Theory*, 3, 91-106.
- Livingstone, S.M., (1989). Interpretive viewers and structured programs: The implicit representation of soap opera characters. *Communication Research*, 16, 25-58.
- Lowenthal, L. (1950). Historical perspectives in popular culture. *American Journal of Sociology*, 55, 323-333.
- Lull, J. (1982). A rules approach to the study of television and society. *Human Communication Research*, 9, 3-16.
- Luskin, R.C. (1990). Explaining political sophistication. *Political Behavior*, 12, 331-361.
- Maccoby, E.E., & Hartley, E.L. (Eds.) (1958). *Readings in social psychology*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Mander, J. (1978). *Four arguments for the elimination of television*. New York: Morrow.
- March, J., & Simon, H. (1958). *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Markus, H., & Zajonc, R.B. (1985). The cognitive perspective

- in social psychology. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.) *Handbook of social psychology* (3rd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 137-231). New York: Random House.
- Marias, J. (1987). *The structure of society*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Martin, R.R., O'Keefe, G.J., & Nayman, O.B. (1972). Opinion agreement and accuracy between editors and their readers. *Journalism Quarterly*, 49, 460-468. ch. 9 cit.
- Marx, K. (1967). *Capital, Vol. 1*. New York: International Publishers.
- Mauss, M. (1967). *The gift: Forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*. New York: W.W. Norton. (Original work published 1925).
- McClure, R.D., & Patterson, T.E. (1976). Print vs. network news. *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 23-28.
- McCombs, M.E. (1981a). Setting the agenda for agenda-setting research: An assessment of the priority, ideas and problems. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. DeBock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 2* (pp. 219-224). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- McCombs, M.E. (1981b). The agenda-setting approach. In D. Nimmo & K.R. Sanders (Eds.), *Handbook of political communication* (pp. 121-140). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- McCombs, M.E., & Shaw, D.L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of the mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-184.
- McDonald, D.G., & Schecter, R. (1988). Audience role in the evolution of fictional television content. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 32, 61-71.
- McGraw, K.M., & Pinney, N. (1990). The effects of general and domain specific expertise on political memory and judgement. *Social Cognition*, 8, 9-30.
- McGuire, W. (1974). Psychological motives and communication gratifications. In J.G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 167-196). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- McLeod, J.M., & Becker, L.B. (1974). Testing the validity of gratification measures through political effects analysis. In J.G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 137-164). Beverly Hills: Sage.

- McLeod, J.M., Becker, L.B., & Byrnes, J.E. (1974). Another look at the agenda-setting function of the press. *Communication Research, 1*, 131-166.
- McLeod, J.M., & Chaffee, S.H. (1972). The construction of social reality. In J. Tedeschi (Ed.), *The social influence processes* (pp. 50-99). Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.
- McLeod, J.M. & Kosicki, G.M. (1986). *Paying attention to the concept of attention*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, Chicago, IL.
- McLeod, J.M., & McDonald, D. (1985). Beyond simple exposure: Media orientations and their impact on political processes. *Communication Research, 10*, 155-174.
- McLeod, J.M., & O'Keefe, G.J. (1972). The socialization perspective and communication behavior. In F.G. Kline & P.J. Tichenor (Eds.), *Current perspectives in mass communication research* (pp. 121-168). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- McLeod, J.M., & Pan, Z. (1989). Getting levels across and crossing levels. A reply to Reeves. *American Behavioral Scientist, 33*, 199-202.
- McLeod, J.M., & Reeves, B. (1980). On the nature of mass media effects. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 1* (pp. 245-282). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- McLeod, J.M., Rucinski, D.M., & Pan, Z.M. (1988). *Attention to television news: Explicating its meaning and measurement*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, New Orleans.
- McLuhan, M. (1962). *The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media*. New York: New American Library.
- McLuhan, M., & Powers, B. (1981). Electronic banking and the death of privacy. *Journal of Communication, 31*(1), 164-169.
- McQuail, D. (1969). *Towards a sociology of mass communications*. London: Collier-Macmillan.
- McQuail, D. (1984). *With the benefit of hindsight:*

- Reflections on uses and gratifications research. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 1, 177-193.
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Meehan, E.R. (1986). Conceptualizing culture as commodity: The problem of television. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 3, 448-457.
- Meehan, E.R. (1984) Ratings and the institutional approach: A third answer to the commodity question. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 1, 216-225.
- Melody, W., Salter, L., & Heyer, P. (Eds.). (1981). *Culture, communication and dependency. The tradition of H.A. Innis*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Menzel, H., (1971). Quasi-mass communication: A neglected area. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 35, 406-409.
- Meyer, T.P. (1989). Reflections on cultivation theory and consumer behavior. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 16, 786-789.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No sense of place: The impact of electronic media on social behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Milavsky, R., Kessler, R., Stipp, H., & Rubens, W. (1982). *Television and aggression: The results of a panel study*. New York: Academic Press.
- Miller, A.H., Goldenberg, E.N., & Erbring, L. (1979). Type-set politics: Impact of newspapers on public confidence. *American Political Science Review*, 73, 67-84.
- Miller, G.A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity of processing information. *Psychological Review*, 63, 81-97.
- Miller, M.M., & Reese, S.D. (1982). Media dependency as interaction. Effects of exposure and reliance on political activity and efficacy. *Communication Research*, 9, 227-248.
- Miller, P.V. (1974). *Issues in conceptualization and measurement of message discrimination*. Unpublished manuscript. Department of Communication, University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, MI.

- Miller, P.V. (1977). Themes of measurement in communication. In P.M. Hirsch and F.G. Kline (Eds.), *Strategies for communication research* (pp. 113-126). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Miller, P.V., & Cannell, C.F. (1977). Communicating measurement objectives in the interview. In P.M. Hirsch and F.G. Kline (Eds.), *Strategies for communication research* (pp. 127-151). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Miller, P.V., Morrison, A.J., & Kline, F.G. (1974). *Approaches to characterizing information environments*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New Orleans.
- Mills, C.W. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1989). Cultivation analysis: Conceptualization and methodology. In N. Signorielli & M. Morgan (Eds.), *Cultivation analysis. New directions in media effects research* (pp. 13-34). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, M., & Shanahan, J. (1991). Television and cultivation of political attitudes in Argentina. *Journal of Communication*, 41(1), 88-116.
- Morley, D. (1980). *The "Nationwide" audience: Structure and decoding*. London: British Film Institute.
- Morris, C.W. (1938). *Foundations of the theory of signs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Morrison, D. (1988). The transference of experience and the impact of ideas: Paul Lazarsfeld and mass communication research. *Communication*, 10, 185-209.
- Murdock, G. (1978). Blindspots about western Marxism: A reply to Dallas Smythe. *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 2, 109-119.
- Murray, J.P. (1991). Nothing lasts forever: Instability in longitudinal studies of media and society. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 14* (pp. 102-110). Newbury Park: Sage.
- Nass, C.I., & Reeves, B. (1991). Combining, distinguishing, and generating theories in communication. *Communication Research*, 18, 240-261.
- National Institute of Mental Health (1982). *Television and aggression: Ten years of progress and implications for*

- the 1980s (D. Pearl, L. Bonthilet, & J. Lazar, Eds.). Rockville, MD: NIMH.
- Neisser, U. (1976). *Cognition and reality*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman.
- Neuman, W.R. (1976). Patterns of recall among television news viewers. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40, 115-123.
- Neuman, W.R. (1982). Television and American culture: The mass medium and the pluralist audience. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 46, 471-487.
- Neuman, W.R. (1986). *The paradox of mass politics: Knowledge and opinions in the American electorate*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Neuman, W.R. & Fryling, A.C. (1985). Patterns of political cognition: An exploration of the public mind. In S. Kraus & R.M. Perloff (Eds.), *Mass media and political thought* (pp. 223-240).
- Neuman, W.R., & Pool, I. de S. (1986). The flow of communications into the home. In S.J. Ball-Rokeach & M.G. Cantor (Eds.), *Media, audience, and social structure* (pp. 71-86). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Newcomb, H.M. (1978). Assessing the violence profile studies of Gerbner and Gross: A humanistic critique and suggestion. *Communication Research*, 5, 264-282.
- Newcomb, H. M., & Hirsch, P.M. (1984). Television as a cultural forum: Implications for research. In W.D. Rowland & B. Watkins (Eds.), *Interpreting television* (pp. 58-73). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Newcomb, T.M. (1953). An approach to the study of communicative acts. *Psychological Review*, 69, 393-404.
- Nie, N.H, Verba, S., & Petrocik, J.R. (1979). *The changing American Voter* (Enlarged ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Nienhaus, B. (1987). *Commodity relations: A theoretical approach to the mass communication process*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Montreal, Quebec.
- Nienhaus, B. (1988). *Beyond medium and text: Commodity relations*. Paper presented at the Center for Twentieth Century Studies International Conference on Television, Milwaukee, WI.

- Nienhaus, B. (1989a) What are we celebrating? A curriculum essay. *Qualitative Studies News* (Spring), 3-4.
- Nienhaus, B. (1989b). *Communication, the commodity form and charisma*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C.
- Nienhaus, B. (1990). *The price of temperance: Revisiting the Ryan-Coughlin encounter*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Journalism Historians Association, Atlanta, GA.
- Nienhaus, B. (1991). *Father Coughlin: The early years*. Unpublished manuscript. Department of Communication, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Nimmo, D., & Sanders, K.R. (Eds.) (1981). *Handbook of political communication*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Nimmo, D., & Swanson, D.L. (1990). The field of political communication: Beyond the voter persuasion paradigm. In D.L. Swanson & D. Nimmo (Eds.). *New directions in political communication*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). The spiral of silence: A theory of public opinion. *Journal of Communication*, 24, 43-51.
- Ogden, C.K., & Richards, I.A. (1936). *The meaning of meaning: A study of the influence of language upon thought and of the science of symbolism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- O'Keefe, G.J. (1974). Political campaigns and mass communication research. In S.H. Chaffee (Ed.) *Political communication*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- O'Keefe, G.J. (1980). Political malaise and reliance on media. *Journalism Quarterly*, 57, 122-8.
- Olien, C.N., Donohue, G.A., & Tichenor, P.J. (1983). Structure, communication, and social power: Evolution of the knowledge gap hypothesis. In E. Wartella, D.C. Whitney, & S. Windahl (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 4* (pp. 455-461). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Owen, B.M. (1976). *Economics and freedom of expression--Media structure and the First Amendment*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
- Palmgreen, P., Kline, F.G., & Clarke, P. (1977). *Message discrimination and information holding about public affairs: A comparison of local and national issues*.

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New Orleans.

- Pan, Z., & McLeod, J.M. (1991). Multilevel analysis in mass communication research. *Communication Research*, 18, 140-173.
- Parker, E.B. (1963). The effects of television on library circulation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 27, 578-589.
- Patterson, T.E. (1980). *The mass media election: How Americans choose their president*. New York: Praeger.
- Patterson, T.E., & McClure, R.D. (1976). *The unseeing eye: The myth of television power in national elections*. New York: Putnam.
- Payne, S. (1951). *The art of asking questions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Perrow, C. (1986). *Complex organizations* (3rd ed.). New York: Random House.
- Perse, E.M. (1990). Audience selectivity and involvement in the newer media environment. *Communication Research*, 17, 675-697.
- Perse, E.M., & Rubin, R.B. (1989). Attribution in social and parasocial relationships. *Communication Research*, 16, 59-77.
- Peterson, R.A. (1982). Measuring culture, leisure, and time use. In D.C. Whitney & E. Wartella (Eds.). *Mass communication review yearbook 3*, (pp. 445-455). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Pierce, J.C., Lee-Sammons, L., Steger, M.A.E., & Lovrich, Jr., N.P. (1990). Media reliance and public images of environmental politics. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67, 838-842.
- Pinegree, S. (1983). Children's cognitive processes in constructing social reality. *Journalism Quarterly*, 60, 415-422.
- Pinegree, S., & Hawkins, R. (1981). U.S. programs on Australian television: The cultivation effect. *Journal of Communication*, 31(1), 97-105.
- Pool, I. de S. (1983). *Technologies of freedom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pool, I. de S., Inose, H., Takasaki, N., & Hurwitz, R.

- (1984). *Communication flows. A census in the United States and Japan*. New York: University of Tokyo Press.
- Pool, I. de S., & Shulman, I. (1959). Newsmen's fantasies, audiences and newswriting. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 23, 144-158.
- Poster, M. (1990). *The mode of information. Poststructuralism and social context*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Postman, L. (1972). A pragmatic view of organization. In E. Tulving & W. Donaldson (Eds.), *Organization of memory*. New York: Academic Press.
- Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing ourselves to death. Public discourse in the age of show business*. New York: Viking Penguin.
- Potter, W.J. (1986). Perceived reality and the cultivation hypothesis. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 30, 159-174.
- Potter, W.J. (1990). Television exposure measures and the cultivation hypothesis. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 34, 313-333.
- Potter, W.J. (1991). Examining cultivation from a psychological perspective. *Communication Research*, 18, 77-102.
- Price, V. (1992). *Public opinion*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Price, V. & Zaller, J. (1990). *Who gets the news? The measurement problem in media research*. Revised version of a paper presented at the meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Price, V., & Ritchie, C.D. (1991). Matters micro and macro. *Communication Research*, 18, 135-139.
- Przeworski, A. & Teune, H. (1970). *The logic of comparative social inquiry*. New York: John Wiley.
- Rabinow, P. (Ed.) (1984). *The Foucault reader*. New York: Pantheon.
- Radway, J. (1984). *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy, and popular literature*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Ray, M.L., Sawyer, A.G., Rothschild, M.L., Strong, E.C., & Reed, J.A. (1973). *Marketing communication and the*

- hierarchy of effects. In P. Clarke (Ed.) *New models for communication research* (pp. 147-176), Beverly Hills, Sage.
- Reese, S.D. (1991). Setting the media agenda: A power balance perspective. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 14*, (pp. 309-340). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Reeves, B. (1978). Perceived TV reality as a predictor of children's social behavior. *Journalism Quarterly*, 55, 682-689, 695.
- Reeves, B. (1989). Theories about news and theories about cognition. Arguments for a more radical separation. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 33, 191-198.
- Reeves, B., & Anderson, D.R. (1991). Media studies and psychology. *Communication Research*, 18, 597-600.
- Rimmer, T., & Weaver, D.H. (1987). Different questions, different answers? Media use and media credibility. *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, 28-36, 44.
- Ritchie, L.D. (1991). Another turn of the information revolution. Relevance, technology and the information society. *Communication Research*, 18, 412-427.
- Rivers, W.L., Miller, S. & Gandy, O. (1974). Government and the media. In S.H. Chaffee (Ed.). *Political communication*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Roberts, D.F., & Bachen, C.M. (1981). Mass communication effects. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 32, 307-356.
- Roberts, D.F., & Maccoby, N. (1985). Effects of mass communication. In G. Lindzey & E Aronson (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (vol. 2, pp. 539-598). New York: Random House.
- Robinson, J.P. (1977). *How Americans use time: A social-psychological analysis of everyday behavior*. New York: Praeger.
- Robinson, J.P. (1981). Television and leisure time: A new scenario. *Journal of Communication*, 31(1), 120-130.
- Robinson, J.P., & Converse, P.E. (1972). Social change reflected in the use of time. In A. Campbell & P.E. Converse (Eds.), *The human meaning of social change* (pp. 17-86). New York: Russell Sage.
- Robinson, M.J. (1975). American political legitimacy in an

- era of electronic journalism: Reflections on the evening news. In D. Cater and R. Adler (Eds.), *Television as a social force: New approaches to TV criticism* (pp. 97-139). New York: Praeger.
- Robinson, M.J. (1976). Public affairs television and the growth of political malaise: The case of "The Selling of the Pentagon". *American Political Science Review*, 70, 409-432.
- Robinson, M.J. (1977). Television and American politics: 1956-1976. *Public Interest*, 48, 3-39.
- Rochberg-Halton, E. (1986). *Meaning and modernity. Social theory in the pragmatic attitude*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rogers, E.M. (1962). *The diffusion of innovations*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Rogers, E.M. (1986). *Communication technology*. New York: Free Press.
- Rogers, E.M., & Dearing, J.W. (1988). Agenda-setting research: Where has it been, where is it going? In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 555-594). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.
- Rosenberg, B. & White, D.M. (1957). *Mass culture. The popular arts in America*. New York: Free Press.
- Rosengren, K.E. (1991). Media use in childhood and adolescence: Invariant change? In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 14* (pp. 48-90). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Roser, C. (1990). Involvement, attention, and perceptions of message relevance in response to persuasive appeals. *Communication Research*, 17, 571-600.
- Rothschild, M.L., Thorson, E., Reeves, B., Hirsch, J.E., & Goldstein, R. (1986). EEG activity and the processing of television commercials. *Communication Research*, 13, 156-181.
- Rubin, A.M. (1983). Television uses and gratifications: The interactions of viewing patterns and motivations. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 27, 37-51.
- Rubin, A.M. (1984). Ritualized and instrumental television

- viewing. *Journal of Communication*, 34(3), 67-77.
- Rubin, A.M., & Perse, E.M. (1987). Audience activity and soap opera involvement. A uses and effects investigation. *Human Communication Research*, 14, 246-268.
- Rubin, A.M., Perse, E.M., & Powell, R.A. (1985). Loneliness, parasocial interaction, and local television news viewing. *Human Communication Research*, 12, 155-180.
- Rubin, A.M., & Windahl, S. (1986). The uses and dependency model of mass communication. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 3, 184-199.
- Rucinski, D. (1989, August). *Communication and reciprocity: A reconceptualization of political knowledge*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C.
- Sahin, H. & Robinson, J.P. (1980). Beyond the realm of necessity: Television and the colonization of leisure. *Media, Culture and Society*, 3, 85-95.
- Salmon, C.T. (1986a). Message discrimination and the information environment. *Communication Research*, 13, 363-372.
- Salmon, C.T. (1986b). Perspectives on involvement in consumer and communication research. In B. Dervin & M. Voight (Eds.), *Progress in communication sciences*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Salomon, G., & Cohen, A.A. (1978). On the meaning and validity of television viewing. *Human Communication Research*, 4, 265-270.
- Samuelson, M., Carter, R.F., & Ruggles, W.L. (1963). Education, available time and use of the mass media. *Journalism Quarterly*, 40, 491-496.
- Samuelson, P.A. (1958). Aspects of public expenditure theories. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 40, 332-338.
- Sartori, G. (Ed.) (1986). *Social science concepts*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- de Saussure, F. (1974). *Course in general linguistics*. London: Fontana. (Original work published 1915).
- Savage, R.L. & Nimmo, D. (Eds.) (1989). *Politics in familiar*

contexts: Projecting politics through popular media.
Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

- Sayre, J. (1939). Progress in radio fan-mail analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 3, 272-278.
- Schiller, H.I. (1973). *The mind managers*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Schramm, W. (Ed.) (1954). *The processes and effects of mass communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Schramm, W., Lyle, J., & Parker, E.B. (1961). *Television in the lives of our children*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Schudson, M. (1978). *Discovering the news. A social history of American newspapers*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schudson, M. (1986). The new validation of popular culture: Sense and sentimentality in academia. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 4, 21-36.
- Schultze, Q.J. (1988). Evangelical radio and the rise of the electronic church, 1921-1948. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 32, 289-306.
- Schwarzloze, R.A. (1989). The marketplace of ideas. A measure of free expression. *Journalism Monographs*, 118.
- Sears, D.O., & Freedman, J.L. (1967). Selective exposure to information: A critical review. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31, 194-213.
- Seldes, G. (1970). *The great audience*. Westport, CT: Greenwood. (Original published 1950).
- Seldes, G. (1960). Public participation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 24, 5-11.
- Sewart, J.L. (1986). The social hegemony of the commodity form in sport. In S.J. Ball-Rokeach & M.G. Cantor (Eds.), *Media, audience, and social structure* (pp. 174-198). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Shannon, C. (1949). The mathematical theory of communication. In C. Shannon & W. Weaver, *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Shils, E.A. (1957). Daydreams and nightmares: Reflections on the criticism of mass culture. *The Sewanee Review*, 65, 586-608.

- Shils, E.A. (1963). Charisma. In D. Shills (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social sciences*, vol. 2 (pp. 386-390). New York: Crowell.
- Shoemaker, P.J. (1987). Building a theory of news content: A synthesis of current approaches. *Journalism Monographs*, No. 103.
- Shoemaker, P.J., & Reese, S.D. (1990). Exposure to what? Integrating media content and effects studies. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67, 649-652.
- Siebert, F.S., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Sigal, L. (1974). *Reporters and officials*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.
- Signorielli, N. (1986). Selective television viewing: A limited possibility. *Journal of Communication*, 36(3), 64-76.
- Signorielli, N. (1989). Television's mean and dangerous world: A continuation of the Cultural Indicators perspective. In N. Signorielli & M. Morgan (Eds.), *Cultivation Analysis. New directions in media effects research* (pp. 85-106). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Signorielli, N., & Morgan, M. (Eds.). (1989). *Cultivation analysis. New directions in media effects research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Simonds, A.P. (1982). On being informed. *Theory and Society*, 11, 587-616.
- Simonds, A.P. (1989). Ideological domination and the political information market. *Theory and Society*, 18, 181-211.
- Singer, B. (1973). *Feedback and society*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Slack, J.D., & Allor, M. (1983). The political and epistemological constituents of critical communication research. *Journal of Communication*, 33(3), 208-218.
- Slater, D., & Elliot, W.R. (1982). Television's influence on social reality. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68, 69-79.
- Smith, B.L., Lasswell, H.D., & Casey, R.D. (Eds.) (1946). *Propaganda, communication and public opinion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Smith, I. (1949). *Dear Mr. President*. New York: Julian Messner.
- Smith, E.R.A.N. (1989). *The unchanging American voter*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press.
- Smith, W.E. (1989, August). *The shrinking sound bite: Two decades of stylistic evolution in television news*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C.
- Smythe, D.W. (1977). Communications: Blindspot of western Marxism. *Canadian Journal of Political & Social Theory*, 1, 1-27.
- Smythe, D.W. (1978). Rejoinder to Graham Murdock. *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 2 120-127.
- Smythe, D.W. (1981). Communications: Blindspot of economics. In W. Melody, L. Salter, & P. Heyer (Eds.), *Culture, communication and dependency. The tradition of H.A. Innis* (pp. 111-125). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Snyder, L.B. (1990). Channel effectiveness over time and knowledge and behavior gaps. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67, 875-886.
- Solomon, M.R. (1983). The role of products as social stimuli: A symbolic interactionism perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10, 319-329.
- Stauffer, J., Frost, R. & Rybolt, W. (1978). Literacy, illiteracy, and learning from television. *Communication Research*, 5, 221-232.
- Steiner, G. (1963). *The people look at television*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Stempel III, G.H. (1989). Content analysis. In G.H. Stempel III & B.H. Westley (Eds.), *Research methods in mass communication* (pp. 124-136). New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Stempel III, G.H., & Westley, B.H. (Eds.) (1989). *Research methods in mass communication*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Sternberg, S. (1969). Memory scanning: Mental processes revealed by reaction-time experiments. *American Scientist*, 57, 421-457.
- Stiles, L. (1954). *The man behind Roosevelt*. Cleveland: World Publishing.

- Stinchcombe, A.L. (1968). *Constructing social theories*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Stinchcombe, A. (1989). Education, exploitation, and class consciousness. In E.O. Wright (Ed.), *The debate on classes* (pp. 168-172). New York: Verso.
- Sussman, L. (1963) *Dear FDR: A study of political letter-writing*. Totowa, NJ: Bedminster Press.
- Swanson, D.L. (1977). The uses and misuses of uses and gratifications. *Human Communication Research*, 3, 214-221.
- Swanson, D.L. (1979). Political communication research and the uses and gratifications model: A critique. *Communication Research*, 6, 37-53.
- Swanson, D.L. (1988). Feeling the elephant: Some observations on agenda-setting research. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 11* (pp. 603-619). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Swanson, D.L. (1989). Popular art as political communication. In R.L. Savage & D. Nimmo (pp. 12-61) *Politics in familiar contexts: Projecting politics through popular media*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Tannenbaum, P. (1963). Public communication of science information. *Science*, 140, 579-583.
- Thorson, E. (1989). Processing television commercials. In B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B.J. O'Keefe, & E. Wartella (Eds.), *Rethinking communication: Vol. 2. Paradigm exemplars* (pp. 397-410). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Tichenor, P.J., & McLeod, D.M. (1989). The logic of social and behavioral science. In G.H. Stempel III & B.H. Westley (Eds). *Research methods in mass communication* (2nd ed.) (pp. 10-29). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Tichenor, P.J., Donohue, G.A., & Olien, C.N. (1970). Mass media and differential growth in knowledge. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 34, 158-170.
- Troldahl, V.C. (1965). Studies of consumption of mass media content. *Journalism Quarterly*, 42, 596-606.
- Tuchman, G. (1972). Objectivity as strategic ritual. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77, 660-679.
- Tuchman, G. (1973-4). Making news by doing work: Routinizing

- the unexpected. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79, 110-131.
- Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news. A study in the construction of reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Tulving, E. (1972). Episodic and semantic memory. In E. Tulving & W. Donaldson (Eds.), *Organization of memory*. New York: Academic Press.
- Tunstall, J. (1971). *Journalists at work*. London: Constable, 1971.
- Tunstall, J. (1991). A media industry perspective. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 14* (pp. 163-186). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Turow, J. (1977-1978). Another view of "citizen feedback" to the mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 41, 534-543.
- Turow, J. (1984). *Media industries. The production of news and entertainment*. New York: Longman.
- Verba, S., & Nie, N.H. (1972). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Volosinov, V.N. (1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. New York: Seminar Press.
- Ward., L.B. (1933). *Father Charles E. Coughlin*. Detroit: Radio League.
- Ward, S. (1987). Consumer behavior. In C.R. Berger & S.H. Chaffee (Eds.), *Handbook of communication science* (pp. 651-674). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Watkins, B. (1985). Television viewing as a dominant activity of childhood: A developmental theory of television effects. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 2, 323-337.
- Watt, J.H. & Krull, R. (1974). An information theory measure for television programming. *Communication Research*, 1, 44-68.
- Watt, J.H. Jr. & van den Berg, S. (1981). How time dependency influences media effects in a community controversy. *Journalism Quarterly*, 58, 43-50.
- Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J., & Jackson, D. (1967). *Pragmatics of human communication. A study of interaction patterns, pathologies and paradoxes*. New York: W.W.

Norton.

- Weaver, D.H. (1984). Media agenda-setting and public opinion: Is there a link? In R.N. Bostrom (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 8* (pp. 680-691). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Weaver, D.H., Graber, D.A., McCombs, M.E., & Eyal, C. (1981). *Media agenda-setting in a presidential election: Issues, images, and interest*. New York: Praeger.
- Weber, M. (1968). *On charisma and institution building*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Webster, J.G., & Wakshlag, J. (1985). Measuring exposure to television. In D. Zillman & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Selective exposure to communication* (pp. 35-62). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Webster's third new international dictionary*. (1981). Springfield, MA: G.C. Merriam.
- Weisberg, S. (1980). *Applied linear regression*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Westley, B.H. (1976). What makes it change? *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 43-47.
- Westley, B.H., & MacLean, S. (1957). A conceptual model for communications research. *Journalism Quarterly*, 34, 31-38.
- White, D.M. (1950). The gatekeeper: A case study in the selection of news. *Journalism Quarterly*, 27, 383-390.
- White, L. (1953). The American radio: Toward self-regulation. In B. Berelson & M. Janowitz (Eds.), *Public opinion and communication* (pp. 208-219). Glencoe, IL: Free Press. (Original published 1947).
- Whitney, D.C. (1991). Agenda-setting: Power and contingency. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 14* (pp. 347-356). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Whitney, D.C., Fritzler, M., Jones, S., Mazzarella, S., & Rakow, L. (1989). Geographic and source biases in network television news. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 33, 159-174.
- Whitney, D.C., & Wartella, E. (Eds.). *Mass communication review yearbook 3*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Wiebe, G.D. (1952). Mass communications. In E.L. Hartley &

- R.E. Hartley (Eds.), *Fundamentals of social psychology* (pp. 159-195). New York: Knopf.
- Wilensky, H.L. (1964). Mass society and mass culture: Interdependence or independence? *American Sociological Review*, 29, 173-197.
- Wilhoit, G.C., & de Bock, H. (Eds.) (1980). *Mass communication review yearbook 1*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Wilhoit, G.C., & de Bock, H. (Eds.) (1981). *Mass communication review yearbook 2*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Windahl, S. (1981). Uses and gratifications at the crossroads. In G.C. Wilhoit & H. de Bock (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook 2* (pp. []). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Williams, R. (1969). *Communications*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1963). (G.E.M. Anscombe, Trans.). *Philosophical investigations*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Wright, E.O. (Ed.) (1989). *The debate on classes*. New York: Verso.
- Wright, C.R. (1959). *Mass communications: A sociological perspective*. New York: Random House.
- Wober, J.M. (1978). Televised violence and the paranoid perception: The view from Great Britain. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 42, 315-321.
- Wolfe, K.M., & Fiske, M. (1949). The children talk about comics. In P.F. Lazarsfeld & F. Stanton (Eds.), *Radio research 1948- 1949* (pp. 3-50). New York: Harper.
- Zajonc, R.B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Monograph Supplement*, 9 (2, pt. 2), 2-27.
- Zeller, R.A. & Carmines, E.G. (1980). *Measurement in the social sciences. The link between theory and data*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zickmund, S. (1992). The fatherly voice: Social Relations in the Sermons of Charles E. Coughlin. Paper presented at the convention of the Speech Communication Association,

Chicago.

Zillman, D., & Bryant, J. (Eds.). (1985). *Selective exposure to communication*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Zukerman, D.M., Singer, D.G., & Singer, J.L. (1980). Television viewing, children's reading and related classroom behavior. *Journal of Communication*, 30(1), 166-174.